Transcript created by [Lyra](https://twitter.com/archingskies).

## intro music

**Rhi:** Welcome back to Duskwall. As always, thank you for joining us. If you haven’t yet, please leave us a review or a rating on your podcast provider of choice. Reviews are one of the best ways to help new listeners find the show.

This month’s featured charity is Masjid al-Rabia, a Chicago-based mosque for queer, trans, women, and marginalized Muslims, who may feel out of place in both mainstream Muslim communities and queer communities. Masjid al-Rabia is centered on five pillars of inclusivity: women-centered, anti-racist, LGBTQIA+ affirming, pluralist, and accessible. Their programming includes weekly prayer services, a free library, a family arts program, and prison outreach initiatives. If you have a few dollars to spare, consider making a donation. A link to their site is in the show notes.

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

## [00:01:04] story resumes

**Rhi:** It has been a couple days since your score that you did on the cargo ship for The Dimmer Sisters, which ended up being fairly profitable, if also somewhat creepy, with some mysteries lurking out there—one of them in the form of an eyeball.

**Kim:** [creepy laugh]

**Josie:** [laughter]

**Rhi:** And now, for today, the four of you are in The Nest. You’ve all come together for dinner, we’ll say. What’re you guys up to as you’re all grabbing food?

**Josie:** First of all, we’re setting the scene. Where’s Kevin?

**Minna:** I think he’s at the table.

**Kim:** Yes, Kevin has a seat.

**Josie:** Excellent.

**Kim:** Okay, but is there a plate of food for him?

**Minna:** No. We can’t waste food.

**Josie:** [laughter]

**Madge:** That’s a shame.

**Rhi:** Someday. That’s the goal.

**Kim:** Blaire is reading a book while she eats.

**Madge:** Phin has both her feet up on the table.

**Josie and Minna:** [laughter]

**Josie (as Minx):** Dear, I know it’s not the cleanest of tables to begin with, but would you mind not mussing it up further?

**Madge (as Phin):** It’s not on your food, is it?

**Josie (as Minx):** Uh, no, but it might be at some future point.

**Madge (as Phin):** Then I’ll keep my feet up. It’s fine.

**Josie (as Minx):** Uh, well, it’s less a matter of getting in the food and just keeping it clean. I do try to tidy this up sometimes, at least when it’s my turn.

**Kim (as Blaire):** Jeez, just let her live.

**Madge (as Phin):** I’m living my truth.

**Multiple:** [laughter]

**Josie:** I thought all of you would be on my side on this one.

**Rhi:** Myra, what are you up to while this is going on?

**Minna:** I’m honestly just watching it like a tennis match at this point.

**Josie and Rhi:** [laughter]

**Josie:** Also, what do Phin’s boots look like?

**Kim:** Oh, God.

**Madge:** They are the sturdiest of sturdy work boots. They’re basically ones that the dockworkers wear. They’re definitely dirty, ‘cause she also wears them to the fight pits.

**Josie:** Are they in good condition, though, aside from being dirty, or are they super worn?

**Madge:** Eh.

**Josie:** Eh.

**Madge:** They’re all right.

**Josie (as Minx):** Dear, it’s hard to stand in the way of practicality, but if you ever need those to last longer, I’m certain I could rustle up a contact to help you with that. Not that I don’t think you can’t take care of your own shoes, but I do have a few ideas to spruce them up.

**Madge (as Phin):** Well, these are the boots my mom gave me, and I don’t really wanna “improve” them. I think they’re fine.

**Josie (as Minx):** Ah, well. Far be it for me to mess with a gift.

**Minna (as Myra):** Taking care of your leather items can make them last longer.

**Josie (as Minx):** Indeed.

**Kim (as Blaire):** Yeah, but weathering them makes them look cool.

**Madge (as Phin):** Yeah. [laughs]

**Madge (as Phin):** Of course. Aesthetics are important.

**Kim (as Blaire):** Yeah!

**Josie (as Minx):** Blast. I’ve been beaten at my own game here.

**Everyone:** [laughter]

**Josie (as Minx):** My sense for aesthetic has been turned around back on me.

**Minna:** I think as Myra said that, she definitely shot a look at Minx. [laughter]

**Josie:** [laughter]

**Josie (as Minx):** Curse you, Myra.

**Rhi:** As you guys are chatting and ribbing Minx about her priorities, you guys all notice the temperature suddenly drops in the room.

**Kim:** Nice.

**Josie and Minna:** [dismayed noise]

**Madge (as Phin):** This is the worst.

**Josie (as Minx):** Have we suddenly sprung a draft, or...?

**Kim (as Blaire):** No, I think it’s a friend!

**Madge (as Phin):** No.

**Josie (as Minx):** No.

**Madge (as Phin):** No, not a friend.

**Josie (as Minx):** This isn’t the best way for a friend to come visit.

**Kim (as Blaire):** Why not?

**Minna (as Myra):** We should not have ghosts in our home.

**Josie (as Minx):** It’s impolite.

**Kim (as Blaire):** How is it impolite?

**Minna (as Myra):** Because I don’t want ghosts in my home.

**Josie (as Minx):** At least to come unannounced.

**Kim (as Blaire):** Yeah. Yeah, okay, that we can agree. They should, you know, introduce themselves first.

**Minna (as Myra):** I would prefer that you gave me warning so I can not be here when you have ghosts visiting.

**Madge (as Phin):** Same.

**Rhi:** Blaire, you didn’t exactly invite the ghosts over. This was not—

**Kim:** Oh, this is not one of my friends. Okay. It’s a stranger.

**Rhi:** Yeah. You don’t know what ghosts these are; nobody’s looked.

**Minna:** Can I Attune? [laughter]

**Josie:** I am not going to.

**Kim:** Gimme a looksees.

**Rhi:** Blaire and Myra are both looking?

**Minna:** Yes.

**Rhi:** You both look into the ghost field, and, wow! That’s a lot more ghosts than you were expecting.

**Kim:** Yo!

**Rhi:** There’s about five ghosts in the room drifting in the general direction of your table. Among them is the ghost with the sword from the barge. They specifically seem to be moving towards Blaire. You’re not sure why they’re here, Blaire, but you know that ghosts need to feed on life essence by possessing people and devouring their souls.

