

THE HIDDEN PEOPLE

Episode 2.03

“Fairest of Them All”

Written by

Alexa Fett Fisher

TEASER

24. In the other space. Eerie quiet except for Nissa and Mack's running steps and panting.

MACKENNA

I don't know what the fuck that is, but it ain't good. We've got to hide.

NARRATOR

No, that isn't good at all. A beast not completely corporeal but most certainly malevolent. Imagine the most ominous fog of the darkest midnight. But with teeth.

NISSA

The hollow's too far, even if it could hide us. How much longer can we--
(coughing fit)
Mack, stop, I can't--
(coughing harder)

Nissa falls to her knees. Mack stops running.

MACKENNA

You're getting worse.

NISSA

(weezing)

I'm sorry--

MACKENNA

Even without whatever is poisoning you, I don't think we can outrun it.

(beat)

Stay still, and be as quiet as you can. I'm going to try to make us invisible.

NISSA

(hoarse)

Can--can you do that?

MACKENNA

I think so.

A moment of concentrated silence.

NISSA
(whisper)
Mack...

MACKENNA
Shh, I think I got it.

NISSA
Mack, I can't see you.

MACKENNA
It's working!

NISSA
But I can still see me. And I think it
can too.

Monster roars.

MACKENNA
Oh shit. We've got to keep moving.

They stumble a few steps before Nissa falls.

NISSA
Mack...I just...I can't. My lungs...
they're on fire. Mack...help...

MACKENNA
(desperate)
Okay, I, I'm...I'm going to carry you
okay? I'll just trick your body into
being lighter than it is. That's it,
hold on.

Mackenna lifts Nissa over her shoulders, straining from the effort. Her footsteps are slower, heavier.

NISSA
Mack, this isn't...it'll get you too.
Just...just leave--

MACKENNA
No! I'm not leaving you!

WANDERER
(faint)
Here.

MACKENNA
I'll figure something out. There's got
to be a way.

WANDERER
(less faint)
Here.

MACKENNA
I won't let us die here!

WANDERER
Here!

NISSA
Mack, look.

MACKENNA
That's a head.

NISSA
The hollow. It must be deeper than it
looks. Is...is someone else here?

MACKENNA
They don't look human. Nis, I don't
trust--

Monster roars, closer.

MACKENNA (CONT'D)
Well, fuck, I guess we're doing this.
Hang on.

Heavy footsteps as Mackenna runs, carrying Nissa. They
slide together into the hole and hit the ground.

MACKENNA/NISSA
Oof.

WANDERER
Shh shh shh. Not till it passes.

Hissing mist draws closer. Pause, and then monster roars, and the hissing dissipates as it moves on.

WANDERER (CONT'D)
It'll go hungry today. But we won't.

NARRATOR
Dare I ask what, or who, is on the menu?

END TEASER

25. The Unseelie Court.

ALDER NIAMH
You are mistaken, Shaylee. Your contract was not with the Magister. You worked for the Unseelie Court. Which means that, now, you work for me.

NARRATOR
I'm sure you're about to interrupt this recollection, Alder Niamh. Something about unnecessary repetition, I assume? Before you do, let me remind you that you know quite a bit more now about what transpired the night of the Revel than you did then. And this exchange, with fresh ears? Maybe you'll actually learn something, this time.

SHAYLEE
That's not what he said.

ALDER NIAMH
Not directly. However, you've been with us long enough to know how particular our wording is when it comes to such matters. Pity is wasn't something you attended to when the writ was struck.

SHAYLEE
Right, so what then? I continue training changelings to battle fetches? Just under new management?

ALDER NIAMH

Eventually. There are matters more important to the Court.

SHAYLEE

Such as?

ALDER ODHRAN

Such as: how could the most powerful among the Hidden die without a whisper of how it came to pass?

SHAYLEE

I had nothing to do with that, Alder Odhran.

INQUISITOR AILSA

She speaks false.

ALDER NIAMH

Thank you, Inquisitor. And I believe we agreed that I would be questioning the trainer, Alder Odhran.

(beat)

What happened to the Magister?

SHAYLEE

The last time I saw the Magister with my own eyes was the night of the Revel of Mackenna Thorne.

INQUISITOR AILSA

She speaks true.

ALDER NIAMH

Go on.

SHAYLEE

The one known as Mackenna Thorne defeated, but refused to kill, her fetch. She had a plan to get the fetch out alive.

