

THE HIDDEN PEOPLE

Episode 2.14

“Pedagogy”

Written by

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144. Beach, early morning. Stepping sideways arrival.

SHAYLEE

You can let go now, Riley.

(beat)

This should be the place. Be ready to step back through the circle with me if this goes awry.

RILEY

Do you think it will?

SHAYLEE

No idea. A meeting like this is...I would say "highly irregular," but that wouldn't even scratch the surface.

RILEY

And she can follow us through the circle if we run, right?

SHAYLEE

Yes. But Mackenna's on the other end. I don't want to see what happens if the two of them go toe-to-toe, but it's our only option.

RILEY

Because you can't refuse the summons.

SHAYLEE

Aye.

RILEY

I'm sure everything will be fine.

SHAYLEE

No one on the Court has ever requested to meet a changeling at the start of their training. And certainly not in a remote location.

RILEY

Oh, I didn't actually mean everything will be fine. In all likelihood, she's planning my untimely, gruesome death. But hey, no sense in keeping a negative attitude, right?

SHAYLEE

I...but...apparently, I've been lacking optimists in my life for a long time.

Stepping sideways arrival.

SHAYLEE (CONT'D)

Alder Niamh.

ALDER NIAMH

Trainer. Changeling.

RILEY

Hi!

(beat)

What?

SHAYLEE

(under breath)

What are you doing?

RILEY

Do the Hidden People not shake hands?

(long beat)

My bad. Nice to meet you, Alder.

ALDER NIAMH

Adorable. How progresses the training?

SHAYLEE

We've barely covered the basics. She readily accepted the truth, at least.

ALDER NIAMH

You must move faster. Her fetch will be released soon.

SHAYLEE

How soon?

ALDER NIAMH
One day. Perhaps less.

SHAYLEE
Why? This isn't how we do things.

ALDER NIAMH
The Court decides how the Court does things. You obey. There is no "we" in any of this.

SHAYLEE
One day is not enough time. You know it isn't.

ALDER NIAMH
This is important to the Court. When the fetch is near, I will summon you and then revoke the summons.

SHAYLEE
You're warning us? You're...helping us?

ALDER NIAMH
I have my own interests in this matter. Bother yourself with your job, trainer. Pull out every assistant, every trick, every teaching method. You won't have much time, and this is your most difficult assignment yet.

RILEY
What if I challenge my fetch to a duel?
But a duel of the minds. We can play chess. Like in The Seventh Seal.
(beat)
Do the Hidden People watch movies?

ALDER NIAMH
(long beat)
This is your most difficult assignment yet.

SHAYLEE
She will be ready.

ALDER NIAMH
See to it.

Stepping sideways departure.

RILEY
That went really well.

SHAYLEE
Define "well."

RILEY
I'm alive.

SHAYLEE
So far.

NARRATOR
Seems Shaylee isn't quite as optimistic as her charge. Is that doubt coming from your own abilities, trainer, or from that nagging feeling that something isn't right here?
(beat)
Trust your instincts, Shaylee.

MUSICAL TRANSITION

145. Stepping sideways arrival at Shaylee's beach house.

MACKENNA
Is Niamh following you?

SHAYLEE
No. But the fetch is coming by tomorrow.

MACKENNA
Doesn't matter.

SHAYLEE
Perhaps you didn't hear the "by tomorrow" part.

MACKENNA
They're not fighting. You're not fighting, Riley.

RILEY

I'm not fighting Riley? That's good to hear.

SHAYLEE

We can't avoid this, Mackenna. My contract--

MACKENNA

--forbids you from interfering in their fight. It doesn't say you have to initiate the fight. In fact, they can't even do that supervillain thing where they order you to kill one of them and make you choose which one. Because that would be interfering.

RILEY

Nice loophole, Mack Murdock. So what's the plan?

MACKENNA

When the fetch shows up, we knock her out, tie her up, and then talk some sense into her. Make her realize you can coexist, just like we did with my fetch.

SHAYLEE

That might work. I mean, we'll need about five years to give her the necessary therapy, all whilst avoiding the Hidden People who will definitely be hunting us.

MACKENNA

Shaylee, I only solve one problem at a time.