**Kim:** Mhmm. Go on.

**Rhi:** Just saying.

**Minna:** You can’t see, but I’m pinching the bridge of my nose because I am Myra. [laughing] Way to go.

**Kim:** [laughter]

**Rhi:** Yeah. There’s a bunch of ghosts hanging out in here. What do you all wanna do about it?

**Kim:** I should probably talk to it and try to settle this. It’s probably some kind of misunderstanding.

**Rhi:** Okay. [sigh]

**Josie:** But it is your forte.

**Minna:** I would like to leave? [laughter]

**Multiple:** [laughter]

**Rhi:** Do you tell any of the others what you see?

**Minna:** I think Myra puts her hands on the table and stands up abruptly.

**Minna (as Myra):** That’s a lot of ghosts. I’m going to leave. Blaire, can you deal with this on your own?

**Kim (as Blaire):** You got it.

**Minna (as Myra):** By “deal with this,” to be clear, I don’t want ghosts in my living space. They are not staying.

**Kim (as Blaire):** Oh, yeah. No, no, they’re not staying.

**Minna (as Myra):** Thank you.

**Kim (as Blaire):** Unless they get into jars. I don’t know. But yeah, no, I’ll take care of this.

**Minna (as Myra):** Thank you.

**Minna:** And Myra turns to leave.

**Madge:** Can I leave too?

**Josie:** Yeah. If Myra has deemed this unsafe, I do believe I shall be exiting as well.

**Kim:** Oh my God, you guys! Don’t leave me alone with them!

**Minna:** Myra feels very unsafe around ghosts.

**Rhi:** The other three hastily head down the stairs.

**Josie:** [laughter]

**Rhi:** Blaire.

**Kim:** Yes.

**Rhi:** You’ve got a whole crowd of ghosts that are moving in. They’re not surrounding you, but they’ve made a half circle around you. The one with the sword is standing right in front of you. What do you want to do here?

**Kim:** Blaire’s just gonna look up at this guy.

**Kim (as Blaire):** Hi! You found my home. What’s up? Cool.

**Multiple:** [quietly cracking up]

**Kim:** That’s all I can think of. [laughter]

**Josie:** [laughing] Yeah.

**Rhi:** The ghost that you were talking to, the lead one, tilts its head to the side, and levels the sword at your throat.

**Josie and Kim:** [gasp]

**Rhi:** Not touching, but pointed it at you. You just get from all sides, all of these ghosts, this overwhelming feeling of hunger.

**Kim:** Oh, no. Okay, okay. Blaire’s just gonna put her hands up. She’s gonna take this a little bit more seriously now.

**Kim (as Blaire):** Okay. Let’s see if we can try to level with each other here, all right? What do you want, and how can I help you with that that doesn’t involve the cost of my life? Can we compromise here? Can we level?

**Rhi:** The ghost with the sword doesn’t respond, ‘cause it’s not able to speak. One of the other ghosts—female figure, can’t really make out a lot of the features, but there’s still more of a face there—she says:

**Rhi (as Ghost):** You freed us from the torturer, but now we hunger.

**Kim (as Blaire):** I can help you get to a place where there’s more food than just me and my friends. I do this kind of stuff. I free ghosts. I can help you guys!

**Rhi (as Ghost):** Where?

**Kim (as Blaire):** Deathlands. I can get you out of there.

**Rhi (as Ghost):** How?

**Kim (as Blaire):** You would have to trust me, but I can take you there.

**Rhi:** And again, there’s a:

**Rhi (as Ghost):** How?

**Kim (as Blaire):** I would probably have to put you all in jars, which I know would really suck. But it would make things easier for me—

**Rhi:** The ghosts flare up and—

**Kim (as Blaire):** No, no, no, no, no! No! It’s—

**Rhi:** The plates of food slide around and a couple things crash to the floor.

**Kim (as Blaire):** Oh, jeez. Minx is gonna kill me.

**Josie and Minna:** [laughter]

**Rhi:** Kevin is unmoved.

**Josie:** Well, that’s good. At least Kevin is safe.

**Kim (as Blaire):** I know that jars really suck. I kinda hate them too. I don’t think that they’re very nice. I can only imagine how uncomfortable they are, but I promise, you wouldn’t be there longer than a day. I would be able to carry all of you out very easily. I would let you out and you can roam free for the rest of your immortal days, just feasting on whatever the hell lives out there.

**Rhi:** Give me a Consort or a Sway.

**Kim:** Oh, no, absolutely Consort. All right, I have 1 in Consort. Aww... 3.

**Rhi:** The ghosts don’t really go away, and the one who had been speaking just says:

**Rhi (as Ghost):** There is plenty to eat in this city.

**Kim (as Blaire):** Okay. Can I just ask, as your freedom-giver, liberator person, that you don’t eat me or my friends? You can wreak havoc anywhere else in the city, and if I run into any of you guys again, I’ll leave you alone. But just, you know, so we’re even, one debt to another?

**Rhi:** There’s another long pause while they seem to be considering it. Then the ghost with the sword lowers it and gives a nod. They all drift back out through the wall.

**Kim:** Oh, that was close.

**Josie and Minna:** [relieved sigh]

**Madge:** What a thrill.

**Rhi:** While Blaire is off negotiating with some ghosts, what do the three of you do once you get out of The Nest?

**Madge:** I’m still in front of The Nest. I’m pacing. [laughter]

**Minna:** That works. I like that.

**Rhi:** Okay.

**Josie:** Minx actually wants to try to distract from the tension by talking to Myra a little bit.

**Minna:** Oh.

**Josie (as Minx):** This might not be the most appropriate time, but I don’t think I ever did properly thank you for talking to Bazso. I don’t think me going would have been the appropriate time, but I do appreciate that you opened communications, as it were, and I will be talking soon.

**Minna (as Myra):** Oh, of course.

**Josie (as Minx):** Although, on that note and old acquaintances, had you and Nyryx met before? You seemed to get in a bit of a bad way when we visited.

**Minna (as Myra):** Uh, she thought she knew things about me. I had not met her before, no.

**Josie (as Minx):** All right. Well, indeed, she does have a bit of an insightful eye. I can imagine her assuming something in that fashion.