ALDER NIAMH

And the Magister?

SHAYLEE

Mackenna never had a plan for him.

INQUISITOR AILSA
She speak false.

SHAYLEE
(measured)
She never had a plan for the Magister
that I knew about.

INQUISITOR AILSA
She speaks true.

ALDER NIAMH
And where did this final battle occur?

SHAYLEE
I wasn't there.

ALDER ODHRAN
So you know nothing? I told you the
trainer is worthless, Alder Niamh.

ALDER NIAMH
Use your best guess.

SHAYLEE
The old bell-tower that was destroyed
the night of the revel. The bell was
huge and made of pure iron. Perhaps
large enough to kill someone as strong
as the Magister. She might have thought
to go there.

ALDER NIAMH
"Might have thought." Your guesses are
inadequate. We need answers from the
source. Bring us the changeling known
as Mackenna Thorne.

SHAYLEE
I don't even have an idea of where she
is.

INQUISITOR AILSA
She speaks true.

ALDER NIAMH

But you suspect the changeling was
present when the tower fell?

SHAYLEE

The humans already searched the rubble
and didn't report any other survivors.

ALDER ODHRAN

A mere changeling could hardly survive
an iron bell loud enough to kill the
Magister, and humans wouldn't recognize
the leaves and twigs as its corpse.

ALDER NIAMH

Search the rubble and retrieve the
offal of Mackenna Thorne. We shall
raise it and hear from the construct
itself what it did.

Clothing rustles as Shaylee bows.

SHAYLEE

As the Court wills.

MUSICAL TRANSITION

26. Alfie's bedroom. Bed sheets rustle.

AMELIA

(tsks)

What good is our insurance if the
hospital discharges you so soon? You
should at least be there another day or
two.

ALFIE

I'm doing much better mom, really.

AMELIA

You just woke up from a coma! They
really should have kept you another
night for observation. Lay back,
sweetie.

ALFIE

I'm not tired mom, and you don't have
to tuck me in.

AMELIA

Nonsense. Just because you're released
doesn't mean you shouldn't rest. Let me
just--

Amelia opens closet door.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

Ah, here it is! Your old baby blanket.

ALFIE

The one you made me that's really,
really soft?

AMELIA

Alright sit up, there you go.

(beat)

You're so much bigger now, Alfred. I
remember when I could swaddle you in
that blanket, and now it barely covers
your shoulders.

ALFIE

(deep inhale)

And it still smells like your fabric
softener.

AMELIA

Oh, my baby. When the doctors said that
you...that you might not...

(choking up)

All I could think about was when you
were just born and I would hold you and
imagine the amazing life that was ahead
of you. All the great things you would
do. That you suddenly might not do
anymore--

ALFIE

Mom, it's okay. I'm here, see? Totally
fine, a bit worse for the wear but
absolutely only at the start of the
second act. I've still got a third act
plot twist and a satisfying denouement
before the curtains close for me.

AMELIA

Alfred!

ALFIE

But, hey, I'm popular enough to warrant a sequel. Or, at least my own action figure with kung-fu grip.

AMELIA

You're always so optimistic. Ridiculous, but optimistic. I don't know who you got that from.

ALFIE

It's not a bad character trait.

AMELIA

No. I love that about you.

ALFIE

Yeah. You love me.

AMELIA

My baby.

(kisses forehead)

ALFIE

Careful of the head wound! How am I suppose to impress the ladies with my bad-ass scar--

AMELIA

Language!

ALFIE

--if you cover it with mom-kisses!

AMELIA

(harumphs)

Any lady that is good enough for my boy should understand the power of mom-kisses.

ALFIE

Not "lady," mom.

(pseudo-cool)

"Ladies."

AMELIA

You barely keep up with your laundry, I doubt you can handle "ladies" plural.

(beat)

It doesn't seem like the "ladies" you know keep up with you anyway.

ALFIE

Huh?

AMELIA

Well, it's not like you really knew the Thorne girl, being a murderer and all! And that Nissa...you know, she never called or came to see you after you woke up.

ALFIE

Mom, it's not like that.

AMELIA

I'm just saying, now we know who your real friends are. And how much better you can do. Ooo, speaking of, you remember Danielle, your father's secretary? Well, her daughter's been asking about your recovery. She's about your age. You could come by the office, say hello, look around...

ALFIE

I, uh, don't think I feel up to that right now, Mom. You know: recovering, just out of the hospital.

