

Duskhollow PD - Part 3

Transcribed by mileaftermile.tumblr.com

JONNY

Hello! For the third and final installment of Duskhollow PD. I'm Jonny from The Magnus Archives, you probably know that.

ALEX

If you're on this feed, you - you really should -

JONNY [OVERLAPPING]

Yeah, like... it's -

ALEX [CONTINUING]

- you picked the worst possible episode imaginable to start on otherwise.

JONNY

Yeah, also, if this is your first episode of anything in this feed, *stop*. Go back to episode 1 of The Magnus Archives. If you just want to know what is going on here, go back two episodes, 'cause this is part three and it will be *very* confusing for you. I am here with some other people!

LOWRI

I'm Lowri and I produce The Magnus Archives and I am playing Emma Walensky.

JONNY

Oh, yes, sorry, this is a role-playing game.

[LAUGHTER]

Actual play, roleplay podcast, where everyone is a policeman in a *weird* town. [*whispers*] Investigating a murder. [*loud*] A weird murder!

LOWRI

[*high-pitched*] Murder!

ALEX

And one of those investigators is - is me, I'm Alex Newall, I play Martin in the podcast and I am playing today Archie Murdoch, the person with an accent that I kind of change based on the circumstances, who seems to be doing well.

SASHA

You're still young, you know, you - your voice is still kind of finding itself.

FRANK [OVERLAPPING]

You've got time to find yourself.

JONNY

Who are those other voices we haven't been introduced to?

FRANK [OVERLAPPING]

Oh, you don't want to know.

SASHA [OVERLAPPING]

I'm sorry, how rude -

[LAUGHTER]

JONNY [OVERLAPPING]

Oh, no, no, not at the same time now, one of you - one at a time, please.

[BEAT OF SILENCE]

ALEX

Now neither of you speak, that's how this works.

SASHA

I'm sorry, how rude, I'm Sasha, I play Georgie on The Magnus Archives and today I play Gabrielle Schreiber, a very skeptical detective who's following leads whether they are present or not!

[LAUGHTER]

JONNY

And finally...

FRANK

I am Frank, I play Basira in The Magnus Archives and today I am playing Detective Carl Husselback, who's... I mean, largely his role right now is just be covered in blood.

JONNY

I mean, yeah, it's probably not going to change.

FRANK

No.

ALEX

We thought - we thought we'd shake things up by having you play some kind of police- oh, wait.

FRANK

So outside my comfort zone.

JONNY

So. When last we left our... [*dubious*] heroes?

LOWRI

Absolutely.

SASHA

Protagonists.

JONNY [OVERLAPPING]

Protagonists.

ALEX [OVERLAPPING]

I think Schreiber could be competent.

JONNY

You had found some clues about a body that involved some trains, question mark. And then you did some very embarrassing things that had the chief yelling at your sergeant.

ALEX

But importantly - not us.

JONNY

No, no. And as long as the sergeant isn't one of those bosses that passes their irritation and displeasure down the line, you should be fine.

[SFX: OFFICE NOISES, TYPEWRITERS]

ALEX

I mean, I'm sure being at the very, very bottom rung means that the problems are never going to reach me, I'm sure.

JONNY

He's given you twenty-four hours to crack the case. [*lowers voice*] So, what are you gonna do?

ARCHIE

So I'm seeing here that we've got - we've got a code, right. And we've got a whistle, so is this what they mean when they - like it's - like a whistleblower? Is this - is that what we're dealing with here?

EMMA

Kid, it - it really could be.

LOWRI

I'm gonna take that code and I'm gonna cross-reference it with my -

CHIEF

[*shouting, distant*] Husselback! Is one of your detectives doing wordplay? I *hate* wordplay! You got twenty hours!

ARCHIE

Oh my god, Walensky -

CARL [OVERLAPPING]

Thanks, rookie.

ARCHIE [CONTINUING]

Walensky, you're in so much trouble.

EMMA

Kid, it rolls off my back.

CARL

You're on graveyard shift after this. When this case is over.

ARCHIE

Oh, I hate the graveyard shift, it's wet and damp and lonely. Little tombs on the... *[trails off]*.

JONNY

It is. Like, the Duskhollow graveyard is interesting. All the graves are very old. No one ever actually seems to be buried there, there are - sometimes you'll see burial parties, but they always look basically like the same people clustered around a grave. There's no church, there aren't any churches of any religion in Duskhollow. There is a gravedigger but, you know, he just keeps to himself mostly.

FRANK [OVERLAPPING]

He's just some guy.

ALEX

He got tenure and just hasn't been doing the job since.

JONNY

Pretty much.

LOWRI

I'm gonna be looking for codes in the timetables, using this code or the number that we got from the inside of the dead man's body.

ALEX

9F92251, you mean.

LOWRI [OVERLAPPING]

That exact one.

ALEX

Sorry, 9F-92251.

LOWRI

Yeah.

JONNY

So there are quite a lot of - there are quite a lot of 9F codes, but they - none of them go any higher than 9F-92250.

[VARIOUS PEOPLE "HMM"]

LOWRI

[*whispers*] This is very interesting.

ARCHIE

So, I have a hunch...

EMMA

Yes, go with it, kid.

ARCHIE

So I'm gonna go to the library, but can I have some salt first, please?

LOWRI

Emma looks so proud of you.

JONNY [OVERLAPPING SLIGHTLY]

You're running out of salt.

FRANK

I hate this department.

[LAUGHTER]

LOWRI

I look you -

JONNY [OVERLAPPING]

How's your transfer coming, Husselback?

FRANK

Keeps getting rejected.

LOWRI

I look Archie dead in the eye -

EMMA

I am so proud of you.

LOWRI

And I hand him my salt shaker. All of it.

ARCHIE [OVERLAPPING]

[*shocked*] Full up?

EMMA

Yeah. Yeah, I knew you had it in you, kid.

ALEX

I hold it like it's a live grenade and slowly walk out towards the library, holding this with both hands!

JONNY

Okay.

SASHA

You're leaving yourself without salt.

LOWRI

Look, I think he needs it more than I do, I only taught him about the salt showing the aliens, there are other ways to find the aliens.

SASHA [OVERLAPPING]

Okay, okay.

JONNY

Okay. What about Husselback and Schreiber, what are you up to?

SASHA

Well, so far I have been, you know, hassling the Mariners, but I think I've been -

JONNY

Following the same lead over and over again to see if anything new falls out?

[ALEX LAUGHS]

SASHA

Yeah, yeah. What - I've been working real hard and doing great work so it's definitely time for me to reward myself with a coffee.

[SFX: OUTSIDE, RAIN, SOUNDS OF A CAR ENGINE]

JONNY

Mm-hmm.

SASHA

I do have this receipt from Whateley & Sons Books And Curios and it is right next to my favorite coffee place, so I guess I'll swing by while I'm there, but I don't expect to find anything.

JONNY [OVERLAPPING SLIGHTLY]

Are you going with - are you going with Frank? Or are you doing your own thing, following a maverick course.

FRANK

Yeah, I haven't made any notes so I'm just gonna follow Schreiber.

JONNY

Okay, fair enough. We will start... let's start at Whateley's.

SASHA

Okay.

JONNY

Whateley & Sons Books And Curios is old. If you can imagine like a Victorian curiosity shop dropped into a noir high street, that's what it is. The window is full of rare tomes, strange little antiques. There is a stuffed tiger, a little cuddly tiger that just looks at you. It's actually pretty cute, you know, I said it a bit like it was creepy but it's not actually creepy, it's just - just a cuddly toy. The bell rings as you push the door open.