**Minna:** I think Myra tilts her head and looks at Minx, wondering if she knows that Nyryx is possessed by a ghost.

**Josie:** Minx does not, so... [laughter]

**Rhi:** Minx does not.

**Minna (as Myra):** Your friend has secrets.

**Josie (as Minx):** Well, I must assume so, especially given her trade. Confidentiality is utmost in her line of work, I imagine.

**Minna (as Myra):** Just be careful around her. I think she should be safe, but I’m not quite sure.

**Josie (as Minx):** Well, thank you. I do look after her in what ways I can, though past experience has led me to believe that she should be more careful around me, to be honest.

**Josie (as Minx) and Minna (as Myra):** [laughter]

**Rhi:** I think that’s a good time for Blaire to come bounding out to let you guys know that all is well, although dinner is kind of all over the floor now.

**Kim (as Blaire):** Everything’s under control. I took care of it. It’s fine. It’s all good. Don’t go in there.

**Josie (as Minx):** Glad to hear it. [laughter]

**Kim (as Blaire):** They all left.

**Madge (as Phin):** [suspicious noises]

**Josie (as Minx):** They all left, and they’re not coming back?

**Kim (as Blaire):** No.

**Josie (as Minx):** Uh, all right.

**Kim (as Blaire):** At least, they won’t be bothering us if we ever seen them again. Can’t say for the rest of the city, but, you know.

**Josie (as Minx):** I suppose, better elsewheres than here.

**Rhi:** It’s been over a week at this point since you checked in at The Hound’s Paw. Since Blaire was saying everything’s fine but don’t go back up there, I don’t know if you guys wanna head somewhere else for dinner.

**Minna (as Myra):** Let’s go check in on Rigney.

**Rhi:** Yeah. You head through the streets, get to Nightmarket, which is quite lively this time of night. This is the start of their nighttime rush; things are picking up. Head around to the back at The Hound’s Paw and knock on the door. There’s a bit of a delay before the door opens a crack. You see a sliver of Rigney’s face peering out. Then the door flings open, probably nearly whacks one of you in the face.

**Rhi (as Rigney):** Oh, there you are! It’s been– I– We need to figure out a way that I can get in touch with you when you don’t come around here, because it’s... Ah, come on in, come on in! I have got your table cleared for you.

**Rhi:** He very enthusiastically ushers you inside.

**Josie (as Minx):** Oh, that’s such a relief to hear today.

**Minna (as Myra):** It’s good to see you again.

**Rhi (as Rigney):** Yeah, it’s good to see all of you. Come on.

**Kim:** Can I hug Rigney?

**Madge:** Yeah.

**Rhi:** Oh, yeah, sure.

 **Kim (as Blaire):** I missed your tea.

**Minna:** [laughter]

**Rhi:** Aww. He gives you a one-armed hug back and pats your arm.

**Rhi (as Rigney):** Well, once I get you all seated, I will get you a round of your favorites on the house.

**Rhi:** As he’s walking you up through the back rooms towards the bar proper, he says:

**Rhi (as Rigney):** I heard from that one Bluecoat friend of yours, uh, Laroze, that you all were in the clear for something. He didn’t specifically say what the accusation was, but he said that somebody in The Red Sashes got arrested for whatever it was. I guess with what happened to The Red Sashes, it’s not like anybody’s gonna be coming to their defense.

**Josie (as Minx):** Oh. Did the war turn out unfavorably?

**Rhi (as Rigney):** That’s a delicate way of putting it. The Lampblacks stormed their headquarters, and from what I hear, it was a bloodbath.

**Josie (as Minx):** Mm. That sounds like him, all right.

**Rhi:** Sits you guys down at your table. The bar is probably like three quarters full, but your table is clear. He walks you guys over, sits you guys down.

**Rhi (as Rigney):** Give me a couple minutes and I will be back with your usual.

**Minna (as Myra):** Thank you.

**Rhi:** Gives you guys a big grin and then heads off to the bar.

**Minna:** I think Myra looks at Minx.

**Minna (as Myra):** Aren’t you glad we smoothed things over with Bazso?

**Josie (as Minx):** Indeed. Thank you again.

**Minna (as Myra):** He seems an all right sort, for what he is.

**Josie (as Minx):** Yes. He’s a very dependable fellow; very capable.

**Minna (as Myra):** I like dependable.

**Rhi:** Very quickly, it seems like Rigney just put whatever other requests he had on hold to take care of you guys. He comes back over with your usual drink orders, asks if you guys want any food.

**Josie:** Minx is gonna order something perhaps a little too expensive, but she’s feeling good; she’s back here.

**Minna:** [happy sigh]

**Rhi:** He heads off to put your food in.

**Minna:** There’s been a little bit of relative quiet.

**Minna (as Myra):** Well, I’ve been doing some research at Charterhall University about some of the information we saw about The Circle of Flame. There was a phrase that stuck out to me, “blood-iron ring.”

**Kim (as Blaire):** Huh.

**Josie (as Minx):** Hmm.

**Minna (as Myra):** I have been looking into it. It seems that it’s a little-known artifact, a legendary lost object. Lots of rumors about vampirism around it. It is said to have been forged some centuries ago by a sorcerer. They say that the iron in it was drawn from the blood of a single sacrificed human. There’s some more terrible rumors around that, but that’s the gist.

**Kim (as Blaire):** Sick.

**Minna (as Myra):** I did eventually pick up a book on the ring that says what it does. This book has been taken out by somebody called Avrathi. I believe we have seen that name recently in connection with this whole mess.

**Rhi:** Blaire, the name Avrathi sticks out to you because that was the name on the box that you grabbed that contained your magical eyeball.

**Kim:** [gasp] Ooohh, okay.

**Rhi:** This Avrathi person had been smuggling in this weird eyeball thing from Iruvia, and has apparently been doing some research on this artifact that Myra’s telling you about.

**Kim (as Blaire):** Sounds like they’re into some weird shit.

**Josie (as Minx):** Yeah. At every level, this business gets more and more unsavory.

**Madge (as Phin):** Yeah.

**Kim (as Blaire):** It’s just getting good.

**Josie (as Minx):** No, Blaire, *unsavory*. This is bad.

**Minna (as Myra):** It does not get less unsavory when we come to the effects of the ring.

**Josie (as Minx):** Oh dear.

**Minna (as Myra):** [sigh] It’s described as a plain, hammered-iron ring. It’s got all sorts of pockmarks in it. These pockmarks are supposed to disappear when exposed to blood. It is supposed to give you some of the powers of a vampire, as far as being able to hear thoughts, see in darkness, see invisible things, and find the location of objects. All quite useful, but unsavory.

