The Magpies – Transcript
Season 1, Episode 9: The Embassy Score, Part 2

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## Intro

Rhi: Welcome back to Duskwall. Thank you for joining us. I hope you’re ready for today’s episode. It’s a big one in a lot of ways. As always, please rate and review us on iTunes if you can. It’s a great way to help others find the show.

A few quick announcements. First, if you can’t get enough of me talking here on Magpies you can listen to a couple interviews I did with some other shows recently. Last week I was on Tales from the Fandom as part of their Women in Tabletop Gaming Month celebration, and next week I’ll be on I Am Here. Links to both shows will be in the show notes, and I’ll tweet the link to my I Am Here episode when it goes live.

Also, Minna and I will be at GenCon this August. I’m running one game of Blades in the Dark that filled up within a few hours of event registration going live, and due to my schedule for the rest of the con I’m not gonna be able to run any others. Sorry about that. I’ll be there all four days, and Minna will be there Friday and Saturday, so if you’re going let us know. We’d love to meet some fans.

Next, Madge will tell us about this month’s featured charity.

Madge: On September 20, 2017, Hurricane Maria, a Category 4 storm made landfall in Puerto Rico. Now, over six months after the initial landfall, residents of the island are still dealing with damage caused by the storm. Clean water, food, medicine and fuel are still in limited supply, and parts of Puerto Rico are still without power. The entire population of the island, 3.4 million people, has been affected by Hurricane Maria, and the island is still recovering. As the 2018 hurricane season draws near it’s as important as ever to help our fellow U.S. citizens in Puerto Rico, which is why our featured charity for the month is Unidos.

Started by the Hispanic Federation Unidos is a program created specifically to help disaster relief and recovery in Puerto Rico. So far Unidos has delivered millions of pounds of food, water, and essentials to help those affected most by the storm thanks to the generosity of people like you. To join them, go to HispanicFederation.org/Unidos and donate. On the page you’ll also find a link to other ways that you can help the people of Puerto Rico.

Rhi: The link for Unidos will be in the show notes.

Now then, let’s get started. Shall we?

## Story Continues [0:02:35]

Rhi: So, Blaire, what I’m picturing is that you kind of like stab forward like you’re gonna get him in the gut—

Kim: [gasps]

Rhi: --and he manages to dodge out of the way, and reaches to his side and draws a saber, and starts yelling:

Rhi (as Young Man): Intruders! There’s intruders! Guards!

Kim: Shit.

Madge: Great.

Rhi: And starts chasing after you guys. You guys basically get chased back out the door and down the alley a ways.

Kim: Damn it.

Rhi: Myra, you probably see the two of them sprint away.

Madge: [giggles] Myra’s outside, so it’s Myra standing there in awkward silence and then out they come, right behind—[laughs]

Rhi: Blaire and Phin, you’re able to run far enough to where you’re able to find a place to hide where they aren’t currently chasing you.

Madge: We jump into a conspicuously placed wagon full of hay, until our wanted level decreases.

[laughter]

Josie: Just beware of any white cloaked individuals coming in from above.

Rhi: [laughs] So Myra, you have currently not been spotted.

Minna: Is it a bad idea for—I think I’m just gonna go casually that way and sneak in where they were. I know the time scale when the office should be empty. I’m gonna try and find a place to hide a little bit closer to the office.

Rhi: Okay. Yeah.

Minna: So, what does a Devil’s Bargain look like there?

Rhi: Hmm. What does a Devil’s Bargain look like? So, you are sneaking back in…

Minna: When I come back that door is going to be locked.

Rhi: And guarded. I think that works. That’ll be the Devil’s Bargain, that the door is gonna be locked and guarded behind you, so you’re gonna be a lot more limited in your escape routes, but yes.

Madge: [laughing] Meanwhile Blaire and Phin are probably gonna go on a bar crawl.

Rhi: [covers mouth laughing] Oh no!

Minna: So, please let me roll to hide in some convenient place. I’ve rolled a 6.

Rhi: Okay, so, Myra. You hear shouting and running, you step into the shadows, you watch Phin and Blaire go tearing past, then you watch the Iruvian man who’d been speaking with you go tearing past, and then there’s a bit of a pause, and then you see a pair of guards with swords drawn go running past as well. As soon as the guards clear your hiding spot you just very calmly and casually walk around to the open back door—

Minna: [nervously Mm-hmm…

Rhi: --quietly walk down the hall and up the stairs, where you are able to find a small office that looks like nobody’s using it right now. There’s a desk and a chair, but bookshelves are empty, there’s nothing on the walls, there’s no papers or anything. It looks like it’s an unused office at the moment. You just kind of quietly duck in there, and close the door. [laughs]

So, circling back to Minx.

Josie: Minx, given that her cover is not blown, decides to maintain it and simply meet up with everyone later, and will make a hubbub about it being unsafe, or what was that, what’s happening, what’s the information.

Rhi: So, the girl at the desk is like:

Rhi (as Girl): I’m—I’m so sorry. I’m not sure what’s happening. P-Please stay seated. Um…

Rhi: And she’s like peering down the hall, but looking back at you a lot, so she doesn’t see Myra. After a few minutes the two guards and the other assistant come back, and you hear the assistant be like:

Rhi (as Assistant): You two, lock that back door and stay on it. I’m going to have additional guards posted around the outside to start sweeping the area. I—[seethes] Those damn Lampblacks.

Madge: [giggles loudly]

Minna: Oh no!

Kim: Yes!

Josie: We didn’t mean to! We didn’t mean to.

[laughter]

Rhi: So, they’re a higher tier than you, but their weakness is: They just lost a huge chunk of their security apparatus, because they kind of used The Red Sashes as hired muscle, and The Red Sashes are GONE, so they are like, kind of reeling and trying to fill in a lot of security gaps.

Josie: Ohhh.

Rhi: Yeah, so he’s assuming that it’s The Lampblacks coming to try to finish the job. [trails quietly into laughter]

Josie: Oh no. [laughs]

Kim: This is the best.

