

TALES FROM THE ALETHEIAN SOCIETY

The Scripts: Volume Two

A Parcel of Rogues

Jude Reid and Chris Edwards

**EPISODE 1:
FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS**

Episode Cast:

**LORD ARTHUR ROXBURGH
GODALMING
HIERONYMUS CADWALLADER
PROFESSOR JONES
GRAND ARTIFICER (DRONING VOICE)
LADY SOPHIA ROXBURGH
JESSIE GORDON
CRESSIDA CADWALLADER
BANJO
ALEXANDER, LAIRD MORNINGSIDE
MRS WALKINSHAW
MARGARET BALFOUR
GAWKER**

NARRATOR: Shadow Factories Presents- Tales from the Aletheian Society: Book Two, Chapter One - For Whom the Bell Tolls!

THEME MUSIC PLAYS

FX: Somber muttering, teacups and the tolling of church bells. Hurried feet dashing across the ground.

GODALMING: You're late, Lord Arthur!

ARTHUR: (somewhat out of breath) I know, I know! It's just things have been so hectic recently. I feel like I haven't had a minute to collect myself since this whole insanity began.

GODALMING: Well, you're here now, sir, that's the important thing

ARTHUR: Do you suppose anyone noticed?

GODALMING: I reckon your absence has been noted, Lord Arthur. It's a fairly important affair, after all. Seems like anybody who's everybody is here to pay their respects.

ARTHUR: I always find these things a little macabre, don't you? I mean, is this how he would have wanted to be remembered in life? Stretched out on a table with a sheet over him, people eating cucumber sandwiches and drinking tea from china cups?

GODALMING: I wouldn't care to speculate sir, we never really discussed such matters.

ARTHUR: Now, remind me, Godalming, you weren't with us at the start of this, were you?

GODALMING: No, Lord Arthur. I had accompanied Dr Cadwallader to the meeting of the Northern Chaptermasters in...

FX: Carriage wheels, clopping hooves.

HIERONYMUS: Leeds! This is what I'm reduced to. Even the sight of an open midden swarming with scurvy Loiners brings a tear to my jaundiced eye. Ah, back in the bosom of mother England, far from the pestilential jocks. Pasty and slope-browed though they may be, the Northerner is at least superficially an Englishman.

GODALMING: Very good, sir. I believe this is the Leeds Chapterhouse up ahead, under the Church Institute.

CADWALLADER: Tch, back to the Stygian depths, eh? These affairs might feel a little grander if they weren't cloistered away underground. Always thought it was rum for a Society devoted to light to spend it's time burrowing away underground like moles.

GODALMING: Well, we all have our secrets, don't we, sir?

FX: Carriage draws to a stop, soft horse whinny.

CADWALLADER: (nervous) Yes... indeed. Well, here we are then. Brace yourself, Godalming, we're about to meet the most odious individual ever to grace the society's ranks...

PROF JONES: Welcome, one and all! In yew come. I'm Professor Jones of the Aberystwyth Chapter. I'm organising the Northern AGM this year - for my sins!

PROF JONES: Ah, Doctor Cadwallader, is that you? I heard you was promoted to Chapter Master. Glasgow, was it? Never mind, eh. Still just a doctor I see, then? Not made it to professor yet?

CADWALLADER: You're not a real professor! There's no such thing as the Invisible College

PROF JONES: What, you don't believe in things unless you can see them, eh? What about air, you can't see that - do you believe in *air*, Doctor Cadwallader?

FX: Titters and chuckles.

CADWALLADER: Damn your eyes, woman! While you loll about passing yourself imaginary titles, I've been hard at work defending the world.

PROF JONES: Defending it from what? Buttered bacon? Looks like you've saved the world a few times over, eh?

FX: Further titters and chuckles.

PROF JONES: Anyway, enough of all this fun. Get yourself inside and find a drink. Knowing you, I expect you'll be wanting more than just one. Let this one loose at the bar for a few hours and he'll be all "Who's coat is this jacket?" by lunchtime eh?

FX: Glasses clinking, being filled, muttered conversation.

CADWALLADER: Lord, I loathe that woman. I could do with more than a drink, I can tell you that.

GODALMING: Yes, I'm terribly sorry about your Aunt Cressida confiscating the malaria kit, sir.

PROF JONES: Right then! The first seminar is about to begin, so if we can all please pay attention to the Grand Artificer's speech? Thankyew

FX: Polite smattering of applause, followed by a droning voice in the background.

DRONING VOICE: If we could have the first slide, please. Now the important thing to note here is the anti-clockwise striations on the anterior bevelling around the grand conjunction of these two runes. As I'm sure I don't need to remind any of you, this should be done...

CADWALLADER: The challenge here is to drink enough to stop any of this rot percolating into my brain - a Sisyphean task to which I intend to apply myself with red-blooded vigour. Alright, so the situation's dire, but it's still better than a daytrip with Aunt Cressie...

FX: Chuffing of steam train, a clatter of books falling to the floor.

SOPHIA: Oh, *Blauer Arsch!*

ARTHUR: I must say, darling, I'd never noticed you having bad posture until Cressida pointed it out. But you're doing a jolly excellent job with those books. You nearly had them that time!

JESSIE: Whit way de ye care what that foosty auld biddie says, onyway, Sophie? Yer all airs an' graces anyhoo, naubody's gonnae notice if yer a wee bit humphit

SOPHIA: I am, of course, thankful to Miss Cadwallader for pointing out a bad habit. One must struggle to address the defects in oneself before seeking to address those of others. I value the rigorous insight and support of an honest female colleague.

JESSIE: And whit am I? Minced stovies?

FX: Bustling footsteps as CRESSIDA approaches under full sail.

CRESSIDA: Lady Sophia! What on earth do you have in this valise? The porter here is almost stooped double trying to get it to our carriage. If you've been carrying bags of this weight, it's no wonder you've become so grotesquely lopsided.

SOPHIA: Uh, ladies things, Miss Cadwallader, delicates and unmentionables!

CRESSIDA: Unless your bloomers are made of cast iron, my girl, you're engaging in havers and fabrications! You there, porter fellow, dump out the contents now!

SOPHIA: No, you mustn't!...

FX: Thud of BANJO hitting the floor of the carriage.

BANJO: Ooh, ya dancer!

CRESSIDA: Well, my dear, it seems I owe you an apology – this *creature* certainly seems to qualify as unmentionable

ARTHUR: Banjo! What are you doing in my wife's baggage! And where are the **(Sophia kicks him)**
OW!

BANJO: When I saw all yer luggage piled up in the hall, I knew you were plannin' tae emigrate tae America, and I decided tae stow away and seek ma fortune

JESSIE: I can read yer fortune, Banjo, an' it involves getting hauphed offae a movin' train.

CRESSIDA: Now, now, Miss Gordon, we must take pity on this poor wayward soul. It is true that the Creator's hand may have slipped once or twice on the clay while fashioning him, but even those of more limited abilities are capable of serving the Society – after all, look at Lord Arthur

ARTHUR: (flattered) Well, I don't think of myself as a role model for others, but...

CRESSIDA: He has the look of atavistic untamed nature about him, I shall take him on as my ghillie.

BANJO: Am ah gettin' a joab? Yaldie! You'll no regret this, missus. Hooz about an' advance on ma first wages, so I can spruce masel up?

CRESSIDA: (ghastly tittering) Och, yer a cheeky wee rogue, aren't you, Mr Banjo. I can see we're going to get on famously

JESSIE: (muttering) Did ma lugs just gie oot, or did the crabbit auld witch just gie somebody a compliment? And it wuz *Banjo*?

CRESSIDA: If you have something to say, Miss Gordon, why don't you share it with the whole chapter?

JESSIE: Naw, miss, nuthin'

CRESSIDA: Good. Because I want you all on your best behaviour when we call on Miss Balfour this afternoon. The ladies of the Unicorn Club are extremely particular about manners, and I won't have you showing me up with foul language or uncouth habits.

SOPHIA: Your pardon, Miss Cadwallader, but we know very little about this Unicorn Club – does their presence explain the lack of an Edinburgh chapter?

CRESSIDA: Indeed it does, Lady Roxburgh. They are one of a number of organisations with which the Aletheian Society has reciprocal treaties in order to help contain the threat represented by the Satanic Forces arrayed against us. There are other such groups; the Motley Mumpers, the Esoteric Legion, and the Cambridge and Fiveheads Cryptozoological Society to name but a few.

ARTHUR: Are they all virgins? Is *that* why it's called the Unicorn Club?

CRESSIDA: Lord Arthur! How dare you speculate on the virtue of such a group of distinguished gentle-ladies? Get your mind out of the gutter, boy!

ARTHUR: I'm terribly sorry, I'm sure they've had loads of rumpy-pumpy. Please stop shouting at me!

SOPHIA: Arthur!

JESSIE: And whit wey is it we're *all* goin' tae Edinburgh onyway...

BANJO: Edinburgh? So we're no goin' tae America then?

JESSIE: Banjo, whit train wuz it did ye think took ye to New York? I mean, ye ken it's across the ocean?

BANJO: Ah just thocht we were takin' the long way roon', like yon orient express

CRESSIDA: **(laughing)** Oh, Mr Banjo. Your humour is simply wicked! Very droll

SOPHIA: I remember reading about some of these agreements, yes. But hold a moment - if we are entering their demesne, do we not by charter have to make a formal presentation to their offices?

CRESSIDA: Hmph! Only one of you actually bothered to read the training materials! Still, I doubt my shiftless nephew's ever read anything more complicated than the label of a whisky bottle. Some of you will have to go the Regency and kowtow on behalf of the rest of us.

CRESSIDA: I suggest Miss Gordon, since her social class will leave her well used to seeing others as her social betters, and Lord Arthur, since he seems to have a spine composed of gutta percha in any case.

SOPHIA: Please, Miss Cadwallader, you're being most unfair. My husband has many fine qualities.

CRESSIDA: I'm well aware of the shapeliness of his calves, Lady Roxburgh. Gentle on the eye is one thing, a lifetime battling Satan's Invisible World is another. I wouldn't get too attached to him if I were you.

SOPHIA: Too attached...? He's my husband!

CRESSIDA: Piffle, as if that means anything. Husbands are like dogs; deserving of sentiment, but seldom arousing passion in anyone possessed of even a modicum of good sense. They don't last very long, and are quickly replaced by contacting the appropriate breeder.

JESSIE: Aye, well, ye've maybe goat somethin' there

ARTHUR: I'm happy to just toddle along wherever I'm told to be honest

CRESSIDA: (patronising, as if speaking to a dog) Who's a good boy, then?

ARTHUR: (surprised and pleased) Is it me?

FX: Switching from the carriage back to the funeral.

ARTHUR: Yes, she can be a bit of an old battleaxe, Miss Cadwallader. Not always the easiest of travelling companions. But I'm sure you've had your share of run-ins with her.

GODALMING: Oh, I've always been very careful to avoid her notice, sir. She doesn't tend to pay much attention to the retainers.

ARTHUR: Not like Sophie, she's got eyes like a hawk! We were barely off the train at Waverly when...

FX: Train station, hubbub, trains, the passengers are alighting.

BANJO: There yes go, Missus C. Gently does it

CRESSIDA: Thank you, Mr Banjo, what simply splendid manners

BANJO: (full on charm) Onythin' fer you, Missus C

JESSIE: Oh, this is gien' me the boak

SOPHIA: (breath of shock) Quickly! Everybody, act natural - pretend that you haven't noticed!

FX: General noises of confusion from the group, cocking of pistols from CRESSIDA.

JESSIE: Pretend we huvnae noticed whut? Nane ae us know what yer talkin' about!

SOPHIA: Over there, getting off the Flying Scotsman from London. It's none other than William Westcott!

JESSIE: (pretending to recognise him) Oh, aye. William Westcott. So it is. Small world, eh?

SOPHIA: William Westcott the head of the *Quator Coronati* masonic research group? He's on the watch lists!

ARTHUR: (confused) Is he a salesman?

SOPHIA: A salesman? He's a dangerous occultist!

ARTHUR: Oh, wait a moment - I thought those were lists *of* watches, but no, now you say it out loud I see what it means - a list of people to watch out *for*. Yes, that does make more sense. Shame, I was going to get you a Japy for your birthday.

CRESSIDA: I have my suspicions as to who he might be here to see, but I shall keep them to myself for just now. For the moment, we have neither the time nor the right to interfere with his presence here. It is an ill omen, however.

JESSIE: Right, weel, I'll take his Lordship off tae this Regency, you all go see Miss Balfour, and we'll meet up at the pub roon the corner?

CRESSIDA: We certainly shall not! I do *not* drink with dusty coalmen and oily engineers! The very idea! The teashop on Cockburn street will suffice.

JESSIE: Whitever! Fine. Look, here's a noddy comin' noo. 'Moan, Arthur, stick your haun oot.

FX: JESSIE lets out a piercing whistle.

JESSIE: (bellowing) Haw! Big man! Stop pretending ye cannae see us! Aye ye wur! *Aye ye wur!*

FX: Horse and carriage clops over and stops.

JESSIE: Right that's us away then. See yous later.

FX: Horse and carriage accelerates away through streets of Edinburgh.

ARTHUR: Oh my word, look at all the Scots Baronial! It's simply divine. I rather wish we'd got Edinburgh instead of Glasgow, you know.

JESSIE: Edinburgh? This toon's so far up its own arse, ye could roll it aroon' like a wean's hoop

ARTHUR: Doesn't it make your spirits lift to see all this wonderful architecture? Seat of the Scottish Enlightenment and all that?

JESSIE: Enlightenment? In this place? All they're good for is filling yer ears and emptyin' yer poke. Ye'd get mair sense oot o' Banjo than these daft pricks, swannin' about in their natty tartans.

ARTHUR: Well, perhaps it is foolishness, but I choose to enjoy things in life that are beautiful, Miss Gordon. I think aesthetics is one of the very few harmless pleasures this world has to offer.

JESSIE: Harmless? Who'd do ye think paid fer aw this? Emptyin' oot the highlands; folks starved and beaten and sent half a world away frae their families, just so some fat bampot could build a stupit wee tower on top ae his hoose

ARTHUR: Careful, Jessie, you almost sound like one of those terrible Marxists! Where would you be if you went around toppling the establishment?

JESSIE: I don't know, where *would* I be?

ARTHUR: It's our sworn oath, to protect British civilisation, not to change it

JESSIE: Mebbe. But it doesnae mean we cannae wish fer somethin' better.

FX: Carriage stops.

ARTHUR: (clears his throat) Well, uh, here we are, then. Shall we?

FX: Double doors opening, a skirl of bagpipes playing “Scots Wha Hae.”

MORNINGSIDE: Och, welcome, welcome most esteemed members of the Aletheian Society! Welcome to the Regency!

MORNINGSIDE: It grieves me greatly to say the Regent isnae here at the moment, I know she’ll be sorely vexed to hae missed your visit! Where are my manners? I’m the Laird Morningside, I function as the privy counsellor to the Regent

JESSIE: Privy? Ye clean oot the cludgie?

ARTHUR: No, Jessie, it means “private”, he’s like a confidential advisor to a king or queen

MORNINGSIDE: Yes, that’s right – I advise the Regent, as she acts in the stead of our rightful king, Bonnie Prince Charlie

JESSIE: “Bony Prince Charlie” more like – he’s been dead fae hundreds of years!

ARTHUR: Not even a century, actually. Lived to a ripe old age in Italy.

MORNINGSIDE: And while his flesh may have withered, his spirit he is very much alive! The ladies of the Unicorn Club carry forward the sacred Stuart bloodline, waiting for the day that Scotland once more has her rightful monarch.

ARTHUR: Gosh – so you mean to say you’re against old Vicky? I wouldn’t want to get on the wrong side of her! I once saw her tear a guardsman’s shako in two with her bare hands after getting into an argument with Gladstone

MORNINGSIDE: No, sir, we do not recognise the rule of the Teutonic pretenders. Although the Regent has graciously decided to press her claim solely to the throne of Scotland. Your Queen Victoria is welcome to keep England and Ireland for herself.

ARTHUR: I suppose that seems sporting, you’re basically asking for a consolation prize then?

MORNINGSIDE: (frosty) Indeed. Now, I'm afraid we're all *extremely* busy today, what with the Anointing and all. However I'm sure our ladies can keep you entertained, so why don't you have wee natter with them before leaving? I'm sure you'll have had your tea already?

MORNINGSIDE: Here's Mrs Walkinshaw now, she can look after you! **(Loud, as if talking to a deaf person)** You're looking splendid this afternoon, Mrs Walkinshaw! These are just some visitors from Glasgow!

WALKINSHAW: (clearly senile, sounds disgusted) Dirty beasties!

MORNINGSIDE: (loudly) That's right, Mrs Walkinshaw, from Glasgow.

MORNINGSIDE: Mrs Walkinshaw is one of the Seventeen, the inner circle that guides the Unicorn Club. I'll leave you in her capable hands, then! Toodles.

FX: Tapping of dainty feet scurrying away, piping music halts.

WALKINSHAW: Dirty, dirty beasties!

JESSIE: Look at her, she's a hundred if she's a day. We'll no be gettin' any sense oot ae her!

ARTHUR: She's reached a venerable age, certainly. Would you like a cup of tea, Mrs Walkinshaw?

WALKINSHAW: Dirty beasties!

JESSIE: You mind the auld baggage, I'm gonnae hae a poke about

ARTHUR: Are you sure that's a good idea, Jessie? We are supposed to be here to pay our respects, not to rifle through their cupboards.

WALKINSHAW: Dirty, dirty beasties!

JESSIE: Lets see what's behind here...

ARTHUR: Come on, Mrs Walkinshaw, how about a nice sit down?

WALKINSHAW: Dirty...dirty....**(Choking noises)** RAAAGH!

ARTHUR: Help, she's having a convulsion or something!

FX: WALKINSHAW thrashes about, and begins snapping her teeth and roaring.

JESSIE: Goad! She's tryin' tae bite us! Pin her arms!

ARTHUR: I've got her, I've got her, I'll just use some of my *Schwingen* training and...

FX: Noise of a frail old lady's neck being snapped like a twig, the roaring stops.

ARTHUR: Oh. Oh. **(a beat)** Oh dear.

JESSIE: Whit did you do, ye great numpty?!

ARTHUR: She's dead, isn't she?

JESSIE: Aw naw, Arthur, I'm sure she's about tae get up and gie it laldy belting out "Walking in the Zoo" wi her heid on backwards! Of course she's deid! That's what happens when a six foot posh boy chucks a wee granny that looks like she's made of dried twigs and turkey wattle!

ARTHUR: Oh God! What have I done? I've ruined everything!

JESSIE: Calm doon. Naebody's aroond. I say we just make this look like an accident.

ARTHUR: You said it yourself, her head is on backwards! No, I shall have to just admit my guilt and suffer whatever punishment the Unicorn Club chooses to give me. It's no more than I deserve.

JESSIE: Let's start by trying to get her head round the right way, nice and gentle.

FX: Cracking noises as her head turns around, followed by a crunch.

JESSIE: Okay. Noo her heid's come off awthagither. I'm no seein' us talkin' our way oot ae... Huh...

ARTHUR: What?

JESSIE: Nae blood. She's practically dried oot inside.

ARTHUR: I'm not a medical man, but that seems unusual.

JESSIE: I concur wi' yer diagnosis, Dr Roxburgh - somethin's very wrong wi' this Unicorn Club. I say we hoof it oot ae here and try tae find the others.

ARTHUR: If only we had Doctor Cadwallader, he'd know just what to do!

JESSIE: Aw, haud yer wheesht. Whit's fur ye'll no go bye ye. The auld bampot wouldnae be lookin' after anywan' but himsel' onyway.

FX: Back to the AGM, the Droning Voice is continuing in the background.

PROF JONES: What's the matter, Dr Cadwallader, not enjoyin' yourself? Would have thought you'd be loving all this, you bein' the hero of the hour and all

HIERONYMUS: Heroes die, madam. Ergo I ain't one.

PROF JONES: I dunno, Hieronymus, I've always found you quite a figure of a man

HIERONYMUS: What's your game, Jones, come to rake me over the coals again? Some further humiliation to heap on me?

PROF JONES: Nothing like that, Dr Cadwallader, just wanted to give you this

HIERONYMUS: A key? What Pandora-like horror does this portend?

PROF JONES: I suppose that's a matter of perspective, isn't it Doctor? It's my room key and I'll be in there presently, but I shan't be wearing much, if you catch my drift

FX: CADWALLADER snorts out drink.

HIERONYMUS: Bloody Nora! I thought you hated me?

PROF JONES: I do hate you, Dr Cadwallader. I find everythin' about you utterly loathsome.