**Kim (as Blaire):** And for how long?

**Josie (as Minx):** Blaire, no.

**Kim (as Blaire):** I’m just asking! For my notes.

**Minna (as Myra):** It seems to be a short time. The ring will return to its original appearance after that period has ended. I’m sure I can imagine why some parties might be looking for it.

**Madge (as Phin):** Yeah.

**Kim (as Blaire):** Well, yeah. It’s a one-way speed pass to vampire powers.

**Josie (as Minx):** Oh dear. Anything on where it may have been? Was it in the vicinity of Duskwall in any intervening century?

**Minna (as Myra):** Oh, certainly in the vicinity of Duskwall; the legends are all associated with the city. Just, it has been lost for a long time.

**Josie (as Minx):** Mm.

**Minna (as Myra):** Perhaps not, if somebody is asking about it now.

**Josie (as Minx):** Is there someplace below where one might excavate such a thing? Where would one even find this?

**Rhi:** Really, these kind of magical artifacts or occult artifacts can be in any number of places. They could be buried in some ruins under the city, like Minx is suggesting; it could be in somebody’s private collection, where they either do or don’t know what they have. It could be in The Lost District, which is a former noble, wealthy district that was ravaged by plague, and rather than trying to rebuild and repopulate, it was just abandoned to The Deathlands—the lightning barrier no longer covers it. There’s rumors that there’s all kinds of lost treasures out there, but you have to brave The Deathlands in order to find them.

**Kim (as Blaire):** I wonder if I can ask my eyeball friend about this Avrathi guy.

**Josie (as Minx):** I’m sorry, “eye ball *friend*?”

**Kim (as Blaire):** Well, okay, yeah. Friend is a bit of an exaggeration. He may not be a friend, after, you know, examining for my five minutes of the day... that I have been adhering to!

**Josie (as Minx):** But this eyeball possesses a personage?

**Kim (as Blaire):** We don’t... Yeah, I don’t know if it actually does that. But I don’t know if it’s really a “friend.” I don’t know.

**Josie (as Minx):** Blaire, I already knew this, but remind me never to visit your room.

**Kim (as Blaire):** Oh, yeah. Uh, yeah, no, there’s a big “keep out!” sign right in front.

**Josie (as Minx):** Indeed. But verbal protests and literary protests don’t always work in the case of Kevin, for example.

**Rhi:** I think at this point, Rigney comes over with a tray of food.

**Rhi (as Rigney):** Who’s Kevin? Do you guys have another group member?

**Kim (as Blaire):** Uh, more like a pet.

**Minna (as Myra):** [laughter]

**Josie (as Minx):** He sits at the table with us, apparently.

**Josie:** [laughter]

**Kim (as Blaire):** Well, yeah. He’s part of the family.

**Minna (as Myra):** She bought a statue.

**Rhi (as Rigney):** I see. Uh, all right. Well, congratulations on your statue.

**Rhi:** He hands out the food and manages to make it halfway to the bar before he starts laughing.

**Everyone:** [laughter]

**Minna:** Bless Rigney. I love him.

**Madge:** Longer than I expected, honestly.

**Rhi:** On the eyeball and the ring, the one lead that you have there is that name: Avrathi.

**Kim:** Mhmm.

**Minna (as Myra):** My feelings are that this artifact should remain buried, but I don’t think it will if they’re persistent.

**Josie (as Minx):** Indeed. It would be poor for business to allow a formerly-extinct gang to return in possession of such an artifact.

**Kim (as Blaire):** Right, but wouldn’t it be more important for us to get it and, I don’t know, lock it away than let this Avrathi guy try to get his hands on it?

**Josie (as Minx):** I suppose that would be better.

**Kim (as Blaire):** Yeah.

**Josie (as Minx):** Although, I would imagine it would be better for it to simply remain lost.

**Kim (as Blaire):** But what if he finds it first? This guy is actively looking for it.

**Rhi:** Myra knows that when this book was checked out by Avrathi, it was about six months ago, so this person has quite a bit of a lead on you.

**Josie (as Minx):** Mm. Well, does anyone have any objections to us pursuing this artifact to prevent it from falling into the wrong hands?

**Minna (as Myra):** My only objection would be that I don’t know that we’re equipped to do this, but if these people are resurging in Six Towers, then it’s probably best that we don’t let them get too much power.

**Madge (as Phin):** Yeah.

**Josie (as Minx):** And it does seem that our lead at the moment is Avrathi. Do we know anything about this person? Perhaps we could gain a profit in addressing them.

**Minna (as Myra):** Yes, if this name has come up multiple times, it might be worth looking into them.

**Josie (as Minx):** Indeed.

**Madge (as Phin):** Mhmm.

**Rhi:** None of you really know the name, so you’d have to go digging to see what you could find out.

**Madge:** [singsong] Gather Information.

**Josie:** And that’s a thing we shall do. [laugh]

**Madge:** Yes.

## [00:22:39] gather information: Minx

**Josie:** I mostly wanna do my deal of hitting the well-to-do folk of the town up, and trying to see if that name passes around in noble circles at all.

**Rhi:** Okay.

**Minna:** Also, reminder: we have a +1 on Gather Information roles.

**Josie:** Yup. Which means I’ve got a good old 4d6 Sway for this.

**Rhi:** I assume you all finish up dinner and then head out into the city, or at least Minx does.

**Josie:** Indeed.

**Rhi:** And what did you get?

**Josie:** A 6.

**Rhi:** 6 with a Sway. Where do you go, who do you talk to?

**Josie:** I will sit in and make pleasant conversation with folks in Brightstone establishment, mostly keeping things to a beverage to not tax myself.

**Rhi:** Okay.

**Josie:** But mostly make small talk, ‘cause, I imagine, cafes in Brightstone mostly exist for this sort of showing off/mingling sort of thing.

**Rhi:** Yeah. You head on off to Brightstone. There’s a handful of cafes that you know, that you’ve visited before, that have this atmosphere of, sort of, you can just strike up conversations and chat with people over a glass of wine or whatever. And you hit a couple of those, and eventually end up talking to a young woman who looks like she’s from Iruvia. You casually slip the name “Avrathi” into the conversation.