Rhi: So, he comes back in and his hair is kind of tossed from running. He’s trying to smooth it.

Rhi (as Assistant): Ma’am, I am terribly sorry about this. We have unfortunately had some incidents with a local criminal gang attempting—

Josie (as Minx): Well, is everyone safe? Is everything safe? What--?

Rhi (as Assistant): Yes. Yes. There were two attempted intruders. I’m not sure if they were thieves or assassins. There have been—I’m sure the guards out front mentioned that there have been a number of security threats here recently.

Josie (as Minx): Mm-hmm. When one says security threats I generally do not find it means potential assassins have infiltrated the building on a regular basis.

Rhi (as Assistant): I-I know. I’m—[sighs] This is difficult and shocking for us as well, and if you would like to reschedule your appointment until we can guarantee the security of the building I will understand. I’ll make sure that we get something on the books.

Josie (as Minx): I do believe I shall wait before I depart into these unsafe alleys at this time.

Rhi (as Assistant): All right. Please have a seat and I will keep you updated on what the situation seems to be.

Josie (as Minx): All right. Well, thank you.

Rhi (as Assistant): I need to go check in upstairs, but I’ll, uh, bring you more tea. Or would you like wine, if that would help calm your nerves?

Josie (as Minx): Wine would be much appreciated right now. Thank you.

Rhi (as Assistant): All right. Yes. Give me a few moments.

Rhi: He heads off upstairs. Uh, Blaire and Phin. [exasperated laugh]

Madge: [laughs]

Kim: [resigned] yeah.

Rhi: You guys are hiding in a cart. There don’t seem to be any guards coming down upon you at this moment, but you’re about a good two or three blocks away from the embassy at this point.

Kim (as Blaire): [sighs] So now what?

Madge (as Phin): I don’t know. We could probably try getting in through a window, but they’ve probably beefed up security now.

Kim (as Blaire): Yeah, they’re on high alert now because they saw us. [sighs] Oh, this is not how I wanted today to go.

Madge (as Phin): Mm, me neither. Do you think we should wait across the street from the embassy?

Kim (as Blaire): I mean, it can’t hurt to scope it out if we can stay in the shadows.

Madge (as Phin): Yeah. Well, yeah, we have to move around and make sure it doesn’t look like we’re staring at the place, because otherwise we’ll get in trouble for loitering or whatever.

[quiet snickering]

Kim (as Blaire): Can we go to roofs? Do you think that would be better?

Madge (as Phin): Roofs might be better. Yeah.

Kim (as Blaire): Yeah, all right. Let’s scope it out on rooftop then.

Rhi: Okay. You’re able to scramble up to the rooftop of the building that you’re closest to, and I think for just the moment, this kind of first stretch of your trek back, the buildings are fairly close together, so you can just sort of almost walk across the rooftops. I’m just sort of picturing a lot of the buildings up here, in some places you have to jump down or climb down a little bit because there’s a roof that’s lower, there’s some where you have to climb up a little bit, but they’re all like very closely packed together for this first part of your rooftop trek back towards the embassy.

So, while you guys are doing that, Myra.

Minna: I’m going to wait the 15-20 minutes until it sounds like she takes her old client out.

Rhi: You hear after a few minutes not quite running but heavy, quick moving footsteps go down the hall. You hear a door open. There’s sort of some low voices that you can’t make out through the door.

Minna: Do they sound familiar?

Rhi: One of them you can’t really make out clearly. The one that you can hear sounds like the assistant who’s been talking to you throughout this whole thing. So, you hear them talking, and then after a minute or so you hear the footsteps come back and go back down the stairs.

Minna: I don’t think that she’s gone with her client yet, then. I am waiting for her office to be empty for a minute.

Rhi: So, after probably a good 10 minutes since kind of the whole dust up in the hallway the assistant comes back over to you, Minx.

Rhi (as Assistant): I’ve spoken to the ambassador and her current guest, and she wishes to continue with business as usual as much as possible. Due to the disturbance it’s taken a bit longer to finish up the meeting, but once that’s done I can escort you upstairs and you can meet with her.

Josie (as Minx): I’m glad to hear that business can proceed forward. I must admit I myself am not quite ready to leave yet in any case, but thank you for updating me.

Rhi (as Assistant): Yes, of course. Right, well, I need to return to my work. I’ll let you know as soon as she’s ready to see you.

Josie (as Minx): Indeed. Do check back.

Rhi: He heads off again. So, let’s go back to Blaire and Phin.

Madge: Yay.

Rhi: You guys have gotten pretty close to the embassy building, but you’re now basically like kind of at the alley that you went through when you were running, and in order to get onto the embassy roof, if that is what you want to do, you’re gonna have to make a Prowl, or if there’s some other way you think you can make your way across, you’re gonna have to make some kind of roll to get from the roof that you’re on onto the embassy roof.

Madge: Okay. I have an idea. My suggestion was if we were gonna move onto the other roof we could distract the guards first by throwing rocks down the alley and then jumping over.

Kim: Oh, yeah. We could do that. If things call for jumping over the roof we should keep that in mind.

Madge: For now we’ll just stay where we’re at.

Rhi: As you’re up there, you do see a single guard come down the alley apparently just doing a looping patrol around the building, but it’s just one guard which is kind of weird, because most places when you’re having people on patrol they will have two guards.

Madge: Yeah.

Rhi: So is there anything you wanna look for in particular up here, or are you guys just kind of hanging out keeping an eye out for the moment?

Madge: Can I look for other guards? Like, if they’ve positioned anyone on the roof?

Rhi: Yes. I think this is gonna be controlled. There’s not really an immediate threat to you up here.

Madge: Three.

Rhi: The way the building is angled you can’t really see much beyond the alley that you came in, and you kind of push yourself up and lean out, a little far, and then Blaire like grabs the back of your shirt and pulls you back and is like a little freaked out, and yeah, you’re just not able to see anything.

Madge: Dang.

Rhi: Back inside… Myra, you do eventually hear a pair of footsteps come up and then two sets of footsteps go back down the stairs.