AMELIA

Oh, of course. When you're better is what I meant.

ALFIE

Right. Hey, um, shouldn't you be picking up Connor from school soon?

AMELIA

I asked your Grandma Melody to take care of him this week. I want to focus on you getting better.

ALFIE

Oh, I, uh...I really don't need anything mom. Just, uh, some alone time?

AMELIA

No video games! You're supposed to be on bed rest, and I know how they get you agitated.

ALFIE

No, no video games. Just, uh, you know...maybe I will take a nap after all. A nice long nap. And I'll be hungry afterwards. Super hungry. So, maybe, uh, you can--

AMELIA

Of course, sweetie. Nothing heals like chicken noodle soup.

ALFIE

Ooo, with the Batman shapes?

AMELIA

(beat)

I'll see what I can find at the store.

ALFIE

You're the best mom.

AMELIA

Get some rest, sweetie.

Amelia walks away.

ALFIE

Can you close the door, Mom? Quiet would be good for resting, you know?

AMELIA

Sure. Sweet dreams.

Door closes.

After a moment, Alfie gets out of bed, and opens the window.

ALFIE
Sneaking out is such a cliche. And yet...

Alfie sneaks out the window.

MUSICAL TRANSITION

27. The Thorne House.

SAM
Tea's ready. I'm not sure if it'll be good. I think those tea bags are older than us.

THOMAS
Thanks, Sam.
(sips hot drink)
Yeah, that's gross.

SAM
Sorry.

THOMAS
It's alright. My parents weren't really tea drinkers. Sorry we don't have anything better.

Sets mug on table.

THOMAS (CONT'D)
I've been thinking about what to do next.

SAM
Me, too. I don't have a lot of the resources I had as a detective, but I still have my experience and some favors to call in. I've put out some feelers, in case Mackenna pops up somewhere... unsavory.

THOMAS
(shocked)
What kind of contacts do you have?

SAM

Oh, you know. The kind you don't really want to know.

THOMAS

Okay, but what do we do until then? Odds are, wherever Mackenna and Nissa are has something magical going on with it, and our specialists in that area are all benched or MIA.

SAM

Sure, we're the newest ones to the whole secret world of fairies, but I'm pretty confident we're also the most mature of the bunch.

THOMAS

Sam, I don't think maturity is a point in our favor when it comes to fairies.

SAM

Yeah.

(beat)

Okay. Fake it 'til we make it. Our star players are out, but we're not. So, what would Nissa and Alfie do?

THOMAS

Am I Nissa or Alfie in this roleplay?

SAM

You are definitely a Nissa.

THOMAS

Right. Nissa, Nissa... Nissa would be on her computer. Looking up...things?

Sam opens a laptop and types a few words.

SAM

Okay, just a normal search engine?

THOMAS

Oh, no. I'm certain she has some advanced code, or algorithm, or a screen that scrolls like the Matrix.

SAM
But we don't.

THOMAS
So, Google it is.

SAM
What are we even looking for?

THOMAS
Um, fairy..fantasy...teleportation?

Keyboard clicks.

SAM
Okay, it's a start. But, there's a lot
of stuff here, and a healthy chunk of
it is from fictional story forums.

THOMAS
I don't know. Search through all of it,
I guess?

SAM
You're not a very good Nissa.

THOMAS
And you haven't been very Alfie-like.

SAM
(clears throat)
(deep voice)
I'm Batman.

ALFIE
(from the next room)
Too Affleck, not enough Bale.

THOMAS
Alfie!

Slow steps coming upstairs.

ALFIE.

I still have Mack's spare key to the basement entrance. No new walking-through-walls superpowers, if that's what you were hoping for.

(mumbling)

I know I was.

THOMAS

You should still be resting.

Alfie flops on the couch.

ALFIE

Oof. There. Legs up. Resting. Now, where are we on the Mack and Nissa search and rescue?

SAM

Not very far, unfortunately. We could really use your help.

THOMAS

Sam, he was just released from the hospital, after a brain injury that could have left him brain dead without magical intervention. We shouldn't be pushing him.

SAM

Desperate times.

ALFIE

The only pushing you'd be doing is pushing me off this super comfy couch while I'm just trying to relax my poor, battered body from severe trauma. You make me move, you're the bad guy, Thomas.

THOMAS

(sighs)

I still don't approve of this.

SAM

Dissent noted.

ALFIE

Now, what were we looking at?

(beat)

Add "failure" to the search.