**Rhi (as Woman):** Ugh, don’t even talk to me about the ambassador. She has just been utterly useless in fulfilling my requests. I simply wish to have some of my belongings—my belongings, my heirloom jewelry!—transported here from home, and she can’t find a way to avoid all of the customs and duty charges, and– Oh! It’s just... [sigh] Useless woman.

**Josie (as Minx):** Oh, that is utterly unacceptable. How did you even come by her services? Surely there must be someone you can switch to.

**Rhi (as Woman):** Ugh! Well, no. If I’m trying to business with Iruvia, then it’s just Elstera. She’s the ambassador; she lives in the Iruvian embassy. There’s really no one I can speak to.

**Josie (as Minx):** Oh, dear. That’s a shame to hear. Do I get the sense from anyone else that this is a frustrating individual?

**Rhi:** Not really, actually. It just seems to be this one person who is irritated with her. Other people that you talk to actually describe her as being quite charming. Just having her at a dinner party guarantees that you’re going to have a pleasant and charming and intellectually stimulating conversation for your guests.

**Josie (as Minx):** All right. That’s good to know. I’m gonna relay that to other folks so that we now have a person. I imagine Phin might be able to get something, ‘cause it sounds like she does a lot of bringing stuff in and out that likely involves the docks to a certain degree.

## [00:25:33] gathering information: Phin

**Madge:** That’s what I’ll do for mine, is I’ll go to the docks, ask around and see what’s going on.

**Rhi:** What are you gonna roll for that?

**Madge:** I’m probably gonna do Consort, since I’m not doing anything underhanded to do so. Okay, I got a 5. [chuckle]

**Rhi:** Huh, 5. Okay, cool. Yeah, you ask around, chat with the handful of people who still do cargo shipping. A lot of people on the docks are just either fishers or work the leviathan hunters. The handful who still do cargo ships are, at the moment, happy to talk, because they have nothing to do because the cargo ship they were planning on unloading is still being held off away from the city while The Spirit Wardens have it locked down for investigation. So, if you ask about shipments from Iruvia, lead around to Avrathi again, when you bring up that name, there’s a few sideways glances exchanged. A couple of them are hesitant, and one of the dockworkers—actually, the woman you that borrowed the spyglass from last time, an older woman—waves a hand.

**Rhi (as Older Woman):** Ah, she’s fine. I know her family; they’re good folk. Avrathi is a... We like dealing with her when she’s got shipments coming in or out, ‘cause she pays some extra to keep everything quiet, off the books.

**Madge (as Phin):** All right.

**Rhi (as Older Woman):** You said you didn’t have any other follow up questions, there, Phin?

**Madge:** Yeah. I’m good.

**Rhi:** Okay. We have a name and an occupation, and we know that this person smuggles stuff in from Iruvia, apparently on a semi-regular basis. The dockworkers you talked to said that this happens every few months.

## [00:27:15] gathering information: Blaire

**Rhi:** So, what else do you all want to try to investigate?

**Kim:** I do wanna study my eyeball crystal friend and see if I can figure anything out about its connection to Avrathi.

**Rhi:** Okay, you can do that. What roll would you like to make?

**Kim:** Hmm. I’m thinking either Attune or Study.

**Rhi:** Yeah, I would say either one of those.

**Kim:** 6.

**Rhi:** Hm, let me think. How to do this... Okay, I know how I’ll do it.

You pick up the eye. You’re studying it, you’re looking at it. It keeps trying to make eye contact with you. You’ve got the name in your head, “Avrathi;” you’re trying to figure out something about it. As you have that name in your head, this thing makes eye contact with you. You get this split-second flash in your head of this richly-appointed office with a very fine tapestry on the wall, beautiful, carved wooden furniture, some maps and paintings on the wall; the desk has papers scattered all over it. And sitting at the desk, an Iruvian woman; late 30s, early 40s. Just what you see, she has a quill in her hand and a piece of parchment in the other; she just appears to be reading it. You just get this flash burned into your head, and then it goes away. You just instinctively drop the eyeball onto your bed.

**Kim (as Blaire):** [gasp] Okay.

**Rhi:** The eye is twitching around even more frantically now, trying to look back at you, but it’s facing the wrong direction.

**Kim (as Blaire):** [quietly] Aww, poor little guy.

 **Rhi:** So it can’t quite see you.

**Kim (as Blaire):** Can I pick him up and look at the little guy again?

**Madge and Minna:** [laughter]

**Kim:** What?

**Madge:** [laughing] It’s not like it’s a cute little hamster you found! [laughter]

**Minna:** [laughter]

**Madge:** It’s an *eye*! That gives you Force visions!

**Kim:** He’s a fish!

**Minna:** Aww.

**Kim:** He lives in a little glass bowl!

**Madge:** [Laughing] Aahh! This is so...

**Minna:** [laughter]

**Rhi:** Just so that I’m clear, Blaire—

**Kim:** Oh no.

**Rhi:** You wanna pick it up and make eye contact with it again, right?

**Madge:** [whispering] Oh, gosh, this is such a bad idea.

**Kim:** Your DM voice is telling me that’s bad.

**Rhi:** No, do it.

**Minna:** [laughter]

**Kim:** Uh...

**Rhi:** You wanna get more information, don’t you?

**Kim:** Stop. Don’t tempt me.

**Madge:** Gosh. [laughter]

**Minna:** [still laughing]

**Madge:** [strangled, overcome noise]

**Kim:** Uh...

**Madge:** [shrill, laughing] What are you doing?!

**Rhi:** You were right, it’s a scrying eye. It shows you stuff, Kim.

**Kim:** I’m gonna roll, uh—

**Minna:** [dismayed noise]

**Kim:** Odds I don’t do it, evens I do.

**Josie:** Uh–

**Kim:** God, 5. Okay, I don’t do it. I *don’t* do it.

**Rhi:** Okay.

**Kim:** It’s fine. I know what she looks like, and I know what, maybe, her office is. That’s enough. We’re good.

**Rhi:** I will also say, because that was a 6, you will be able to recall information about the office in the future, if you need it.

**Kim:** All right.

**Rhi:** Okay.

**Minna:** So, we know who she is, sort of what she looks like, where to find her. As a crew, we have a contact who is Fitz, the collector. I just remember, he’s the very impatient man who wanted me to do it in two minutes or less when I explained things to him.