Minna: Mm, so she has not left her office.

Rhi: No.

Minna: It’s going to be—Hmm. This is some decision making.

Rhi: Yes. She is alone in her office at the moment. [laughs]

Minna: I’m going to look into the ghost field and see if there’s any ghosts around. [laughs]

Kim: Do it!

Rhi: Cool. Good. I see no way this could go wrong. There’s actually tons of ways it could go wrong and I’m very excited about it.

Josie: [laughs]

Minna: I’m gonna ask about the Devil’s Bargain and then make my decision.

Rhi: Whatever ghost you end up chatting with is going to remember you and be interested in you the way that sword ghost seems to have kind of glommed onto Blaire a bit.

Minna: Oh man. Oh man. I’m honestly kind of tempted for story purposes.

Rhi: That’s why I gave it. [smiling]

Kim: Do it~.

Minna: Okay. I’ma do it. I’ma do it!

Rhi: All right.

Minna: I’ve rolled a 3.

Kim: Nooo.

Madge: Good gracious.

Rhi: So, there is a ghost. It still has its very clearly defined features, clothes are still very visible, and based on what this person’s wearing it looks like they were a member of The Red Sashes.

Minna: Mm.

Rhi: And the ghost doesn’t quite notice you at first. She seems to be rushing through the wall in the direction of where Avrathi’s office seems to be, and then like getting sort of blown back, and then she tries that a couple times and then she notices you, and looks at you, and just goes:

Rhi (as Ghost): You. You can get me in there. You can make her pay!

Rhi: And she’s gonna lunge towards you.

Minna: Ahhh! Um, um…

Rhi: So, complication, you’ve got a ghost trying to possess you again.

Minna: Yeah!

Josie: Oh, that’s awesome. Yay.

Minna: Oh my God.

Rhi: Now, you do have a spiritbane charm.

Minna: Yeah. I think it lives on like a chain around her neck, and she just whips it out and holds it up.

Minna (as Myra): You can’t—You can’t have me.

Rhi: Yeah. The ghost sort of—The way that you had seen it go through the walls and then get blown back into the room, it sort of has that blowback on a smaller level where the spiritbane charm seems to knock it back a couple feet.

Minna: I think Myra notices that similarity and she kind of narrows her eyes.

Minna (as Myra): Interesting. She has protection against you. Makes a lot of ghosts, does she?

Rhi (as Ghost): She made plenty when she left us there to get slaughtered! You can get me in.

Rhi: It tries to move towards you, but can’t seem to overcome the repellence of the charm.

Minna (as Myra): Can we make a deal?

Madge: [nervous throat noises]

Kim: [musically] Make a deal with the ghost. Make a deal with the ghost.

Rhi: It stops, eyes you kind of suspiciously.

Rhi (as Ghost): What sort of a deal?

Minna (as Myra): You get Avrathi out of that office, and I’ll get you into it. This is a short term deal. I will not—You cannot join me for very long, but I will get you in there.

Rhi: I think you’re gonna need to make a roll to convince it.

Minna: Yeah. Yeah… What am I doing? [nervously]

Rhi: Yeah. What are you doing? [laughs]

Minna: Okay. What am I rolling, Consort?

Rhi: Probably. It sounds like you’re making an honest deal, as you usually do.

Minna: I don’t think that Ghost Contract works on ghosts.

Rhi: I don’t see why it wouldn’t.

Minna: Okay. I might have to do—I rolled a 6!

Kim: Woo!

Rhi: Okay.

Minna: And I’m gonna make a Ghost Contract with the ghost about that short time period, because yeah. [laughs]

Rhi: I think you have to lower the charm, and the ghost cautiously drifts closer to you.

Minna (as Myra): So, if we’re gonna make the deal…

Minna: I hold out a hand.

Rhi: Okay, and the ghost sort of cocks her head to the side a little bit, and is just like:

Rhi (as Ghost): This isn’t going to work.

Rhi: And like, goes to shake your hand, and then her eyes go wide because she’s able to physically touch and shake your hand?

Minna: I think where our palms met, that’s where the mark appears.

Rhi: It flairs up bright on both of you. She pulls her hand back and shoots you a look.

Minna (as Myra): We made a binding contract. You will stay exactly as long as we have agreed to and no longer, or you will regret it.

Rhi (as Ghost): Very well. You want her out of the office?

Minna (as Myra): I do.

Rhi: She nods, drifts through the door, and you hear a lot of screaming. Every door in the hallway but yours slams open and shut. You hear another scream that is not the ghost, and then running footsteps.

Minx, the assistant has just come to get you.

Rhi (as Assistant): Um, if you can just give the ambassador just a few moments to finish with her notes then I can take you upstairs.

Rhi: And then there’s just screaming and cacophony from upstairs.

Josie (as Minx): What is going on in this embassy? Seriously.

Rhi (as Assistant): I have no idea.

Rhi: This guy just looks like—He has clung to his decorum throughout this whole thing, and now he’s just like ‘fuck, I don’t know.’ [laughs]

Kim: This is above his paygrade.

Madge: ‘I just work here.’ [laughs]

Rhi: As the two of you are standing there looking like just in shock, an Iruvian woman, middle aged, in a nice jacket and long skirt, comes tearing down the stairs and is just like:

Rhi (as Woman): What is going on in here?! There’s some kind of spirit or something up there now! And— Where are the guards?!

Josie (as Minx): Ghost troubles, now?

Rhi: She just starts yelling at the assistant. The assistant is like:

Rhi (as Assistant): I don’t know, Ambassador. I don’t—

Rhi: Like, the two of them are going back and forth, and are just very involved with each other, so Minx, I don't know what you’re gonna do.

Josie: You know, I think I’m gonna approach the ambassador’s assistant, but also the ambassador, and kind of just try to fuel the shouting chaos, because I’m offended about all this. What’s going on? Why are there ghosts now?

Rhi: So, just trying to keep them all tied up down here?

Josie: Yes.