SHAYLEE

Sometimes the problems just behind those are much, much bigger. And come much, much faster.

RILEY

Like that I Love Lucy episode with the chocolate on the conveyor belt.
Classic.

MACKENNA

Right.

(beat)

This will work. My plans always work.

SHAYLEE

Your plans have landed you, in no particular order, in jail, shot, and on another planet ruled by a giant monster.

MACKENNA

And who killed the giant monster, hmmm?

SHAYLEE

Sam.

MACKENNA

Yeah, but--

SHAYLEE

With my gun.

MACKENNA

But it was my plan.

RILEY

Wait, does this mean I don't get my superhero training?

SHAYLEE

No.

MACKENNA

Yes.

RILEY

I'm confused as to which answer means I get to learn magic.

SHAYLEE

This is why the Court fears halflings.
You're too compassionate and too
confident.

(beat, sigh)

Riley, we're following Mackenna. We're
saving both of you. But we'll still
train you, at least today. You'll need
those skills once the Hidden People
realize we've betrayed them. Again.

MACKENNA

Honestly, they should really be
expecting it at this point. Fool me
twice, you know?

RILEY

You can't get fooled again.

SHAYLEE

(beat)

Was that a reference?

MACKENNA

Everything she says is a reference.

RILEY

Not everything.

SHAYLEE

Yeah.

MACKENNA

Pretty much.

RILEY

Sometimes I'm just really sarcastic.

MACKENNA

Give her a stick, Shaylee. I'm really
feeling the need to teach her how to
dodge.

RILEY

Gulp.

MUSICAL TRANSITION

146. The bar in the Conley village. Playing cheesy rock!

NARRATOR

So Mackenna beats on her protégé and pretends it's training. She has much in common with her other half. Halfway across the world, back in Conley, her tortured companions have to make do without her. Perhaps, given how non-life-threatening their days away from her tend to be, they might realize the real danger in their lives.

THOMAS

Thanks for this, Alfie. I haven't gotten out much. Sam...she's opened up a little, but I know there's so much more going on in her head. Even when I'm with her, she's miles away.

ALFIE

Uh, well, this guys' night out isn't entirely without ulterior motives, so I should probably be thanking you.

THOMAS

What do you mean?

ALFIE

You know how my parents are cutting me off because I'm an immature embarrassment?

THOMAS

Alfie, I'm sure they didn't actually call you--

ALFIE

That was a quote from the paperwork freezing my trust.

THOMAS

Oh.

ALFIE

But see, I have a plan. I figure that you're the most mature, put-together person I've ever met. If anyone can teach me to be an adult, it's you!

THOMAS

Alfie, you're older than me.

ALFIE

Yes, but you're much adulttier.

THOMAS

So I'm supposed to teach you how to be an adult? I mean, that's flattering, but I don't really feel equipped. My life is upside-down right now.

ALFIE

You don't have a job, and yet you're still living well! You even have a cute girlfriend!

THOMAS

Okay, okay. What kind of things am I supposed to teach you?

ALFIE

I don't know. How to be mature. How to socialize with adults. How to get a girlfriend. How to be a man. The list is endless. Let's start with whatever you can teach me in this bar.

THOMAS

Yeah. Okay, I can do that. We'll start with something simple.

(beat, thinking)

Oh, I know. How to order a drink at a bar.

ALFIE

I've done that before.

THOMAS

No, see: we're in a booth. I mean at the actual bar.

ALFIE

But that's where the adults
sit...riiight.

THOMAS

Come on. Follow me.

Thomas and Alfie approach the bar.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

You're going to order a drink like a
real man.

ALFIE

That's so much pressure.

THOMAS

Just go with it. Make eye contact with
the bartender. He'll make his way to
you when he's free.

ALFIE

But then what? What does a real man
drink? Beer? Scotch? On the rocks?
Rocks is a drinking thing, right?

(beat)

You don't order beer on the rocks, do
you?

THOMAS

Alfie. That's not what a real man
drinks.

ALFIE

Whiskey?

THOMAS

Why would you think that? Why would a
real man drink scotch or whiskey?

ALFIE

Um, they seem kinda manly, right?

THOMAS

No, Alfie. You know what's manly? What a real man drinks?