THOMAS

Why?

ALFIE

Mack and Nissa's bodies weren't found, so they got out. If they were safe, they would have contacted us by now, or at least Nissa would, if Mack would still need to be in hiding because of the whole wanted murderer thing.

SAM

Her face was all over the evening news after fake-Mack--

ALFIE

Fack.

SAM (CONT'D)

--was captured. If real-Mack showed up again, someone would notice.

THOMAS

Okay, but Mackenna was able to step-sideways into our kitchen after being shot. If she can do that, how would a crumbling building stop her?

SHAYLEE

It would stop her if it broke the circle mid-step.

SAM

Jesus, are none of the doors locked?

SHAYLEE

The rug in Mack's toilet is a circle. And fuzzy.

THOMAS

Are you alright Shaylee? You left really quickly--

ALFIE
(sassy)
And where the fuck were you?

SHAYLEE
Bit of excavating. Confirming the
Magister is dead, and I found this in
the rubble of the bell-tower.

Stone thunks on coffee table.

ALFIE
Holy TARDIS, your pocket is bigger on
the inside!

THOMAS
The Magister's dead? And that's- part
of a chalk circle. Mackenna did get
out!

SHAYLEE
Not quite. The circle is broken. See
how the edges spark, where the stone
split? The circle broke as it was being
used.

ALFIE
And that means?

SHAYLEE
I thought it was a myth, a boogeyman of
a place to caution against careless
stepping-sideways.

SAM
Shaylee, what is it?

SHAYLEE
The In-Between.

ALFIE
The In-Between. Obviously. And that is?

SHAYLEE
Imagine a high tension wire over a
chasm. The anchors of the wire are our
circles, and moving along the wire is

stepping-sideways. If you're stepping-sideways and one of the circles breaks, the wire loses tension...

THOMAS

And you fall into the chasm below.

SHAYLEE

The chasm is the In-Between. A nasty place with all sorts of badness. Or so the story goes.

THOMAS

So, it's not a place you've been to.

SHAYLEE

It's not a place anyone has been to. It's a myth.

ALFIE

If researching the Hidden People with Nissa has taught me anything, it's that all myths come from at least a grain of truth. So what's the grain here?

SHAYLEE

Failed stepping-sideways is rare, but it has happened before. And when it does, the person just...disappears. No body, no dust. Just blinks out of existence entirely. If the conservation of mass still applies to magic, I'd guess they'd have to go somewhere.

THOMAS

And the somewhere is the In-Between. How do we get them out?

SHAYLEE

We don't. It's never been done.

ALFIE

Then we'll be the first.

SAM

Oh, Alfie.

ALFIE

No. Mack does impossible shit all the time. Shaylee, even a week ago you thought beating the Magister was impossible, and yet boom: Mack did it.

SHAYLEE

She had some help.

ALFIE

Exactly. We're the help. If we give up on them, it's impossible. But, when we work together...

SAM

I guess "the impossible" is becoming our speciality, isn't it?

THOMAS

I'm with Alfie. We can't give up on them, not without at least trying everything.

SHAYLEE

I don't want to give up on Mack either. So then, what's the first step when tackling the impossible?

ALFIE

We work together.

SHAYLEE

Okay, done.

ALFIE

No, all of us. We need to reach Nissa and Mack. Find a way to communicate.

SHAYLEE

Something else that has never been done: communication between our world and the In-Between.

SAM

Maybe some impossibilities are more possible than others.

THOMAS

I think I have an idea. But I don't think you'll like it.

(beat)

I want to talk to Mackenna. The other Mackenna.

SHAYLEE

The fetch.

ALFIE

Shaylee, stop trying to make fetch happen.

SAM

You're right, Thomas. I don't like it. She's unstable, at best, and probably still wants to kill you.

THOMAS

Maybe, but I think I was starting to get through to her the last time we spoke.

SAM

Right before she tried to murder you, and you tazed her.

THOMAS

Regardless, she's our best shot. She was able to track our parents, Mack, me... probably through some magical means, right Shaylee?

SHAYLEE

Technically, she's human and can't do magic. But she knew where you were without using typical methods. I hate saying this, but it's our only idea right now.

SAM

Then we'll come up with something else.

THOMAS

Sam, she's in custody, under even higher security since our Mack escaped last time. She wouldn't be able to hurt me.

SAM

I don't like the risk.

THOMAS

Don't like the risk, or don't like seeing Ron again?