Rhi: Yeah, okay. That works. I’m trying to think if Blaire and Phin would notice any of this. I think you guys are close enough that you hear screaming. It’s kind of distant, muffled screaming, but you hear screaming coming from inside the building.

Kim: Is there any way I can distinguish between human screams and the ghost scream?

Rhi: That’s a good question. Let me think. Um…

Kim: [laughs]

Rhi: I think that you are able to tell the difference, because you’re you. [laughs] The ghost’s screaming, the reason you’re able to recognize it is because it’s super, super loud, louder than most humans could get.

Kim: Yeah, and I’d like to imagine it’s got some kind of echo effect, too. It’s wailing more than like a scream, I think.

Rhi: Yeah.

Kim (as Blaire): Oh, Phin. Phin, Phin, Phin.

Madge (as Phin): What? What?!

Kim (as Blaire): Phin.

Madge (as Phin): …

Kim (as Blaire): There’s some spooky shit happening in there.

Madge (as Phin): Uh, ugh, okay, then we’re staying here, right?

Kim (as Blaire): No!

Madge: [laughs]

Kim (as Blaire): If there’s a ghost— This wasn’t part of the plan. We should probably check it out. We have to make sure Myra and Minx are okay.

Madge (as Phin): Uh…

Kim (as Blaire): Also, if there’s a ghost there maybe I can help it.

Madge (as Phin): [groans]

Minna: I love this so much.

Rhi: I’m very proud of Blaire for thinking of her friends first,--

Josie: She’s a good girl.

Rhi: --and not immediately like: ‘Phin, there’s a ghost in there. We have to help it! Oh, and I guess we should help Minx and Myra…’

[laughter]

Madge: [groans, face in hands]

Kim: Can I just roll a Prowl to run across the roofs and jump onto the embassy? I’m just gonna fucking do it. I’m not gonna wait for Phin’s permission.

Rhi: If you wanna do it, yeah.

Kim: Oh boy. I think I might push myself. I’ve got a little bit of stress left to spend.

Rhi: What’s your stress at right now?

Kim: Uh, 4.

Rhi: Oh yeah.

Kim: I got a 5.

Rhi: Five, okay. You do it, but there’s a consequence. So, I’m gonna go with the very classic…

Kim: Oh boy.

Rhi: …because this is fun…

Kim: Oh no.

Rhi: You get a running start, and you jump, and you sail majestically through the air, and you start to descend and you hold your hands out, and you just barely catch on the edge of the roof, and your feet like bang against the wall, and you’re dangling there by your fingertips. The ghost screaming has kind of stopped, and in the silence after the ghost stops screaming you hear muffled shouting from the door below where the guards are.

Kim: Okay.

Rhi: So, Phin. [laughs]

Madge: Phin just like— She was running her hands up into her hair when she saw you jump, like what are you doing, and she just like slowly drags them down her face…

Rhi: [laughs]

Madge (as Phin): Oh my gosh.. Oh… Okay. Okay. Cool. This is what we’re doing now. Great.

Kim: [laughs]

Madge: And I’m gonna jump after her.

Rhi: Okay. Do you wanna—

Madge: What’s a Devil’s Bargain look like? Because I cannot push myself.

Rhi: I know. I know where your stress is at.

Madge: Shut up. [giggles] This is fine.

Rhi: Okay. Let me think. Devil’s Bargain… How do you feel about taking another level 1 harm?

Madge: [clap] yeah.

Rhi: And again, risky position, same as Blaire.

Madge: Okay, so I got a 5 as my highest.

Rhi: Okay. Hoo, oh, I know what’s gonna happen. Okay, so Phin, you’re just like: ‘Why is this happening? This is—Why?’ And then you run, and because you’re in much better physical shape, you land, and rather than your fingers catching on the gutter, your heel kicks off the gutter as you land and you kind of bleed momentum, run off onto the roof a little bit. However, by kicking the gutter, it kind of kicked it loose.

Josie: Oh—

Minna: Um?!

Rhi: And now it’s dangling at an angle, and Blaire is dangling down even further in a much more precarious situation.

Kim (as Blaire): Phin!

Madge: Ohhh no. Okay. Uh… [laughs] How close am I to her?

Rhi: You’re pretty close. It’s the sort of thing where you kind of keep running a couple steps to bleed off momentum, so it’s not like you ran really far.

Madge: Okay, and what’s the level 1 harm I’m doing here?

Rhi: You twisted your ankle.

Madge: Yeah. I’m gonna turn around and I’m gonna try and pull her up. [laugh]

Rhi: Okay. I will remind you, you do have climbing gear, which includes rope.

Madge: Yeah! So I’m gonna use the climbing gear to throw her a rope.

Rhi: Okay, and I think that this will be Prowl, and I think this makes a lot of sense to do as a group check, or like one of you is aiding the other. I don’t know how you wanna—but I think you both kind of need to be involved.

Kim: Right.

Madge: Mm-hmm.

Kim: How do you wanna do this? Do you wanna do this as a group? Because I don’t mind—

Madge: Yeah, let’s do this as a group.

Kim: All right. I don’t mind leading.

Madge: I’ll take the stress for it.

Kim: Are you sure?

Madge: Yeah.

Kim: Okay. [laughs]

Rhi: All right. So, yeah, both of you go ahead and roll Prowl again.

Kim: Are you kidding me? I got 3 for both of my dice.

Rhi: Okay.

Madge: [breathes heavily]

Kim: Don’t you dare drop me.

Madge: [giggles, sniffles]

Kim: Don’t you dare do it.

Madge: [laughing] I got a 1.

Kim: [shrieks] No!

Minna: No, no, no, no…

Rhi: So, Phin, you said you were gonna take the stress.

Madge: Yeah.

Rhi: What’s that put you at, Phin?

Madge: Uh, how many do I take?

Rhi: Two.

Kim: Are you okay?

Madge: [growing laughter] … Yeah. I just \sparked\ a trauma.

Kim: Madge!

Josie: God damn it Why?