**Rhi:** Yes.

**Minna:** I might go to him and see if he’s heard from Avrathi at all about weird artifacts, or what he knows about her.

**Rhi:** Are you gonna do Consort for that?

**Minna:** Yes. And I’ve gotten a 5.

**Rhi:** You head in to talk to Fitz. He is his usual very busy, slightly dismissive self. Then when you ask about Avrathi, he just scoffs and rolls his eyes.

**Rhi (as Fitz):** I am an art dealer. I deal in paintings and sculpture and, occasionally, pottery. But she sent people around, asking about all sorts of bizarre, occult things. I want nothing to do with that. I do not wish to have The Spirit Wardens coming down upon me. Bluecoats, I can bribe, that’s no problem; the Inspectors, I can evade. But The Spirit Wardens, that is a brand of trouble I do not need.

**Minna (as Myra):** What kinds of things has she asked about?

**Rhi (as Fitz):** Oh, I don’t know. Some ancient relics, um, of a cutter, or a quarter, or something. I don’t remember. Uh, some ring she was interested in, some idols, or... I don’t deal in those things.

**Minna (as Myra):** Oh, I quite understand. I just thought she might be the type to cast her net wide. Good to know I was correct.

**Rhi (as Fitz):** Yes.

**Minna (as Myra):** You said cutter or quarter. Is it just that you don’t quite remember the word?

**Rhi (as Fitz):** Yes, yes. I—

**Minna (as Myra):** Hm. I wonder what that wa– Oh. Kotar?

**Rhi (as Fitz):** That was it, yes. Kotar, yes.

**Minna (as Myra):** Ah. Interesting. Thank you. If you don’t mind, don’t spread around that I asked about this.

**Rhi:** He gives you a look of pure offense, like “how *dare* you doubt my discretion?”

**Rhi (as Fitz):** Of course not. I—

**Minna (as Myra):** I thought I would make it clear. That is all. I, of course, don’t doubt you.

**Rhi (as Fitz):** Yes, well, there’s anything I can do for you right now?

**Minna (as Myra):** No, thank you. This has been most enlightening.

**Rhi (as Fitz):** [sigh] Is Minx enjoying that statue?

**Minna (as Myra):** Oh, she loves it. It has taken up a prominent space in our home.

**Rhi (as Fitz):** Good. It’s a fine work of art; should be treated with the utmost respect.

**Minna (as Myra):** Of course. It’s practically a member of the family.

**Josie:** [snort]

**Rhi:** He nods approvingly, then sees one of his workers doing something and strides off yelling at them.

**Josie:** There were no lies told here.

**Minna:** [laughter]

**Josie:** Somehow.

**Rhi:** Myra was completely honest.

## [00:33:05]

**Rhi:** You guys have gained some information about Elstera Avrathi. What do you guys wanna do with this information?

**Josie:** Rob her blind.

**Kim:** Uh, I don’t know if we should do that just yet.

**Josie:** Aw. [laughter]

**Minna:** I would like to know more about what she’s found. I don’t know how we could achieve that, exactly.

**Madge:** We could at least go through her files and see what she actually has her fingers in.

**Kim:** Yeah, we could do that. We could do some kind of espionage thing.

**Minna:** Yes, actually do our crew’s purpose for once, the first time in the entirety of the podcast.

**Josie:** Let’s do an espionage.

**Rhi:** Okay. So, your plan is to break into the embassy and look for information?

**Minna:** Mhmm.

**Madge:** Yup.

**Josie:** Mhmm.

**Rhi:** Okay. What type of plan do you wanna do?

**Minna:** We were suggesting a Deception, with the method being us distracting, me and Minx distracting.

**Josie:** Mhmm.

**Madge:** I’m fine with that.

**Rhi:** So, deception with Minx and Myra keeping her attention while Blaire and Phin do some robbery.

**Josie:** Mhmm.

**Kim:** Yep.

**Rhi:** Okay, cool.

**Josie:** Do we know what people generally import from Iruvia?

**Rhi:** It’s described as a land of black deserts, obsidian mountains, and raging volcanoes, so there’s probably actually a lot of mining and jewels that come from there.

**Kim:** [whispering] Black deserts!

**Rhi:** Art, sculpture, tapestry, spices.

**Josie:** Art and sculpture. I don’t have to necessarily bullshit about those.

**Rhi:** [laughter]

**Josie:** That will lend to my disguise.

**Minna:** Is my undercover identity still burned?

**Rhi:** Yes it is.

**Minna:** All right.

**Josie:** ‘Cause I’m thinking, we come in being like “hey we want to set up trade route” or something like that.

**Minna:** I think Myra can pose as a fine secretary.

## [00:34:52]

**Rhi:** Engagement roll. There’s two competing elements; one of them is a bonus for you, one of them is a detriment, so those will just cancel out. It’s gonna be 2d6, the engagement roll. Ooh, that would be a 3.

**Kim:** Woof.

**Minna:** [nervous noise]

**Rhi:** The Iruvian embassy is a large brick building in Charterhall, not really built in the Iruvian style; they just moved into a big town home and converted it into the embassy. Has a low brick fence around it; there’s a nice courtyard with some fountains and benches and things. Minx and Myra, you two are heading in the front. Phin and Blaire, how are you two planning on getting in?

**Madge:** Is there a back way we can enter?

**Rhi:** Yeah.

**Madge:** Yeah, then—

**Rhi:** Yeah, there’s a servants’ entrance type thing. Blaire and Phin, you guys have split off to try to sneak around to try and get in. Minx and Myra, you two stroll up to the front gates, where there’s a pair of guards in front of the gate leading in. When the two of you approach, one of them holds up a hand to stop you. She says:

**Rhi (as Guard):** What’s your business here?

**Josie (as Minx):** Due to my trade, I do believe we need to file some paperwork for the establishment of a art delivery service.

**Rhi:** The two of them glance at each other. The woman looks back.

**Rhi (as Guard):** Do you have a meeting arranged with the ambassador?

**Josie (as Minx):** We did have an appointment for this time. Is this not the case on your end?

**Rhi (as Guard):** What’s your name?

**Josie (as Minx):** Nyra Foxglove.

**Rhi (as Guard):** One moment.

**Rhi:** The other guard goes inside. There’s a bit of an awkward wait while you guys are just kinda standing there and the other guard is staring at you. After a few minutes the other guard comes back and just shakes his head.