[DOOR OPENS, BELL RINGS]

[RAIN, OUTSIDE SOUNDS FADE OUT]

ALEX

I'm thinking very Dutch angles and like chiaroscuro in here...

JONNY

Oh, very much so, very much so, there's like - there aren't enough lamps in here and everything has quite stark shadows.

ALEX

This is either Chinatown kid or is - the owner is Helena Bonham-Carter. I can't decide which but it's gonna be one of them.

FRANK [OVERLAPPING]

Why not both?

ALEX

Ah, fair point.

SASHA

Okay, so is anybody come out when the bell rings, or -

JONNY

Not immediately, no. You can't see the desk, it's - it's sort of behind various piles of old books and - and an old grand piano, that is covered in books.

SASHA

Okay. Well, I will kind of wander around, making sure that my footsteps are falling in a very police-y way, you know.

JONNY

Okay. As you round a corner in the books, a man is there. He's middling height but *very* stooped. Just a very long face goes down quite a way with little small round spectacles.

WHATELEY

Hello.

GABRIELLE

Mr. Whateley?

WHATELEY

That's me, Eustace Whateley, what can I do for you, what sort of delights can I purvey to you this day?

GABRIELLE

I'm afraid we're actually here about some previously purveyed delights.

WHATELEY

Oh. Oh, dear. Nobody's come to a horrible end, have they?

GABRIELLE

It's rather suspicious that you should say that, can I ask what led you to that conclusion?

WHATELEY

I was just asking questions.

GABRIELLE

We'll ask the questions here.

WHATELEY [OVERLAPPING]

Can a man not express some idle curiosity about the horrible deaths -

CARL [OVERLAPPING]

No.

WHATELEY [CONTINUING]

- that might be associated with things he has sold them?

CARL

Not unless a man plans to give more information, more context?

[MUFFLED LAUGHTER IN THE BACKGROUND]

WHATELEY

I mean, what is this about? Also, who are you? Are you buying anything?

CARL [OVERLAPPING]

Probably not.

GABRIELLE

Detective Schreiber -

WHATELEY

Oh, the police! Detectives, yes, I'm so dreadfully sorry, how very rude of me. I always do my best to cooperate fully with the police.

GABRIELLE

You made a sale, a little while ago. There was a conductor's hat.

WHATELEY

Oh, dear.

GABRIELLE

And a timetable, I believe.

WHATELEY

Yes, a train timetable.

GABRIELLE

Comma "old".

WHATELEY

Mm, comma "old". [*chuckles*] Not to be confused with comma "ancient". Or comma "undated".

GABRIELLE [OVERLAPPING]

Right.

WHATELEY

Or comma “future”? I sell a lot of interesting things.

GABRIELLE

Alright, well this isn’t an advert, you’re not on the radio here.

[LOWRI LAUGHS]

Would you care to tell us about those particular items? Were they of any interest?

JONNY

Could you please make me a Smokes roll?

SASHA

I feel like these have gone a bit too well for me so far.

[DICE ROLLING]

And, there we go.

ALEX [OVERLAPPING]

[*enthusiastic*] Yay!

SASHA

That’s a one.

JONNY

Okay.

WHATELEY

Yes, of course, of *course* I can. Please come this way, detectives.

JONNY

He walks back ‘round to the other side of the desk, pulls out a *huge* old account book, starts flicking through.

WHATELEY

Now, let me see, various volumes sold for thirty pounds.... No. An old hand organ sold for 200 pounds.... No.

JONNY

Could you please make me a wisdom test against boredom?

[SASHA LAUGHS]

SASHA

Yes, I can. That's a ten under thirteen, so, I'm okay.

JONNY

Okay. Yeah, so -

ALEX

You're sufficiently bored already, thank god.

SASHA [OVERLAPPING]

I am okay.

JONNY

So, yeah, you could, like - you know that he's just stalling.

FRANK

I'm gonna wander around while he just takes his time, so much time, going through these records.

WHATELEY

An old tobacco box, comma "old". Fifteen pounds.... No.

[MUFFLED GIGGLING]

Oh, sorry, of course, here we are, detectives.

JONNY

You have intimidation, I believe, as an expertise -

FRANK [OVERLAPPING]

Yes.

JONNY

Could you roll me Smokes as well, actually, thinking about it.

ALEX

Do you get an advantage for being covered in actual blood?

JONNY

[in character voice] No, I'm surprisingly used to that, it - it's not -

ALEX

If anything, it's detracting.

FRANK

Seven.

JONNY

[in character voice] Makes it feel like home.

WHATELEY

Here we are, of course, detectives. Train conductor's cap, comma "old". Fifty pounds.

CARL

Mm-hmm.

WHATELEY

Train timetable, comma "old". Forty pounds. Sold to a Mrs. Angela Grockle, two days ago. Now, she was after train memorabilia, I believe, specifically those relating to the British Rail standard class of train. Fascinating, fascinating business, really. I managed to locate these for her and sold them along. I did, of course, not know anything about any curses or arcane or eldritch properties that they may have had, and no such knowledge would be provable on my part.

FRANK

You can't see it but I had just rolled my eyes very powerfully.

JONNY

[in character voice] No, I saw that.

[LAUGHTER]

CARL

Have you sold any whistles recently?

WHATELEY

No, though originally I believe there was supposed to be a whistle that goes along with the cap as a set, but whether it was ever created, who can say.

CARL

Can you say?

WHATELEY

I - I can't no.

[LAUGHTER]

Whether or not I can, like, I didn't get a - I didn't find a whistle, though apparently there was supposed to be one with the cap as part of the set, and indeed the timetable. Detectives, I've been in this situation enough times, selling the harmless curios that I do that sometimes may end up... pivotal aspects of murder scenes, who can say? But I've been around - I've done this dance enough times that it is probably a good idea for me to come clean. I do have a second copy of that timetable. I may have made myself a copy that I can provide to you as long as you remember how helpful I was to Duskhollow Police Department. I would very much hate for anyone to think that I was in any way involved with covering up or trying to excuse any sort of horrific crime. I'm simply a humble shopkeeper.

CARL

Yeah, alright, we'll take that timetable.

GABRIELLE

And you mentioned that you found this cap and timetable. Where exactly did you find it?

WHATELEY

Oh, where does anyone buy antiques? Elsewhere.

GABRIELLE [OVERLAPPING]

Here?

[LAUGHTER]

WHATELEY

Some dealers I'm acquainted with found them in their own auctions, often. Estate sales. Washed up on lonely beaches. Where do antiques come from? All over the place.

CARL [OVERLAPPING]

Did you have any more specific information about these particular items?

WHATELEY

No.

CARL

That is *all* you had to say.

WHATELEY

Yes. Well, actually now I think about it, now I really think - now that I am so very keen to help out the police department, I believe that these were acquired from the old stationmaster of the Duskhollow trainyard.

ALEX

Write that down!

[SOUNDS OF WRITING, FRANK MUMBLING]

SASHA [OVERLAPPING]

[*singing*] Stationmaster, stationmaster.

FRANK [OVERLAPPING]

[*talking while writing*] Duskhollow...

JONNY

And he will provide you with a copy of an old train timetable. That is strange, actually. Lots of different train designations but all of them have arrival times and dates of this year. Whatever year this might be in Duskhollow, it's hard to tell but it's definitely this one.

SASHA

Sorry, so when you say they're for this year, is it for the bit of the year that hasn't -

JONNY

It's for the future, yes.

SASHA

But aren't all train timetables for the future?