ALFIE

(prolonged)

Ooooh!

SAM

(sarcastic)

You know what? No, it's totally fine. In fact, it's so fine that I'm going to call him right now to get us an appointment to see your homicidal big sister that we just got locked up. I'm sure it'll go peachy.

ALFIE

(beat)

I think Sam broke.

SAM

(sarcastic)

Yup, just gonna call the guy who got me fired from the job I wanted all my life and ask for a favor. I'm sure he'll have no problem just helping us out right?

QUICK TRANSITION

28. Conley jail.

SAM

I can't believe he had no problem helping us out.

THOMAS

I can't believe she's still here. I thought they would have moved her to a more secure location by now.

SAM

Her arraignment is next on the docket, and they'll move her to the county jail then to await trial, or sentencing if she pleads guilty.

THOMAS

Sam, I know this was my idea, but I don't know what to say to her. She doesn't know how human courts work, or lawyers or jail. She must be so scared.

SAM

I know, but for now you have to focus on Mackenna, okay? Your sister is safe in here at least, and once we get Nissa and you-know-who back, we can help her. Focus on why we're here.

THOMAS

Right.

RON

Thomas? These officers will escort you back to the interrogation room. She's already there.

THOMAS

Okay, I'm ready.

RON

Remember, you two aren't allowed any physical contact. And if she becomes too agitated, you'll have to leave.

THOMAS

I know. Thank you.

RON

DeMarcos will take you back. I'm sure you remember where it is.

Footsteps walk away.

A few beats of awkward silence.

RON (CONT'D)
It's good to see you, Sam.

SAM
(terse)
Detective Sitwell.

RON
That's, uh, not official. Yet.

SAM
But it's a given. All the papers named
you in the arrest of the very dangerous
fugitive. Chief McIlveen knows how
politics play out.

RON
Yeah, the arrest...look, I told the
Chief what you did, honestly. I don't
know why he kept that out of the
report, or why you don't have your job
back.

SAM
I do.

RON
Sam, if there's anything I can do, any
way to thank you for...for
everything...

SAM
Stop it Ron, there's nothing.

RON
Sam--

SAM
No, you know what? There is something.
A goddamn apology.

RON
I am sorry. I'm so sorry.

SAM

Yeah? For what? For betraying my trust?
For getting me fired? For benefiting
from my work? Or are you only sorry
because I'm mad at you?

RON

(low voice)

I'm sorry I didn't believe you. When
you were skeptical about Mackenna being
the murderer.

SAM

What?

RON

Before, all the doubts you had. I don't
know why I'm only seeing it now but...
that girl in there, she doesn't act
like the Mackenna Thorne we
interviewed.

SAM

That doesn't mean anything, Ron.

RON

No, not on its own. But, her hair. How
it changed color, and we thought she
was wearing a wig? That's her real
hair. Completely different from all the
other times we saw her.

SAM

Hair dye is a thing, Ron.

RON

Not just that. The scar on her face?
It's way too old, too healed over. We
would have seen it in the first
interview, even if she used make-up.

SAM

What are you saying, Ron?

RON

I don't know...yet.

SAM

Listen, Detective: you got your win.
Why are you still thinking about it?

RON

Because I don't think that's the whole
story. And I bet you already figured it
out, too.

SAM

Maybe the whole story doesn't matter.

RON

The Detective Mulligan I know would
never say that.

SAM

There is no Detective Mulligan anymore.

RON

I made a mistake. I think you were
right all along; I just don't know
about what.

SAM

You're a smart cop, Ron. You'll know
how to figure it out. And you'll know
when to drop it.

NARRATOR

Or perhaps, Samantha, he'll just drop
dead.

MUSICAL TRANSITION

29. Interrogation room. Door opens.

THOMAS

Mackenna!

Door shuts.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

It's good to see you.
(beat)
It's okay to talk. No one else is
listening.

FETCH

You came here.

THOMAS

Yes. To see you.

FETCH

Why?

THOMAS

You're my sister.

FETCH

I did not kill her. Yet, I have taken
her place. Is this reclamation?

THOMAS

Do you know why you're here? You killed
our parents. This is how we punish
people for killing others.

FETCH

They call me by her name. I have not
earned it. He will punish me if I use
it.

THOMAS

Mackenna, the Magister is dead. He'll
never hurt you again.

FETCH

I...I do not understand.

THOMAS

She killed him. You're free.

FETCH

That is not possible.