Madge: [laughs]

Rhi: So, Phin, you run over and throw the rope down to Blaire. Blaire grabs the rope and puts most of her weight on it, and Phin you’re not well balanced up there. You just kind of very desperately, you still got that explosion recovery, your ankle’s fucked up, and Blaire is kind of panicking, yanks on the rope real hard… You lose your balance and fall.

[gasps]

Madge: Gosh

Rhi: And you hit the ground in the courtyard just as the two guards come out, and…

Minna: Oh my God.

Rhi: You have just enough presence to sort of stagger to your feet and run, and you just run, and the way that trauma works is: When you suffer trauma you’re taken out of the action. So, Phin just takes off.

Kim (as Blaire): [weakly] Phin…

Rhi: One of the guards chases after. Blaire, you are still dangling from the edge of the roof… and we’re gonna go back inside. Myra, you heard several thumps and shouting from outside, but you don’t really have time to go investigate.

Minna: Yeah, let’s not. I gotta keep my mind n—I gotta keep my head in the game.

Rhi: Yeah. You don’t have time to investigate, because the ghost comes back and doesn’t really hesitate, just kind of dives into you.

Minna: I think Myra is prepared for this to happen and has built controls around it, so she’s not going to be as freaked out as she could be. I think Myra learnt to deal with the supernatural as a way of protecting herself, and when she’s in control she’s relatively okay.

Rhi: Yeah. Is there anything in particular that’s going through her head as this happens?

Minna: I think it’s one of those she feels another presence inside her chest and she tells herself it’s okay, you are in control, this is only for a short time, focus on the task at hand. What first? You go out into the hallway, and she does so. You go into the office, and you just look for anything useful, and so she begins \casting\ around inside the office.

Rhi: Okay. The thing is, as soon as you get into the office the ghost kind of tries to leave since it can’t get anything out of you, and you don’t get blown backwards the way it was, but you stumble back a couple steps.

Minna: Can I communicate with it?

Rhi: Yeah. It’s basically on a thought-to-thought level.

Minna (as Myra): What did you want in here?

Rhi (as Ghost): I want to wait here for her to come back so she can pay.

Minna (as Myra): I’m sorry, but that is not going to be possible. Is there something that you can do before she returns that will satisfy you?

Rhi: When you say that’s not possible your vision almost goes red with rage.

Minna: I think Myra clenches her fists, but she stays strong.

Rhi: It’s just this kind of seething rage for a few moments, and then it’s like:

Rhi (as Ghost): I will destroy her work then, if you will not let me have her.

Minna (as Myra): Let me find any information she has found on strange artifacts first. Will you help me with that?

Rhi (as Ghost): That was not part of our deal.

Minna (as Myra): If we can satisfy both of our aims, then this will have gone better, don’t you think?

Rhi: If you want to convince it you’re gonna have to make a roll.

Minna: All right. Is this a—What is this?

Rhi: I don't know. What is it?

Minna: I mean, I think I’m trying to reason with it, and I think it’s probably a Consort. That’s a 4.

Rhi: Okay. Again, you get that kind of seething rage and bitterness, and then it just kind of:

Rhi (as Ghost): Fine, but I can’t help you with anything until I can get out. There’s something in here blocking me.

Minna (as Myra): I understand that. I don’t know how to stop it right now.

Rhi: You can look around to see if you can find something that would be—

Minna: Okay. What do I do for that? Survey?

Rhi: Yeah.

Minna: I got a 6.

Rhi: Okay. Yeah. You look around very quickly, there’s nothing really obvious on the walls, pull open some desk drawers, and then in the bottom drawer of the desk… you know when you’ve gotten close to it because it’s a struggle to open—

Minna: It’s like placing the same pole of magnets together.

Rhi: Mm-hmm. Exactly. It feels very much like that, just that pressure resistance. You can force the magnets together, but it’s hard, it’s really hard. So, you drag the drawer open and have to force yourself to grab this carved obsidian idol that is covered in runes and things, and it’s basically sort of a humanoid figure with its arms crossed up in front of its face, kind of a defensive thing.

Minna: Can I just like toss it out the door? Because that would be useful to have, like if I pick it up on the way out.

Rhi: Yeah, you can just set it out in the hall.

Minna: Yeah, I put it in the hall.

Rhi: As soon as it’s out of range the ghost bursts out of you, and just sort of whips around and looks at you.

Rhi (as Ghost): Tell me what I have to do before I can destroy this place.

Minna (as Myra): I’m looking for anything on the blood-iron ring, or other strange artifacts, but that is my priority.

Rhi (as Ghost): Fine.

Rhi: You go ahead and make your roll. For right now it’s going to be controlled position, standard effect, you and the ghost are looking for information.

Minna: Rolled another 6!

Rhi: Okay, awesome. You find a small, leather bound journal. Unfortunately, as with the notes you got from Arun, it’s in Iruvian, but you’re still able to tell this is something useful because flipping through there are also sketches. There’s a sketch of that idol that you just put outside, there are sketches of a couple other things that you don’t really recognize, there is a page that has a few sketches of things involving eyes.

Minna: [squeamish groan]

Rhi: None of them are an exact match for the thing that you actually have, but they look similar. Then, towards the middle it looks like it was copied as a reference out of that book you had, a sketch of the blood-iron ring, so you’re guessing that the notes on that page probably relate. You’re gonna have to find somebody to translate it, but there’s a bunch of notes there.

You see there’s a letter on her desk, recent date, and you glance at it and your eyes go to the signature which is Harvale Brogan.

Minna: Hmm. I’m gonna take that, too.

Rhi: Yeah. So, you’ve got a notebook of all kinds of fun and exciting notes on stuff, and a letter from Harvale Brogan about something.

Minna: I think I’m just gonna tell the spirit:

Minna (as Myra): I will leave you to your work.

Minna: And leave, and take the idol.

Rhi: Yeah. As you get about half way down the hall you just hear slamming, and things falling and being tossed around, it sounds like there’s a small tornado happening in there.

Minna: Mm-hmm. I’m gonna go back to that little office and try to climb out that window.