JONNY

I mean not those sold as antiques, usually.

SASHA [OVERLAPPING]

Oh, I see, of course, it's an antique! Oh, it's an antique! Yeah...

JONNY [OVERLAPPING]

It was printed - it was printed like fifty years ago.

ALEX [OVERLAPPING]

It's - it's timetable, comma "present".

SASHA

Timetable, comma "present", comma "old".

ALEX

Yeah.

GABRIELLE

Oh, I see what the - the issue is with this, Sarge. It's a misprint. Those can be very valuable, you know, you get a - you get a book with a typo in it, it's more valuable because it's rarer, dates it specific. So this one, it's a misprint.

CARL

Hmm.

FRANK

On a quick glance, does the 9F-92251 show up at all?

JONNY

Yes. It's scheduled to arrive at eight o'clock tonight.

[LOWRI INHALES DRAMATICALLY]

ALEX [OVERLAPPING]

Yay!

LOWRI

Oohh.

ALEX

You should wait on the train tracks, just to be sure.

FRANK

I will *not* do that.

[LAUGHTER]

JONNY

So.

FRANK [OVERLAPPING]

Don't want another character killed by a train.

JONNY [CONTINUING]

Let's cut to the library.

ALEX

Okay I - I stride -

JONNY [OVERLAPPING SLIGHTLY]

The library is, like, a tall imposing building, lots of oak, lots of beams of light. For a town the size of Duskhollow, the library is way too big and very echoey.

ALEX

I stride powerfully up and, utilizing my library card supplies, I'm still not sure how supplies work but it's one of the ones I've got -

[SFX: FOOTSTEPS ECHO, SOUNDS OF QUIET TALKING IN BACKGROUND]

JONNY

What's your dice?

ALEX

D8.

JONNY

Roll a d8.

FRANK

To see if you brought your library card.

[DICE ROLLING]

ALEX

Seven.

JONNY

Yes.

LIBRARIAN

Yes. Oh, yes, hello. Hello, what can I can do for you?

ALEX [OVERLAPPING]

I've forgotten my voice, one second.

JONNY [OVERLAPPING]

This is the - this is the librarian's voice.

ARCHIE

Ah jeez -

SASHA [OVERLAPPING]

I'm sorry -

LIBRARIAN

My name is - my name is Arthur, yes. Hello?

SASHA [OVERLAPPING]

It's - it's just that that's the same voice that Jonny uses when he pretends to be our cats.

[LAUGHTER]

JONNY

[in the same pretentious voice] That's nonsense, I don't know what you're talking about.

ARCHIE

Ah jeez... ehm, okay -

LIBRARIAN [OVERLAPPING]

I'm a libr- I'm Arthur the librarian, at the Duskhollow Public Library.

[SASHA LAUGHING]

ARCHIE

Ah jeez.

LIBRARIAN

What can I do for you? Officer?

ARCHIE

So, I -

LIBRARIAN

You have a library card, so it's all in order.

ARCHIE

I am looking for train books because I've got to research, like, a train, um... thing.

LIBRARIAN

Hmm, well, train books will be under T. For... train books.

ARCHIE

You don't have any kind of cross-referencing system?

LIBRARIAN [OVERLAPPING]

Do you need -

ARCHIE [CONTINUING]

I'm gonna - I'm - I actually have library user as an expertise.

LIBRARIAN

I believe that - no, this library, we believe that Dewey was a fool.

ARCHIE

Do you have an indexing system that I can perhaps cross-reference with?

LIBRARIAN

No. *[pause]* But *I* know where they all are.

FRANK

I am the index!

ALEX

[imitating librarian] I'm indexing right now!

SASHA

[laughing] Oh no!

LIBRARIAN

They're over there, here, I'll show you.

JONNY

He takes you over to a big wall with a little brass plaque, reading "train books".

ARCHIE

Excellent. Well, I guess I'd better get started.

ALEX

Oh, before I forget, I pull out a salt shaker and just - salt his face.

[LOWRI LAUGHS]

LIBRARIAN

Oh, my face! Oh no! God, salt in my face!

LOWRI

Yeesss!

LIBRARIAN

That's really not what I came to work hoping would happen.

ALEX [OVERLAPPING]

Wait. Wait, wait, wait -

FRANK [OVERLAPPING]

Would you say he was... assaulted?

ALEX [OVERLAPPING]

No other -

[SEVERAL PEOPLE "OOOH" AT FRANK'S PUN]

FRANK

I'm so sorry, I hate myself.

ALEX [OVERLAPPING]

The important -

SASHA

Bet he's feeling pretty salty about it.

[FRANK LAUGHS]

FRANK

Nice.

JONNY

He sort of staggers away to go wash his eyes out.

ARCHIE

[*whispers*] Oh my god, she was right, that's the only NPC that's reacted to salt! [*louder*] I found a real one!

ALEX

Okay, I am gonna begin researching the *heck* out of old trains.

JONNY

Make me a Flashlight roll.

ALEX

Come on d4.

[DICE ROLLING]

JONNY

Oh, you only have a d4 left?

ALEX

Yep.

JONNY

Okay, well, it's fine, you got a three -

ALEX [OVERLAPPING]

I rolled a three.

JONNY

So, that's - that's enough. So. 9F-92251, if you're cross-referencing it with the old British Rail standards -

ALEX

Well, naturally.

JONNY

Those were a particular brand of locomotive that... only 999 of them were ever made. Officially. The 999th one was 9F-92250. So, if there were to be a train with the designation 9F-92251, that would make it the secret thousandth locomotive.

ARCHIE

Okay, okay, so that's - let's work with what we know here. We have a secret thousandth locomotive. We have a librarian who is some kind of alien. And we have someone having a heart attack so big that they exploded. And then someone came in and took their heart later? And then *they* sort of exploded. Hmm. Okay.

ALEX

I go back to the librarian who is presumably in great disproportionate... [*unintelligible*].

LIBRARIAN [OVERLAPPING]

[*still recovering*] Oh, yes, yes, uh... I'm okay, I've washed my eyes out and, uh... I'm keen to help you again.

ARCHIE

What - what can you tell me about local records on like...

ALEX

I bring up, like, this specific type of locomotive and just like -

ARCHIE

Do you know where, like, when they stopped being in commission?

LIBRARIAN

Hmm. I mean, I don't really - I mean, but if it was anything to do with Duskhollow then I imagine that any decommissioned trains would have gone to the old train graveyard, the railyard.

ARCHIE

Fantastic. Bye!

ALEX

I salt him a little bit more -

[Librarian makes sounds of shock and distress]

ALEX [CONTINUING]

- and head off to the trainyard.

[LAUGHTER]

LIBRARIAN

That's last thing I wanted to occur based on this interaction.

ALEX

I leave - I leave backwards, keeping him in my eyesight because I know an alien when I see one reacting to salt in the eyes, like an alien, not a human.

[DOOR OPENING, RAIN STARTS AGAIN]

LOWRI

Oh, I'm so proud of you.

ALEX

I'm learning. I got this.

JONNY

And are you letting anyone else know that you're going to the trainyard?

ALEX

Well, none of them have mobile telephones. I am going to go to the rotary phone.

JONNY

Mm-hmm.

ALEX

Wait, is there a chance that the chief could pick up?

JONNY

Yes.

ALEX

I'm going straight to the yard, I'm not calling anyone.

JONNY

Okay, brilliant! Brilliant. I'm gonna stick with -

ALEX

Okay!

JONNY

- gonna stick with... young Alex.