PROF JONES: (seductively) But luckily for you, I have a thing for bad boys. Five minutes, room eighteen, bring a bottle

HIERONYMUS: (Stammering) Buh...buh... yes, **(too loud)** yes, madam, I believe I can assist you with that particular matter of Society business

HIERONYMUS: By Jove, who'd have thought it. Perhaps the good lord in his infinite beneficence has seen fit to shine his mercy down on this poor sinner for once.

GODALMING: Telegram for you sir, it's your Aunt Cressida – you're to return to Edinburgh immediately!

HIERONYMUS: When's the next train to Edinburgh?

GODALMING: Noon, sir. Eighteen minutes.

HIERONYMUS: Bring the carriage around and have it wait.

FX: CADWALLADER gulps down his drink and bangs the glass on the table.

HIERONYMUS: I can do this! Tally ho!

FX: Boots on cobbled streets.

CRESSIDA: Tch, we're running late now

SOPHIA: We would have got there much sooner if we'd taken a cab instead of walking. And I still don't see why we needed to telegraph for Dr Cadwallader

CRESSIDA: (snorts) Wastrel and ne'er-do-well though he may be, he's a Cadwallader. It's our divinely ordained duty to crush the serpents of Satan beneath our heel. Given his druthers, he'll do little more than slake his wicked desires. It takes a firm hand to propel him towards his destiny - why do you think I asked the Tribune to name him as Chaptermaster in the first place?

SOPHIA: What? *You* were responsible for him being named Chaptermaster?!

CRESSIDA: Well of course - you can hardly have thought it was awarded on merit, child? It was evident that left to his own devices he'd simply pickle himself in sin. A fresh start, under my watchful eye, seemed just the ticket.

SOPHIA: This seems like a gross misuse of the Society's resources

CRESSIDA: That, my dear, is because you never saw the alternative candidates. Ah, here we are at Margaret's house.

SOPHIA: The name here is not Balfour

CRESSIDA: Och, a great mistake it was for her to marry that silly man with his silly lighthouses. She'll always be Margaret *Balfour* to me.

FX: Knocking at a door, click of a revolver's chamber being spun and snapped back into place.

SOPHIA: Why are you going armed? I thought you said this woman was your friend and our ally?

CRESSIDA: Well, truth to tell I found her last communique a little unsettling. That's why I wanted the rest of you here as well.

SOPHIA: Why would you not tell us to prepare ourselves? We could be walking into a trap!

CRESSIDA: Your chapter is woefully lax in its methods of going about things. One should begin each day on the presumption that you will be coming face to face with his Luciferic Majesty, and preparing accordingly.

FX: A moan and a thump on the inside of the door.

SOPHIA: What was that?

CRESSIDA: Check if the door is locked, I shall cover you.

FX: Doorknob turns, door creaks open, zombie noises from the hallway.

CRESSIDA: Margaret? Hello, Margaret? Are ye alright?

FX: MARGARET groans, footsteps walk up the hall, the living room door creaks open.

CRESSIDA: Margaret? Is that you? There you are!... and you're eating Nelson...

FX: Crunching slurping noises.

SOPHIA: She's eating a cat!

CRESSIDA: Well I can assure you, Lady Roxburgh, this is not usual behaviour for Margaret. I can only assume she's taken leave of her senses, she'd never harm Nelson ordinarily - she dotes on the little brute

FX: Wet splat of cat remains hitting the carpet, hungry growl from MARGARET.

SOPHIA: She looks like she might still be hungry! I'm getting the poker

CRESSIDA: Oh, I'm sure there's no need for that. I think I see the light of recognition in her eyes. The happy memories of younger days, hands of "Pope Joan", trips to the orchard on the old wagon, sharing biscuits by candlelight -...

FX: Slobbering growl from MARGARET, trudging footstep.

CRESSIDA: No, I was wrong! Time for you to have your biscuit, Margaret...

FX: Slobbering roar, followed by two pistol shots, body collapses, then starts heaving itself up again.

SOPHIA: How can she still be moving? You shot her!

CRESSIDA: Don't just stand there! Bludgeon her, girl!

FX: Poker repeatedly striking skull with a wet crunch, sounds of exertion from SOPHIA, growls from MARGARET fade with each strike.

CRESSIDA: I believe that's enough, child

SOPHIA: What in the hell *was* that?

CRESSIDA: (more quietly) Not Margaret, anyway. At least not any more.

FX: JESSIE and ARTHUR come pelting in the front door, out of breath from running.

JESSIE: Watch oot! There's somethin' wrang wi them!

ARTHUR: Sophie! Are you alright?

SOPHIA: I am here, Arthur. We are a little shaken, but unharmed

JESSIE: Jings! You goat one as well?

ARTHUR: Oh my God, you killed one too? Darling, do you know what this means? (**beat, then very excited**) I'm off the hook for killing Mrs Walkinshaw!

CRESSIDA: We shall have to pray that my nephew makes haste

FX: Train station full of angry Victorian muttering.

HIERONYMUS: God Blind Me! What's all this nonsense? What are all these esclops doing?

GODALMING: I don't know, sir, but perhaps it would be best to avoid the constabulary, on account of your lack of trousers?

HIERONYMUS: Poppycock! No Englishman would let their eyes stray south of the waistband when held with a firm gaze and an unwavering voice! I'm going to find out what's going on

GODALMING: Very good, sir. I'll attend to the tickets.

HIERONYMUS: I say, you there, what's going on here? What's all the hullabaloo?

GAWKER: Ey up! Somebody's only gone and made off wi' 't train!

HIERONYMUS: Stolen a train? In England!

GAWKER: Ay, an even strangerer than thut, it were the train what pulled the dead boxes! All them poor-'ouse dead bound fer the 'natomists tables in Cambridge instead of thur final reward. Maybe 'twas God 'imself wot pulled t'train up to 'Eaven?

HIERONYMUS: Maybe so, God does seem terribly fond of corpses in my experience.

GAWKER: Ere! You do realise yer knackers is swinging about?

HIERONYMUS: Nonsense, ma'am! This is England, Gentlemen don't go about half naked!

GAWKER: Ah...No, I reckon not

HIERONYMUS: Carry on then, old bean

GODALMING: I got the tickets sir. Luckily it wasn't our train that was taken, but it's knocked the schedule out. Apparently it's only the latest of several corpse trains to go missing.

HIERONYMUS: I feel the chill wind of destiny across my nethers, Godalming. I don't like this one little bit. Who steals trains full of corpses?

END CREDITS PLAY

FX: A horse softly whinnies, she gets several firm pats on the neck.

GILLESPIE: Aye, there y'are, who's a guid girl? Now, let's try it again. I say "*the incident!*" and then you neigh. Got it?

FX: Horse neighs.

GILLESPIE: Naw, you wait until I say the words, then you neigh. Let's try it again, *the* -

FX: Horse cuts him off, neighing before he's finished.

GILLESPIE: Too soon! You've got tae let me finish. Go again. *The incident!*

FX: Horse munches hay.

GILLESPIE: That's yer cue ya daft cuddy!

FX: Horse whinnies and clops its hoof.

GILLESPIE: Shut it you! Whit dae you know about showmanship, eh? Nothin', cause yer just a stupid nag!

FX: Horse whinnies and clops its hoof twice.

GILLESPIE: Oh, yer always bringin' up yer time in the circus. Lordin' it ower me just because you've got stage experience an' I huvnae. Well I'm done wi ye! I'm no workin' wi a prima donna like you any more. Find yersel another partner, y'ungrateful ungulate!

FX: Door slams shut, GILLESPIE stomps off swearing.

**EPISODE 2:
MEDIA VITA**

Episode Cast:

NARRATOR

ARTHUR

GODALMING

CADWALLADER

CRESSIDA

SOPHIA

JESSIE

BANJO

ROBBIE

ISABEL THORNE

A TRAVELLER

STATION GUARD

ANGRY MOB MEMBER

MALE MEDICAL STUDENT 1

MALE MEDICAL STUDENT 2

GILLESPIE

NARRATOR: Shadow Factories Presents- Tales from the Aletheian Society: Season Two, Chapter Two - Media Vita!

THEME MUSIC PLAYS

FX: The funeral soundscape, a grandfather clock bongs once.

ARTHUR (yawning): How much longer is this dreadful affair going to go on, Godalming? I'm getting stiff as a board with all this sitting around in the draught.

GODALMING: I believe the Funerary Procession won't be setting off for the Necropolis 'till four o' clock, sir.

ARTHUR (wearily): I suppose we're expected at that as well, are we?

GODALMING: I'm afraid so, sir.

ARTHUR: Worse luck. Awful things, funerals, everyone standing round looking maudlin. Sophie's been crying on and off all morning. **(suddenly distracted)** At least the poor soul's staying put this time. After what happened with Mrs Balfour, death doesn't seem quite so *permanent* as it used to...

FX: MRS BALFOUR's house.

ARTHUR: So - let me get this straight - Miss Cadwallader was friends with a flesh hungry undead who tried to eat you while we were off visiting the Unicorn Club? Sounds like a bit of a funny basis for a friendship to me.

CRESSIDA: She was not always so, Lord Arthur. A terrible transformation has been wrought upon her by enemies unknown, and I shall make it my business to find out by whom.

ARTHUR: But are you *sure* she's properly dead this time?

SOPHIA (resignedly): Yes, Arthur. I think the brains on the poker mean we can be relatively confident of that.

JESSIE: Looks like she took a right good killin though.

ARTHUR: Well, I think you all deserve something to steady your nerves after what you've been through. There's Mrs Balfour's sherry decanter. Let me pour out a few glasses.

BANJO: Aye, ahm shaken tae the marrow. Make mine a double.

FX: A ruler hitting flesh. ARTHUR yelps.

CRESSIDA (preaching): "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess!" Ephesians, five eighteen!

ARTHUR: But surely- "wine gladdens the heart of man". That's in Psalms. Or is it Proverbs? I always get those two confused.

SOPHIA (hastily): Miss Cadwallader is quite right, Arthur. It is far too early in the day for alcohol. I shall have a glass of milk instead.

CRESSIDA: Milk is fattening and bad for the complexion.

SOPHIA: Then I shall have (**a resigned pause**) water.

CRESSIDA: An excellent choice.

FX: A note is scribbled, paper is torn from a notepad, coins jingle in a bag.

CRESSIDA (appallingly jocular): Now, Mr Banjo, my good laddie, take this shopping list, and this purse to Kennington and Jenners. Tell them to deliver by close of business today. If you're quick, there'll be a wee something for you on your return.

BANJO: Right ye are, Missus C. Ah'l be doon there quicker'n a hoor's drawers.

CRESSIDA (tittering) : Och , you cheeky wee rascal.

FX: BANJO leaves the room, door opens and slams loudly. Then, soot clattering down a chimney.

SOPHIA (startled): Wait - did you hear that?

CRESSIDA: Something - or someone - is in the chimney!

ARTHUR: Do you suppose it's the... chimney sweep? I mean, who else would be up there?

JESSIE: Gies the poker. (**repulsed**) Naaw, no the wet end... Right you, oot ye come.

FX: A poker rattles up the chimney, someone is jabbed with it. ROBBIE squeals, then thuds down the chimney into the fireplace.

FX: ROBBIE groans.

ROBBIE: Please - don't hurt me again...

JESSIE: Ah huvnae hurt ye at aw yet. But that could change, so now's a good time tae dae as yer telt.

SOPHIE: Jessie! Look at him, he's terrified! He's little more than a boy!

CRESSIDA: Now, listen to me, young man. What is your name? Are you a relative of the lady of the house?

ROBBIE (scared and earnest): I'm her son, Robert. Who are you people?

CRESSIDA: I am Miss Cressida Cadwallader, a lifelong friend to your mother. These are... **(a pause, then continuing disdainfully)** my associates. But *you* can't be wee Robbie - *he* must still be in short trousers.

ROBBIE: I really am, Miss Cadwallader.

CRESSIDA (proud and maternal): Well, you must have eaten up all your mince and tatties like a good boy. Look how you've grown!

ROBBIE (hesitant, noticing the corpse): Is that... is that my mother?

SOPHIE: I am so sorry, Robert. I know this must be terribly distressing for you, but I assure you, we had no choice but to end your mother's suffering.

ROBBIE: She's dead? **(with tremendous relief)** Thank *Christ*.

ARTHUR: Gosh. Expecting a big inheritance, are you?

ROBBIE (flustered): No - no, I love my mother dearly - but - something *happened* to her. She went out two nights ago, but what came back... that *thing* tried to eat me. I've been hiding up the chimney all night listening to it moan and scratch at the walls. It may be wearing her face, but that monster is *not* my mother.

SOPHIE: Where did she go, prior to her transformation?

ROBBIE: Just to her ladies' club, as usual.

CRESSIDA: The *Unicorn* Club, I thought as much. **(a pause)** Robbie, where does your mother keep the key to her bureau? I wish to inspect her paperwork.

ROBBIE: On a chain around her neck. For security, you understand, she's very private about that kind of thing.

JESSIE: Aw naw, don't you all look at me, ahm no puttin ma haun in that...eugh...

FX: A wet squelch, a jingle of a key on a chain, then a lock being turned.

CRESSIDA (crisply): Thank you. (**thoughtful**) Now, Maggie, let's see what secrets you've been keeping from me...

SOPHIA: May I help? Hmm. Invoices, receipts - several ledgers.

FX: Riffing papers.

CRESSIDA: The accounts of the Unicorn Club, unless I am very much mistaken.

ROBBIE (astonished): Mother was the treasurer of her ladies' club. I didn't realise it went much beyond bake sales and raffles. But there are thousands of pounds in these accounts!

CRESSIDA: Give these ledgers your full attention, Lady Roxburgh. Now, what have we here... Margaret's diary...

FX: Turning pages of a notebook as she talks.

CRESSIDA: Committee meeting, AGM, EGM... (**a sniff of surprise**) bake sale... Ah, now, what could this be?

ARTHUR: Ooo, what have you found?

CRESSIDA: There is a solitary entry in Margaret's diary for the date of the evening before her transformation. It reads: E C M nine two five, two three five five.

ARTHUR: Ooh, could it be a code? Sophie's frightfully good at them - remember that time a secret coded document turned up at the house, and you solved it in no time flat?

SOPHIA: That was a letter from my uncle Heinrich in Anatolia. It was not in code, it was written in German.

ARTHUR: Well it certainly foxed me!

SOPHIA (frustrated sigh): Perhaps they are the initials of someone she was to be meeting. The numbers might represent a sum of money, perhaps, or an order number?

CRESSIDA: Then you must search through the accounts and see if you can find a corresponding entry. (an imperious pause) Go on then, girlie, hop to it.

SOPHIA: No - but - I mean to say, Miss Cadwallader, that will take hours of tedious scrutiny!

CRESSIDA: Indeed, and it is a task ideally suited to a well-bred young lady. It is not appropriate for you to go gallivanting off chasing wild geese, as I understand you hitherto have been wont to do.

SOPHIA: But I... (takes a deep breath) Yes, you are correct of course, Miss Cadwallader. Arthur, please carry these heavy books to the table for me. I shall apply myself diligently to their study.

CRESSIDA: Capital. I shall go to the train station to establish the time of my nephew's arrival, and to meet him on the platform. Miss Gordon, you will accompany me. You are far too corrupting an influence to leave in the company of these impressionable young people.

JESSIE: Enjoy yersels wi yer books. Looks like I'm aff fur a walk - whit wis it again, Sophie? - wi an *honest female colleague*.

FX: Door opens and closes.

ARTHUR: You do put up with a lot from that rotten old bully, Sophie. My old housemaster used to say it was every brave boy's duty to stand up to bullies. Of course, he used to give us five of the belt straight after, so it *was* a bit of a mixed message.

SOPHIE: Arthur! Miss Cadwallader is not a bully! She is a perfect example of a respectable British gentlewoman. I wish to learn all that I can from her.

ARTHUR (meekly) : I think you hurt Jessie's feelings with that thing you said on the train.

SOPHIE (unconsciously sounding quite like Cressida): Nonsense. She's far too common to have those kind of emotions. Now, let us begin...

FX: A pen scratching, pages of a ledger are turned for a few moments, then silence. SOPHIA sighs.

SOPHIA: It's no use, Arthur. This is beyond tedious. And there are so many other fruitful ways we might instead be making use of our time.

ARTHUR (hopefully): I suppose we could pop upstairs, darling - if you're keen!

SOPHIA (oblivious): I have a friend presently studying in the anatomy department of Edinburgh University, with whom I have been corresponding. If we were to make our way there, we might be able to make use of the dissecting room to find out more about the circumstances of Miss Balfour's death.

ARTHUR: I thought you said you shot her then bludgeoned her to death with a poker...

SOPHIA: Not *that* death, Arthur, the previous one... Never mind. If we go quickly, we can be back by the time Miss Cadwallader returns. Who knows, she might even be impressed by my initiative and ingenuity!

Arthur (unconvinced) : If you say so, dearest.

SOPHIA (firmly): I do. Come along now, there's a good boy.

FX: Footsteps, door opens and closes.

ROBBIE (with nervous hysteria) : Looks like it's just you and me again, mother. I really should do something about this mess...

FX: A busy street, BANJO walking.

BANJO (gleeful): Awright then! Let's see whit we've goat here..."

FX: Coins jingle into his hand.

BANJO: Aw ya belter, that's ma aiffternoon sortit! Well, ah won't be needin this!

FX: A piece of paper being crunched up and thrown away.

FX: The sounds of the street and BANJO's voice slowly become muffled.

BANJO: Eh... where did aw that fog come fae? It's a right pea souper. (**whiny**) How am ah gonnae find the pub in this?

FX: Distant ethereal music, laughter, bottles clinking - echoey, faint, clearly supernatural.

BANJO: Aw, they've pit oot a wee red light! Hauld on, ahm comin!

FX: The spectral music and his footsteps fade into the fog.

FX: A busy railway concourse. A steam train leaving the station, distant shout of "All Aboard".

CRESSIDA: According to the station master, the Leeds train will arrive just after seven.

JESSIE: Could we no jist have bought a paper fur the railway times an saved wursels the walk?

CRESSIDA: A penny saved is a penny earned, Miss Gordon. Now, we shall repair to our headquarters, and return in good time to meet my nephew on the platform.

JESSIE: Aye, a widnae want to keep the auld coot waiting, he'd huv an apoplexy if he hud tae walk hame on his ain. Dae ye think they'll pit oot a pile a' sandbags in case the train disnae stop in time wi a' the extra weight o him an his ge-gaws?

CRESSIE (primly): In my day any illuminate who spoke of her superior in such terms would have been flogged raw. My nephew has clearly been remiss in enforcing discipline in his chapter. I shall educate him as to his error on his return.

JESSIE: Ah cannae wait tae see that.

CRESSIDA: This chapter reeks of informality almost as much as its chapterhouse reeks of the deep fat fryer. (**A sudden change of subject**) Now we are alone I must ask - has my nephew instructed you to join with him in the debauched act of physical congress?

JESSIE (nonplussed): Whut?

CRESSIDA (with satisfaction, drawing the word out): Fornication, Miss Gordon.

JESSIE (indignant): Eh?

CRESSIDA: My nephew has never possessed the moral fortitude to resist gratifying his abominable and unchristian appetites. I should hardly be surprised if he had resorted to *your* ilk to satisfy the carnal ones. However I assume from your vacant expression he has not.

JESSIE (slowly and incredulously, after a stunned silence): Naw. He husnae. Ye can tell on account o the fact his facial features are still in the usual configuration.

CRESSIE: Very well. Should he order you to do so in future, I expect you to inform me immediately you have finished.

JESSIE (absolutely outraged): Inform ye after ah've finished whit? Ahm no goin tae bed wi' that slobberin' auld walrus! Good taste an decency aside, they dinnae make a bed big enough fur two folk an his puffed up heid!

FX: An awkward silence. Slow footsteps.

JESSIE: Whit were they numbers in Miss Balfour's wee book again?

CRESSIDA: ECM -nine-two-five. Then on the next line, two three five five. Why do you ask?

JESSIE: Look at they big letters stencilled on the wall there.

CRESSIDA (reading): Yes- ECM-9. **(slow realisation)** It must be the Engineer's Line Reference for Waverley Station!

JESSIE: Wis she meeting someone aff a train then? Are the ither numbers a date mebbe, an arrival time?

CRESSIDA (thoughtfully): Twenty three - fifty five - it might well be a time on the 24 hour clock. First used by The Ancient Egyptians. **(disapprovingly)** It would be *just* like the Unicorn Club to adopt such an affectation.

JESSIE: The middle bit's... a platform number then?

CRESSIDA (sniffily): Waverly only has twenty-one platforms, as well you should know.

JESSIE: Well pardon me fae no bringin ma trainspotters handbook.

CRESSIDA: A train arriving at five minutes to midnight - let me check. Excuse me-

FX: A paper rustles sharply as cressida helps herself to a traveller's timetable.

TRAVELLER: Madam, that is *my* timetable!

CRESSIDA: And I shall require it for but a mere moment.