Rhi: Okay. So, let’s go back to Blaire, since Blaire is in the most precarious of states right now.

Kim: Oh boy. Yeah.

Rhi: You are dangling over the yard. Phin has just fallen and run off with one of the guards in pursuit.

Kim: Did I see her run away?

Rhi: I think you did. I think you were able to kind of look over your shoulder and see. So, what are you gonna do?

Kim: What do you think would be best to roll to pull myself up there?

Rhi: Probably Prowl, it’s the physical one.

Kim: Oh boy, all right.

Rhi: You could also… There are windows on this floor if you wanted to try to like kick through one of those.

Kim: [humming] There’s a window right at kick height where I’m dangling from right now? Like, knee or foot?

Rhi: Yes. Do you have any space left in your load where you could have like a pistol to shoot it out?

Kim: Ooh, yes I do. I have 1 in Skirmish. We can try that I guess.

Rhi: This feels like a desperate situation to me. You’re dangling one-handed and trying to shoot.

Kim: Yeah.

Rhi: So you’re gonna get experience.

Kim: Cool.

Rhi: Got that going for ya.

Kim: Cool. Three. Okay…

Rhi: Three… Oh boy.

Kim: Yeah…

Rhi: You do shoot, but the kickback makes you lose your grip and you fall.

Kim: [shrieks] No!

Rhi: So, let’s see…

Kim: No… I don’t wanna…

Rhi: On a desperate, a fall like that, you’re gonna…

Kim: Rhi…

Rhi: Oh God, this is gonna be level 3 harm.

Kim: [distraught] Rhi, no!

Josie: Ahh!

Rhi: I’m sorry. You failed a desperate roll.

Josie: Nooo.

Kim: What’s the level 3 harm? [whines, laughs]

Rhi: Shattered Leg.

Kim: Nooo! My baby!

Rhi: You are welcome to try to resist. I don't know how much stress you’re at. How much stress do you have?

Kim: I have 4 left. I’ll go with the broken leg.

Rhi: Okay. You hit the ground, you’ve got level 3 harm, Shattered Leg. Minx, you in the midst of your screaming argument with the ambassador and her assistant hear yet another explosion of ghostly wailing and destruction upstairs, which means you don’t hear Blaire fall outside.

Josie: Oh dear. What do I do? I think it might be finally time to bail. I’m gonna keep screaming at everyone and slowly edge towards the stairs, but what I’m gonna do is be screaming and then right at the end, just:

Josie (as Minx): Cheerio.

Josie: And then cast my cloak in front of them, and then bolt upstairs gaining the initiative in the situation.

[laughter]

Rhi: Okay, yeah. So, you throw your cloak off dramatically and run.

Josie: Can I opt for it to gently land on their faces?

Rhi: Oh, absolutely.

Josie: [laughs]

Rhi: So, you run upstairs just as Myra is running towards the office, and you two almost run into each other outside that door.

Minna (as Myra): Out the window.

Josie (as Minx): All right. Out the window. Let’s go.

Rhi: I’m going to allow that, given the chaos inside, I will let you guys climb down without having to make a roll.

Minna: Nice.

Rhi: You climb down. You see Blaire on the ground.

Kim: Oh, I’m crying.

Rhi: Yeah. She is in very bad shape.

Minna: I think we carry her away.

Josie: Aw.

Rhi: Yeah, yeah. You guys get her up and carry her out.

Josie: Minx is fussing with her the whole way. No, precious baby. [laughs]

Kim: No, aw. [laughs]

Rhi: Phin is nowhere to be seen. I don't know if Blaire tells the other two what happened.

Kim: I’m probably in too much pain at the moment.

Rhi: Yeah. Blaire is not very communicative right now.

Minna: I think Myra’s whispering:

Minna (as Myra): Blaire, we’ll get you help. We’ll get you help. Just hold on.

Kim (as Blaire): [whimpering]

Rhi: Yeah, so, you guys manage to limp away with some information.

Josie: So we did get something out of this.

Minna: Oh, we certainly did.

Josie: Did we get any coin at all?

Rhi: Well, it depends on if Myra wants to keep that statue.

Minna: That statue would be useful for the house, but I don't know.

Josie: Mm-hmm.

Minna: Wait—Should we have left a Magpie pin?

Josie: Yes.

Rhi: I will allow you to have left one retroactively if you want to.

Josie: Yes, do it.

Minna: Yes. [grinning]

Rhi: Oh! Oh! Minx, you have one on your cloak.

Josie: Oh. Yay.

Rhi: Yeah. That’s what we’ll say. Yeah. There’s a Magpie pin on your cloak if you want to leave a calling card.

Josie: Yes.

Rhi: So, yeah. You have a notebook full of notes on arcane artifacts, you have a letter from Harvale Brogan that you haven’t had a chance to read yet, I’ll tell you about it when you do, and you have an obsidian statue that seems to repel spirits from at least the space of like, a room. Myra, you’re pretty sure that it would cover most of the common room in The Nest, or you have the option of selling it, and it will get…

Minna: I think it’s up to the group whether we do sell it, but it could be useful.

Josie: I’ll say, depends on how much coin.

Rhi: Five coin.

Minna: Yeah, I feel like we can find other ways to protect The Nest.

Kim: Yeah. We could use the coin, honestly.

Minna: Yeah, especially since Blaire was just hurt, I think that Myra feels it makes more sense to sell.

Josie: We only have space for one personified statue in the common area. We don’t need another one.

Rhi: [laughs]

Kim: There can only be one Kevin.

## Downtime [0:38:26]

Rhi: We’re shifting into downtime. To start off, Blaire, what are you doing during downtime?

Kim: Blaire is sitting alone in her room, and she is reading this book. It’s one that she’s read before, and it is one of her favorites. She enjoys re-reading it, but right now she just can’t seem to focus on it. The words just aren’t registering in her head. The pain is obviously still there, and she’s so frustrated with herself, and her eyes are watering, and she’s just so angry and hurt and upset, and she’s just gonna fling the book across the room, and then just cross her arms and snuggle back into bed, and try to sleep this off.