ALEX

I'm sure you mean young Archie Murdoch.

JONNY

Well actually, yeah, okay, I'm gonna stick with grizzled old Alex playing young Archie.

ALEX

There we go.

JONNY

You can approach the railyard. It makes *zero* sense that a town the size of Duskhollow would have such an extensive train graveyard. But it does. It's maybe... it's hard to tell exactly how big it is. But the fence is remarkably easy to hop and you start to wind your way through ancient rusting carriages and hollowed-out locomotives. They're old lamps staring at you like [*whispers dramatically*] empty sockets of a skull.

ALEX

Okay. It's -

JONNY [OVERLAPPING]

What are you looking for?

ALEX

So, this is feeling quite sketchy, so I'm gonna draw my salt.

JONNY

Mm-hmm. Okay.

ALEX

And then what I'm gonna do is... I'm gonna - I'm gonna -

JONNY

You do also have a shotgun, as I recall.

[LAUGHTER]

ALEX

Yeah, well, I see which way the winds blowing. [*loud*] Due alien! [*normal*] With a hint of salt. So, my logic is... I have expertise in engineering.

JONNY

Mm-hmm.

ALEX

I've used me library. In terms of engineering, it's like, okay, cool, it's this type of train -

JONNY [OVERLAPPING]

Yep.

ALEX

So realistically it's on this gauge of track, realistically if it's gonna be in a train graveyard or something similar then it's gonna have to be in a certain type of shed because you have gauges and so on -

JONNY [OVERLAPPING]

Could you make me -

ALEX [CONTINUING]

- I'm trying to narrow down where that train would be if it was here.

JONNY

Yep, that's fine, you can 100% do that. It's so easy for you, I'm not even gonna go into details about how you do. Are you in any way sneaking or are you...

ALEX

God, no!

JONNY

Okay, great, so as you get closer, into a nearby hill out of the train graveyard is a tunnel. Dark tunnel, just stretching away into the hill. And there is a track that leads from it into the center of the train graveyard. And stood there, there are eight people, wearing hooded jackets that, even in the gloom, you can tell [*whisper dramatically*] are anoraks.

ALEX

Do any of them wear like station hats at all?

JONNY

It's hard to tell. As you're getting closer you feel some strong arms gripping you either side. Could you make a strength test, please? I'm gonna say at disadvantage because there are two of them.

ALEX

Am I able to use my special ability of swings and leaps, being just vaguely acrobatic or is this not an applicable one?

JONNY

If you had been like - if you'd been jumping from train to train or something, yes, this is just trying to escape being nabbed.

ALEX [OVERLAPPING SLIGHTLY]

They got me. Strength with disadvantage? Little did you know -

[DICE ROLLING]

That's the first one. We got a seven on the table.

[DICE ROLLING]

Thirteen, nooo! Oh, I've ruined your story, but nevermind.

JONNY

You are grasped. I mean, it's not my story, you're the one who decided to go to the trainyard without any backup. You are yanked backwards by two very big guys in anoraks.

BIG GUY 1

What we got here? Looks like a looky-loo.

ARCHIE

No, I'm - I'm - I'm a cop and I'm allowed to go wherever I want 'cause the Sarge says so.

BIG GUY 2

Take him to the track.

JONNY

And -

ARCHIE

We're - we're on the track.... That's what - I don't understand...

JONNY [OVERLAPPING SLIGHTLY]

You are dragged down on the center. One of the figures in anoraks comes forward, lowers the hood and you see Angela Grockle wearing a station - wearing a conductor's cap.

[SASHA GASPS]

ALEX

I have never met her and I have no idea who she is.

JONNY [OVERLAPPING]

With a whistle - yeah, no, you have no idea - with a whistle around her, uh - this is entirely for the - the audience's benefit.

ALEX

That's fine.

JONNY

With an old tin whistle hung around her neck.

ANGELA

And what can I do for you, officer?

ARCHIE

Now. The thing with Archie Murdoch -

ANGELA

I don't really care. Tie him to the track, please.

ARCHIE

Oh, dammit.

JONNY

You are tied to the track.

ALEX

I keep yelling out because I'm reading my stats and thinking of anything - I'm yelling out on the track -

ARCHIE

Don't do that, I - I alre- I swallowed the other whistle, it'll all go wrong if you do that!

JONNY

The figures around are not chanting, or saying anything.

ALEX [OVERLAPPING]

Oh, well that's a win.

JONNY

But they are each scratching stuff into their own little notebooks in a very specific rhythm.

[HE IMITATES THE SOUND OF RHYTHMIC WRITING]

[SFX OF RHYTHMIC WRITING]

Cut back to: the rest of the squad.

[RAIN FADES OUT, REPLACED WITH SOUNDS OF POLICE DEPARTMENT]

ARCHIE

Oh no. Oh jeez. Oh jeez!

LOWRI

Well... I would actually like to use one of my special abilities, because I'm just by myself.

JONNY

Yeah - uh, have you guys returned to the police station, yet? Frank and Sasha?

SASHA

Well, we've got our coffee, so... I guess so?

FRANK

Yeah.

JONNY

So, they'll be... returning to the police station, very shortly.

LOWRI

Okay, well I wanted to use my special ability "deduction".

JONNY

Okay, yeah.

LOWRI

Which is, once per session you can apply your powers of deduction and reasoning to reach a "strange" conclusion and require the GM to provide a hint to the next best step.

JONNY

So. The thing about aliens. Is they don't know how humans work? Not really. They get specific obsessions, specific things just stuck in their brains, not like humans. And clearly what's going on here is some of the aliens have become obsessed with trains.

EMMA

[*realization*] It's how they're communicating with each other!

JONNY

It may be how they're communicating with each other, maybe they believe trains to be the dominant lifeform since they're so much bigger and eat people.

[SASHA LAUGHS]

JONNY

Either way, chances are, they'd also need somewhere inconspicuous to land their spacecraft. And if they're really into trains, maybe the old train graveyard would be where they would be.

LOWRI

So do the three of us just look at each other and go...

JONNY

I mean these two have, uh, like - okay, you guys walk in with coffee just as you're like - just as this is dawning on you.

FRANK

So we just walk up to you and go -

CARL

He's going to see a train, we need to get there by 8:00.

[LAUGHTER]

EMMA

Yes, yes! The graveyard! Yes?

GABRIELLE

I mean, can't hurt to -

EMMA [OVERLAPPING]

[*agitated*] What time is it? [*pause*] Quarter to eight?

SASHA [OVERLAPPING]

What time *is* it?

JONNY

Uh, it's currently - it's currently half past seven.

SASHA

How long does it take to get to the trainyard?

JONNY

About 20 minutes.

SASHA

Cool.

EMMA [OVERLAPPING]

We haven't got time!

CARL [OVERLAPPING]

We can go really fast in my police car!

JONNY

I mean roll me your - roll me your police car!

[DICE ROLLING]

FRANK

Three.

[CAR ENGINE STARTS]

JONNY

That's enough! You do not crash.

ALEX

Which one of you is leaning out the window yelling [*imitates siren*] nee-naw nee-naw?

[SIREN STARTS]

JONNY

Uh, no, you've got an actual siren -

ALEX [OVERLAPPING]

Wooow. Big budget.

JONNY [CONTINUING]

- you've got an actual siren, It's going around, it's one of those domed ones.

FRANK

Ooh.

ALEX

Oh, the, uh, [*questioning*] cherry, is that what they call it?