THOMAS

Say your name. He can't stop you
anymore.

FETCH
(shaky breath)
(whispered)
Mackenna. Mackenna Thorne.
(louder)
My name is Mackenna Thorne.
(disbelief)
I am Mackenna Thorne.

THOMAS
It's okay now.

FETCH
I have reclaimed. I am unworthy, but I
have reclaimed.

THOMAS
Mackenna--

FETCH
(whispered)
I am Mackenna Thorne.

THOMAS
Mackenna, I need your help. The other
Mackenna, she's missing.

FETCH
No, I am Mackenna now. I've taken my
name back. She cannot have it.

THOMAS
You are Mackenna, but so is she. People
have the same names all the time.

FETCH
No, there can only be one of us. Those
are the rules.

THOMAS
Whose rules, the Magister's? He's dead.
The Hidden People's? You are human, not
one of the Hidden, and our rules say
you can share names.
(beat)

Look, I'm named after my grandfather, alright? We're both Thomas Thorne, and neither of us had to die for the other to keep the name.

FETCH
Two Thomas Thornes?

THOMAS
Yes. And he loved that we shared a name. It made us closer.

FETCH
But that Thomas Thorne is gone now. And you are here. That Mackenna Thorne is gone. And I am here.

THOMAS
There's nothing I can do to bring my grandfather back. But I think you can find Mackenna. You can bring her back. Share her name. Be close, like I was with my grandfather. And you can be family, like you're supposed to be.

FETCH
Our parents...you said they didn't know. That they thought the changeling was me. That they didn't abandon me.

THOMAS
Mackenna, you didn't know our parents. But if they had even an inkling that you were out there somewhere, taken away from them? They would have moved heaven and earth to find you.
(beat)

And so would I.

FETCH
I want her life. All the things I should have had. The birthright that was taken from me.

THOMAS

You'll have to be in prison. For... probably a long while. That's what happens in the human world when you kill someone. But, you'll have your family back. You'll have me. I'll visit you, as often as they'll let me.

FETCH

I will have...a brother.

THOMAS

You've always had a brother.

FETCH

(beat)

I agree to your terms.

THOMAS

Thank you. How did you find Mackenna, when you were trying to kill her?

FETCH

The Magister's Mirror. It is an enchanted scrying device. Because we had a connection, there was no place you could hide from me. Any reflective surface would be a portal to the mirror.

(beat)

I saw them. That night, eating and drinking as though all was well. As though I had never suffered for their negligence.

THOMAS

Our parents...

FETCH

I hated them. I stalked them. I killed them. And it brought me no relief.

THOMAS

(shake it off)

Where is the mirror, Mackenna?

FETCH

I stayed in the woods nearest to your home when I wasn't hunting you. It is hidden under the roots of the tallest tree, near my bed.

THOMAS

Thank you.

(beat)

You'll be in court soon...human court. They will move you to another prison after that. There will be rules you'll have to follow, so you won't get in more trouble or be hurt.

FETCH

I am accustomed to rules. And the punishments for disobeying. If I die, I die as Mackenna Thorne. That is all I ever wanted.

THOMAS

Mackenna, they won't kill you for breaking the rules.

FETCH

Then the torture for disobedience won't break me either. I have suffered worse than any mere human could put forth.

THOMAS

Torture?! Mackenna, that won't happen to you here; I promise. But please, just do what they say.

FETCH

They will tell me the rules?

THOMAS

Yes.

FETCH

Oh.

(beat)

That is...simple. I will follow the rules they will tell me. And they will not beat me?

THOMAS

That's how it's supposed to work, yes.
If anyone ever beats you...well, I
imagine that wouldn't go well for them.

FETCH

I find that acceptable.

THOMAS

(under his breath)

What did they do to you?

(normal)

I have to go now, but I'll visit you as
soon as I can.

FETCH

I do not believe you, but we shall see.

NARRATOR

Two sisters depending on you, Thomas. I
wonder which one you'll let down the
most?

MUSICAL TRANSITION

30. The other place. Wanderer's cave.

WANDERER

You're lucky that cut wasn't deeper. As
it is, the poison is only slowly
spreading, rather than shutting down
the first organ it comes across.

MACKENNA

Is there a cure?

WANDERER

No.

NISSA

Great. So my death will be slow and
painful instead of quick and painful.

WANDERER

There's a chance your body will be able to fight off the infection. Not a strong possibility, but still not unheard of.