TRAVELLER (sputtering in outrage): Return it or I shall have the police on you!

JESSIE (apologetically): Sorry pal, she's no right in the heid. Gets violent if ye try onythin, best jist tae let her get oan wi it.

FX: Paper being unfolded.

CRESSIDA: As I thought. Even in this uncivilised modern times no passenger trains arrive in Waverly so unsociably close to midnight.

TRAVELLER (frustrated): May I have my timetable back?

JESSIE (soothingly): Gie it tae the nice (wum)man.

FX: Paper rustling sharply as CRESSIDA returns it. Footsteps as she briskly walks off.

JESSIE: Wait up, Granny, we'll go an get ye a cuppa tea an a wee sit doon.

TRAVELLER: That woman should be in an institution.

JESSIE: No argument here pal.

FX: Cressida and Jessie walk along the railway concourse.

CRESSIDA: Very funny, Miss Gordon. I suppose you think yourself quite the wit after that little display.

JESSIE: You were the wan who said we were keepin a low profile. Did ye *want* the polis involved?

CRESSIDA: If the constabulary turn up for either of us, it's hardly likely to be for ME, you insubordinate guttersnipe. **(pause)** Ah, excellent, a doorway marked "Railway Staff Only". The investigation leads us this way, Miss Gordon, and be as quiet as you can. Now is not the time to draw any undue attention to ourselves.

FX: Footsteps fading as they go down a flight of stairs.

FX: Outside the anatomy department. There appears to be a riot in progress.

ANGRY MOB MEMBER (shouting over the rabble): You're nothing but graverobbers and butchers! You'll hang like William Burke!

ARTHUR: This is all a bit rowdy. Should we come back later?

ANGRY MOB MEMBER: Give us back our deid!

SOPHIA: Have courage, dear heart. I think I see a side entrance through which we can avoid the mob. Follow me.

FX: Footsteps. A door creaks open and they step into an echoey dissecting room. Two male medical students are bickering over a dissection specimen in the background while SOPHIA and ARTHUR talk.

MALE MEDICAL STUDENT 1: It's the twelfth cranial nerve, look.

MALE MEDICAL STUDENT 2: No - look, I know the preservation's so bad it's hard to tell, but I'm sure it's the hypoglossal.

MALE MEDICAL STUDENT 1: The twelfth *is* the hypoglossal- remember the mnemonic- oh oh oh to touch and feel, virginal girls' vaginas and hymens

FX: They continue to bicker softly in the background.

ARTHUR: Gosh, look at those chaps over there, they look hard at work. Is one of them your medical student friend?

FX: Footsteps approach.

ISABEL: Is it... Lady Roxburgh? So good to finally meet you - I'm so glad you found the time to visit.

SOPHIA (warmly): Dear Isabel. You look *just* like your photograph.

ARTHUR: But - you said your friend was a medical student. This is a *woman!*

ISABEL: Isabel Thorne, Lord Arthur. A pleasure to meet you. Sophia's told me a great deal about you in her letters. Don't mind those two over there, they're like a pair of vultures fighting over a dead camel.

ARTHUR (whispered): Is it safe to shake hands, do you think, dear? Or has she had them... in people?

ISABEL (laughs): Don't worry, Lord Arthur. I'm a great proponent of Semmelweis's theory, I wash in chlorinated water after every examination. Much to the scorn of my fellow students, I hasten to add, but I've seen enough women die of childbed fever spread by careless surgeons to know it's worth doing. Not that I've had my hands on a cadaver for weeks - despite the cholera they're simply not to be had.

SOPHIA: But the mob outside are calling you bodysnatchers and graverobbers - why would they do that if things are as you say?

ISABEL: You have to remember that most of that mob were fed stories of Burke and Hare with their mother's milk. "Be back before dark or you'll end up on Dr Knox's table..." A few of the old-timers might remember those days themselves. So when bodies start going missing of course it's the anatomists they blame.

SOPHIA: Bodies are going missing in Edinburgh?

ISABEL: Apparently so. The gate to Grayfriars was broken open the other night - they say that graves have been opened and the bodies spirited away. Of course, now people are digging up their nearest and dearest to check whether or not they're still there, it's impossible to tell which tombs have been opened by resurrectionists and which by loving relatives.

SOPHIA: But if they are not being sold for dissection, where then are they going?

ISABEL: Your guess is as good as mine, I'm afraid. All I know is they're not coming here.

SOPHIA: Then perhaps it is time for me to confess that this is not purely a social call. We are in Edinburgh on important business, and have need of your assistance.

ISABEL: Well, I have plenty of time on my hands. What can I do for you?

SOPHIA (lowering her voice): A... friend of ours has perished in what we shall call "unusual circumstances" and I should be grateful for your expertise in examining the body.

ISABEL (sucks air through her teeth): What about the police? What do they think about all this?

SOPHIA: For reasons which I am not at liberty to disclose, the police must not be informed. We must proceed in the utmost secrecy.

ISABEL: All very cloak-and-dagger. **(a thoughtful pause)** All right. If we can find some way of getting it down here - *discreetly*- I'll have a look, and if anyone asks I'll deny all knowledge of how it got there. It's worth a brush with the law to get my hands dirty again.

ARTHUR: Just as a heads-up, I wouldn't say she's in... perfect condition. I mean, more "spares or repairs" than "one careful owner", if you get what I mean.

ISABEL: At this moment in time I'd take a side of beef if it gave me something to cut. I'm absolutely desperate.

ARTHUR: Don't you worry that all this... gory business will spoil your marriage prospects, Miss Thorne?

ISABEL: Not in the slightest, for the simple reason that it's *Mrs* Thorne already.

ARTHUR (aghast): You're married? But what will you do if your husband finds out?

ISABEL: As it happens he's very supportive of the whole thing. So are the children- they keep bickering over who's going to go into practice with me once they're old enough to qualify.

ARTHUR (horrified): You're abandoning your children - for... this?

ISABEL: They're hardly still at the breast, Lord Arthur. They have their education, and I have mine.

SOPHIA: I do have... some concerns that this is an... unwomanly pursuit.

ISABEL (astonished): You do? But you seemed so keen on it in your letters. **(a sigh)**. Ah well. I suppose I shouldn't be surprised. All of Edinburgh seems to be outraged at the thought of a woman practicing medicine at present. At this rate I'll be astonished if we get to graduate at all.

ARTHUR (flustered): But even if you *do*, what man would ever go to a... woman physician? Worse still a woman *surgeon* - go at the wrong time of the month and heaven *knows* what she might cut off.

ISABEL: I've never understood why men are willing to have women bring them into the world, but can't trust them to keep them in it.

ARTHUR (mansplaining helpfully): Ooh, yes, midwifery you mean? Now that's a respectable profession for a woman. That would be *much* easier, wouldn't it? Have you considered that instead?

ISABEL (sighs heavily): Once or twice, yes.

ARTHUR (sotto voce): Oh - on the subject of midwives - how long after you're married does it usually take to have babies? Only it's been a couple of years, you see, and I rather expected the stork to be along with a little bundle by now.

ISABEL: Sophia, have you had the talk with him about where babies come from?

ARTHUR (laughs nervously): Oh yes, I know it's not *really* the stork...**(sotto voce)** ...though it did come as a bit of a shock when I found out.

ISABEL: Well then, remember that midwives and obstetricians can help the baby out, but you still have to put it in there in the first place. Assuming you're both in good health and you're having plenty of intercourse it should happen before long.

ARTHUR: Oh that shouldn't be a problem then, we talk all the time.

SOPHIA: Arthur, she means the *other* kind of intercourse.

ISABEL: And if nothing happens, see a doctor to check everything's in good working order. Which is yet *further* proof of the need for female physicians - Sophia, wouldn't you prefer your doctor to be a woman when it comes to rummaging about in your bloomers?

SOPHIA (stiffly): I prefer to avoid any rummaging in that area entirely.

ISABEL: And there's your diagnosis. At any rate, you have a corpse that's not getting any fresher in this heat. Come with me and we'll arrange for it to be brought down to the laboratory to see what I can find out for you. And keep it quiet - otherwise the fight for a spot at the dissecting table is going to make that riot outside look like a nursery school outing.

FX: A heavy metal door creaks open, then closes. Outside noises, distant sounds of trains shunting. Footsteps as CRESSIDA talks.

CRESSIDA: The railway yard. If dear Maggie was not here to meet a *passenger* locomotive, then perhaps it was a *freight* train. Observe the railway sidings and the sheds - all of them neatly numbered for ease of reference. And here we have it - siding number twenty five, and a railway carriage on it.

FX: A heavy padlock jingles.

JESSIE: It's locked. Dae ye smell that though?

CRESSIDA (sniffs): I do. Most unpleasant. Reminiscent of the charnel house.

FX: Muffled sound of flies buzzing.

CRESSIDA: Go ahead, Miss Gordon. If you do insist on carrying those lockpicks incompletely concealed in the cuff of your coat, you may as well put them to use.

JESSIE: No unless ye say please

CRESSIDA: As you prefer.

FX: A lock being picked.

JESSIE (grudgingly appreciative): Nice wan. Whit've we goat in here then?

FX: A sliding industrial door is pushed open. The buzzing gets louder.

JESSIE: Aw, jeez-o, that smell'd gie ye the boak.

CRESSIDA: It's... empty. The cargo's been removed, but whatever it was must have been wrapped in all that stained cloth.

JESSIE: That's whit the stink's comin' aff.

FX: Cloth rustling across a floor.

CRESSIDA: Coarse linen, sewn roughly into long bags. All of them have been crudely ripped open.

JESSIE: They look awfae like durty windin' sheets.

CRESSIDA: Look down. On the floor. Those marks.

JESSIE: Footprints. Bare ones. Pointin towards the door. **(sounding rattled)** Aw right, ahv already hud ma ration o the walkin' deid fur wan day, ahm good tae go noo.

FX: The door is pulled shut. JESSIE breathes a sigh of relief.

JESSIE: Ah don't know whit's worse - findin' a freight car full o' zombies, or findin' it empty an' no knowin' where they've taken themselves aff tae.

GUARD (distantly): Hey! You two! Stop there!

FX: Guard starts to run towards them.

JESSIE: Baws. We've been spotted.

CRESSIDA: You go ahead. I'll remain to deal with the guard.

JESSIE: Whit is it wi you Cadwalladers and this noble self sacrifice thing? But aw right then, if ye insist.

FX: JESSIE's running footsteps. The guard approaches CRESSIDA, out of breath.

GUARD (angry): What are you doing here? The yard's out of bounds to the public!

CRESSIDA (sounding breathless): That *woman* stole my purse! I've followed her all this way - thank heavens you're here to help!

JESSIE (distantly and indignantly): That sleekit auld besom.

GUARD: You wait here, missus, I'll catch her for you. Hey! You! Stop thief!

FX: The guard chases after JESSIE.

CRESSIDA (smugly): Now, time for a 'nice cup of tea and a sit down.' "*Granny*", indeed.

FX: CRESSIDA's footsteps fading away as she heads in the opposite direction.

FX: Steam train pulling into the station while the station clock bongs seven, then doors opening, CADWALLADER and GODALMING disembarking.

CADWALLADER: Well, here we are at last, Godalming. Only in the abominable jock-lands could this city be mistaken for the "Athens of the North", but compared to Glasgow it's positively civilised.

GODALMING: Indeed, sir.

CADWALLADER: Mind you, even the jungles of Bhutan compare favourably to that wretched industrial cess-pit.

FX: Glass bottles clink loudly.

CADWALLADER: Careful with those bags, old man! If those bottles get smashed there'll be no chance of sneaking more in past Aunt Cressie's lidless gaze.

GODALMING: Very good, sir.

CADWALLADER: In fact, speaking of the Gorgon, where is she?

FX: A pocket watch opens and closes.

CADWALLADER: By Jove, she's late! That must be the first time in her life. I wonder what's happened, maybe she's dead. Well then, quickly, old man, there's bound to be a watering hole in the station.

GODALMING: I believe there is, sir, but-

CADWALLADER (ignoring him): We can sink a few pots of the local brew while we wait. I fancy something rich and bitter - like the people of Edinburgh.

FX: They hurry along the platform.

GODALMING (trying to get his attention): Sir...

CADWALLADER (still ignoring him completely): All we have to do is say we went looking for her when she wasn't there to meet us off the train. Might as well take our time over it - we can say we've been searching for her all this time.

GODALMING (still trying, still failing): Sir...

CADWALLADER: The dreadful old termagant will never know the truth-

CRESSIDA (bellowing): HIERONYMUS!

END CREDITS PLAY

FX: Chinking and clunking of bottles, GILLESPIE shuffling around.

GILLESPIE (muttering): Crabbies... blended... Twelve year old... oot ye go...

FX: Glugging of bottle of liquid pouring down a drain.

GILLESPIE: James Eadie Distilleries... single malt... eighteen year old, doon the drain wi you.

FX: More pouring.

GILLESPIE: Whits this yin? Swiss absinthe... must belong to her ladyship. Hmmm. Ah wiidnae want to get on her bad side... Heh heh heh... Ah'll plank the empty bottle in auld fustilugs' room, he'll get the blame fae drinkin' it. **(cackles again)**

FX: More pouring, rustling of paper.

GILLESPIE: Whit's this? A letter? Addressed tae me? Could it be... a last missive fae Dr Pritchard, lord rest his soul, tae his beloved servant Gillespie?

FX: He rips the envelope open.

GILLESPIE (reading with solemn reverence): Tae ma good and faithful servant Gillespie, Castellan o' Hunter Hoose, if you are reading this letter, then ah... wait a minute, this isnae fae Dr *Pritchard*...

HIERONYMUS (smugly): ... if you are reading this letter, then I am delighted to inform you that you have been wasting your time pouring out the cold tea I placed in these whisky bottles prior to my departure. I have taken the majority of their former contents away with me, but knowing how much perverse satisfaction disposing of my alcohol brings to your otherwise joyless existence, I have secreted an unspecified quantity of the remainder in the various nooks and crannies of Hunter House for you to ferret out. I hope the search drives you to distraction, you sanctimonious old vulture. I beg to remain, your unwilling employer....

GILLESPIE (concluding darkly): ..Doctor Hieronymus Cadwallader. So *that's* the game ye want tae play, is it, doctor? Awright then. Naebody knows Hunter Hoose like ah do, ah'll find yer sinful liquor... and when ah do, ye'll no like whit ah top it up wi'. **(calling downstairs)** Mrs Gillespie! Pit the kettle oan, an warm up the *muckle* teapot! Ah've a powerful need fur...hydration.

**EPISODE 3:
A FINE AND PRIVATE PLACE**

Episode Cast:

NARRATOR

ARTHUR

GODALMING

CADWALLADER

CRESSIDA

SOPHIA

JESSIE

BANJO

ROBBIE

MORTIMER

FIRST WITCH (AGGIE)

SECOND WITCH (NESSIE)

THIRD WITCH (SENGA)

WATCHMAN

GILLESPIE

DR HUNTER

NASTY WEE URCHIN

NARRATOR: Shadow Factories Presents: Tales from the Aletheian Society! Book 2 Chapter 3: A Fine and Private Place

THEME MUSIC PLAYS

FX: Funeral soundscape. soft conversation, people moving, teacups clinking.

GILLESPIE (announcing): Those guests wishin' tae say their farewells shid make their way in an orderly fashion tae the coffin prior tae the last journey o' the deceased.

ARTHUR: I suppose I should go and say goodbye, if it's my last chance. **(a pause)** Do you believe in the afterlife, Godalming?

GODALMING: I suppose I do, sir. Seems likely as not, considerin all the things we've seen workin' for the society. Unquiet spirits and suchlike.

ARTHUR: Oh, those, yes. No, I meant - you know, a Heaven full of angels and clouds and harps on the one hand, and Hell filled with demons and brimstone and accordions on the other.

GODALMING: Wouldn't care to comment, sir. All seems a bit neat an' tidy to me. Hard to separate folks into saints and sinners while they're alive, don't see why it should get any easier once they're dead.

ARTHUR: I'm a C of E man, me. I simply adore all the ceremony - the eucharist, the liturgies, the music, the lovely clothes - though come to think of it actually believing in God might be optional. My old vicar, he'd have had something comforting to say - God in his infinite forgiveness welcoming our friend over there to eternal bliss. But then, Gillespie's ghastly Presbyterian chap would say he was burning in hell forever with all the other sinners. **(a resigned sigh)** I don't know, Godalming. All I know is that wherever he is, he's not in that box. **(a pause)** Anyway. Where was I?

GODALMING: I believe Dr Cadwallader had just arrived in Edinburgh, sir.

ARTHUR: Oh yes, Dr Cadwallader had just arrived in Edinburgh, and it was so *nice* to have everyone back together again.

FX: A huge row is occurring in MRS BALFOUR's house.

JESSIE: The auld besom set the polis oan me! I could be in the jail right noo if ah hudnae gone like the clappers.

CRESSIDA: Given your proven aptitude for escaping justice, I hardly think that likely!

JESSIE: Oh aye, so Banjo's a charmin wee scamp but ahm a hardened recidivist, is that how it goes? You're no right in the heid!

SOPHIA: Jessie! How dare you speak to Miss Cadwallader with such disrespect!

JESSIE: Get yer heid oot yer arse, Sophie, yer never gonnae be teacher's pet no matter how much ye sook up tae her

CRESSIDA: And as for *you*, Lady Roxburgh, your have not accounted for your disgraceful disobedience in gallivanting off to socialise with fallen women when you should have been attending to your duty here!

SOPHIA: Gallivanting? I was doing nothing of the sort!

CRESSIDA: I hold myself responsible - your failures are all too predictable given your total lack of self discipline.

CADWALLADER (soothingly) : Now, now, ladies, calm yourselves, there's no need for such hysteria.

FX: A long pause. Then they start again.

SOPHIA: Hysteria? How *dare* you, Chaptermaster?

JESSIE: Who died an pit you in charge?

CRESSIDA: I consider the disgraceful state of this chapter's discipline to be entirely your responsibility, Hieronymus.

CADWALLADER: Me? I'd like to see *you* do any better!

ARTHUR (narrating happily): Yes, everything was back to normal again. We decided to rest for the night, and plan the next steps of our investigation in the morning.

CADWALLADER: I see in my all-too-brief absence you've managed to embroil yourselves in some murky occult conspiracy. I can't leave you alone for a moment

JESSIE: Is that no whit were paid tae do - uncoverin' murky occult conspiracies?

CADWALLADER: It's not piece-work, Miss Gordon - you're not paid per cultist uncovered. Why you lot aren't content to sit tight and drink your pay like respectable people is beyond me .

ARTHUR: I didn't know we got paid!

CRESSIDA: Were it not for the actions of the Aletheian Society, the world would long since have succumbed to the wiles of the enemy and been dragged shrieking into the pit!

CADWALLADER (muttered): Suddenly that doesn't sound quite so bad.

SOPHIA: Terrible deeds are occurring not fifty miles from Hunter House. All altruism aside, we must do our duty for self-preservation alone.

CADWALLADER (grudgingly): A more compelling argument, I grant you, Lady Roxburgh. **(after a sigh):** Very well. If you're all so keen to throw yourselves headlong into mortal peril, don't let me be the one to stop you. To summarise, in a city in the throes of a cholera epidemic, we have an unexpected dearth of corpses. The anatomists' tables are empty, tombs lie open, even the worms go hungry. And yet, at least one of the missing Dead Trains has found its way to Edinburgh, the bodies within moved to a place unknown. **(musing)** Who could want such a quantity of cadavers, and for what end?

ARTHUR: Vultures!

SOFIA: Vultures, Arthur?

ARTHUR: They eat bodies, don't they? **(faltering a bit)** I thought there might be a really *big* one.

CADWALLADER: An excellent suggestion, Arthur. However, quite aside from the fact that no one has as yet seen a monstrous carrion-bird roosting on the battlements of Edinburgh Castle, your "Enormous Vulture" theory does not account for the presence of walking corpses.

SOPHIA: The answer must lie with the Unicorn Club. Two of their members turned to flesh-eating monsters, and the Regent mysteriously absent? I don't believe in coincidence. This is a *conspiracy*.

ARTHUR: But how to find out more about them? They weren't exactly welcoming last time, and that was *before* we accidentally decapitated one of them. In my experience that tends not to endear you to people.

ROBERT (clearing his throat nervously): Er... While you were all out yesterday, I went through the accounts from mother's wee club. I didn't get all that far, but I did notice that they've been doing a lot more spending than usual over the last few weeks. A lot of it's just of cash withdrawals from the Club's account, paid to persons unknown - but a few local businesses seem to be doing very well out of them.

CRESSIDA: Good work, laddie. Look at this wee boy, all of you - he's a shining example of the rewards of obedience and hard work!

SOPHIA (tightly): Yes. Very good work, Robert.