JONNY

Yeah, I want to say. As you hurtle through the rain, towards the graveyard -

LOWRI

When we get closer to the graveyard, I'll say -

EMMA

Turn the siren off, [*lowers voice*] you don't want to let them know we're here.

ALEX

[*laughing*] Do I hear the distant strains of a honky-tonk as someone twirls their mustache? I'm like [*high-pitched*] "No, no, let me go!" [*sings bar of dramatic music*] duh-dah-duh, da-da-da-dun...

JONNY [OVERLAPPING]

Alex. Alex, you are currently tied to the tracks. The rain beats down, soaking you through. In the distance, you hear the sound of a police car and then it stops.

[RAIN BEGINS]

[SIREN STOPS]

ARCHIE

[*Alex laughing*] Aw jeez. Oh no. I'm so on my own. Oh jeez.

JONNY

Angela blows the whistle -

[LOWRI GASPS]

- and it resonates.

[SHRILL WHISTLE]

And all trains and the carriages around, all the rusted old hulks, start to vibrate ever so slightly. And distantly, deep within the tunnel you can see just a pinprick of light, starting to approach.

ALEX

I would like to attempt to use my other special ability so that I've blown it by the time I get run over by a train.

JONNY

Mm-hmm.

ALEX

I would like to use my special abilities MacGyver.

JONNY

Okay!

ALEX

Once per session, you can improvise a solution to a situation using available tools, devices, and uncommon lore.

JONNY

Okay.

ALEX

So, I am going to use - see, this is - this is playing into an Alex strength, which is bull-[*censored*] on the fly. I happen to have palmed one of the Marlboro Reds that were from earlier and as a result, I've got that sequestered along with the lighter. Now, it just so happens that Archie Murdoch with his engineering knowledge knows that there is an issue in these kind of train lines where a certain amount of aluminium oxide can end up laid into the track as a result of the soldering process to make the rails.

JONNY

Mm-hmm.

ALEX

So, his logic is very simple which is “you can’t burn through your ropes using the cigarette, it won’t - it’d take too long”, but what he’s doing is he’s slowly accruing as much dust as he can, buying time to then light the cigarette in hopes that the aluminium oxide thermite will go [*imitates burst of flame*], and then burn through the ropes so that he can *then*, with the big bright light going off from the thermite, both escape and run away as a distracting bright light goes off.

JONNY [OVERLAPPING]

So, you - what you’re doing, to be *absolutely clear* -

ALEX

I’m setting myself on fire, Jonny.

JONNY

You’re - you’re act- you’re trying to burn some thermite underneath you.

ALEX

Yes! In order to burn my ropes, make a big bright light so they’re like “Oh, my eyes!” and then I’ll get away.

JONNY [OVERLAPPING]

Yep, okay, grand. Uh, so while that’s happening the police car pulls up, [*he makes a screeching noise*] screeches to a stop just outside the train graveyard.

EMMA

I’m coming, kid!

FRANK

Well, I was gonna suggest stealth.

[LAUGHTER]

JONNY

Yeah, you hear [*muffled, distant*] “I’m coming, kid!”

ALEX

Yes!

JONNY

Two of the anoraks look up. Angela gestures -

ANGELA

Go sort it out.

LOWRI

I'm gonna draw my Colt official police revolver -

JONNY

Yep.

LOWRI

Which, I have special bullets if that is acceptable to you -

JONNY [OVERLAPPING]

It is not, no.

LOWRI [CONTINUING]

- which I have treated with salt.

JONNY

Okay, here's what I'm going to say.

LOWRI

Mm-hmm.

JONNY

So your revolver is technically a d6, rather than anything else this - this refers - like, this is an ammo die, it determines when you're out of ammo. If you've treated your bullets with salt, it is now a d4 because it's probably going to jam.

LOWRI

Okay!

JONNY

Okay, good. Alright, good - good to know.

[LOWRI LAUGHS]

ALEX

Oh, am I gagged, by the way? Just so I know.

JONNY

Uh, [*deliberating*] no?

ALEX

Okay, good to know, good to know.

SASHA

Mistake on their part.

[LAUGHTER]

JONNY [OVERLAPPING]

If you do - if you do speak though, they will go "Shh!" and return to what they were doing.

ALEX

That's fine, I'm - I'm not gonna - I'm just gonna choose my moments.

JONNY

So, how are you guys getting in?

SASHA

Well, I have got lock-picking, I can pick any lock by making a Flashlight roll, so...

JONNY

Make a Flashlight roll. Yeah, there's - there's one of those big old wire mesh gates -

SASHA

Where's my d10? Where's my d10? Oh, there it is, right.

ALEX [OVERLAPPING]

I think Lowri snagged it.

JONNY

Oh, I've completely forgotten to get any of you to make any sort of stress roll -

[DICE ROLLING]

SASHA

Five!

JONNY [CONTINUING]

- it's too late, now. Well, actually, no, it's not. Archie, make a stress roll because you're about to be crushed by a spectral train!

[LAUGHTER]

ALEX

Would you like me to make you, like, three?

JONNY

Yeah, go on, just knock yourself out. Just keep - just keep -

ALEX

Uh, okay, I'm on d8, so...

JONNY

Actually, no. Actually, no, roll with disadvantage, so two d8s and take the lowest.

ALEX

'Kay.

[TWO DICE ROLLING IN QUICK SUCCESSION]

Four!

JONNY

You're fine, apparently, this is apparently, just not a - not an issue for you, uh -

ALEX

And also I wouldn't worry too much, I mean, like, the library wasn't really that stressful for me, so I think - I think I'm kind of up to scratch -

JONNY

Yeah, fair, fair. Okay. So, the gate swings open - *[to Sasha]* what did you roll on your Flashlights?

SASHA

A five.

JONNY

Five, yeah, you're fine. The gate swings open. The train graveyard is quiet before you, the rain beating down. In the distance, deep in the distance, you can hear the whistle of a train coming.

LOWRI

I -

ALEX

And Archie's using this opportunity to yell -

ARCHIE

Shoot them if they're wearing perv jackets!

[TRAIN CULTISTS SHUSH HIM]

[LAUGHTER]

LOWRI

I run towards the sound.

JONNY

You see Angela give a few of the other trainspotters a nod to send them off after these guys. As you round a corner, you can see a trainspotter, full anorak, with what looks like an old World War Two machine gun.

[LAUGHTER]

FRANK [OVERLAPPING]

Wow.

JONNY

That, uh, opens up on you. Could you please make a dexterity roll, please?

LOWRI

Absolutely, I have eighteen dexterity.

[DICE ROLLING]

Thirteen.

JONNY

Okay, so you're taking - could you roll me a d6 - actually, no, make it a d8, for how much damage you're taking.

[DICE ROLLING]

LOWRI

Two.

JONNY

Okay, so it just - doesn't actually hit you, but you dive to the ground and spread yourself out on top of it.

ALEX

A light grazing from a machine gun!

JONNY

You can see other trainspotters approaching with - the other ones mainly seem to have knives drawn? Like kitchen knives. It's mainly the knives that they found in kitchen drawers and one of them has a machine gun. So, what are you guys doing? Lowri, you've already done yours because if you had succeeded you would have got an attack. So, one of the things The Cthulhu Hack does is rather than having enemy attacks and player attacks, you ro- you choose what you're doing, you make a roll, if you're successful, you damage them. If you're not successful, they damage you.

ALEX

Sure.

JONNY

And there are a couple of additional ones - because there are more of them, they will get one or two extra attacks on you. So. Frank. What're you doing?

FRANK

I want to try and find the leader of this little, uh... trainspotters club.