**Rhi (as Guard):** You’re apparently not on the ambassador’s schedule for the day. I’m afraid that due to recent security concerns, we can’t allow unscheduled, unvetted visitors. So, good day.

**Josie (as Minx):** Now, hold on just one moment. We did in fact schedule this appointment. It was about three months ago.

**Josie:** I turn to Myra.

**Josie (as Minx):** Can you check on that? It was about three months ago, yes?

**Minna (as Myra):** Ah, yes.

**Minna:** She flips through her notes.

**Rhi:** Do you wanna do a flashback to—

**Minna:** Yes. I think she’s just going to have made up a little passable-looking planner. I think all she would have had to do is just take time.

**Rhi:** Well, just having it written down in your schedule isn’t gonna be enough. I would say, if you wanna try to forge a note...

**Minna:** Oh, from– Mm, I like that.

**Rhi:** So, 1 stress.

**Minna:** I rolled a 3.

**Rhi:** You have a forged letter. It’s not great. You’re not sure how well it’s gonna hold up, but you can try it.

**Minna:** Think she just waves it front of the guard.

**Minna (as Myra):** Yes, I have this, from Avrathi, from months ago.

**Josie (as Minx):** And now, surely, with this advance planning, we all understand accidents happen. But surely a moment of time can be spared to correct this oversight.

**Rhi:** I feel like you guys need to do a group social action here, either a Sway or—

**Minna:** I think it’s gonna be a Sway.

**Josie:** Mhmm.

**Minna:** How’s your stress at?

**Josie:** My stress is at 0, so I will lead. Critical.

**Rhi:** Okay. Critical from Minx. Myra, what did you get?

**Minna:** I got a 4.

**Rhi:** Minx, you don’t take any stress. It’s a critical success. The guard is just like:

**Rhi (as Guard):** All right, all right, all right. Let me... [sigh] If you have something from the ambassador, then it must have just been left off the schedule, I suppose. [sigh] Come on.

**Rhi:** There’s a desk where a young Iruvian woman is sitting, still flipping through this schedule book and rummaging through papers. There’s several chairs and couches and a few little tables; this is where you sit and wait for someone to come get you. One of the guards walks you in.

**Rhi (as Guard):** Have a seat and we’ll get this sorted out. The ambassador may have something else scheduled right now, so it may be a few minutes. I apologize.

**Josie (as Minx):** Very well.

**Rhi:** The guard heads back out.

**Josie (as Minx):** Can I passively try to lend credence here? Like, turn, talk to Myra, and pretend like we’re discussing pieces in our collection that we wanna unload or acquire and stuff like that?

**Rhi:** Yeah, you two can have that quiet conversation that the assistant would be able to just barely overhear.

## [00:39:40]

**Rhi:** While you two are doing that, getting in the front door, let’s cut around to the back door with Blaire and Phin.

**Kim:** Yeah.

**Madge:** Yay.

**Rhi:** What’re you two doing?

**Kim:** Well, I imagine we have to get in first. Is the back door locked at all or no?

**Rhi:** It’s a servants’ entrance. You haven’t really seen anybody come in or out while you’ve been hanging out back here. Once again, if you want to find out if it’s locked, you will have to try the door.

**Josie and Minna:** [laughter]

**Rhi:** You cannot tell if a door is locked at range.

**Madge:** Okay. I’ll go up to the door and try and open it.

**Rhi:** Phin goes up and tries the door. It is locked, but, Phin, you can tell just looking at it, it’s a pretty cheap lock. It’s not a super secure one.

**Madge:** Can I break it?

**Rhi:** Yeah.

**Madge:** Cool.

**Kim:** Okay...

**Rhi:** [laughing] Hey, Phin got there first.

**Kim:** Yeah, yeah. I would have picked it, but...

**Madge:** Do you wanna pick it? I mean, wrecking can be a backup option.

**Kim:** All right.

**Rhi:** This is gonna be risky, standard effect.

**Kim:** [gasp] 6!

**Rhi:** Okay. You look at this you’re like:

**Kim (as Blaire):** Psh! I got this.

**Rhi:** Pop the lock, and yeah, the door is open. Inside there is a dimly-lit hallway with a few doors and doorways leading off. Then you can see, about halfway down, there’s a set of stairs heading up.

**Kim:** And that’s the only set of stairs?

**Rhi:** That you can see, yeah.

**Kim:** I guess we should head up those stairs, then.

**Rhi:** All right. You guys wanna sneak-sneak-sneak?

**Kim:** Sneaky-sneak.

**Madge:** Yeah.

**Rhi:** Okay. Do you wanna do that as a group thing?

**Kim:** Yeah, we can.

**Madge:** Yeah. How much stress do you have?

**Kim:** I have 3. I have the stress to spare.

**Madge:** Okay, cool. Yeah, go ahead. Would be good. [laugh]

**Kim:** 3.

**Madge:** 4.

**Rhi:** 4, okay. The four is the result.

**Kim:** So, do I take—

**Rhi:** You take 1 stress.

**Kim:** All right.

**Rhi:** I’m gonna say you have reduced effect. You guys start sneaking towards the stairs, sneak, sneak, sneak, and you’re only about halfway there when you have to duck into a nearby closet to hide, because someone comes down the stairs and heads up towards the other side of the building.

**Kim:** Anything cool in the closet?

**Rhi:** Uh, no. There’s just like a couple brooms, and a mom, and a bucket.

**Kim:** Ew.

**Minna:** [giggle]

**Rhi:** And some dust rags. Bucket’s empty.

**Minna:** You’ve shoved these kids into a broom closet together.

**Rhi:** I am obligated to do it once a campaign.

**Madge and Minna:** [laughter]

## [00:42:18]

**Rhi:** We’ll follow that person back up to the front room, where Minx and Myra have been chatting quietly about their plans for art sales. A young Iruvian man in a nice, very finely-tailored suit, comes over.

**Rhi (as Young Man):** I am terribly sorry about the mix-up, Ms. Foxglove. Seems that your appointment did not make it onto the schedule.