CADWALLADER: Any names in particular stand out?

ROBERT: Well - this one. "Mortimer and Son". The address is just off the Royal Mile.

CRESSIDA: And what manner of shopkeeper might they be, pray tell?

ROBERT: They're undertakers, Miss Cadwallader.

CADWALLADER: Now then, that casts a ray of light on these shadowy depths. Let me see that - hmm, sizeable amounts of moneys paid for "goods received".

CRESSIDA: It would be an unusual undertaker who sold goods in place of the more usual services.

ARTHUR: I don't know, they sell coffins, don't they?

CADWALLADER: More likely they've been selling their contents. Why go to the effort of digging up a corpse when you can pay the undertaker to slip a few sandbags into the box instead and cut out the middleman.

CRESSIDA: Very well then. Lord Arthur, you might perhaps go and make enquiries at this undertaker - discreetly, mind.

ARTHUR: Oh yes, I'll be the soul of discretion. Er... what is it I'm not to mention?

CRESSIDA: (a sigh) I suppose you'll insist on going with him, Lady Roxburgh?

SOPHIA: We are at our best working as a team.

CRESSIDA: I suppose at least that way he'll find his way home before dark. Hieronymus, you and I will go and investigate Grayfriars Churchyard for signs of disturbed earth.

ROBERT: Perhaps I could accompany you, Miss Cadwallader? With mother gone I'd prefer not to sit around here - and I do know the city rather well.

JESSIE: An whit about me? Last picked fur fitba' again, is it? You know whit? Ah know when ahm no wanted. Ahm goin oot fur a walk, see yous later.

FX: She leaves, the door slams.

ARTHUR: I told you she was upset, Sophie.

CRESSIDA: Good riddance, I say. Now. Where *is* Mr Banjo? He's been gone all night, and there's no sign of the grocer's boy with the order.

CADWALLADER: Banjo? Do you mean to say you brought that lackwitted racketeer with you?

ARTHUR: Oh yes, doctor, Miss Cadwallader made him her ghillie.

CADWALLADER (slowly and disbelievingly): You made... Banjo... your ghillie. Dare I ask, did you give him money prior to his disappearance?

CRESSIDA: Yes, I sent him with five guineas and a shopping list to Kennington and Jenners.

CADWALLADER: Well that's the last you'll see of the money, and with a bit of luck the last we'll see of him.

FX: Echoey footsteps in the fog. The distant, ethereal pub music continues to play faintly.

BANJO: Aw, hold up a minute. Ah've bin walkin for hours and thon pub's no getting any closer. Ah jist want somethin' tae drink! Whit kindae pub even is this?

FX: The music gets louder.

BANJO: Ah think it's stopped movin'! Ahm gettin' closer! Hullloo!

FX: A fire crackling gets louder.

BANJO: Whit's goin on? Aw naw, it's jist three auld biddies an a bonfire. Whit's the game?

FIRST WITCH: Hail tae thee, Banjo, son of Glasgow!

SECOND WITCH: Hail tae thee, Banjo, beggar and thief!

THIRD WITCH: Hail tae thee, Banjo, who shall be king hereafter!

BANJO: Whit?

FIRST WITCH: Are ye sure ye've got the right one, Senga?

SECOND WITCH: Looks a bit glaikit tae me.

THIRD WITCH: Aye it's the right one, look, he's got the royal chin!

FIRST WITCH: Whit chin?

SECOND WITCH: Exactly.

BANJO: Ehhh- that's aw very good, but where's the pub?

THIRD WITCH (annoyed): There is no pub. We've summoned ye here by our arts arcane tae give ye a warnin aginst certain doom!

BANJO: Aye, but where's the pub?

FIRST WITCH: Ach, Nessie, just get on wi' it.

SECOND WITCH: Awright then. **(clears throat and continues portentously)** Heed me, scion of a lost bloodline! The seal of the Covenant is broken at the pretender's hand, and from the depths a dark rider comes on a white horse! By Stuart blood she is released, and by Stuart blood alone can she be bound, else all is lost!

BANJO: Did yous say ah wis gonnae be king?

THIRD WITCH: Did ye no hear whit she said? *Certain doom.*

BANJO: Haw man, ahm gonnae be king!

SECOND WITCH: Seal - broken. Bad thing - comin. Stuart blood - tae bind it. Ah cannae pit this any clearer.

FIRST WITCH: Can ye no just tell him in plain English?

SECOND WITCH: You know the rules, Aggie, it's the prophecy or nothin'.

FIRST WITCH: Jist gie him the bag, Senga, an' we can sling wur hook.

FX: A bag full of rattly wooden objects is thrust at BANJO.

THIRD WITCH: Well that's it, the world's doomed if it's this eedjit standin between us an the forces of hell.

FX: The music and fire crackling slowly fades away.

BANJO (gleeful): Aw right then, ladies, cheers very much! Ahm aff tae toast ma new joab as the king! Ehhh - don't suppose ye've seen a pub round here anywhere, huv yous? Hey - where did yous go? (**a pause**) And aw that fog's blown away, whit's that about? (**a pause**) Whit ahm ah daein on tap o' this big hill? Ehhh - whuts in the bag?

FX: He empties out the bag.

BANJO: Whit ur aw these wee wooden boxes fur? Hehh, mebbe they're they wee bottles a whisky...

FX: He snaps the lid off one. Rustles the contents.

BANJO: Wee dollies? Whit wid ah want wi wee dollies in boxes? (**a pause**) Haw, come back, yous, yuv given me the wrang bag!

FX: Scuffling noises as CADWALLADER, CRESSIDA and ROBERT scramble over a wall.

CADWALLADER (grunts as he lands heavily, then talking quietly): Right, you two, over you come, and keep the noise down. That bunch barring the gates won't take too well to strangers poking round the churchyard, not now they're seeing bodysnatchers at every turn. (**a pause**) Shabby old place, isn't it?

CRESSIDA: Shabby? Grayfriar's is one of the oldest sacred sites in Scotland. What other place this size contains a hundred thousand dead, bore witness to the signing of the Covenant and the martyrdom of its signatories *and* holds the Mackenzie Poltergeist - and that's to say nothing of Wee Grayfriars Bobby.

CADWALLADER: What in God's name is Wee Grayfriars Bobby?

ROBERT: He's a dog, Doctor. He belonged to an old man, and when he died, Bobby refused to leave his side, even after he was buried. He's lived here ever since - over ten years. People leave out food for him, he's quite the tourist attraction.

CADWALLADER: Little scruffy grey thing, about yea high? Looks like a particularly angry mop?

ROBERT: That's right, did you see the photographs?

FX: A small dog growling, gradually getting louder.

CADWALLADER: No, no need-

FX: The dog goes apeshit, barking and running towards them.

CADWALLADER: Damn and blast, it's got our scent. Run for it!

ROBERT: It's only a wee dug, Doctor!

CADWALLADER: It's not the dog I'm worried about, boy. We won't get back over the wall in time, and I've no desire to be caught half over it with my arse at the mercy of that angry mob there.

CRESSIDA: There- that crypt! The door's open a crack already. Quickly you two, put your backs into it!

FX: CADWALLADER and ROBERT grunt and heave, the crypt door slides open, they squeeze inside, they drag the door shut, the barking becomes muffled.

WATCHMAN: What's that, Bobby? Is it bodysnatchers, laddie?

FX: The WATCHMAN walks around on the grass.

WATCHMAN (calling back): Nothing to see. Probably just a squirrel again.

FX: All breathe a sigh of relief.

CADWALLADER: That was a closer shave than I care for. Now, to wait till they've gone.

CRESSIDA: This crypt's been disturbed recently. Watch your step, boy, that flagstone looks...

FX: ROBERT yelps as the floor gives way - he tumbles some distance and impacts on the ground.

CRESSIDA: - unstable.

ROBERT (winded): I'm all right!

CADWALLADER: Stand up, boy, reach up your hand and I'll see if I can grab you (**a pause**) Wave it about - no, nothing. Can't tell how far down you are. There's nothing for it, we'll have to go fetch a light and some rope, though how we're going to do that with that bunch out there baying for blood I have no idea.

ROBERT: No - wait, there's a light in my bag! I dropped it when I fell, but I think...

FX: Fumbling sounds.

ROBERT: Yes, there it is...

FX: ROBERT lights the lantern.

CADWALLADER: Well I haven't seen one like *that* before. The red and white paint job with the little windows is a bit unusual, but the revolving light at the top's really something else.

ROBERT: It's one of father's designs - a pocket version of one of his bigger works. It's not ideal of course, but you know what they say, any port in a storm (**a nervous laugh**)

CRESSIDA (darkly): That man and his silly wee lighthouses

CADWALLADER: Hmm, you're not that far down after all. Damnation, that dog's started up again - if they start to search in earnest it won't take long till we're dragged out and lynched. I'd sooner take my chances with the tunnels than with Fido and friends. Make room down there, boy, I'll be with you in a moment.

CRESSIDA: Wait. Give me that.

CADWALLADER: Give you what?

CRESSIDA (testily): Your service revolver, Hieronymus. I wish to reassure myself that it is in working order before we enter these fathomless depths.

CADWALLADER (indignant): My weapons are maintained to the highest standard - you may have every confidence in that.

CRESSIDA: If you maintain your weapons with the same diligence and care with which you maintain the moral rectitude of your chapter, I have no confidence in it whatsoever.

FX: Sounds of her exposing the revolver's cylinder, checking it then snapping it shut.

CRESSIDA (sniffy): Acceptable.

CADWALLADER: Is there any other item of my personal effects that you might care to peruse before we continue? The knots in my bootlaces, perhaps?

CRESSIDA: Very droll, Hieronymus. Well, what are you waiting for? Get down there immediately. I shall bring up the rear.

CADWALLADER (muttering): God help anything that tries to creep up behind us.

FX: A shop bell jingles as SOPHIA and ARTHUR walk in.

ARTHUR: Gosh, it's a bit gloomy in here, isn't it?

SOPHIA: It is an undertaker's, Arthur, they are not renowned for their cheerful decor.

MORTIMER: Welcome to Mortimer's Funeral Parlour. My condolences on your loss

ARTHUR (a startled yelp): Oh, sorry, I didn't see you there behind me. Err, what condolences? Oh - no, nobody's dead yet.

MORTIMER: Of course, sir. Perhaps then the sorrowful event is imminent?

SOPHIA: No, no one is dying either. We are simply here to... peruse your establishment, and see what services you might have to offer for the future.

MORTIMER: Very wise, ma'am. As the Good book says, "ye know neither the day nor the hour".

ARTHUR: It's about time for elevenses, isn't it?

SOPHIA: Arthur, Mr Mortimer means that death may come at any moment.

MORTIMER: Exactly so, madam.

ARTHUR: Well, that's a bit sinister, if you don't mind me saying so.

MORTIMER: Might I interest you in viewing our range of patented Iron Coffins? The spring loaded lid guarantees security against even the most determined of resurrectionists.

ARTHUR: Gosh, is that the price there? They seem terribly expensive.

MORTIMER: Is not an eternal slumber undisturbed by anatomising ghouls worth any sum of wordly coin? There are after all no pockets in a shroud (**a short, slightly ghastly laugh**). Or - (**disdainfully**) if sir's budget does not stretch, a coffin collar placed around the neck of the deceased will hold the mortal husk securely to the bed of the coffin, preventing any undignified bodily removal.

ARTHUR: Removal in one piece, anyway. Turns out heads come off easier than you'd think.

FX: SOPHIA picks up a heavy metal device.

SOPHIA: What is this device?

MORTIMER (alarmed): Gently, please - give it here,...thank you. I see madam is a lady of exquisite taste. This, newly arrived from the Americas, is a patent-pending coffin torpedo, guaranteed to explode with lethal force when disturbed.

SOPHIA: You seem to have based a whole industry on the fear of anatomists, Mr Mortimer.

MORTIMER: You need merely look around you, madam. Half the graves of Edinburgh lie open as though the day of resurrection were upon us - but those *we* put in the ground, stay in the ground.

FX: A little bell is ringing insistently.

SOPHIA: Arthur. **(pause)** Arthur. **(pause)** Stop ringing that bell.

ARTHUR: But look, it's on a piece of string. Is it something for cats to play with?

MORTIMER: No, sir. That is the bell attachment for our safety coffin. For a physician to overlook the faintest trembling spark of life is a forgivable error. But for the patient, to be buried alive is a fate more terrible than death. **(brightly)** And yet, with our patented safety coffin, simply pull the attached cord, and a bell on the surface will alert the cemetery watchman. For a small extra charge, we can fit a breathing tube, a viewing window and a pop-up flag, to ensure your journey back to life is swift, secure and comfortable.

ARTHUR: I really hope you don't fit those ones with coffin torpedoes as well.

SOPHIA: It appears that half of your products are designed to keep bodies in the earth, and the other half to liberate them from it, Mr Mortimer. What a remarkably comprehensive service you provide.

MORTIMER: Indeed, Madam. Now, perhaps you would care to step into our storeroom, to see a selection of our larger wares.

SOPHIA (wary): No, I think we have seen enough for now...

FX: A gun being cocked.

MORTIMER: I must insist, madam. Kindly begin by placing your muffler and its contents carefully on the ground, and kick them gently towards me. Otherwise you will receive a first hand demonstration of the effects of the coffin torpedo on the body of an adult male.

FX: ARTHUR gulps. SOPHIA puts her muff down and scuffs it over the floor.

SOPHIA: So it is true- you are supplying corpses to the Unicorn Club after all.

MORTIMER: Very perceptive, madam.

FX: The door chimes ring again as the door is opened.

MORTIMER: Ah, there you are, my boy. Now, time for these two... to rest.

FX: A cosh whacks into SOPHIA's head: she grunts and falls.

FX: Footsteps in an echoey tunnel - dripping water.

CADWALLADER: Dash it all, Aunt Cressie, how much longer is this wretched potholing expedition likely to take? I thought Edinburgh smelled bad in summer, but these tunnels reek like a butcher's shop.

CRESSIDA: If you'd prefer to retrace your steps, Hieronymus, feel free to take your chances with the Greyfriars mob.

CADWALLADER: At this rate they'll be dead and buried themselves before we see the light of day.

CRESSIDA: We must be under the royal mile by now - these tunnels come out in the crypts under St Giles cathedral. Another right turn should do it (**a pause**). Wait a wee minute. *That* shouldn't be there.

CADWALLADER: What shouldn't be there?

CRESSIDA: That opening. That should be sealed.

FX: She walks over to it, shifts some bricks.

CRESSIDA (to herself): The brickwork's been destroyed- looks like someone's taken a sledgehammer to it - and there's the remains of the ward...

CADWALLADER (rattled): What do you mean, ward?

FX: CRESSIDA heads down the tunnel.

CADWALLADER: Wait - where are you going -

CRESSIDA (down the tunnel): Come on now, Robert, I need your silly wee lighthouse.

FX: Footsteps as ROBERT and CADWALLADER join her, all whispering.

CRESSIDA: This is Mary King's Close.

ROBERT: I've heard of this place. It used to be an ordinary Edinburgh street, until plague struck the residents. Rather than help them, the townsfolk barricaded them into their homes and bricked the whole thing up so they couldn't escape.

CADWALLADER : Sounds like the sort of civic policy you could roll out for the rest of Edinburgh and see a solid improvement.

ROBERT: Just think of all those poor souls, starving and suffering and waiting for the inevitable...

CRESSIDA: Worse than that, boy. There was something in the close with those people - something ancient and hungry. Whether it brought the plague, or whether those infected summoned it in their desperation, history does not relate, but they say that once the wards were in place, the screaming from inside the close lasted for a full week, and the scratching on the bricked up walls far longer than that.

CADWALLADER: I see your aptitude for telling bedtime stories remains undiminished.

CRESSIDA: It's no fairy tale, Hieronymus. It's clearly documented in detail in "Satan's Invisible World Discovered" by George Sinclair, 1685 edition.

CADWALLADER: Well, that certainly sounds like a respectable publication

ROBERT: If all those people died in here, shouldn't it be full of skeletons?

CADWALLADER: And yet, not so much as a wishbone.

CRESSIDA (urgently): Shh! (**a pause**) I saw something - it flickered in the light. The torch, Robbie - there's something at the far end- it's watching us! There - I distinctly saw a face -

FX: Slow footsteps as she heads down the close.

CRESSIDA: There it is - a child's face - but that's impossible, what would a child be doing down here...?

FX: Footsteps echoing, CRESSIDA breathing, water dripping.

CRESSIDA: It's... it's a doll.

FX: Rustle as she picks it up. a sigh of relief.

ROBERT: There must have been children living here all that time ago. Perhaps it belonged to one of them?

CRESSIDA: Perhaps... The clothes are filthy, of course, but the face has been cleaned, and recently by the looks of it. This doll has the look of a toy still in use.

CADWALLADER: If you've concluded your graverobbing, can we leave this ghastly mausoleum?

FX: CRESSIDA puts the doll in her bag and snaps it shut.

CRESSIDA: Certainly. I don't intend to be here when the inhabitant returns.

FX: ARTHUR snoring gently in a very small space.

SOPHIA (grunts in pain): Oh... my head. Where am I...? Arthur? Arthur?

FX: Sounds of SOPHIA groping around in a wooden box, finding ARTHUR and shaking him vigorously.

SOPHIA: There you are- Arthur, wake up! We're trapped!

ARTHUR (sleepily): Go back to sleep, sweetheart, it's still dark.

SOPHIA (impatient): It is dark because we are locked in a... a....

FX: Sounds of her fumbling around. Eventually she raps on dull sounding wood.

SOPHIA (a terrified whisper): Arthur, I think we are in... a coffin. We have been buried alive!

FX: Back in the tunnels.

ROBBIE: Doctor - Miss Cadwallader... I feel quite unwell. Lightheaded all of a sudden.

CADWALLADER: Pull yourself together, boy. We'll be out of these blasted tunnels soon enough.

CRESSIDA: Lift your lantern, Robert, let me take a look at you. Hieronymus, he's gone white as a ghost. Do you... do you smell that?

CADWALLADER (sniffs deeply): Tobacco and cheap cologne. He smells like a french brothel, same as usual.

CRESSIDA: Not *him*, Hieronymus. The air - there's something about it that isn't right. These tunnels connect with the old Nor' Loch - the swamp's been drained to build on, but there must still be pockets of marsh gas underground.

ROBBIE (drowsy): I think... I need to lie down...

FX: ROBBIE slides to the floor.

CRESSIDA: It's no good, the boy's passed out. Quickly, help me lift him. Whatever's afflicting our wee canary here, we'll be next if we don't make haste.

FX: They lift ROBBIE and start to drag him. A lurch and a fall again.

HIERONYMUS: Mind your step!

CRESSIDA (weakly): I can feel it - the gas - starting to take effect. Go - fetch help -

FX: She slumps.

CADWALLADER: Aunt Cressie? Damnation, what a time to find out she's susceptible to human weakness after all...

FX: He shakes her unconscious body. Then slow approaching footsteps, muffled breathing.

CADWALLADER: Hello? Hello! Help! We're over here!

JESSIE (through gas mask): Hello, Chaptermaster.

CADWALLADER: Jessie? Is that you? What are you wearing on your face? No matter- there's some sort of noxious gas in here - you have to help us out of the tunnels!

JESSIE: Ah, naw, doctor. It's chloroform. Did ye know it was invented in Edinburgh? So wis penicillin, the hypodermic syringe, lime cordial - is there anythin they're no claimin' credit fur?

FX: She approaches slowly.

CADWALLADER: Fascinating I'm sure (**a cough**) but can the history lesson wait?

JESSIE (conversationally): Ah telt them they'd need a bigger dose tae pit you oot. If there wis a prize fur trainin yer liver you'd win best in show. Ah weel, mair than wan way tae skin a cat, eh?

FX: She steps slowly towards him.

CADWALLADER (coughing, desperate): Jessie, what are you doing? Put that billy-club down-

FX: Rustling as he fumbles for his service revolver.

CADWALLADER (wheezing): I've shot better men than you for less.

FX: The revolver clicks and fails to fire.

JESSIE: No wi-oot yer firin pin ye've no. Ahd like tae say this won't hurt a bit. But we both know ah'd be lying. Haud still.

CADWALLADER: Wait!

FX: A cosh hitting skull. CADWALLADER grunts and crashes to the ground.

END CREDITS PLAY

FX: Seagulls, waves, children playing in the distance, a barrel organ playing "Oh I do like to be beside the seaside." GILLESPIE walks along the beach and sits down.

GILLESPIE: Ahhh, Troon beach oan a Saturday. Does ye good tae get oot tae get oot the hoose, wee bit o sun on those peelie wallie cheeks o yours. Ah brought ye an ice cream wi a squirt a thon red sauce, just the way ye like it. An wan wi a wee chocolate stick fur me.

FX: GILLESPIE crunches his flake and licks his cone. Hunter bonks on the inside of his jar.