JONNY

That would be Angela, she is currently standing over Archie, blowing her whistle. That light's getting closer, Archie.

ALEX

It's fine, I've got my thermite, this'll solve my problems.

FRANK

So, I can see that he's tied -

JONNY

Not at the moment, there are a couple of trainspotters between you and the circle.

FRANK

I wanna punch these trains, what does that look like?

JONNY

Okay, brilliant. That would be a strength check.

[DICE ROLLING]

FRANK

[*drawn out*] Fiiiive? Is it supposed to be under or -

JONNY

Under your strength.

FRANK

Oh, okay, yeah, I rolled a five.

ALEX

[*laughs*] Oh, I don't have to lie about what I rolled then!

[LAUGHTER]

JONNY [OVERLAPPING]

What's your - what's unarmed damage?

FRANK

It is a... d8.

JONNY

Fantastic, roll a d8.

[DICE ROLLING]

FRANK

One.

[JONNY LAUGHS]

ALEX [OVERLAPPING]

Roll better.

JONNY

I mean, you like shove him. And he sort of staggers back and he's like -

TRAINSPOTTER

[*baffled*] What?

FRANK

I just want him out of the way!

JONNY

I mean, he's out of the way. Uh, but he still, like, has a knife and is like [*weird voice*] "I'm gonna stab you".

[ALEX LAUGHS]

FRANK [OVERLAPPING]

Well, don't.

JONNY

So, Sasha.

SASHA

I'm gonna be trying to, like, hop up onto trains and then run across them to basically, like, avoid the ground -

ALEX [OVERLAPPING]

Oh, I should've done that.

SASHA [CONTINUING]

- and get there real quick.

JONNY

Make me a dexterity roll.

SASHA

Okay.

[DICE ROLLING]

That's bad! I got a twenty.

JONNY

That is bad.

SASHA

And a twelve - which is over twelve.

JONNY

So, you climb up onto the top of the train and unfortunately, standing there is just the *biggest* anorak you've seen with what looks like... you know those gardening implements that you sort of dig in and used to pull up weeds.

SASHA

Yeah.

JONNY

Got one of them and he just stabs you.

[LOWRI GASPS]

SASHA

Oh no!

JONNY

Roll me a d10 for your damage.

SASHA [OVERLAPPING]

That's real bad!

[DICE ROLLING]

Two.

JONNY

Okay, so it - you - it stabs you a bit -

SASHA [OVERLAPPING]

Just a little stabbing.

[LAUGHTER]

JONNY [OVERLAPPING]

Just a little bit of a stabbing.

GABRIELLE

Ow!

JONNY

So, there are a couple of others who are charging with knives, one will go for Husselback, and one will go for Walensky. So could you both make me strength rolls, please.

ALEX

I'd help but I'm here to raise the stakes, sorry guys.

[SASHA AND LOWRI LAUGH]

[TWO DICE ROLLING]

LOWRI

I got seventeen, so my strength is six.

FRANK [OVERLAPPING]

Fourteen.

JONNY

[*to Frank*] Yeah, so you're fine - you're fine, you managed to just, like, kick him away. [*to Lowri*] You get a little bit more stabbed. Just a - this'll just be a d6, I think.

[DICE ROLLING]

LOWRI

Three.

JONNY

So, that's three damage.

LOWRI

Down to six.

ALEX

You want to be tied to the train tracks, much safer!

LOWRI

Apparently so.

ALEX

How's my thermite plan going?

JONNY

You've got enough if you want to - if you want to light it.

ALEX

Archie yells out - because Archie knows that thermite burns really brightly -

ARCHIE

Uh, aw jeez, uh, [yells] hey! Everybody look over here! Ooh!

ALEX

And then lights the thermite. In hopes of maybe getting -

JONNY [OVERLAPPING]

Okay, so. I'm going to straight - like, I would - I would ask you to make a saving throw but you're lighting some thermite under you.

ALEX

Not a lot! Little bit.

JONNY

So - mm, okay. So, what I'm gonna say... is please roll me a d10 for how much damage you take. If you roll one or a two, you do not burn through the ropes. If you roll three or above, you burn through the ropes. You are also taking this much damage, to be clear.

ALEX

Oh, this is great!

LOWRI

Wow.

ALEX

Okay.

SASHA

How much health have you got?

ALEX

Was just gonna say. Okay, so... I can kill myself with this.

FRANK

Nice.

ALEX

So let's see how we're doing.

[DICE ROLLING]

In fact, there's a solid chance I'm killing myself with this.

[VARIOUS PEOPLE EXCLAIM]

So I have seven hit points, I have done myself six hit points worth of damage.

FRANK [OVERLAPPING]

Jesus.

JONNY

Okay, you burn through the rope. So, there is a bright light as, uh -

EMMA [OVERLAPPING]

Kid, no!

JONNY [CONTINUING]

- Archie's MacGyvered thermite ignites, igniting the ropes, igniting him -

[ARCHIE YELLS]

ARCHIE [OVERLAPPING]

Aw jeez! Aw, it's everywhere! Oh god!

JONNY

- you are - you took six damage! You are - and you are very much on fire. Just to be clear -

ARCHIE [OVERLAPPING]

Aw jeez, oh god!

EMMA [OVERLAPPING]

Drop and roll, kid! Drop and roll!

JONNY [OVERLAPPING]

- you are *super* on fire.

ARCHIE [OVERLAPPING]

[*hysterical*] Oh jeez, oh god! Oh boy! Oh boy! Oh, I'd rather have the goo! Aw jeez, oh man, oh jeez.

JONNY

But at the very least you're freed!

ALEX

I immediately try to run off, on fire, away from the train that's clearly gonna crush me before I burn to death from the fire I lit on myself.

JONNY

You can see, approaching now - it's - like, as you go up, you can see, reflected down the tunnel, a locomotive of black glass approaching.

ALEX

Oh, good god.

JONNY

At a reasonable clip.

ALEX

Yeah, I'll take the thermite burns, thanks.

JONNY

Glowing green smoke billowing from the stack.

LOWRI

Can we all see it?

JONNY

Uh, no you're not there yet.

LOWRI

Ahh.

ALEX [OVERLAPPING]

Yeah, I am - I am - [*unintelligible*].

JONNY

But you can - you can get there, now, if you'd like.

LOWRI

Yeah, I'm still running to -

EMMA

[*yell/s*] Kid!

JONNY

Okay, so I'll say that you can reach them. Are you attacking any of the trainspotters or are you - what do - what do you?

LOWRI

I'm saving all of my salt bullets for that train that's coming towards us, 'cause it's clearly an alien.

FRANK

Oh my god.

JONNY

I mean, I'm gonna say you can see the train, if you want to take a shot at the train... just go for it, go for it, try to shoot the train.

LOWRI [OVERLAPPING SLIGHTLY]

I'm going for it. What do I roll?

JONNY

Dexterity would be for a - for a bullet.

LOWRI

Not damage?

JONNY

No, not - I mean, you've got to hit it first.

LOWRI

Oh yeah, of course, sorry. Oh dear, I have dexterity eight.

[DICE ROLLING]

FRANK

What if you miss the train?

LOWRI

I hit the train!

ALEX [OVERLAPPING]

Yes!

SASHA [OVERLAPPING]

Hooray!

LOWRI

I got a six!

JONNY

Okay, could you roll me...

LOWRI

Well, armed I have a d6.

JONNY

You have - so that's a d6 damage.

ALEX

But you're using salt bullets.

LOWRI

Oh, yeah.

JONNY

So that's a d6 damage. D4 for the ammo.