Rhi: She’s got her leg in a splint, and bandages and stuff.

Kim: Propped up, yeah.

Rhi: Propped up on a pillow. Yeah… Okay, so, Blaire’s kind of bedbound for a while.

Kim: Yeah.

Minna: Baby…

Rhi: Minx, how do you spend your downtime?

Josie: I want to talk with Bazso. I’ll leave a note through the normal channel. I’ll make sure to pick up a bottle of his favorite whiskey, but I don’t think Minx likes whiskey so she’s gonna bring a little something for herself too, and she’s gonna fuss way too long over what she’s gonna wear, and like ask opinions and shit of Myra about it.

Minna: [laughs]

Josie: I don't know what advice Myra gives back.

Minna: [laughing] Why is she asking Myra specifically?

Josie: Because you met with him most recently.

Rhi: She’s also the only option. She’s not gonna go and put on a fashion show for Blaire while she’s bedridden with a broken leg, and Phin is still missing.

Josie: Mm-hmm.

Minna: So, I think Myra’s gonna ask to you:

Minna (as Myra): Do you want to look like somebody Bazso would be more comfortable meeting with, or do you want to look like the best version of you?

Josie (as Minx): Oh, hmm, yes. I do suppose those diverge a little bit, don’t they. Let’s go with the former.

Minna (as Myra): Dark colors, fairly plain, clean. That would be my suggestion.

Josie (as Minx): I would’ve hoped he’d gain some taste. All right, I shall dress down for this.

Josie: And she will.

Rhi: Yeah. So, where do you go to meet? I will leave it up to you, but my suggestion is some place that you guys hung out at when you were younger?

Minna: Aw.

Josie: Then I suppose it might be like a workers bar where we probably snuck into as children or whatever.

Rhi: You guys grew up in Charhollow, right?

Josie: Yeah. Sooty bar in Charhollow.

Rhi: You get there first. He’s not there when you arrive.

Josie: Yeah. I’ll stake a claim.

Rhi: Yeah. You get a few sideways glances from the factory workers who are in there ,but before anybody can kind of approach you Bazso comes in and is greeted warmly by the workers here. A couple people stand up to clap him on the shoulder, shake his hand, somebody buys him a drink, and he’s like talking to people a little bit, you know, works the crowd a little before he comes over to your table and gives you a once over.

Josie (as Minx): It’s good to see you.

Rhi (as Bazso): I can’t say the same. [sighs]

Rhi: He takes a drink and sits down across from you.

Josie (as Minx): I figured. Although, I’m glad to see something has changed around here. It was not so long ago that neither of us were particularly welcome here.

Rhi (as Bazso): Well, I wouldn’t say you’re particularly welcome around here, but folks around here they like me, they like my group. They think of us as heroes of the working man, and now that we’ve stuck it to those silver spoon sucking Red Sashes…

Josie (as Minx): I was pleased to hear about that. They do have a, I believe the phrase I would have used in the day, way too much of a stick up their arses.

Rhi (as Bazso): [chuckles] Oh, Ellie, I almost missed you.

Josie (as Minx): Huh, well that’s closer than I was expecting, almost. [laughs]

Rhi (as Bazso): Ugh. What do you want?

Josie (as Minx): Well, I suppose for what apologies are worth, pretty much nothing, but that’s what I start with. I am sorry about what I did.

Rhi: He had kind of been leaning back in his chair, starting to raise the glass of ale, and when you say that he sets the glass down and just gives you this look like:

Rhi (as Bazso): You’re sorry. You’re sorry that you bailed in the middle of a job to steal some damn furniture, and left me holding the bag.

Josie (as Minx): Well, like I said—

Rhi (as Bazso): And got me sent—You did nothing to keep me from going to Ironhook. You did nothing to help me when I was in there. Nyryx sent me things. Did she tell you that?

Josie (as Minx): Um, no. No, she didn’t mention that part.

Rhi (as Bazso): [sighs] I have no idea what she sees in you.

Josie (as Minx): Heh. Well, she seems to see less these days, as it were.

Rhi (as Bazso): Oh, maybe she’s finally coming to her senses. Sorry is worth less than nothing. Sorry is a damn insult.

Josie (as Minx): Well then, perhaps an insult is where we need to start.

Rhi (as Bazso): [sighs] What are you calling yourself these days? Minx?

Josie (as Minx): Indeed. Minx is what I go by in the crew.

Rhi (as Bazso): Yeah. Well, run along home, Minx. There’s nothing for you here.

Rhi: He picks up his beer, stands up, and heads over to the bar where a couple of the other people make a hole for him to sit down.

Josie: Minx is gonna drop her affectation and go back to her normal voice, which is a little bit higher and squeakier and a lot more prude, and after Bazso leaves start socializing in the bar.

Rhi: Some of them give you kind of weird looks at first, but once you prove that you can actually talk the talk they start feeling like, oh, the fancy airs, that’s the act, this is who she really is, she’s one of us.

Josie: When I leave, if I can get his eye, I’m gonna wink at him.

Rhi: I think he just ignores you.

Josie: Okay. [laughs]

Rhi: Like, he sees the wink but doesn’t respond.

Josie: Mm-hmm. Fair enough.

Rhi: All right. That’s Minx trying to mend bridges, for whatever that’s worth. Myra, what do you do during downtime?

Minna: I am getting a translator for that journal.

Rhi: Okay. You get back in contact with someone you met when you were doing your info gathering infiltration at Duskwall Academy. She had been in training to be a diplomat to Iruvia, ended up washing out of the program due to high levels of academic stress, she just didn’t want to deal with it, and now does some work as kind of a translator, scribe, sort of a lot of bookish, writing-type things. She doesn’t have her own shop. She rents a little bit of space in a book seller’s shop.

Minna: What’s her name? Should I come up with a name?

Rhi: Uh, whichever one of us can come up with a name first.

Minna: Preet?