GILLESPIE: Whit's that? Aye, steady the buffs, Wullie, it's comin'

FX: DR. HUNTER splashes and makes an excited turkey gobbling sound. The cone plops into the jar. GILLESPIE shuts the jar.

GILLESPIE: There ye go, *bon appetit*.

FX: Sounds of a severed head in a water filled jar noisily eating an ice cream.

GILLESPIE: Aye, ye've still got a good appetite oan ye, Wullie. Where ye put it ah've goat no idea.

FX: A nasty wee urchin approaches.

NASTY WEE URCHIN: Haw, mister, whuts in yer jar?

GILLESPIE: None of yur business, ya durty wee skelf.

NASTY WEE URCHIN: It's a heid! It's a cut-aff heid in a jar!

GILLESPIE: Show some respect, that's the famous Doctor Hunter there.

NASTY WEE URCHIN: Did ye kill him, mister? (**gleeful**) Ah bet ye killed him! Ahm gonnae get the polis! Yur a murderer, yur gonnae go tae jail!

FX: HUNTER lets out a particularly awful turkey gobbling shriek and bonks on his jar.

NASTY WEE URCHIN (screams): Aaah! It's opened its eyes! It's no deid!

FX: The nasty wee urchin runs away wailing.

GILLESPIE: Heh heh heh. Nice wan, Wullie. Moan, finish up yur cone an' we'll go doon tae the links, see if we can wind up any o they rich golfin' bastards.

FX: GILLESPIE ambles off down the beach, tunelessly singing "Oh I do like to be beside the seaside" along with the barrel organ.

**EPISODE 4:
MEMENTO MORI**

Episode Cast:

NARRATOR

ARTHUR

GODALMING

GILLESPIE

HIERONYMUS

CRESSIDA

SOPHIA

JESSIE

BANJO

ROBBIE

EUPHEMIA ST CLAIR, REGENT OF SCOTLAND

LAIRD MORNINGSIDE

GHOST

MORTIMER

PESTILENCE

KID

ISABEL THORNE

NARRATOR: Shadow Factories Presents: Tales from the Aletheian Society! Chapter 4: Memento Mori

THEME MUSIC PLAYS

FX: Funereal chat, clinking of teacups etc.

GILLESPIE: If ye'd all like tae make an orderly queue, I'll noo be beginning with the death photies in the parlour. Mind and crowd in, these things arnae cheap!

FX: Sound of people forming a line and shuffling forward. Occasional flash powder bursts from GILLESPIE.

ARTHUR: I suppose we'd better go up and take a turn, eh Godalming? Although I find it terribly hard not to mug when I see a camera. I think every photo Sophie and I have together I've got a big stupid grin on my face. Probably not appropriate for the occasion.

GODALMING: I think most people would say you've had a lot to be happy about, sir.

ARTHUR: Yes, I suppose so. But sometimes... I don't know, I just feel as if everyone else is having a conversation I'm not involved in.

GILLESPIE: Next! Aye, get right in there. Aye, put yer arm aroon' him, he wulnae bite

FX: Flash powder burst.

ARTHUR: Damn! I'm sure I had my eyes closed!

GODALMING: Not to worry sir, I'm sure they'll get you again later

ARTHUR: If there even is a later, eh? We always think so, but look what happened to him...

FX: Dripping water, the the groans of the awakening group in the cell.

CRESSIDA: (praying) Lo, many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting disgrace

HIERONYMUS: I can guess which way you think my bread is buttered. Where in the deuce are we, anyway?

SOPHIA: (edge of panic) Not in the coffin, at least, thank God!

ARTHUR: We were buried alive! And without one of the patented bell thingummies to let everyone know!

SOPHIA: That schwein Mortimer held us at gunpoint!

HIERONYMUS: Pistols are funny things, you never know when one's going to misfire, eh aunty?

CRESSIDA: I told you your weaponry needed checked more often, Hieronymus. It's a poor workman who blames his tools.

HIERONYMUS: I'm not blaming the bloody tools - I'm blaming you! I assume this is part of some scheme, and not just incipient dementia? What were you planning to do if they just killed us out of hand? They don't always monologue you know!

FX: Cell door creaks open, bagpipe fanfare.

MORNINGSIDE: Good morning, honoured guests. It is my very great pleasure to present to you her Grace, Euphemia Madeleine St Clair, heir to the House of Stuart, High Steward and Anointed Regent of Scotland

EUPHEMIA: Welcome one and all, members of the Aletheian Society. We feel we must apologise for the conditions of your cell - and for the treatment that you've suffered at the hands of our retainers. Unfortunately you find us preparing for war, and in such times things oft require a rougher hand than one would wish. Rest assured that once matters have been resolved, you'll be safely repatriated to England.

SOPHIA: What madness is this that you speak of? War! Madame - you are in violation of at least four articles of the documents of alliance between our two organisations! And Jessie, what are you doing with these people?!

JESSIE: What am I doin'? Mebbes I just got tired of having English and foreigners treatin' me like shite in ma own country. Not tae mention that soor biddie settin' the polis on me or treatin' me as if I was the kind o' wagtail that would let auld jollocks here have his way wi' me.

EUPHEMIA: It grieves us sorely to go against a document bearing our own mother's signature, but it is the divine right of a ruler to exercise their judgement as their conscience demands. Once Scotland has been returned to its proper condition of rulership, we shall seek to make amends with your Society. After all, apart from the matter of national politics, we are most evident natural allies.

CRESSIDA: Your Grace...speaking as a Scottish woman and a member of the Aletheian Society, I think it would be easier for us to accept all this if you were to let us know what was going on?

EUPHEMIA: Indeed, it is but a small matter. Our illustrious bloodline has always had sway over the supernatural forces abroad in these lands. Up until now we've utilised that power to keep them quiescent, but now we have decided to utilise it in a more direct manner to force the British government to accept our claim to throne and rulership of Scotland.

HIERONYMUS: Good God, Woman! What are you planning to unleash?

MORNINGSIDE: You watch yer tongue in the presence of royalty, y'impudent wee manny!

JESSIE: Don't worry, I know what bawface here needs tae keep him quiet

FX: Grunts of pain from **HIERONYMUS** as **JESSIE** kicks and punches him.

EUPHEMIA: Enough, Miss Gordon. We applaud your fervour, but we must show hospitality to these poor souls, no matter how offensive we may find their manners to be. We shall see our prisoners mistreated unduly.

JESSIE: Sorry, yer Grace, but this malmsy auld windbag's had it comin' a long time. He doesnae like the Scots very much!

CRESSIDA: Nonsense! He can't very well dislike...

HIERONYMUS: **(Through pain)** No! Don't say it!

ARTHUR: **(clears throat)** Lord Arthur Roxburgh, your Grace. I've got at least three or four second cousins who own about half of Morayshire, so hopefully I can count as Scottish? I was wondering, if it isn't too much trouble, if you could tell us what exactly is it that's going to happen?

SOPHIA: The close of Mary King! You've let the thing loose because you intend to use it as a weapon!

EUPHEMIA: Hardly *loose*, Lady Roxburgh, it is held securely by Stuart blood and the implacable will of the rightful ruler of these lands. It merely serves as the instrument of our design for the moment. Once its task is complete, it will be returned to the darkness from whence it came.

CRESSIDA: **(tight, angry)** You sacrificed Margaret and the others to it, then?

EUPHEMIA: What of it? They were sworn to serve us, body and soul. We needed both in order to fulfill our destiny. By the blood and images of the Seventeen was it bound, by the blood and images of the Seventeen was it released.

MORNINGSIDE: Your Grace, time is ticking on. We'll have to make haste if we want to get the first batch loaded and away.

EUPHEMIA: Forgive me, friends. It seems as if we must awa. The sweet pipes of destiny are playing across hill and glen, and we must heed them.

HIERONYMUS: Certainly sounds like a pipe dream to me

EUPHEMIA: Fair ye well, one and all!

FX: Skirl of bagpipes, which then fade away as the Regent heads away down echoing tunnel.

MORNINGSIDE: Oh, and I wouldnae waste yer breath shouting, ma wee bairns - yer too far underground fer that tae do any good. These bars were built to hold the Duke of Queensberry's flesh-eating giant of a son, so *you're* not going to break them. Best you just bide yer time here. Byes-e-bye, now! **(titters as he withdraws)**

FX: Door slams shut and locks.

ARTHUR: I can't believe Jessie would turn on us like that! It seems like only yesterday we were comrades in arms.

SOPHIA: It was only yesterday! Oh, I feel responsible - it was my thoughtless words that drove her to join these lunatics.

HIERONYMUS: As usual, Aunt Cressida is to blame.

CRESSIDA: Blame? Come now, Hieronymus. I know she must have passed you something - there's hardly any other reason she would have touched you voluntarily

HIERONYMUS: (sigh of exasperation) Yes, she planted a set of lockpicks on me. Didn't spare the boot leather while she was at it, though! Your plan worked, but I still say you got damned lucky.

CRESSIDA: “Don’t always monologue” indeed...

FX: Lockpicks turning in lock, cell door opening.

ROBBIE: (groggy) What’s going on? My head is pounding like a drum

ARTHUR: Wait, so Jessie’s still on our side, then? It’s all a ruse! What a wheeze - it’s a shame I can’t tell everyone at Pratt’s about it.

SOPHIA: Eugh, I detest those stuffy gentlemens clubs. Why can they not let women in as well?

ARTHUR: Well, it’s pretty crowded as it is, and there’s a long waiting list. I don’t know that you could actually fit anybody else in. Maybe if you took that big armchair out...

HIERONYMUS: I used to be a Beefsteak man, myself. Never gave a fig about the politics, but they did a damnably good nosebag.

ROBBIE: (bemused) So... we’re in an underground prison cell, discussing gentleman’s dining clubs? I feel I’ve missed a critical step somewhere while I was unconscious.

CRESSIDA: Young Robert is quite correct! Compose yourselves and get on with the society business! We’ve an insane Queen of Scotland about to try and dissolve the Union using the Dark Arts. We must strike now, while we have the element of surprise!

ROBBIE: Yes, definitely missed something important...

HIERONYMUS: Well, now I really want a steak, but setting that aside for the greater good, let us take stock. We are in an unknown underground labyrinth, with no weapons and no idea where our opponents went. But at least we have *surprise*, eh Auntie?

CRESSIDA: Cease your incessant whining, Hieronymus. I know these tunnels like the back of my hand. In my day initiation into the Society wasn’t just baring your buttocks to fifteen old men with paddles in a darkened room. *We* had to work for it!

SOPHIA: (whispered aside to Arthur) She’s so formidable, the way she outwits him and forces him to obey her. A lion tamer could do no better

ARTHUR: (*whispered back*) Yes, dear

HIERONYMUS: All very well knowing the tunnels - we still don't know which way they went.

CRESSIDA: It'll be one of those two tunnels here. I suggest Hieronymus and myself go down this one on the left, Lord and Lady Roxburgh and young Robert the one on the right.

SOPHIA: Should we split our forces so? We are without weapons

CRESSIDA: Nonsense

FX: **Crunching noise followed by drift of dust and small stones.**

CRESSIDA: These ancient timbers can provide a source of perfectly serviceable improvised weaponry. Combined with the element of surprise, it should be enough to carry the day. Just be sure to space out your attentions - we wouldn't want twenty tons of sandstone landing on top of us before the job is done.

ARTHUR: Or at all, really

FX: **Chorus of snapping, crunching noises followed by longer drift of dust and stones.**

ROBERT: I think I'll forgo the weaponry, I wouldn't have the first idea what to do with it

CRESSIDA: If you find your way to an exit, I suggest you take it, Robert, dear. Your mother would want to see you safe, and it seems the least I can do for her

ROBERT: Thank you, Miss Cadwallader. I'm sorry to not have been much use

CRESSIDA: Nonsense, my boy. Not all of us are meant for this life.

HIERONYMUS: (*grumbling*) Not all of us get a choice...

CRESSIDA: Come on then. Let us depart.

FX: **Feet in tunnels, the two teams part company, we continue with the Roxburgh party.**

ROBERT: You seem a fearless lot, Lord and Lady Roxburgh. My imagination has always been my greatest enemy, filling my nights with dreams of things dark and dismal until I can barely stand to close my eyes sometimes

ARTHUR: Well, I try not to think about... much. I find that helps

SOPHIA: Knowledge, Mr Stevenson, that is the greatest panacea for fear. Once you know the nature of what you face and how to defeat it, you find that light of truth drives out the shadows of ignorance in which fear hides. The key to success, as in any endeavour, is the maintaining of the paramount supremacy of the rational mind and complete emotional control...

FX: The funeral once more, teacups clink.

ARTHUR: Sophie! There you are, I've been wondering where you got to

SOPHIA: (tearful) Oh, Arthur!

ARTHUR: I'm here, my darling. Everything is going to be alright

SOPHIA: Arthur. I just wanted you to know... in the midst of all this tragedy and darkness... I wanted you to know...

ARTHUR: What is it, my angel? You can tell me anything

SOPHIA: Oh, Arthur, I'm pregnant!

ARTHUR: Pregnant! Are you sure? But this is wonderful news!

SOPHIA: I'm so sorry, I know the timing just couldn't be worse.

ARTHUR: My dear, the timing is perfect. Something to lift our spirits on such a sad day as this. Oh, darling, I've never been happier!

SOPHIA: Forgive me, dear heart, forgive me for never giving you the children you wanted before now

ARTHUR: There's simply nothing to forgive, my love. God gives us the miracle when He chooses, and not a moment before.

SOPHIA: And I've decided. After the funeral, I'm going back to Switzerland, for good.

ARTHUR: Switzerland? But why, I thought you were happy here? I mean, I love the alps, but... for good? It just seems a little final

SOPHIA: I'm done with Britain, and with the Society. I want to raise our child far from such madness. Hesselius can go to hell for all I care, I'm done being his cuckoo in the nest.

ARTHUR: Who's Hesselius? I don't understand what you're talking about. Look, all I know is this - I love you, and I want to be with you. If that means cuckoo clocks and alpine hikes for the rest of my life then fair enough. As long as we're all together.

SOPHIA: My love... **(cries again)**

FX: Back in the tunnels, **CRESSIDA** and **HIERONYMUS** edge through the darkness.

HIERONYMUS: So, want to tell me what all that dreadful mummery was about? Don't believe I've ever known you to be sentimental - why'd you send the boy away? And spare me the tedious denials.

CRESSIDA: **(deep sigh)** Margaret and I... we were very close when we were younger.

HIERONYMUS: **(suspicious)** How close are we talking here? **(shocked)** Auntie! Are you ... are you a *sapphist*?!

CRESSIDA: Don't be ridiculous, Hieronymus!

HIERONYMUS: Sorry, just, seemed like a penny dropped there for a moment and -

CRESSIDA: Women don't do such things...

HIERONYMUS: Um... no, Auntie, I'm sure you're right **(sotto voce)** not for free, anyway...

FX: A spooky wail from the **GHOST** fills the tunnel.

GHOST: **(suitably ghostly)** Cress-i-da!

HIERONYMUS: What in blazes was that?!

GHOST: Cressida! You've come back. You said you would. I waited and waited until the candle burned down. I was so hungry, Cressida, so cold. But you never came back, Cressida

CRESSIDA: Lilian? Is that you? If that's Lilian, we're on the right track

HIERONYMUS: A phantasmal apparition of somebody you used to know, and it seems you manipulated them and left them to die in a God-forsaken hole. I'm not even remotely surprised.

GHOST: Cressida. Come back, Cressida. I don't care about joining the Society anymore, I just want to be out of here

CRESSIDA: I'm sorry, Lilian. We are all on our own in this life - I discovered that for myself all those years ago. If you didn't, then you were never Society material in any case.

HIERONYMUS: Lord, you're a cold fish, Auntie

CRESSIDA: And you're an overly emotional weakling, but we all have our crosses to bear. Sadly, you're mine

GHOST: (sadly) Come baaaaaack!

FX: Feet scabble on, the chattering sounds of teeth clicking together from the undead.

HIERONYMUS: Some kind of shipping crate here. What in the deuce is that noise, somebody got a set of castanets inside?

CRESSIDA: There's a label... hard to read in this light... I believe it's a...post office shipping mark. This crate is bound for Waterloo station.

HIERONYMUS: It stinks, whatever it is. I don't suppose there's any chance we can just chalk this up to blissful ignorance and continue our pursuit?

CRESSIDA: We need to know what's going on here, Hieronymus. Help me with this.

FX: Cracking and crunching of lid coming off. The clicking gets louder.

HIERONYMUS: Gah! The stench! Somebody's intent on posting a rotting body to Waterloo.

CRESSIDA: Not just a body, my boy. It's moving.

FX: Clicking is accompanied by the cracking of joints as the creature sits up and attacks.

HIERONYMUS: Get the lid back on!

FX: Undignified shoving of the lid, with scrabbling of zombie hands from below.

CRESSIDA: Hold it still, I'll just trim off the pieces sticking out

FX: Snapping of fingerbones.

HIERONYMUS: Hang on a moment while I pile some loose boulders on top.

FX: Thump of large boulders on wood, the bashing and thrashing of the corpse within.

HIERONYMUS: So that's their little game. Posting corpses to London! Actually, I mean... that's pretty pathetic, isn't it? A few sturdy dockers could take care of these scrawny brutes.

CRESSIDA: Unobservant as ever, Hieronymus. Did you not notice the bluish skin? The piscine aroma? The clear fluid it was splattered with?

HIERONYMUS: No, Auntie. Bizarrely, my attention was focused on the fact that the ruddy thing was trying to kill us!

CRESSIDA: I'm not a doctor, but I've seen enough cases in my time to recognise death by cholera

HIERONYMUS: Cholera! As if there isn't enough about at the best of times! Seems like hardly a day goes by without an outbreak somewhere.

CRESSIDA: Yes, but I think their plan is to have it break out *everywhere*. Look in this next chamber

FX: Chattering of dozens of teeth, slow thumping and gnashing from multiple boxes.

HIERONYMUS: There's... there's hundreds of these boxes. Addressed for London... Liverpool...Manchester... Birmingham - every major city in England! This is the most monstrous scheme ever devised! These blasted jocks won't be happy until I can never go home!

CRESSIDA: Now, Hieronymus, you know that you -

HIERONYMUS: No...I'm... Not. I'm an Englishman, and I will be until the day I die. An accident of birth -

CRESSIDA: And blood

HIERONYMUS: *An accident of birth* does not determine my nationality!

CRESSIDA: Hold yer wheesht, boy. I hear something up ahead. I believe we've caught up with our prey.

HIERONYMUS: **(whispering)** Oh yes, because we are *definitely* the hunters in this scenario

FX: Crates being moved heavily.

JESSIE: To you, Morty. Lift wi' yer legs

MORTIMER: My name is Mortimer! Not "Morty", "Haw, Morty Boy" or "Heid the Baw", you soap-dodging gutter trash!

JESSIE: Well, I'd rather be gutter trash than a peely-wally wee corpse-footerer like you

MORTIMER: How dare you! My family have served the members of the Unicorn Club for over a century

JESSIE: Ye make it sound like they're breedin' ye like prize dugs. Come tae think of it, ye dae pit me in mind ae wan o' they wee yappy bastards wi' the eyeballs that stick oot. A lapdug, that's whit ye are

MORTIMER: I don't have to take this kind of abuse from you! I'm a master of the funerary arts, and Grand High Mortician to the Regent.

JESSIE: Oh, aye, that's why she's got ye helpin' tae shift boxes full a leaky, stinkin', corpses, because she hinks that much o ye

MORNINGSIDE: Can you two not just stop blethering and get on with it? There's a lot more crates to come and we've got a tight schedule tae keep to

JESSIE: Aye, it'd go a sight faster if you got yer haunds dirty, big man

MORNINGSIDE: Don't be ridiculous! Do I look like some kind horny-handed labourer?

JESSIE: I wouldnae know whit ye look like, pal. Somethin' offae the cover of a tin of shortbreed, mebbes? Either that or an explosion in a tartan-weaver's shop.

MORNINGSIDE: The likes of you wouldn't understand sartorial elegance. This outfit cost mair money than you'll see in a lifetime. The silk for this shirt came from Valencia! The leather fer ma turnshoes is made from narwhal's hide! This tartan drove three weavers tae madness before I was happy with it! I'm the most debonair and refined wee laddie you're ever going to meet in this life or the next. Now you mind your p's and q's and get on with yer appointed task!

FX: Sound of a club striking MORTIMER's head, he yelps in surprise and crumples, his end of the box falls.

CRESSIDA: You see, now *that* is how you use the element of surprise.

HIERONYMUS: Hmm, I'll just take this pistol shall I?

MORNINGSIDE: (shouting as he runs away) Your Grace!, Your Grace! The Society have escaped and they're ruining everything!

FX: The LAIRD scurries away.