ALEX

Oh, sorry. I'm with you now.

[DICE ROLLING]

LOWRI

Three.

JONNY

Okay, grand. It has -

ALEX

That is salt damage.

JONNY

Yes. Uh -

LOWRI

It's clearly a supernatural alien train, it has green smoke.

JONNY

Yes it is, but it's also... not vulnerable to salt!

[ALEX AND LOWRI LAUGH]

LOWRI

No, you're wrong!

ALEX [OVERLAPPING, QUIETER]

It's okay, I'm on fire, I didn't notice.

JONNY [OVERLAPPING]

So, your bullet - I mean, your bullet hits the huge train and backtracks.

LOWRI

Does it shatter?

JONNY

No.

LOWRI

[disappointed] Oh.

JONNY

Could you please roll me a d4?

[DICE ROLLING]

LOWRI

Three.

JONNY

Hey, your gun's still working!

LOWRI

Yay!

JONNY

So... Frank.

FRANK

Well, I was trying to get to Grockle.

JONNY

I will say that you can - you can reach her, are you just shouldering your way past the - the trainspotters who are trying to stab you?

FRANK

Yeah.

JONNY

The machine gun one is gonna try and hit you so whatever you do this turn, if you fail, you're gonna get a little bit machine gunned.

FRANK

I'm gonna try and grab her.

JONNY

Yeah, okay. Make me a strength check.

FRANK

Oh, and I also want to try and rip the whistle off from around her neck.

ALEX

Grab her by the whistle!

JONNY

If you - if you want to go for the whistle, that's dexterity, if you want to just grab her, that's strength. I am gonna say, however, that she is currently supernaturally empowered by the oncoming train, and so you will be reducing your strength by four.

LOWRI

I should've gone for her, she can die.

JONNY

No - *[sarcastic]* nooo -

LOWRI [OVERLAPPING]

[laughing] No regrets.

JONNY

- Shooting the train with a pistol - with some salty bullets from a pistol? That was a great plan. That was a great plan, Lowri.

ALEX [OVERLAPPING]

No, you should have thrown your pistol at the train.

FRANK

I'm gonna go for the whistle, but can I use my ripped ability to roll at advantage?

JONNY

Are you saying you want to be so muscled, that you just -

ALEX

You're assuming, okay, that Frank saying that they wanna grab by the hand - it could be, one pec here, one pec there -

FRANK

Yeah, do it Terry Crews style.

[LAUGHTER]

LOWRI [OVERLAPPING]

Just hug her.

JONNY

Okay, fine, you've still got - you've still got five for dexterity, so roll with advantage, do it!

FRANK [OVERLAPPING]

Yeah, I know, it's fine.

ALEX

Grab it with your pecs!

FRANK

Okay, that was a sixteen.

JONNY

It's not enough. I mean, it's -

FRANK [OVERLAPPING]

Too much.

JONNY [OVERLAPPING]

- too much.

[DICE ROLLING]

FRANK

That was a fifteen.

[VARIOUS SOUNDS OF DISAPPOINTMENT]

LOWRI [OVERLAPPING]

How'd you fail?

JONNY

You flex your - *[grunting noises like someone flexing]* - and she sort of takes a single step back -

ALEX

Dammit! I didn't think of that.

JONNY

Trouble is, like, it's - you're very strong, but not super flexible, 'cause of all the muscles?

FRANK [OVERLAPPING]

Yeah.

[GENERAL SOUNDS OF SADNESS]

ALEX

It's like a sticker stuck between the shoulder blades.

JONNY [OVERLAPPING]

Sasha.

SASHA

Okay, so I'm up high, presumably because I'm up high I can see what's going on.

JONNY

Yes, you can.

SASHA

Okay, if I want to go for - I want to try and just run, grab Angela Grockle, and put the cuffs on her.

JONNY

Oh, also - sorry - you also got machine gunned, I forgot I'd said that. So could you roll a d10 and take that much damage. But you're in decent health so it's not a problem. Yeah, you get a little bit machine gunned for four damage. What did you say you did?

FRANK [OVERLAPPING]

Only took some bullets.

SASHA

I want to run for Angela Grockle and put the cuffs on her.

JONNY

Make me a dexterity roll.

[DICE ROLLING]

SASHA

Ten.

[ALEX "OOH"S]

Under... 12.

JONNY

Okay, so yeah, you couldn't - you can -

FRANK

Should've done that and then taken the whistle.

ALEX [OVERLAPPING]

With your pecs.

FRANK [OVERLAPPING]

I know.

JONNY [CONTINUING]

- tackle her. So you - the cuffs go round. You're holding her. The train is literally twenty feet away and barreling towards you. Archie, what do you do?

ALEX

Grind her face down like a sandpaper on the train.

[FRANK MAKES A DISTURBED NOISE]

JONNY

Well, no, no, you're *on* the track. She was standing on the track.

ALEX [OVERLAPPING]

Get off the track!

JONNY

You are currently on the track. The train is -

SASHA

I wanna - I wanna -

JONNY [OVERLAPPING]

That'll be your next turn. Archie, what are you doing?

ALEX

Am I still on fire?

JONNY

Yes.

ALEX

I stop, drop, and roll away from the tracks.

JONNY

Okay, you are no longer on fire. That is your turn. Walensky - unless you want to try and save Schreiber, [*whispers*] but you would take some fire damage. [*normal*] Just - just a choice, just a choice I'm throwing out there for you, Archie.

LOWRI

Oh! I know, I mean...

[BEAT OF SILENCE]

Yeah, I'm gonna -

JONNY [OVERLAPPING]

Eh, too late, Walensky, your go.

LOWRI [OVERLAPPING]

I'm not -

[LOWRI MAKES A FRUSTRATED SOUND]

JONNY

What are you doing?

LOWRI

I'm going to rugby tackle Schreiber off the...

JONNY

Okay, strength check. [*sing-song*] If you fail this you are all getting hit by a train.

ALEX

I rolled away from the tracks, how dare you -

JONNY [OVERLAPPING SLIGHTLY]

Not you. And not - not the Sarge, but like, the two who are on the track with, uh -

ALEX

The people who tried to help and rescue me.

LOWRI

I have nothing that's gonna help me with this.

[DICE ROLLING]

One!

[CHEERING FROM OTHERS]

Oh, nailed it!

[CLAPPING]

JONNY

Okay, uh -

SASHA

Life for everyone!

[LAUGHTER]

ALEX

So not how I thought this would go.

JONNY [OVERLAPPING SLIGHTLY]

So you - you leap, tackling both of them. With one hand, you yank the whistle off Angela Grockle. With the other hand, you throw the cap away.

FRANK

Pile of salt will help some.**

[ALEX LAUGHS]

ALEX

Oh, salt and burns.

JONNY

As you - like, as you do, you can feel something else snap along with the cord. Not something physical but something in reality and the train sort of... starts to shatter. You're all peppered with little bits of glass.

ALEX

Question for the - for the DM. Are we peppered in glass Die Hard-style where it's like "oh no, a bit a glass" or are we peppered in glass like reality-style where it's like "oh god, we're all in ribbons, it's glass".

FRANK

I assume it's Die Hard style.

JONNY

It's been awhile since you've seen Die Hard, isn't it, 'cause that - it *messes him up*!

ALEX [OVERLAPPING]

Oh, I suppose, yeah. Bad example.

JONNY [OVERLAPPING]

It messes him up, massively!

SASHA

Gets *all* up in his feet.

ALEX

I was thinking more like Terminator or something.