Rhi: Sure. So, yeah. You head into the shop and Preet has a little desk area off to the side of the main counter where she does her work.

Minna (as Myra): Preet, how are you? Do you remember me?

Rhi (as Preet): Uh…

Minna (as Myra): It was Lizete.

Rhi (as Preet): Lizete, yes. Oh, it has been quite some time. This probably isn’t where you expected to find me.

Minna (as Myra): Oh, I mean, our lives have obviously gone in different directions. I did not get through the program either.

Rhi (as Preet): Oh, yes, it seemed to be a lot of stress and heartache for very little reward.

Minna (as Myra): Very little. How are the \rewards\ treating you these days?

Rhi: She kinda looks around.

Rhi (as Preet): [sighs] You know, I get a steady amount of work, and I have my own place. My family doesn’t really talk to me anymore, but I’m not so sure that’s much of a loss.

Minna (as Myra): That sounds like the dream. Not so much the family part, but you seem stable. That’s good. I’m glad.

Rhi (as Preet): Yeah, and when work is slow, I have…

Rhi: And she just sort of gestures at the bookshelves.

Rhi (as Preet): ...free run of the place.

Minna (as Myra): Well that sounds wonderful.

Rhi (as Preet): It’s… It’s calm. I like calm.

Minna (as Myra): I have kind of a strange favor to ask of you. I remember you were very good with the Iruvian language.

Rhi (as Preet): Uh, yes.

Minna (as Myra): Um, I’ve come across a strange, strange series of notes. I was wondering if you could help me translate them. I would appreciate if you didn’t spread their contents around. Some of them seem like they could be quite dangerous, from what I can tell.

Rhi (as Preet): Let me take a look.

Rhi: And she holds her hands out for the journal.

Minna: She hands it over.

Rhi: Okay, yeah, so she sort of pages through it, and kind of makes a little bit of a face when she sees some of the sketches.

Rhi (as Preet): I will definitely keep this quiet, because I do not want to get arrested or hauled away by The Spirit Wardens.

Minna (as Myra): Oh, that bad, is it?

Rhi (as Preet): Well, yes, quite frankly yes, it’s that bad, actually.

Rhi: She leans over and picks up a satchel she has next to her, and she tucks it away in a small interior pocket.

Rhi (as Preet): I’m going to work on this at home. I don’t want someone to see that here. But yeah, I can work on this for you. Give me maybe a week?

Minna (as Myra): That sounds entirely fair.

Rhi (as Preet): All right. Just come back here in a week and I’ll give you my translations.

Minna (as Myra): Thank you.

Rhi (as Preet): How about you? How have you been since you left?

Minna (as Myra): I’ve been well enough. Exciting life. Not much to tell really, though.

Rhi: At exciting life, not much to tell, she like looks at you, glances back at her bag, and looks back at you, and is like:

Rhi (as Preet): I see… Uh, well…

Minna (as Myra): I wouldn’t worry about it if I were you. It won’t touch you.

Rhi (as Preet): Fair enough. Uh, anyway, I should get back to work.

Minna (as Myra): Thank you.

Rhi (as Preet): Good luck out there.

Minna (as Myra): You too.

Rhi: So, Myra, you head back to The Nest, Phin is still missing, Blaire has hobbled out to the kitchen table, Minx has come back from her errands. You pull out the letter that you found, that was from Harvale.

Minna: Yes.

Rhi: It says he confirms that he has people looking for info on the blood-iron ring. He says that there isn’t any new info about the other relics of Kotar. He also says that he can’t loan her any of his gang to guard the embassy, because there have been a lot of injuries and deaths lately. He mentions that three of his people went out on this cargo ship and didn’t come back, and then he says, some upstart gang calling themselves The Magpies jumped a bunch of my people down at The Docks and they’re still recovering. The letter kind of ends with these Magpies seem to be starting to be something of a problem, initially they were just sort of irritating. Now they seem to be doing some actual damage, and next time The Circle meets I think we need to discuss what to do about them.

Minna: [deep inhale] Ugh. We’re gonna be at war…

Rhi: So, the three of you are looking over this letter, and cinematically we sort of pan out into the city… and where’s Phin?

Madge: So, I think Phin is back at the fight pits. That’s usually where she goes. She has really taken a beating over the past couple days while this has been going on and going horribly, while everyone else is doing their stuff. The way that she stands is she’s obviously keeping her weight off of her twisted ankle, but as she fights it gets really obvious that something isn’t as controlled anymore, like she doesn’t pull punches, she is very precise and direct about landing punches where she knows it’s going to hurt after the fight.

She’s fighting with the same guy that she had been up against a couple sessions ago that had totally knocked her flat, but this time now that she’s up against him again it’s going a very different way. The action follows the fight for a couple rounds I think, and then Phin knocks this guy down and she like jumps on top of him and keeps punching him, and doesn’t stop until she’s pulled out of the ring.

Rhi: Yeah, yeah, a couple people who are like manning the fight jump in and drag her off, and the guy is like just barely clinging to consciousness, face is just covered in blood and cuts. How does Phin look, as we close out here?

Madge: She’s got one black eye, a cut through the opposite eyebrow, a split lip, and just the biggest grin on her face.

## Outro

Rhi: Thanks for listening. The Magpies will be back in two weeks. In the meantime, follow us on Twitter at @magpies\_pod.

The Magpies podcast is hosted and produced by Rhi. Follow me on Twitter at @rhiannon42.

Blaire Culhane is played by Kim Kogut. Follow her on Twitter at @kimdianajones.

Minx is played by Josie. Follow her on Twitter at @DragonGirlJosie, and watch her art streams at  picarto.tv/DragonGirlJosie.

Myra Keel is played by Minna. Follow her on Twitter at @mynaminnarr.

Phin Haig is played by Madge. Follow her on Twitter at @madgequips.

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## Blooper [

Kim: Okay… So now we have split up the remaining party all ways. [laughter] We’ve done it, guys!

[clapping]

Josie, Minna & Madge: [laughing] We did it!

Rhi: [laughing, gasping for breath] Fuck!