JESSIE: Took yez long enough! If I'd been workin' ony slower I'da got a job fae the cooncil! They were getting ready tae send the first load up tae Waverley station. I don't know whit the hale plan is, but that Regent wimmin is aff her heid, and the Laird is a total roaster

HIERONYMUS: Thank you, by the way, for that terribly convincing beating you gave me earlier. A less charitable soul might almost have thought you were enjoying yourself.

JESSIE: Away an' bile yer heed! I was the one takin' all the risks. I'm surprised you could even feel it through aw that lard.

HIERONYMUS: (bristling) How dare you, madam?! A good amount of weight is simply an indication of a surplus of healthful vitality!

REGENT: While my heart lifts at the sight of such bonny warriors arrayed for battle, we're afraid we must now exercise my most royal prerogative and remove ye. By this ancient sceptre, by our royal blood and right of birth, we command thee, Spirit - dispatch mine enemies!

FX: The spirit manifests.

LAIRD: (worried) Is it not supposed tae glow? I thought the *Basilikon* said the sceptre was supposed to glow...

PESTILENCE: I hear your call **(mocking)** Regent

REGENT: Aye, now be about your business, Spirit

PESTILENCE: Bound I was by Stuart blood. Released I was by Stuart blood.

REGENT: And commanded now ye are by Stuart blood!

PESTILENCE: (Awful laugh) No, Euphemia. Your Bonnie Prince spread his seed far and wide, but there's not one drop of his blood in your veins. But I should thank you properly for offering up the others to me. Come, join me in an embrace.

REGENT: No! Back! Stay back! The sceptre compels...

PESTILENCE: Compels *nothing* without the rightful heir

FX: MORNINGSIDE shrieks and scurries off. The REGENT screams as her life-force is sucked out. The sceptre drops to the ground with a rattle.

PESTILENCE: But there is one still left... They'll have to be found and dealt with before the great work begins. My ascendancy must not be thwarted again

FX: The spirit disappears again.

HIERONYMUS: It's gone! What in the hells was that? It looked like just a street urchin, but whatever it did to the Regent... she's just dust now

JESSIE: Gotcha!

FX: JESSIE picks up the sceptre.

JESSIE: This sceptre thing, they thought they could control it with that

CRESSIDA: But *who*? Who is it looking for?

FX: A jaunty band plays in a park bandstand.

BANJO: Roll up! Roll up!, get yersels a swatch o' the greatest show ever tae be seen. Adults and children of all ages, this is pure culture, so get wired in like a tramp eatin' soup!

KID: Here, mister. Whit's yer show about?

BANJO: Puppets, son. It's a Punch and Judie show.

KID: They're all wimmin, but. Which wan's supposed tae be Punch?

BANJO: Ah, you're a wee smartarse, aren't ye? Well, if ye look very closely, you might just see Punch after all

FX: Sound of BANJO punching the kid, knocking them over. KID cries. Crowd forms a mob and begins to furiously chase BANJO.

BANJO: Aw, not again! Everybody's a critic!

FX: A large boulder rolls aside.

ARTHUR: Fresh air! Daylight! We've escaped!

SOPHIA: It looks like we've come out somewhere on Arthur's Seat. This whole city must be riddled with tunnels.

ROBBIE: Aye, the Old Town is a fearful mess of slums, with heaven knows how many layers of collapsed basements and sealed up tunnels. Nobody knows even the half of what's down there.

SOPHIA: For whatever reason I believe the Cadwalladers want to deal with the Regent by themselves. So in the meantime I suggest we make ourselves useful by following up on the autopsy we requested.

ARTHUR: I thought Cressida told you to drop that?

SOPHIA: Well, she's Doctor Cadwallader's superior, not mine. And since *he* is Chaptermaster, and in any case rarely seems to care what I do as long as it doesn't distract him from wallowing in alternating baths of vice and self-pity, I'm choosing to ignore her and do what I see fit

FX: The funeral, clinking teacups, sombre chat.

GODALMING: So it seemed as if Lady Roxburgh was becoming disenchanted with Miss Cadwallader's methods?

ARTHUR: I must admit, I was quite glad the scales seemed to have dropped from her eyes. It wasn't like my Sophie at all to be so *deferential*. You know, while I'm sure Miss Cadwallader is a woman of many fine qualities, I struggle to put my finger on what any of them might actually be...

GODALMING: And did the autopsy reveal anything useful?

FX: Echoey dissection room, the clink of scalpels and surgical tools, the door creaks open.

SOPHIA: Isabel? Forgive me for interrupting, we were wondering what you had discovered?

ISABEL: Ah, Lady Roxburgh. I suppose I should start by putting your mind at rest - there is no evidence of wrongdoing in this case.

SOPHIA: What? She was shot in the chest and bludgeoned with a poker! **(beat)** Oh, I'm sorry Robert...

ROBERT: Quite alright, Lady Roxburgh. I'm firmly convinced her spirit had departed already. What was left behind was just flesh.

ISABEL: What was left behind was so dessicated that it began to disintegrate even as we began our explorations. We managed to save most of the remains in that jar, but I doubt anyone could be convicted on the basis of powder alone.

SOPHIA: Is this normally possible?

ISOBEL: I can't account for it. The cadaver was still showing some flexibility and blood pooling when you brought it in. It's almost as if something was sucking it dry of every drop of moisture. I have no medical - or indeed rational - explanation.

FX: Pop of a lid being taken off, ARTHUR sniffs and then sneezes loudly, followed by the smash of him dropping the jar.

ARTHUR: Oh God! I'm so sorry! I've got your mother everywhere!

SOPHIA: Arthur! How many times do I have to tell you about opening jars and sticking your nose in? Did the incident with Dr Cadwallader's cocaine teach you *nothing*?

ROBERT: Again, quite alright, Lord Roxburgh. Her soul is in a better place.

ARTHUR: That is very kind of you to say, Robert, but despite your protestations, I insist on paying for a funeral for... these trousers and anything else we can sweep up.

FX: Trousers being unbuckled and falling to the floor.

ARTHUR: Mrs Thorne, is it possible you might have a broom about the place? And perhaps a spare pair of trousers?

SOPHIA: (curses softly in Switzerdeutsch to herself at her husband's idiocy)

ARTHUR: From dust we come, to dust we shall return, eh?

FX: Sweeping noises, ARTHUR hums happily.

END CREDITS PLAY

FX: Train chuffs away in the background, GILLESPIE's feet walk the pavement, bricks clink in his bag.

GILLESPIE: Here we are, a day oot in Dundee. A wee piece for ma lunch, a bag o' bricks tae chuck through pub windaes, and the drizzle is just comin' on nicely. All they bampots still off in Edinburgh, and nae messin up Hunter Hoose. This is gonnae be a rare day of pleasure fer me.

FX: GILLESPIE collides with MCGONAGALL, clatter of bricks and squawks of pain from both.

MCGONAGALL: Och! If you'd taken mair care as ye walked doon the street, ye wouldnae hae stood upon both of ma feet!

GILLESPIE: Ye've knocked ma piece doon the drain, and ye've spilled ma guid bricks, ya glaikit erse!

MCGONAGALL: Through your unruly actions, ye've caused this fall, by bein' say lanky and skinny and tall, but now you face the wrath of... McGonagall!

GILLESPIE: Aye, well, noo you'll face the wrath of Gillespie. Ye'll rue the day ye... why are ye talkin' in rhymes, ya daft bam?

MCGONAGALL: I'm a man of genius bright, in my words the public does delight!

GILLESPIE: Another mentalist! I might as well have stayed in Glasgow. Farewell, Dundee, ye can save yer own souls, I'm no chuckin' bricks through yer pub windaes onymore!

MCGONAGALL: Oh, beautiful city by the Clyde, how unhappy must be the folk where this man resides!

GILLESPIE: Not half as miserable as the folk of Dundee must be, listening to this pish!

**EPISODE 5:
STATE OF DENIAL**

Episode Cast:

NARRATOR

CRESSIDA CADWALLADER

JESSIE GORDON

ARTHUR ROXBURGH

GODALMING

HIERONYMUS CADWALLADER

LAIRD MORNINGSIDE

BANJO

GRANNY

PROSTITUTE

WILLIAM WESTCOTT

OLD CLOOTIE

SUPPORTER

NARRATOR: Shadow Factories Presents: Tales from the Aletheian Society! Chapter 5: State of Denial

THEME MUSIC PLAYS

FX: Rattle of mourning carriage, clop of hooves.

CRESSIDA: He saved my life, we'll always have that to remember

JESSIE: I woulnae hold it against him

ARTHUR: It's a deep blow to us all, of course. Makes you think about what you've still got to be thankful for

SOPHIA: (very cold) I do

JESSIE: Well, here we are, end of the line

FX: Carriage crunches to a stop, the occupants jump down.

SOPHIA: Not the end for all of us, just for one

JESSIE: Aye...Well. Let's just get through this, eh? Best fit forward! (**contrite**) Och! Sorry, sorry - I forgot...

CRESSIDA: (gently) We're here to remember him, Jessie, not to forget. Life takes everything away in the end, memories are all we ever keep for ourselves.

ARTHUR: Yes, we deal with so much darkness, so much horror. It's important to keep our memories of the good times alive

FX: Muffled scream from MORNINGSIDE inside an adjoining room.

ARTHUR: I've witnessed some truly horrible things since I've become a member of the Society, but I never expected this. Torture? I don't know how Jessie can stomach it.

FX: Another muffled scream from MORNINGSIDE.

ARTHUR: I shall have to get a drink, I can't listen to this

FX: Inside the room, MORNINGSIDE is heaving for breath, weeping uncontrollably.

MORNINGSIDE: Madame, yer a monster!

JESSIE: Listen here, pal, you huvnae seen the half of it! That's a nice wee bunnet you've got there, it'd be a real shame if somebody was tae *PULL OOT ALL THE STITCHIN!*

FX: Slow ripping fabric noises, MORNINGSIDE screams again.

MORNINGSIDE: Y'inhuman fiend! Is there nae depths tae which you wouldnae stoop?

FX: Silk hanky being whipped out of a pocket.

JESSIE: Aw, a nice wee silk hanky. But what's this? There's a thread loose.

MORNINGSIDE: No! Please, I beg you...

JESSIE: I'll just gie it a wee tug

FX: **Ripping noise of handkerchief being torn in two, MORNINGSIDE screams in horror.**

MORNINGSIDE: (Sobbing) What's *wrong* with you? Have you no *humanity*?

FX: **Tinkle of a piece of jewellery landing.**

JESSIE: Oops, clumsy me, dropped yer bonnie brooch

FX: **Crunch of brooch being ground underfoot, MORNINGSIDE screams once more.**

JESSIE: I could keep this up aw day, they natty wee slippers can go next

MORNINGSIDE: No! Please! Anything but the turnshoes!

JESSIE: Awright then. Talk, whit was that thing?

MORNINGSIDE: Something ancient and terrible. It was attracted to the plague, or maybe it *made* the plague, I don't know. The Stuarts, they've always had... abilities, something they called "the favour of the Unicorn", whatever that means. All I know is the blessing was supposed to be in the blood. They warded that thing into place, left it trapped in the body of it's last victim, for centuries. The family have a secret book, the original *Basilikon Doron*, it explains it all - I'm no wizard, I just translated the Greek for the Regent.

JESSIE: Whit does it do then, this thing?

MORNINGSIDE: It's death, I think. I mean, all it seems to want is to destroy. It can raise the dead, although it seemed to work best with victims of disease, but that was quite convenient for our plans (**hastily**) I mean, for the *Regent's* insane plans. I never liked the woman personally, I was only going along with her because of tradition, y'understand?

JESSIE: Oh, aye, that'll be why you had yer tongue planted up her arse. Because of *tradition*.

MORNINGSIDE: But... but listen, the thing said that she wasn't the heir - which must mean the rumours were true! Euphemia has always been obsessed with the idea that there's another, hidden branch of the family! I think it was part of the reason she was willing to sacrifice the Seventeen.

JESSIE: How do we find this heir then? Talk!

MORNINGSIDE: I swear, I don't know! If we'd known who it was, Euphemia would have killed them herself. All I can tell you is that they Stuart blood is noble and refined, it'll be somebody of natural quality, class and elegance...

FX: The streets of Edinburgh.

BANJO: Mebbes I could make the dolly show a bit more interestin' if I took their claes off? Make it appeal tae a mair mature audience. **(disappointed)** Naw, there's nothin' under the claes, nae details tae get onybody excited'. I must be the unluckiest punter alive.

FX: Lurching, wheezing GRANNY zombie approaches.

GRANNY: Sang...real **(groans)** sang...real

BANJO: Away, there's a wummin likes her drink! Good on ye at your age! Got any tae spare?

FX: GRANNY zombie growls and lurches forward.

BANJO: Aw, comin' tae gi' us a hug? Aye, everybody's yer pal when yer blootered, eh hen?

FX: GRANNY zombie bites one of BANJO's ears off, BANJO screams.

BANJO: Aw ya bandit! Ma ear! She bit ma ear aff!

GRANNY: Sang ... real...

FX: Teeth clacking as she tries to bite BANJO again.

BANJO: Help! Polis! Murder! Get this mad auld biddy aff me!

POLICEMAN: Here, what's all this disturbance? What've you done tae this nice lady, ya shady bam? I know a purse-snatcher when I see one! Don't you worry, ma'am, I'll get yer goods back off him.

BANJO: She's the one that attacked me! I huvnae done anythin'!

POLICEMAN: All them dollies.. **(realising)** You're that thug that assaulted a young boy in the park earlier! Oh, you're a wanted man, my son. Come along quietly, now.

FX: Clink of handcuffs coming out.

GRANNY: Sang... real...**(growls)**

POLICEMAN: Aye, miss, if you can come down tae the station with us, we'll get you a wee cup of tea and you can tell us what this evil nyaff did tae... ARGH!

FX: GRANNY savages the POLICEMAN, he gurgles and chokes as she bites his throat out.

BANJO: She's distracted - I'm oota here afore she decides she wants m'other ear too!

FX: BANJO runs off, GRANNY looks up from liquid mess and growls, then hobbles after.

GRANNY: Sang... real

FX: Door opens then closes as JESSIE comes out, in the background we can hear the LAIRD whimpering while it is open.

JESSIE: Well, that's all we're gettin' ootae the wee peacock. Ony more an he'll likely pass oot. Begged me tae go tae his wife and get replacement clothes, tried to gie me a list tae fetch for him! Man's nae right in the heid, probably never had tae wipe his own arse afore.

ARTHUR: Yes, well, it can be a sticky wicket for us public school boys. Took me a while to get the hang of ...

SOPHIA: Arthur! Some decorum, please!

ARTHUR: Sorry, dear! Just reliving the halcyon school days of yore. Ah, fagging at St Paul's; **(nostalgic)** Being thrashed by the sixth-formers for some trifling infraction! A friendly ducking in the

lavatories on a chill winter morning! Carrying the fag-master around on our backs until we dropped from exhaustion! Character-forming stuff - I can hardly wait for our own children to experience it all!

JESSIE: Weel, I'm goin' out tae get a wee breath o' fresh air. Get the smell of burnt velvet oot ma nostrils. I'll leave you high-society types tae think of wur next move.

FX: Door opens then closes as JESSIE departs, muttering about "useless bampots."

CRESSIDA: Well then, given the severity of the situation I have a contact to look up - somebody who may be able to help with this kind of matter. Lady Roxburgh, would you care to accompany me?

SOPHIA: Actually, Miss Cadwallader, I think you should take Arthur

CRESSIDA: Lord Arthur? This situation is hardly one suited to his... capabilities

SOPHIA: (cross) Miss Cadwallader! Lord Arthur Roxburgh is a grown man and a member of the Society in good standing. It behooves you to give him the chance to prove himself to you, instead of dismissing him out of hand.

CRESSIDA: Very well then, Lady Roxburgh, I will take charge of him for the time being. I very rarely find my initial judgement of a person to be in error –

HIERONYMUS: (interrupting) Hah!

CRESSIDA: However, I will on this occasion give Lord Roxburgh a chance to impress me afresh, if that is what you wish

SOPHIA: Thank you, Miss Cadwallader! **(to Arthur)** Now, Arthur, you go with Miss Cadwallader, and be on your best behaviour

ARTHUR: Yes, dear. Best foot forward! **(beat)** Do you think that's left or right? The best foot, I mean?

CRESSIDA: Come along, Lord Arthur. Best we be on our way

FX: They exit, ARTHUR is muttering "Left? No, Right? Oh, I can't decide" as they go.

HIERONYMUS: You're wasting your time, you know.

SOPHIA: So you too are intent on disparaging my husband, a brave man who –

HIERONYMUS: Pax, Lady Roxburgh. I'm quite fond of Arthur, as it happens. I simply mean you're wasting your breath trying to get on my Aunt's good side - she hasn't got one

SOPHIA: Oh, here we go again, just because a woman stands emancipated and in her own power, you seek to drag her down!

HIERONYMUS: I see there's no talking to you about this. Dress her up in your suffragist nonsense if you want, the truth is she's on nobody's side but her own. Gender doesn't come into it.

SOPHIA: Men like you have held Western civilisation back long enough, Dr Cadwallader. The day is coming when things will be done in a better way

HIERONYMUS: And there's not a poor bugger dead in the name of some stupid cause who didn't believe otherwise. Trouble is the hallowed day never really comes, there's just another wise owl waiting to point you over the next hill to a fresh slaughter tomorrow.

SOPHIA: You say this because the status quo serves you and yours. There *are* people who could be trusted more with such power.

HIERONYMUS: And whose names might appear on such a list, Lady Roxburgh? Yours, I assume? I'll let you in on a little secret, gleaned through a lengthy observation of human beings and their failings – *nobody's suited to power*. In the end you always become what you set out to replace.

SOPHIA: Hah! With such an attitude, would the human race ever have advanced itself at all? Somebody must have the courage to steer human affairs, even if the cost is high

HIERONYMUS: I've changed my mind, you and my aunt are two peas in a pod. You're welcome to her.

SOPHIA: So little respect you show her, is it any wonder that the two of you don't get along better? A woman of her age, you can't expect her to live forever, is this really how you wish to leave things?

HIERONYMUS: She'll see us all in our graves, I expect. "Whom the gods love die young", and all that

FX: The tolling of bells at the Necropolis.

CRESSIDA: (sighs) Ah, the late Doctor Cadwallader

ARTHUR: I must say, she's holding up remarkably well, considering.

FX: Wheezing of DR CADWALLADER as he pants up the hill, running late.

HIERONYMUS: Sorry, everyone. Unavoidably detained. Here now, the show can go on!

JESSIE: Did ye think we were gonnae haud everything up on account o' you? The whole world doesnae spin around your big fat heid, ye ken. We're just waitin' on the minister

ARTHUR: Now I'm... I'm confused. I thought it was... Isn't it *Doctor Cadwallader* in the casket?
(slowly) If it isn't Dr Cadwallader then who is it?

GODALMING: (whispered aside to Arthur) I'm sure it'll come to you sir. Given time.

SOPHIA: Good of you to finally make it, Dr Cadwallader. So seldom we see you up this early in the day.

HIERONYMUS: (deflating somewhat) Felt the need for a drink or two, under the circumstances. Call it an old soldier's salute to a fallen comrade, eh? I'm not here to pick a fight with you Sophie, on this of all days....

ARTHUR: Something's not right here, Godalming. I keep trying to remember what happened... I was with Cressida, we were going to meet her mysterious contact, and then...

GODALMING: And then, sir?...

FX: The streets of Edinburgh.

ARTHUR: So who's this mysterious contact then? Seems like a rather seedy part of town, although I do love to get a look at the underside of the bridges. You'd hardly even know they were there from up above!

CRESSIDA: Indeed. That is rather the way he prefers to operate. Out of the public eye. Aha! Look yonder!

ARTHUR: Oh, it's that Westcott fellow from the station. He seems to be asking that young lady for directions. Oh, she's taking him into her... apartment I suppose you'd call it? Maybe she's making him a cup of tea.

CRESSIDA: Lord Arthur, I refuse to believe that a man of the world such as yourself doesn't grasp what is happening here - he's engaged the services of a prostitute and is now proceeding into that dank underground hovel to revel in sinful carnal gratification!

ARTHUR: Gosh! You must be really good at lip-reading to have got that from this distance. I totally misread the situation.

CRESSIDA: Come, let us interrupt the assignation.

FX: Click of pistol being readied.

ARTHUR: Shouldn't we wait until they're finished? I mean, it seems only polite.

CRESSIDA: (sighs) Just follow my lead, boy

FX: Splintering crunch of rotting timbers being kicked in, shrieks of surprise from PROSTITUTE and WESTCOTT.

WESTCOTT: Good God!... er, I mean - Madam! Put your clothes on and remove yourself from my person. You have clearly misunderstood my innocent request to...to...