JONNY

It's - yeah, like, it's - it might, like, *you're* fine, anyway. It'll probably do a few points of damage to these guys but I don't think enough to kill them.

ALEX [OVERLAPPING]

Okay, that's kind of what I was getting at, good to know.

JONNY

The rest of the trainspotters start to scatter.

LOWRI

I shout -

EMMA

I knew it!

CARL

Right, we want to make as many arrests as we can right now. Come on, come on [*snapping fingers*].

GABRIELLE

Angela Grockle, I'm arresting you for the murder of Geoffrey Mariner.

JONNY

So, you - you can be going around, like, tying up a few other trainspotters, and, yep, you sort of cuff her, sit her down, couple of minutes later, in walks the judge. Flanked by a few members of the town council.

ARCHIE

Aw jeez. Oh no.

JONNY

Yeah, he gives you a look.

ARCHIE

[*whispers*] It's okay, I've planted some Marlboros on her! We've got her bang to rights!

EMMA

[*gasps*] I'm so proud of you, boy!

JUDGE

Who made the arrest?

GABRIELLE

I did your honor.

JUDGE

Detective Schreiber. What are the charges?

GABRIELLE

Murder of Geoffrey Mariner.

JUDGE

What is the evidence?

GABRIELLE

She had been corresponding with the deceased. Right, your honor, I'll just - I'll lay it out for you, I've got it all figured out, right, okay. Angela Grockle -

JUDGE

Yes, please explain the crime as though there were some audience who needed to be fully filled in.

[LAUGHTER]

GABRIELLE [OVERLAPPING]

Right, Angela -

JUDGE [OVERLAPPING SLIGHTLY]

Which in many ways there is, because it is me, the judge.

GABRIELLE

Yes, your honor. So, Angela Grockle - several years ago, her husband dies and here's what she does, she sets her sights on a young heir and she secretly marries him, it has to be a secret, sir, because she knows that, she is like a - a kind of middle class, middle-aged woman -

FRANK [OVERLAPPING]

Oh my gosh.

EMMA [OVERLAPPING]

[*loud*] It was aliens!

[ALEX LAUGHS]

GABRIELLE

Don't listen to that, sir.

ANGELA

It was none of the- don't -

GABRIELLE [OVERLAPPING]

So, basically -

ANGELA

This is all ridiculous. [*louder*] I was trying to summon a demon train, okay! It's very simple, there was a demon train which ate my husband years ago. He was one of the original trainspotters and he was trying to summon the train for power, the power of steam. But his hubris cost him his life and I discovered a way to bring it back, but the whistle - the whistle died with him, so I had to re-manifest the whistle, so I tricked that *fool*. I didn't love him, I didn't marry him, he's not an alien, he was just a fool -

GABRIELLE

No, well, this is the thing - she was having an affair with the housekeeper!

[LOWRI LAUGHS]

ANGELA

What, Nellie?

GABRIELLE

Yes.

ANGELA

I mean that's got nothing to do with anything.

ARCHIE

That, and possession of Marlboros.

ANGELA

Our affair is completely tangential of this whole case.

GABRIELLE

I knew it.

ANGELA

Anyway, point is, I tried to summon a demon train and it went badly for me...

ALEX [OVERLAPPING]]

I love how you have a team of cops who are derailing your *confession*! [*quieter*] Pun intended.

CARL

Well, thank you for confessing.

ANGELA

Your - your colleague's very irritating.

[LOWRI LAUGHS QUIETLY IN THE BACKGROUND]

CARL

Yeah, uh -

ANGELA

Very irritating.

ALEX

[*whisper-shouting*] Yeah!

[ALEX AND LOWRI HIGH-FIVE]

CARL

Your honour, do you have a moment?

JUDGE

Yes, Sergeant, I think I do. One second. Guilty!

JONNY

He slams a gavel down on nothing in particular. It rings out and the members of the town council just sort of walk over, pick up Angela Grockle, cart her away.

JUDGE

Yes, what did you want, Sergeant?

CARL

You've met my, um, detectives.

ALEX [OVERLAPPING]

Give him a wa- oh. Give him a wave.

CARL

And... that one.

JUDGE

Uh-huh, yes.

CARL

I really want a transfer.

JUDGE

That's - I don't work for the police department -

CARL

No, but I mean, if you could put in a word that you understand and think it would be good... for my health.

EMMA

[*sotto voce*] Quick, kid! Pass me the salt!

JUDGE

I will not.

CARL

Fair enough.

JONNY

He turns around and leaves.

ALEX

Yay!

JONNY

Case closed, everyone!

ALEX

That's how you know it's a success, 'cause everything's the same at the end of the episode!

[LAUGHTER]

[RAIN FADES OUT]

JONNY

That was... real weird and went... *[trails off, struggling to describe it]*.

ALEX

I survived!

FRANK [OVERLAPPING]

That was impressive!

JONNY [OVERLAPPING]

There was some energy in this room. So that was - the setting was Duskhollow PD, from MacGuffin & Company and the system was The Cthulhu Hack by Paul Baldowski. You can find more about MacGuffin & Company at macguffinandcompany.com, or patreon.com/macguffinandcompany -

ALEX

And there'll be links in the show notes.

JONNY

There'll be links in the show notes to all of this. You can find more information about The Cthulhu Hack at cthulhuhack.com, as well as, I believe, Paul also has a Patreon for that.

ALEX

I - I can't believe we survived a Cthulhu Hack, I've never done anything like this before.

FRANK

I can't believe *you* survived.

[LAUGHTER]

ALEX

[high-pitched] I know!

JONNY

To be fair, I was playing it a bit - I should have been making you guys roll a lot more stress. I don't know, maybe I should have been hurting you more, you did get shot with a machine gun.

ALEX [OVERLAPPING]

I did set myself on fire, as well.

JONNY [OVERLAPPING]

Yeah, you did, as well.

LOWRI [OVERLAPPING]

That didn't really do a lot of damage.

FRANK [OVERLAPPING SLIGHTLY]

Sasha got stabbed!

JONNY

Yeah, like - and none of those did as much damage as Archie falling out of a window.

[LAUGHTER]

ALEX [OVERLAPPING]

That really messed me up!

FRANK

A ground floor window, into a bush.

ALEX

Oh, yeah! Hell of a bush.

SASHA

In fact, Archie did more damage than any of our, like, antagonists but he just did it to himself.

ALEX

Mega boss!

JONNY

So, thank you all for listening. There will obviously be some more Magnus hiatus content -

ALEX [OVERLAPPING]

Yup!

JONNY

- uh, coming until the start of season five. If you want more actual play goodness with mostly completely different people - except Alex is the GM in that one - Rusty Quill Gaming -

ALEX

So it's pure chaos!

JONNY [CONTINUING]

is - it's - it's a different sort of chaos. And I believe everyone else here has featured on various specials for Rusty Quill Gaming.

LOWRI

I have, on the Bermuda special, which is another of yours.

JONNY [OVERLAPPING SLIGHTLY]

Yes! Yeah, MacGuffin & Company also - we do a lot of micro settings, another one, Not Far To Bermuda, where you're all trapped on a cruise ship -

SASHA

"Trapped" is a horrible word, it's a holiday!

JONNY

I'm sorry - yeah, you're all having a lovely holiday for... three hundred days.

ALEX [OVERLAPPING]

It won't end! The holiday won't end!

JONNY

So, please have a look at that feed and have fun and most importantly - just, look after yourselves.

ALEX

Bye everyone.

JONNY

Good bye!

ALL

Bye!

*unsure of this