MACKENNA

Is there anything else we can do?

WANDERER

Go home. The toxin is unique to this place and unlikely to survive outside of this realm.

NISSA

You know a way out?

WANDERER

It's more likely that you'll fight off the infection than escape from the In-Between.

MACKENNA

The In-Between? That's where we are?

WANDERER

Of course. That's where failed teleportation sends you: this castaway realm of misfits and monsters.

NISSA

Is that how you got here?

WANDERER

Yes. I'm the only one of my group of twenty to have survived.

MACKENNA

Twenty, er, "people" all like you?

WANDERER

An attempt at tact regarding my appearance?

MACKENNA

Well, I didn't want to be rude.

WANDERER

I'm afraid I contracted the same illness as your friend here. I survived, but not without scars.

NISSA

Fuck, it's either die or look like you?

WANDERER

No need to be so vulgar. I know my horns have shrunk considerably, but they were once the length and girth indicative of a scholar, and all that knowledge has not been lost, I assure you! As for the paleness of my skin...well, I always considered the treatment of others based on their color to be quite primitive. Perhaps my world would be better in shades of light and dark, rather than all the colors of the visible spectrum.

NISSA

Yeah, about that...

WANDERER

I was green, by the way. Of noble birth. Obviously. But, we did have a blue in our group. I petitioned for her; clever girl, well above her birth station.

(sighs)

Such a pity. When we got sick, for a brief while, we were the same color.

MACKENNA

So, your group of twenty. All of them caught whatever you had?

WANDERER

It spread slowly. Those that were healthy wandered out to find a way home. They never returned.

NISSA

Then I guess our one hundred percent survival rate is pretty lucky.

WANDERER
Give it time, girly.

NISSA
Call me "girly" again, and your group's survival will be zero.

MACKENNA
Nissa, not helping. I'm Mackenna, by the way.

WANDERER
No, you're not.

MACKENNA
Yeah, I mean, technically...it's complicated. And you are?

WANDERER
I don't even rightly know anymore. It's been ages since I've needed my own name. Too many other important things to remember.

MACKENNA
How about the name of the monster that was chasing us?

WANDERER
If it has a name, I do not know it. It is just a beast, a void. Most of the little ones know to run when it draws near. It's insatiable, and relentless, seeking power in all its forms. It will be back for you, since it's already got your scent.

NISSA
Aren't you in danger being with us then?

WANDERER
(laughs)
That bastard got my scent ages ago. We're equally fucked, I'm afraid.

NISSA
(hisses in pain)

MACKENNA
Nissa, your wound. I think you opened it again.

NISSA
Shit, it stings.

WANDERER
Well, at least your body is trying to fight it. Just a matter of time to see which wins.

NISSA
I don't like those odds. I'd rather we get back home before we see if I can develop magic antibodies or not.

MACKENNA
Do you know anyway of teleporting out of here? I tried stepping-sideways, but it didn't work.

WANDERER
Your way home depends on where home is.

NISSA
Indiana.

WANDERER
I've not heard of that realm.

MACKENNA
Realm? There's more than one?

WANDERER
(sighs)
You travel without the least understanding of the mechanics of the universe, don't you?
(beat)
Lick this.

NISSA
Your palm?

MACKENNA

Why is there a fucking eyeball on your hand? Make it stop looking at me!

WANDERER

It's a third eye. It will be able to identify your home realm, with some stimulus.

MACKENNA

Nope. That's gross.

NISSA

Mack, just do it. I want to get home before I die of faerie flu.

MACKENNA

Can you at least close it while I lick it?

WANDERER

No.

MACKENNA

Fine.

(licking)

Ugh, as gross as expected.

WANDERER

Once more please.

MACKENNA

Seriously?

NISSA

How many licks does it take to get to the tootsie pop center?

MACKENNA

Shut the fuck up, Nissa.

(licks)

WANDERER

Ah, Manheimr. I should have guessed.

MACKENNA

Could you have guessed before I made
out with your special eye?
(gagging)

WANDERER

There is a way then. A Bivrost can
connect Manheimr to the In-Between. A
relic shared between the worlds can
form the bridge, splintered in a bygone
era: half in this realm, half in that
realm. Connecting the pieces of the Arm
Ring of Frigg should form the bridge
and allow you to pass.

NISSA

Where is our half of the Arm Ring?

WANDERER

That is the unfortunate bit. The beast
is insatiable, but not an omnivore.
Whatever it cannot eat, it collects in
its den.