CRESSIDA: "Wet your whistle", Mr Westcott?

PROSTITUTE: Here, you! Costs mair for others, even if they're just lookin'!

ARTHUR: (shocked) Oh my goodness she's naked! I can't look! I feel as if I'm betraying Sophie just by being here

CRESSIDA: Pull yourself together, Lord Roxburgh. Let's not get squeamish. If I can manage the sight of Mr Westcott's flaccid manhood jiggling about, you can survive the sight of an unclad female bosom.

WESTCOTT: How do you know my name? **(blustering)** Dash it all, I'm a doctor, I'm here to perform... an important medical procedure on this poor, poor woman

PROSTITUTE: (indignant) Ah thought ye were wantin' a gub-joab an' a wee squeeze of the diddies? That's whit ye said!

WESTCOTT: (furious) Shut your mouth, you stupid whore!

FX: Smack in the face as ARTHUR punches him, WESTCOTT squeals in pain.

ARTHUR: I regret that act of violence sir, but I shall charge you not to speak to a member of the fairer sex in that manner. If it happens again I shall be forced to thrash you!

CRESSIDA: Well, well, Lord Arthur. I am somewhat astonished, but impressed. Perhaps Sophia is right about you after all.

WESTCOTT: Who are you people? Why are you tormenting me?

CRESSIDA: Firstly, Mr Westcott, whatever you got from Cloutie, throw it over here

WESTCOTT: I have no idea what you're...

FX: Gunshot from CRESSIDA.

CRESSIDA: The next one goes through your head and I take what I want off your corpse

WESTCOTT: (panicking) Alright, alright, here it is

CRESSIDA: Carefully! Now, slide it across the floor.

FX: Something slides across the stone floor

ARTHUR: What is it? Some kind of jewellery?

CRESSIDA: Smash it

WESTCOTT: No!

ARTHUR: Are you sure, shouldn't we return it to its owner or something?

CRESSIDA: Under no circumstance! Smash it, Lord Roxburgh

ARTHUR: Well, alright. It's a bit gaudy in any case

FX: Stomping foot, explosion of crystalline shards and skittering voices as the thing dissolves.

CRESSIDA: Good. Now, Mr Westcott, your life depends on this next question, so answer carefully.

FX: Click of pistol being cocked.

CRESSIDA: Where's Cloutie?

FX: The streets of Edinburgh once more, they walk through the crowds.

ARTHUR: That was jolly impressive back there, Miss Cadwallader. It's no wonder that the Doctor is so good at all this with you as a role-model

CRESSIDA: I shall take that... in the spirit which it was intended, Lord Arthur. Hieronymus is a constant disappointment to me, but I suppose I should remember that such things are relative.

ARTHUR: So who's Cloutie?

CRESSIDA: Forgive me, Lord Arthur, but Cloutie is something that you simply don't have the training to deal with. I'll ask you to wait outside while I attend to him.

ARTHUR: Ah, of course. Useless old bodger Arthur gets left to one side where he can't do any harm.

CRESSIDA: Hardly, I wouldn't trust *any* of the Chapter with this. The Unicorn Club didn't exactly handle Cloutie to my satisfaction the last time we crossed paths. Better for everyone if the negotiations are directed by myself alone.

ARTHUR: Very well, I shall remain on guard!

CRESSIDA: Indeed. You do that. I shouldn't be long.**ARTHUR:** Ooh, fish and chips - that'll help me blend in seamlessly with the locals

FX: CRESSIDA's feet go down the steps to the vault.

CLOOTIE: Cressida. You've aged, my dear.

CRESSIDA: A natural part of the human condition, Clootie. Nothing you'd know anything about

CLOOTIE: Oh, I know *everything* about the human condition, Cressida. I hope you haven't come to threaten me again? As you well know, I was granted diplomatic immunity

CRESSIDA: You were only ever allowed here on sufferance, but the Unicorn Club are gone now - you can't hide under their skirts anymore. Which means you need to make yourself useful to *me* if you want to continue conducting business in this city

CLOOTIE: I think you'll have your hands full as it is, Cressida. Your little friends have woken up something more powerful than they realise. Once it recovers enough to shed off the last of that mortal skin it's wearing (**chuckles**)... well, why should I care what happens to you humans?

CRESSIDA: Because for all it may lead the world to apocalypse, Clootie, it'll be *its* flavour of apocalypse, not yours. Still, if you're happy with just being a runner-up in the ruin and damnation stakes, by all means let the creature run amok...

FX: CLOOTIE laughs, it is unpleasant.

CLOOTIE: Older, but you haven't changed, Cressida. Still the same flint-hearted bitch as ever. Very well then, I believe we have a bargain - my assistance in return for immunity?

CRESSIDA: You can continue to operate here under the same arrangements as with the Unicorn Club, yes.

FX: CLOOTIE spits on his hand, CRESSIDA does likewise, they shake hands.

CRESSIDA: Good. The first thing we need to deal with are the infected bodies in the tunnels.

CLOOTIE: There I can help you, the idiotic young Mr Westcott was bringing me this. No doubt filched from the British Museum or somesuch. How's your Demotic?

FX: Sheafs of papers being spread out.

CRESSIDA: Passable.

FX: Papers being flicked through.

CRESSIDA: Hmm. The offerings present some difficulties, but nothing insurmountable. Yes, this should suffice to clear the tunnels. Loathe though I am to utilise heathen rituals, needs must when the devil drives

CLOOTIE: It never ceases to amaze me, all the things you've seen - the things you've done - and you still cling to your notions of Christian theology. You think if God really existed he'd want anything to do with the likes of you?

CRESSIDA: Some of us must sacrifice so that others can remain pure. That's the way it's always been.

CLOOTIE: Well, you'll be in good company with this creature, suitably biblical. Won't be riding on a White Horse, but in all other respects...

CRESSIDA: Pestilence?! This thing is a Pestilence? God protect us

CLOOTIE: What is it they say, Cressida? God helps those that help themselves...

CRESSIDA: Your sarcasm in the face of the holy is the least of your of offences, Clootie. I shall fear no evil, least of all the likes of you. I'll see myself out

FX: She walks off up the stairs, CLOOTIE mutters darkly as she does so.

CLOOTIE: (muttering) ..sink my teeth into your throat... drag you home with me...

FX: BANJO stumbles down the steps, panting with exhaustion.

BANJO: (wheezing) Awfie determined, the auld folk in this city!

CLOOTIE: Well, well. One door closes, another one opens. Hello to you good sir. Will you take a wee dram?

FX: Bottle uncorks, liquid flows.

BANJO: Aw, yer a good christian man, so y'are. Here's to yer health, sir

FX: BANJO swallows.

CLOOTIE: That's an interesting collection of dolls you have there, Mr Stuart. Don't suppose you'd be willing to part with them?

BANJO: (quickly shifting into sales mode) Oh aye, these wee beauties? Hand-crafted, each one unique, made by ma own silver-haired auld mother fer me when I was just a babbie. It would pure grieve me somethin' rotten tae part wi' them.

CLOOTIE: Five shillings the lot

BANJO: Throw in the bottle, and ye've got a deal!

CLOOTIE: Done!

FX: CLOOTIE and BANJO spit on their hands and shake, a tumult of dolls falls on the table, a bottle and coins change hands.

CLOOTIE: At last, the Unicorn will be ours!

FX: CLOOTIE cackles evilly, BANJO joins in good-naturedly. Their laughter gets more and more over the top until BANJO abruptly stops.

BANJO: Here, whit is it we're laughing about?

FX: Streets of Edinburgh, ARTHUR is choking and gagging.

CRESSIDA: Are you unwell, Lord Arthur?

ARTHUR: I've been poisoned! I asked for salt and vinegar, and instead they poured some kind of toxic diarrhoea over my chips.

CRESSIDA: Ah, you've encountered, "salt and sauce". Of course, nobody really likes it, but one eats it just to prove that you're better than people from other places, where they just eat food on the basis of how it looks, tastes or smells. When you can force that stuff down with a smile, you'll fit right in with the locals.

ARTHUR: So it's like a horrible initiation into some kind of primitive tribe?

CRESSIDA: An unkind analysis, but not entirely inaccurate. Now, we're short on time and we have a long list of items to procure. You and I are going to save the day, Lord Arthur!

ARTHUR: Huzzah!

FX: They depart, but another set of boots approaches.

JESSIE: Now what did they two want here? I'm getting tired of bein' the Tribune's delivery-girl.

FX: She heads down some steps.

JESSIE: Package fer mister Clootie?

FX: Necropolis bells (while ARTHUR speaks here, there are short flashbacks).

ARTHUR: And so we spent the next few hours tracking down esoteric Egyptian wotnots. Some we acquired through honest means.

CRESSIDA: (flashback) Pay the man, Lord Arthur.

ARTHUR: (flashback) Oh? Yes, of course, **(slightly pained)** twenty pounds, was it?

ARTHUR: Others... less honest.

FX: (flashback) Smashing glass, shouts of "stop thief!", running feet.

ARTHUR: But at last Cressida had everything she needed for her ritual. **(beat)** Everything...

FX: Arthur's Seat, a thunderstorm has begun, rain is falling, the ritual is underway.

CRESSIDA: Let's see the list; crushed scarabs are burning in the braziers, crocodile skins hanging thus, sigils marked in blood and honey – good work, Lord Arthur, you've a fine hand for calligraphy

ARTHUR: Honestly, Miss Cadwallader, I can't tell you how grateful I am to be part of this - to really feel I'm contributing instead of just bumbling about and getting in everyone's way

CRESSIDA: I think it's entirely safe to say that I couldn't do this without you, Lord Arthur

FX: Lightning and thunder roil across the sky.

CRESSIDA: It's time for the final supplication. Bring me the knife.

ARTHUR: Here we go. Watch out, freshly sharpened!

CRESSIDA: Sobek! Accept this offering! One calf of pure blood and milk white skin! Let his sacrifice seal our bargain! Let the waters of the **(catches herself before saying "Nile")** Leith rise!

ARTHUR: I say, where are we getting this unfortunate calf from?

FX: CRESSIDA slits ARTHUR's throat, ARTHUR chokes, staggers and falls, gurgling at her feet.

CRESSIDA: Sorry, Lord Roxburgh. But your sacrifice won't be in vain - you'll save many lives

FX: Necropolis bells tolling loudly, weeping and mourning.

ARTHUR: Wait... wait a moment. That was *me* she stabbed! It was me who...

GODALMING: Yes, sir

ARTHUR: It was me who died

GODALMING: I'm afraid so, sir

ARTHUR: And now I'm about to be buried!

GODALMING: Indeed, sir. I believe it was the spot that you picked out, though

ARTHUR: That really isn't as much consolation as I hoped. I assumed I'd be an old man by the time I needed it. With Sophie by my side and a gaggle of children to see me off....

ARTHUR: My child is going to grow up never knowing me...I'm never going to get a chance to meet him... or her. Never going to get to bounce them on my knee or tell them how much I love them

GODALMING: Serving the Society is risky business, Lord Arthur, I'm sure they'll be proud to have a parent who died so heroically

ARTHUR: Heroic? I had my throat slit like a Christmas goose! By one of my own allies, no less. Never even saw it coming. A fool is all I am.

GODALMING: Maybe so, sir, but I'm sure your *intentions* were always good

ARTHUR: I don't want to be a hero, I don't want good intentions. I want to be alive, I want...

ARTHUR: (forlorn) Sophie...

END CREDITS PLAY

FX: Crowd jeering and shouting, football noises coming from a pitch.

GILLESPIE: Whit's all this shite? Ah came here oan the promise o' a good anti-Catholic rally, and instead there's grown men kickin' a baw aboot like weans!

SUPPORTER: It's the new fitba team, Rangers

GILLESPIE: Listen you here tae me, lad. I've been marchin' an' rallyin' against the godless papists aw ma life. I'll shake hands wi an Orangeman, I'll break bread wi' a mason, but I'll be damned afore I waste ma precious holy bile on some stupit' game like fitba

SUPPORTER: Aye, we do all that stuff too, but it's mainly in the pub afterwards, no during the game. Well, except for a wee bit shoutin' an' scufflin' when it gets excitin'

GILLESPIE: Son, it fair brings a tear tae ma eye ta hear ya speak like this. In my day we didnae need an excuse tae hate people, we didnae need an excuse tae turn up an' form a mob. Noo ye just want tae stand there, yer jaw slack wi' sloth, eyes glued tae the pitch when they should be contemplatin' the guid book instead!

SUPPORTER: Aye, well, your day looks like it's been an' gone about a hunnerd years ago, gramps. Noo shut yer geggie an' gie us peace, I'm trying tae watch the game

GILLESPIE: Ya wee rascalion! This country's pure goin' tae the dogs, so it is. The youth o' today huvnae got a clue. Fitba fer grown men! Just one more of Satan's wiles tae ensnare the weak-willed. Ah'm gonnae pray fer yer soul tonight, son.

SUPPORTER: (not paying attention) Aye, you do that, big yin...

GILLESPIE: (muttering as he slopes off) I'm gonnae pray ye're damned to everlasting torments in the pits of hell, ya cheeky wee bampot. You wulnae be sae full of yersel' when it's just you and the pope, bobbin' about in the big lake of fire, bein' prodded by Satan's pitchfork...

**EPISODE 6:
LAST CALL**

Episode Cast:

NARRATOR

ARTHUR

GODALMING

GILLESPIE

HIERONYMUS

CRESSIDA

SOPHIA

JESSIE

BANJO

ROBBIE

LAIRD MORNINGSIDE

ZOMBIE GRANNY

SOLDIER

DESPERATE WOMAN

PESTILENCE

GILLESPIE

THE THING UNDER THE STAIRS

NARRATOR: Shadow Factories Presents: Tales from the Aletheian Society Chapter 6- Last Call

THEME MUSIC PLAYS

FX: Church bell tolling.

MINISTER: *"I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."*

ARTHUR: Well, at least there's a good turnout. (**trying to be jocular**) Wouldn't do to go without a decent send off, what?

GODALMING: If you say so, sir.

ARTHUR: Ooh, there's Uncle George! I really *must* tell him about the baby, the old boy'll be thrilled! **(suddenly remembering)** Oh, no, I forgot. I suppose he'll find out eventually, won't he... I don't recognise the minister, though, that's not the usual chap.

MINISTER (continuing in the background): *"God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart." For we are born into sin, and those who die in their sin, without forgiveness, receive what we all deserve- the due punishment for sin, the torment of hell.*

ARTHUR (indignant) He's gone off script a bit, hasn't he? Whatever happened to "Blessed are those who die in the Lord"? Not that I did, I suppose- the old bible's a bit light on "blessed are those who die sacrificed to the Gods of Lower Egypt"... Wait a minute - this chap's that dreadful old firebrand of Gillespie's, isn't he? I might have known he'd get a *presbyterian* to do it, all original sin and no cushions on the pews. **(a pause)** I don't know if I've lived what he'd call a *godly* life, but it's been a *good* one. At least, I *think* it has.

GODALMING: You'd know best, sir. Still, I suppose you'll find out soon enough, won't you, sir?

ARTHUR: What do you mean, soon enough?

GODALMING: When the funeral's over, sir. When they move on, that's when you do the same, onto wherever it is you're going.

ARTHUR: Gosh. That doesn't seem like long at all.

GODALMING: Well, no, sir. Think of it this way, sir - the sun's already set, and this is just the last few moments before the last of the light fades.

ARTHUR: Hmm. You'd best get on with the story, then, if I'm going to get to find out the end.

FX: Inside the house. Muffled sounds of rain falling heavily, water running through the streets, doorbell ringing.

SOPHIA: Finally!

FX: Soggy footsteps, door unlocking, door opening.

SOPHIA: Where have you been all this time? (**slow realisation**) You are covered in bloodstains. Where is Arthur?

CRESSIDA: I have bad news, I'm afraid. Lady Roxburgh, please - to the parlour.

SOPHIA: No, Miss Cadwallader, I will not take another step - where is my husband?

CRESSIDA (sighs): This unseasonal rain is the result of a rite Arthur and I performed to cleans the catacombs of the undead. The Spirit must have realised we were close to thwarting her plans and sent her minions against us just as we reached a critical point. One of those dreadful walking corpses, armed with a butcher's knife, hurled itself at me. Had your husband not thrown himself bodily in the way, I should be a dead woman.

SOPHIA: Take me to him immediately, Miss Cadwallader. If he is badly injured, I should be at his side.

CRESSIDA: He is in no pain, Lady Roxburgh.

SOPHIA (faintly): What do you mean by that?

CRESSIDA: No pain, nor suffering any longer. He is beyond such things now.

FX: SOPHIA grabs CRESSIDA by the throat and shoves her into the wall.

SOPHIA (angry): You are lying. If he is dead, where is the body?

CRESSIDA (being strangled, hoarse): Swept away by the rising water. Kill me...and your husband died for nothing.... Save your wrath...for those who did this to him...

FX: SOPHIA drops CRESSIDA. CRESSIDA takes a hoarse breath. Footsteps as HIERONYMUS and JESSIE rush to join them.

HIERONYMUS: What in blazes is going on here?

FX: Long silence, only CRESSIDA wheezing.

SOPHIA: Arthur is dead.

FX: Another awful silence.

JESSIE: Ah, shite -

SOPHIA: Jessie - kindly fetch my palm pistols.

HIERONYMUS: Lady Roxburgh- what exactly do you intend to do with them?

SOPHIA: What do you *think* I intend, Herr Doktor?

HIERONYMUS: Now, hold on a moment - that ludicrous buffoon was here the whole time, he can't possibly have been involved.

SOPHIA: The Laird was part of the Regent's infernal conspiracy. They are *all* responsible.

FX: SOPHIA cocks her pistols.

SOPHIA: Herr Doktor, please stand aside.

HIERONYMUS: This is *insanity*. Jessie - tell her - perhaps she'll listen to *you*-

JESSIE: It's no up tae me. If this is whit she hus tae do, ahm no gonnae get in the way. You need tae take the wee lad ootside. He disnae need tae hear this.

SOPHIA: I shall be some time.

FX: The parlour door opens and shuts.

HIERONYMUS: No good will come of this, you mark my words.

FX: Back at the graveside.

ARTHUR: She did all that? Over *me*?

GODALMING: Oh, yes, sir. Quite maddened by grief, from what I hear.

ARTHUR: Good Lord. I mean, I know she's fond of me, in her way, but I never realised she cared so *much*... Look at her, Godalming, she looks so... *tired*...

GODALMING: Hasn't been sleeping much, from what I hear, sir. Grief'll do that to you -that an' all the time she spent looking for your body after the flood was over. Took her *days* to get round all the mortuaries and hospitals, but there was no arguing with her.

FX: The bells toll. Earth is shovelled on the coffin.

MINISTER: Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust. Amen.

ALL: Amen.

ARTHUR: Gosh, it's nearly time, isn't it? Would you do me a favour, Godalming, if it isn't too much trouble? Would you tell Sophie how much... (**a sad laugh**), how much I love her, how *hard* it is to leave her. How *grateful* I am that she put up with a duffer like me all these years.

GODALMING (gently): I'm afraid that's against the rules, sir.

ARTHUR: Oh, yes, I suppose it must be. Wouldn't really be fair on you, either, using you as a telegraph service from beyond the veil, you'd never get anything else done. I must say, for a butler you do seem surprisingly knowledgeable about all of this.

GODALMING: I've led a rich and varied life, sir.

ARTHUR: So have I, when you think about it. I've had my turn, time to step aside to make room for the next generation. There's a nice... balance to that, sort of...comforting. And I know Sophie'll be a wonderful mother.

FX: Rain outside. SOPHIA steps into the room.

LAIRD: Och, there ye are! Hev ye come tae set me free at lest? - whit's wi those wee guns?

FX: A gunshot. The LAIRD screams.

LAIRD: My foot! Ye crazy witch, whit are ye doing?

SOPHIA: I would have thought it was obvious. I'm going to kill you.

FX: Another gunshot, another scream.

LAIRD (wailing and sobbing) : Whit de ye want frae me? I've told ye everything I know-

SOPHIA: I'm not interested in what you know. My husband is dead because of your little conspiracy.

LAIRD: I hed nothing tae do with thet - I swear tae ye!

SOPHIA: Liar.

FX: Another shot. He moans. Rustling as he claws at her skirts.

LAIRD (moaning, desperate) : Please - I beg you - hev mercy -

FX: A click as the pistol misfires. The LAIRD giggles with relief.

LAIRD: Oh, thank you - thank you -

SOPHIA (musing): *Did* I test fire these this morning? I don't believe I did. I must remember to tell Herr Doktor Cadwallader he was correct.

FX: The LAIRD drags himself towards the door.

LAIRD: Please - let me go - please?

FX: SOPHIA reloads her derringer, the LAIRD rattles the door handle.

SOPHIA: Locked, I'm afraid.