**Rhi:** He shoots a glare over his shoulder at the girl sitting at the desk, who shrinks in on herself.

**Kim:** Leave her alone, she’s making minimum wage!

**Josie:** [sympathetic noise]

**Rhi (as Young Man):** Unfortunately, the ambassador is meeting with someone else right now. However, if you are willing to wait a bit, she does have some open time in her schedule. She should be done with her current meeting in, I hope, 15 to 20 minutes, if you don’t mind waiting.

**Josie (as Minx):** Well, I suppose things like these happen.

**Josie:** I turn my Myra and ask:

**Josie (as Minx):** Do we indeed have time to wait?

**Minna (as Myra):** I do believe we have time to wait. Your meeting with that collector isn’t for another hour or so.

**Josie (as Minx):** And how long, pray tell, do her meetings tend to take in this case?

**Rhi (as Young Man):** Hopefully, it should take no more than 30, 40 minutes. It also depends on what sort of questions you have. But I think less than hour. And if the next meeting you have to get to is—

**Minna (as Myra):** Oh, Ms. Foxglove, if you don’t mind, I think I’ll go see if I can find a message runner to see if we can push back that meeting.

**Josie (as Minx):** All right. Very well.

**Minna (as Myra):** I’m sure he’ll be understanding.

**Josie (as Minx):** Indeed. Very well, I do believe the wait shall be amenable. Please do be conscious of our potential time limit.

**Rhi (as Young Man):** Of course, of course. And I do apologize again for the mix-up. Can I get you anything to drink? A refreshment?

**Josie:** I’ll order not a super fancy tea but the sort of tea where... You serve a distinguished guest this.

**Rhi:** Yeah, something that isn’t made with mushrooms.

**Josie:** Yes.

## [00:44:21]

**Rhi:** He heads off again. Before he goes back down the hall, Blaire and Phin, I imagine you guys are peering out through a little crack in the closet door. You see that guy come down the stairs and then disappear up into the front of the house. Do you guys wanna try to continue to sneak up towards the stairs?

**Kim and Madge:** Yeah.

**Rhi:** Okay.

**Josie:** Although Myra’s trying to make contact with them, right?

**Minna:** Yes. I was hoping I could sneak around the back and try to find them?

**Rhi:** Okay. I think they’re gonna do their thing first.

**Minna:** Okay.

**Rhi:** There’s four of you in the part and we’ve split you three ways.

**Multiple:** [laughter]

**Minna:** Only briefly.

**Rhi:** We hope. All right, Blaire and Phin, do you guys wanna try sneaking up the stairs again?

**Kim:** Yeah.

**Madge:** Yeah. And I can go ahead and take the stress this time.

**Kim:** Yeah, that works for me.

**Rhi:** Yup. Both of you, yeah, it’s still risky, standard effect.

**Kim:** Aw, Jesus.

**Madge:** 3.

**Kim:** 1.

**Rhi:** [sighing] Okay. You guys wait a little bit too long to sneak out. You’re opening the door and starting to step out just as that guy comes back down the hallway.

**Kim:** Shit.

**Rhi:** So—

**Madge (as Phin):** Hand me– Hand me the broom. Hand me the broom!

**Kim (as Blaire):** But– uh– Okay, okay!

**Madge (as Phin):** Hand me– to– Broom!

**Kim (as Blaire):** Two?!

**Madge:** Here– right– One. One broom.

**Kim (as Blaire):** Okay.

**Kim:** Uh, I’ll grab a broom.

**Rhi:** Okay. You both have brooms. You guys are now in a desperate position.

**Madge:** [sigh]

**Rhi:** He comes down and sees the two of you come out of the closet with brooms. I assume you start sweeping?

**Madge:** Yeah. I’ll sweep until he gets a little closer.

**Rhi:** He sees the two of you and strides towards you a little more quickly.

**Rhi (as Young Man):** Uh– Excuse me. Who– who are you? How did you get in here?

**Madge:** I’m gonna smack him in the head with my broom.

**Kim:** Oh my God.

**Rhi:** [delighted] Okay. Good, I like it. What roll are you making?

**Madge:** Skirmish?

**Rhi:** Skirmish, yeah. That works. You’re gonna get a point of experience in the Prowess line there, ‘cause this is desperate.

**Madge:** 5.

**Rhi:** Okay. You smack him with the broom. He hits the wall and clutches his head.

**Rhi (as Young Man):** Wha– What the...? Who–

**Rhi:** And he’s clearly revving up to start shouting. Blaire?

**Kim:** Yeah. I think I’ll try and knock him out first because I feel like my five-foot-one ass would not be able to move this man consciously into the closet. So that ... also be Skirmish?

**Rhi:** Yeah.

**Kim:** Oh no. 1?

**Rhi:** Okay.

**Madge:** Blaire, honey. [laugh]

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

## [00:47:08] outro

**Rhi:** Thanks for listening. The Magpies will be back in two weeks. In the meantime, follow us on Twitter [@magpies\_pod](https://twitter.com/magpies_pod).

The Magpies Podcast is hosted and produced by Rhi. Follow me on Twitter [@rhiannon42](https://twitter.com/rhiannon42).

Blaire Culhane is played by Kim Kogut. Follow her on Twitter [@kimdianajones](https://twitter.com/kimdianajones).

Minx is played by Josie. Follow her on Twitter [@dragongirljosie](https://twitter.com/DragonGirlJosie), and watch her art streams at [picarto.tv/dragongirljosie](https://picarto.tv/dragongirljosie).

Myra Keel is played by Minna. Follow her on Twitter [@mynaminnarr](https://twitter.com/mynaminnarr).

And Phin Haig is played by Madge. Follow her on Twitter [@madgequips](https://twitter.com/madgequips).

The opening and closing theme music is from Trio for Piano, Violin, and Viola by Kevin MacLeod and is used under a Creative Commons license.

The Blades in the Dark roleplay system is the creation of John Harper and is published by Evil Hat Productions.

## [0048:10]

**Rhi:** I just need to see where the Iruvian embassy is.

**Kim:** Okay.

**Rhi:** Or the consulate, rather. Whatever. I’ll call it an embassy.

**Minna:** Are you disconsolate that you can’t remember the word for it?

**Josie:** [laughter]

**Rhi:** [long sigh] I will remember this next time you ask for a Devil’s Bargain, Myra.

**Josie:** [laughter]

**Kim:** Oh.

**Minna:** [laughing] I couldn’t resist!