NISSA

Which, I'm assuming, is another vast
cavern of multiple disorganized piles
of various objects of power, with no
way to know which is the one we're
looking for?

WANDERER

Power of the magnitude needed to
connect realms emits pulses of light
when not in use. Constantly containing
that much power indefinitely is
impossible, and would eventually result
in catastrophe.

MACKENNA

So it glows. Woohoo.

NISSA

Our only way home is in the treasure
hoard of the biggest bad of this world,
who, by the way, already has our scent
and wants us as a snack?

MACKENNA

Well, fuck.

MUSICAL TRANSITION

31. Fetch's hide-out, the woods. Leaves crunching as Thomas and Shaylee walk deeper.

THOMAS

Thanks for coming with, Shaylee. I'm hoping you'll have a better idea of what we're looking for.

SHAYLEE

I've heard of the Magister's Mirror before, but I've never actually seen it myself.

THOMAS

But you think you'll know it when you see it?

SHAYLEE

Magical things have a certain feeling about them. I think I'll know.

(beat)

Also, how many mirrors could we find hidden in the woods?

THOMAS

Good point. Either way, I didn't really want to do this alone. Thank you.

SHAYLEE

Aye.

(beat)

This is it.

THOMAS

This? There's nothing here.

SHAYLEE

Look at the forest floor, the way the leaves and soil are compressed. She was here often, in this circle area.

Leaves rustling as Shaylee walks.

SHAYLEE (CONT'D)
You said it was under her bed?

THOMAS
Shaylee, that's just a pile of leaves.

SHAYLEE
You expected her to have an actual bed?
Maybe a blanket and a teddy bear?

THOMAS
No, but maybe a sleeping bag or
something.

SHAYLEE
This is how they make fetches live. She
does not know beds or comfort.
(beat)
Although...

THOMAS
What is it?

Shaylee picks up leaves.

SHAYLEE
(sniffs)
These aren't just leaves. They were her
barghests.

THOMAS
She slept on her dogs' remains?

SHAYLEE
These were the ones I killed when we
fought. She would have had to go back
and get them.

THOMAS
Shaylee, which end was her pillow?
(beat)
So, that big pile right there would
have been her feet? That...that's how
Murphy sleeps with me.

NARRATOR

Ah, the bond of a girl and her murder-hounds.

Leaves moving.

THOMAS

Shaylee, I think I see something.

(beat)

Is this the mirror?

SHAYLEE

Give it here.

(beat)

Yes, I think so.

THOMAS

All right, fire it up and let's see if we can reach Mackenna and Nissa.

SHAYLEE

In truth, I'm feeling a bit exposed out here. We should go back to the house first and meet up with Sam and Alfie. I'm sure they'll want to talk to Mack and Nissa as well.

THOMAS

Shaylee, this will work, right? Scrying for them across universes?

SHAYLEE

It has to, Thomas. I don't know what else to do.

MUSICAL TRANSITION

32. The In-Between

MACKENNA

Here, Nissa. You should drink something.

NISSA

Are you sure that pond water is safe?

MACKENNA

Not much of a choice if it's not. Die of dehydration, or die of giardia.

NISSA

I don't think they have giardia here.

MACKENNA

Drink.

(beat)

So, we'll get a few hours of sleep, rest up, and then sneak into that thing's den to steal the Ring of Twig.

NISSA

Arm Ring of Frigg. Half of it.

MACKENNA

Yeah.

NISSA

Listen, I like having a plan of action, but then what? We need to get the other half that's in our world and connect them. Any ideas on how we do that?

MACKENNA

I don't know yet. But, we'll figure something out.

NISSA

Best case scenario, Alfie somehow figures out we're alive, in an in-between realm, and that the Arm Ring is our way home.

MACKENNA

That's a lot to put on Alfie. Shaylee would probably figure it out.

NISSA

Naw, my money's on Alfie. He's the only one with a ridiculous enough imagination to come up with this.

(beat)

That still leaves connecting the two
halves of a magic relic across
different realms. How the hell do you
connect two realms?

SHAYLEE
(filtered)
Mackenna?

MACKENNA
Did you hear that, or am I going
insane?

NISSA
It's coming from the pond.

MACKENNA
(beat)
Are we hallucinating from the In-
Between water, or is my Irish
reflection talking to us?

SHAYLEE
(filtered)
Mackenna!

THE END