FX: The LAIRD bangs frantically on the door.

LAIRD: Help! Help! She's going to kill me!

FX: A thwack as she boots him to the floor. He grunts and moans.

SOPHIA (calmly): Now, open your mouth.

FX: The LAIRD makes “mmmfff mfff” noises as she forces the pistol into his mouth, barrel rattles off teeth.

LAIRD (indistinctly) : No, no...

FX: Outside, water rushing, rain falling. A gunshot.

CADWALLADER: Four shots. That's both her derringers empty, unless she's got something else up her sleeve.

ROBBIE: Why - why didn't you *do* something, Doctor?

CADWALLADER (resigned) : What did you want me to do, boy? Shoot her? Might have got the drop on her, even with her pistol in her hand. That what you had in mind?

ROBBIE: Couldn't you have stopped her any other way?

CADWALLADER: Not without takin a bullet to m'guts. Pretty clear we were going to end up with at least one corpse on the morning room floor, and the one we got is the least worst option.

ROBBIE: But he was *innocent!*

CADWALLADER: Only in the loosest possible sense.

FX: Sloshing sounds as JESSIE approaches.

JESSIE: Is there onything ye want oot fae inside? I've brought yer bag an thon big sceptre. Ah think wi the mess she's made we're gonnae huv tae set the hoose oan fire.

HIERONYMUS: Good luck getting anything to catch light in this weather. I wouldn't trouble yourself - the water'll wash the evidence away soon enough.

JESSIE: Fair point. Who's gonnae notice wan mair corpse wi'the number they're aboot tae huv sloshin roon these streets?

ROBBIE: How's Miss Cadwallader?

JESSIE: She's mostly spite an' auld boot-leather, that yin, she'll be awright.

FX: Distant sloshing footsteps approaching.

BANJO (approaching): Help! Help!

ZOMBIE GRANNY (rasps): *Sang...real...*

BANJO: Ah telt ye, ah dinnae huv it! Bugger aff!

CADWALLADER (wearily): And here comes the idiot, regular as clockwork.

BANJO: Doctor Cadwallader! Help! Thank Goad ah've found ye! They creepy hings won't leave me alane, I've telt them I dinnae huv it but they're no listenin!

ZOMBIE GRANNY: *Sang...real...*

BANJO: Ah huvnae goat yer fancy foreign wine!

CADWALLADER: Out of my way, you blithering zounderkite -

FX: The zombie moans, CADWALLADER shoots it, it falls into the water.

BANJO: Haw, cheers pal! Awight, ah'd better get a move oan before the next yin comes along wantin its Sangria back.

JESSIE: Eh...

CADWALLADER (ignoring her) : Not so fast. What did you just say?

BANJO: Ahm tellin' ye, there'll be anither yin showin' up any minute! That's the fourth deid auld wumman today! Wan ay them bit mah ear aff!

CADWALLADER: No, you wretched rantallion, about the *Sangria*

ROBBIE: Doctor - I don't think it was saying Sangria, I think it was *sang real*

JESSIE (insistently): Is naebody but me seein' this?

CADWALLADER (ignoring her): What the devil has the Holy Grail got to do with any of this? Though it seems to be tied up in every other half-baked occult conspiracy since records began, so I suppose I shouldn't be surprised.

ROBBIE: Not necessarily, doctor- you see, there's a theory that it's not san-gréal - holy grail - but *Sang Real* - meaning Royal Blood. That spirit mentioned the Stuart bloodline having power over it - what if *Banjo* is the lost descendent that it meant?

CADWALLADER: *Banjo*? How could that witless gongoozler be the scion of a race of kings?

JESSIE (frustrated): If only we hud a magic stick that ye could use tae find oot - look at it! It's aw lit up like a Davy lamp, every time ye wave it near bawjaws here.

FX: She whacks **BANJO** several times - at each impact he yelps.

CADWALLADER: Dear God. *His Royal Majesty, King Banjo.*

BANJO: *Stoppit, ya dobber!*

JESSIE (still whacking): Ah don't know, ahm quite enjoyin' this wee sound an light show.

ROBBIE: Wait a moment-do you realise what this means?

JESSIE: We can make him intae a lamp stand fur Hunter Hoose an save oan the gas bill?

ROBBIE: Don't you remember what that spirit said? By Stuart blood and the sceptre it is commanded - that's how we defeat it and save the world!

CADWALLADER: And Banjo's our only hope, is he? I'm inclined to think a clipper to India is still my best chance of survival. Might last a week or two, if I'm lucky.

ROBBIE: Contagion doesn't respect national boundaries, Doctor. Our only option is to track it down - but where to find it?

JESSIE: Ah can tell ye one place it's no, an that's they tunnels. Wi' the amount o water comin in, even if it disnae huv tae breathe it'll be swept away if it disnae clear oot in time.

CADWALLADER: Where does anyone go in a flood? High ground. And where's the highest point in this wretched borough?

ALL THREE OF THEM: Edinburgh castle.

FX: Back in the house. **SOPHIA** walking towards the door.

CRESSIDA (still hoarse): Lady Roxburgh - aware as I am that grief can distort the workings of the rational mind, I am willing to accept your apology for your most unladylike assault on my person.

SOPHIA (ice cold): You will have no apology from me. Arthur was right - you are nothing but a selfish bully - and one who got him killed.

CRESSIDA: You're being irrational, lassie. I seem tae recall when I outlined the plan, you encouraged your husband to go with me.

SOPHIA: The existence of my sins does not absolve you of yours.

CRESSIDA: "Vengeance is mine, *I* will repay, saith the Lord". Romans, 12:19.

SOPHIA: "Even the devil can cite scripture for his purpose". Get out of my way.

FX: The door opens, closes, sloshing as they join the rest.

JESSIE: Ye done in there, then?

SOPHIA: The Laird is dead. Now to cut the head from this murderous serpent before it can strike again.

CADWALLADER: Got a lot of experience with venomous snakes, have you?

SOPHIA: Only the ones that wear a human skin. **(hesitates)** Why is that fool holding a glowing sceptre? And why is he missing an ear?

JESSIE: Lang story short, we're takin the magic stick tae Castle Rock tae smack that creepy wean upside the heid. Ye coming along?

SOPHIA: Of course. I have a score to settle there also.

FX: They start to wade up the hill, sloshing footsteps, river sounds.

HIERONYMUS (quietly): I've seen that look she's got in her eye, and I don't like it one bit. That's the one the widows had in India just before they started smashing their bracelets and throwing themselves on their husband's pyre.

JESSIE (similarly quiet) : Ye think she's gonnae hurt hersel?

HIERONYMUS: I'm more worried by the prospect of her hurting the rest of us. God alone knows what a woman in that state's capable of - I get the feeling what she did to the Laird was only the tip of the iceberg. Keep a good close eye on her - and Banjo too, for that matter. Royal blood or not, I don't trust that scrawny tat-monger one bit.

JESSIE: Hauld oan a wee minute, ahm no bein' responsible fur the homicidally grievin widow *an* that glaikit wee scrote. Ahm no wan a they goggly eyed lizards fae the zoo -

HIERONYMUS (urgently): Wait! Quiet, the lot of you, not a step further.

CRESSIDA (impatiently, still hoarse) : What is it now, Hieronymus?

HIERONYMUS (a quiet hiss): Over there. Look.

CRESSIDA: That? It's nothing but a floating log...

HIERONYMUS: Exactly what it wants you to think. *That*, is a fine fifteen foot specimen of *Crocodilus Niloticus*, known to the common masses as the Nile Crocodile.

JESSIE: Thank Goad ye had all that expensive education, ah'd never huv translatit that wan.

ROBBIE: What's a crocodile doing in Edinburgh?

CRESSIDA: We invoked Sobek - the Crocodile-Headed God of Ancient Egypt. I suppose we've summoned the animal along with all the water. Regardless, we shall simply walk past- it looks entirely dormant and can hardly pose a threat if we keep our distance.

HIERONYMUS: Of *course* it looks dormant- the damn thing's an ambush predator! I saw one take down a Cape Buffalo once, and that's no mean feat, I can tell you that for nothing.

SOPHIA: Can we shoot it?

HIERONYMUS: You *can*, but I wouldn't recommend it. Won't do much but enrage the brute. We've no choice but to about face and hope it doesn't decide to follow us.

FX: They slowly reverse.

ZOMBIE GRANNY 2 (distantly): *San...greal...*

BANJO: Ah telt ye there'd be another wan a they deid wimmin comin' along! Scarper!

FX: BANJO starts to run/splash.

HIERONYMUS: No, you fool, you're heading straight for the crocodile! Blast it all, the damn thing's noticed him, it's on the move.

CRESSIDA: How can we distract it? Try and get it to chase one of us instead?

HIERONYMUS: It may look slow and ponderous, but those things can get up a fair lick of speed when they've got a mind to. I wouldn't put much money on any of us beating it in a hundred yard dash even on land, and this water's getting deeper by the second.

JESSIE: Whut's yer suggestion then? Fling a stick fur it?

HIERONYMUS: The only thing on that lizard's mind right now is filling its belly - either with Mr Banjo there, or whichever poor fool gets there first.

JESSIE: So wur gonnae need a volunteer tae throw themselves in the way. Ah vote the doctor - he'd be a proper sit doon meal fur it.

ZOMBIE 2: *San... greal...*

HIERONYMUS: Now *there's* an idea... Right - step smart, cross the street and get that idiot's attention - do what you can to bring him back this way -

JESSIE: Gies yer hip flask then-haw, Banjo, hows about a wee dram? (**whisky sloshing**)

BANJO: Whit? Ahm running away fae the hungry deid - (**he stops running**) - a wee dram, did ye say? Awright then! (**He starts running back**)

JESSIE: So... eh, is it part o the plan that he's runnin straight past the crocodile's gub?

HIERONYMUS: It's a masterful plan, requiring accurate calculation and split second precision, I wouldn't expect you to understand - now, on my mark, fling that flask right in the middle of the street, let's see if that wretched reprobate can corner - now!

FX: A hip flask plopping into water.

BANJO (whiny): Whit did ye dae that fur? Noo I've goat tae fish it oot the watter-

JESSIE: It's sinkin', Banjo! Go quick or ye'll miss it! Oh goad ah cannae watch -

FX: The croc roars, erupts from the water and crashes back down.

JESSIE: Wid ye look at that.

HIERONYMUS: Remarkable force in those jaws.

CRESSIDA: Bitten... clean in half.

BANJO: Ah goat it! (**unscrewing of flask and glugging noises**) Where'd that deid wumman go?

HIERONYMUS: I doubt a few mouthfuls of dried up cadaver will satisfy it for long, but I'll settle for long enough for us to get past.

SOPHIA: To the castle, then. Let us bring this wretched affair to a close.

FX: They slosh off.

FX: A rabble outside Edinburgh Castle, crying children, shouting.

SOLDIER: I told you! There's no room! Go back to your homes and wait for help!

DESPERATE WOMAN: Our homes are already under water - we've nowhere else to go! For the love of God, *please!*

SOLDIER: Get back, all of you!

DESPERATE WOMAN: There are *children* out here-

FX: A rifle shot. The crowd react in fear then quieten.

SOLDIER: Back from the gate, or I'll shoot every last one of you, d'you hear me?

FX: The crowd begin to disperse. The society approach.

SOPHIA (disgusted): These guards are monsters. To stay inside their walls and watch while their city drowns.

HIERONYMUS: Better that than watch that crowd trample each other to death trying to get through the castle gates.

ROBERT: They might at least take the children in to safety.

HIERONYMUS: Open the door to one, you open it to 'em all. Besides, with that spirit in there spewing out disease, it's a pretty poor refuge. They're safer in the streets, flooded or no.

JESSIE: Aye, *they* don't know that though.

FX: They approach the guard post.

HIERONYMUS: Excuse me? Excuse me, Corporal?

SOLDIER: Halt! Not a step closer! Who goes there?

HIERONYMUS: *Doctor* Hieronymus Cadwallader, FRS. The surgeons of the Royal College have reason to believe that the source of the cholera outbreak affecting this city has originated within the well of the Castle itself, and I must insist that you allow us admission immediately.

SOLDIER: I'm under strict orders, sir, not to open the gate or leave my post.

CRESSIDA: Your delay condemns your brothers-in-arms to death!

SOLDIER: That's as may be, ma'am - but...

FX: A zombie is shuffling towards him from inside the castle. Clacking.

SOLDIER: Dear God - what is that thing -

HIERONYMUS: Open the door, boy - quickly -

SOLDIER (terrified): Get back... I'll shoot!

FX: Zombie clacks.

SOLDIER (panicking): No! Stay back!

CRESSIDA: Shoot it, Hieronymus!

HIERONYMUS: He's in the way - can't get a clear shot - shoot it in the head, you fool!

FX: Rifle shot, zombie snarls, chomping, soldier screaming. Several pistol shots. Body dropping. Silence.

SOPHIA: This one is different- it looks fresh, not dried out - and it's wearing the uniform of the Royal Highlanders...

CRESSIDA: The boy's fallen close to the gate - if I can just reach the keys on his belt...

FX: Keys jingle. CRESSIDA opens the heavy iron gate, they step through, she locks it behind them.

CRESSIDA: Now- let's have a look at you -

FX: Rustling as she moves the corpse and picks up the rifle.

CRESSIDA: Martini-Henry, Mark 1. Very nice. Designed in Edinburgh, as it happens...

HIERONYMUS: Of *course* it was..

FX: She loads and cocks the bolt action rifle. They hurry in. Then soft zombie moans, clacking teeth, rustling. Their footsteps stop.

CRESSIDA: Well now, that's quite the welcoming committee.

HIERONYMUS: They're everywhere. It must have turned half the garrison into its slaves.

JESSIE: Whit are they doin'? How come they're no attackin us?

FX: Zombies shuffle and clack.

HIERONYMUS (uneasy): They're closing up behind us...

SOPHIA: And parting up ahead...

BANJO: Haw, you, deid bloke, stop shovin'!

FX: PESTILENCE walking slowly towards them.

CRESSIDA (reverently): "And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with plague, and with the beasts of the earth".

HIERONYMUS (quietly): Revelation, 6:8.

PESTILENCE: Bring me the sceptre, and the son of the House of Stuart, and I shall permit the rest of you to live.

JESSIE (hissing): Why dis she no just come an take it?

HIERONYMUS (whispering): Frightened, maybe. They might be the only things on earth can harm her, it's possible she can't act directly against them.

JESSIE: Ah've goat tae say the chance tae get rid of Banjo is pretty temptin'...anybody else? (**a pause**) no takers?

CRESSIDA (firmly): No. Now, listen to me, I-

PESTILENCE (interrupting indifferently): Die, then.

HIERONYMUS: Always monologue, do they, Auntie?

FX: Clacking teeth, shuffling, moans, the zombies close in.

HIERONYMUS: They're closing in - we're going to have to fight our way through.

FX: Big fight: rifle and pistol shots, close combat noises, clacking.

HIERONYMUS (shouting): Keep moving! Our only chance is to get Banjo right up close to it

BANJO: Whit? Whit am ah supposed tae do then?

HIERONYMUS: Use the sceptre, you idiot! Get rid of the spirit, otherwise we're done for!

CRESSIDA: There's too many of them -

FX: More fighting, rifle & pistol shots.

HIERONYMUS: Down to my last bullet.

SOPHIA: My derringers are empty.

JESSIE: Mob's thinnest there - ah'll keep the first few busy, the rest of yous make a run through

HIERONYMUS: Very well - on three- one... two... three-

FX: Close combat sounds, zombies being knocked over, running.

CRESSIDA: There it is! We're almost there!

PESTILENCE (venomous, to Banjo): *You!* Stay back, or watch your friends die.

BANJO: They're no ma friends! Ah jist want ootae here!

PESTILENCE: Then drop the sceptre and leave.

CRESSIDA: He will not!

FX: The sceptre clanks to the ground.

CRESSIDA (horrified): Mr Banjo! I thought better of you than that!

HIERONYMUS: Oh no you don't. Pick that sceptre up or I'll find a sudden use for my last bullet. If we're dying here I'll be damned if *you* get to walk away scot-free.

SOPHIA: Here it is - take it -

BANJO (grunting as he is shoved forward): Whit dae ye want me to do?

HIERONYMUS: Banish it, you idiot!

BANJO: How do ah dae that? Ahm no a wizard wi a magic spell!

SOPHIA (frustrated) : How do you *normally* tell someone to go away?

BANJO: Ehhh....

FX: PESTILENCE shrieks.

BANJO: Go oan then, get tae fu...

FX: Fortunately the shriek of the spirit drowns him out. Corpses drop to the floor. Stillness follows.

CRESSIDA: It's gone. And whatever was animating those walking corpses, gone with it.

SOPHIA (hushed): It's over.

BANJO: Did ah jist save the world? Haw, mebbe ah am a wizard after all!

JESSIE (groans): Can someone roll this pure heavy bastard aff me?

FX: A body is tipped onto the ground.

HIERONYMUS (smugly): Well then, once again the Aletheian Society has saved the day. That's something worth writing about, Robert, wouldn't you say?

ROBBIE: I dare say it is, doctor - I can see it in print - "The Bodysnatcher," by Robert Louis Stevenson.

FX: The last of the earth being shovelled.

ARTHUR: Hooray! So they all lived happily ever after. **(pause)** Well, except for me that is.

FX: The last of the earth is shovelled. Mourners leaving, bells toll.

ARTHUR: I... you know, Godalming, I don't feel ready for this.

GODALMING: No one ever is, sir. I know I wasn't. Can't be helped, though, nothing to do but accept it and move on. Unless, of course...

ARTHUR (urgently): Unless what? Do you mean to say there's an alternative? To *death*?

GODALMING: If you'd like, sir, I can have a word with my employer on your behalf.

ARTHUR: With Doctor *Cadwallader*? I thought you said that was against the rules? Besides, what could he possibly do?

GODALMING (a gentle laugh): Not Doctor Cadwallader, no, sir. My *other* employer. The one with the power to bring you back to life. If you was willing, that is.

ARTHUR (after a pause, resolutely): No. I've had a good innings. Let my death count for something, saving the people I love. I'm ready.

GODALMING (disappointed): As you prefer, sir.

FX: Peaceful outdoors, birdsong.

JESSIE (gently): 'Moan, hen. It's time tae go.

SOPHIA: And that's it? We walk away from here, and life just... goes on without him?

JESSIE: That's about the size of it, aye.

ARTHUR (tenderly): I'm here, Sophie. I'm still here.

SOPHIA (after a silence, in a desolate whisper): Farewell, dear heart.

FX: Rustling as SOPHIA gets to her feet.

ARTHUR (panicky): No - wait - Sophie, don't go - Godalming! I've changed my mind! I don't want to die!

GODALMING (smug): Are you quite sure, sir?

ARTHUR: Yes! I'm sure! What do I need to do? Just make it happen!

GODALMING: Whatever the cost, sir?

ARTHUR: Yes! Damnation, whatever it takes, just bring me back to life!

GODALMING (a pause): Very good, sir.

FX: Birdsong, footsteps, rustling as they walk away. Very faintly a small bell is ringing, getting louder and insistent.

SOPHIA: Wait - do you hear that-?

JESSIE: Hear whit? (**the bell gets louder**) Where are ye going?

FX: SOPHIA sprinting back up the hill.

SOPHIA (shouting, breathless): Arthur? ARTHUR!

END CREDITS PLAY

FX: A broom sweeping up after the funeral, GILLESPIE grumbling and muttering. The broom continues in the background.

GILLESPIE: Aw that fuss, an naebody wis deid after aw'. Ah widnae huv pit it past them tae dae it aw jist tae make wurk fur me.

FX: The thing under the stairs makes a whining sound.

GILLESPIE: Aw right, wurk fur me *an'* you, ah mean. Aye, go oan, then, sook up they crumbs oot the carpet, ah'll get ye a wee plate a' left over sausage rolls once wur done.

FX: The thing sooks up some crumbs and chews them noisily.

GILLESPIE: The wages a' sin are death, right enough, an' its sinful business they goat uptae in Edinburgh once they were oot fae under ma watchful eye.

FX: Shuffling and snuffling from the thing.

GILLESPIE: Aye, yer right. The daft laddie's no the one ah'd've bin glad tae see pit in the ground. Nor any o' they three godless hoydens - no even yon auld yin. Naw, the wan that deserves it is-

CADWALLADER (distant, interrupting): Gillespie! Get your wretched, joyless Presbyterian carcass up here this instant!

GILLESPIE (calls back): Comin', doctor Cadwallader! (**he trails off into inarticulate grumbling**)

CADWALLADER: Quick as you like, man! There's dangerous society work to be done, and only my keen mind, splendid physique and dauntless courage stand between the society and certain death!

GILLESPIE (more hopefully): Ah well, ah'll no pit away the black drapes just yet. (Calling back)
Coming, Doctor Cadwallader!