(beat)

Whatever he wants. Because a real man doesn't care about what people think, isn't worried about trying to impress anyone or seem tough. If you think James Bond is cool and want to be cool, then order a martini.

ALFIE

(British accent)

Shaken, not stirred.

THOMAS

And if you think Dr. Pepper is cool, then you order Dr. Pepper. A real man isn't pressured by what he thinks a real man is supposed to be. And a real man never pressures or shames anyone else for drinking what they like.

(beat)

So how bout it? What would you like to drink?

ALFIE

Uh, I like the fruity drinks, so maybe a strawberry daiquiri.

THOMAS

Perfect. Now make eye contact with the bartender, order your drink with confidence, and enjoy it.

ALFIE

Okay. I can do this! Did you want anything?

THOMAS

You know what? I'll have what you're having. You're the coolest person in this bar, and I'm in the mood to be cool tonight.

NARRATOR

Alfred O'Toole, attempting to put away
childish things. What do you think you
will see in that mirror, darkly?

MUSICAL TRANSITION

147. Outside Sam's house. Knock on door. Sam shuffles around inside.

SAM

(through door)

Who's there?

NISSA

Nissa.

Sam opens the door.

SAM

Nissa? What are you doing here? Is something wrong?

NISSA

Oh yeah. Big time wrong. I'm coming in.

SAM

Uh, yeah, sure. I guess--

Nissa enters and shuts the door.

SAM (CONT'D)

--come on in.

They cross the room and sit down at the kitchen table.

SAM (CONT'D)

So what's the big wrong?

NISSA

You.

SAM

Excuse me?

NISSA

It does not take a genius to see that you're barely holding together right now. So to an actual genius, it's glaringly obvious.

SAM

Oh. I didn't realize--

NISSA

What? That anyone other than Thomas noticed?

SAM

But we've barely seen each other.

NISSA

Like I said: glaringly obvious.

SAM

Right. You're the actual genius in this scenario.

NISSA

Why thank you.

SAM

So, what, you're here to cheer me up?

NISSA

Cheer? Ha. I guess sometimes I forget that you don't know me very well.

SAM

What, then?

NISSA

You're sitting around and wallowing in your terrible memories of what Cygnus did when it took over your body. I happen to know a little something about getting stuck in memories you can't forget.

SAM

I suppose you would. But you probably never killed your friend and tried to eat him. Or ate your own finger.

NISSA

You got me. Never did either of those. But I remember every time my mom cried over my dad who I never met. She doesn't know I remember. Thinks I was too young. But that's the thing about remembering everything forever. So I get to relive her pain, and how it made me feel, basically every second of every day.

SAM

That totally sucks.

NISSA

Also, I literally can never forget any of Alfie's bad jokes.

SAM

Oh.

(beat)

Oh. Holy shit. I suddenly understand you so much better.

NISSA

So I'm here for commiseration and joint mopiness. And in the spirit of that, I brought...

Plastic bag rustles.

NISSA (CONT'D)

Ice cream and DVDs.

SAM

God, is this one of those girls' night things?

NISSA

Back to the you not knowing me so well.
We are not watching some "finding a man
to solve all your problems" bullshit.
We're watching Olivia Benson and Buffy
Summers kick people's asses while we
gorge on cookie dough and raspberry
chip.

SAM

Raspberry chip is my favorite. How did
you know?

NISSA

You mentioned it to Thomas at his house
on October seventeenth of my junior
year of high school. Alfie and I were
over playing Clue with Mack.

SAM

My god. How do you process all of that?

NISSA

I am a fierce and mighty woman. I
handle things. It's what we do.

SAM

All right; I'm in. I'll get some spoons
and bowls.

NISSA

Just spoons. This is an eat the entire
pint kind of night.

MUSICAL TRANSITION

148. Shaylee's beach house. Outside. Riley and Mackenna are
sparring with wooden staves in the sand. The fight ends
shortly after.

RILEY

Yep. It's official. I cannot fight.

SHAYLEE

Actually, you're better than a lot of
the new recruits I've had.

MACKENNA

You're doing better than I expected.
You almost blocked one of those shots.

RILEY

Is...is almost blocking a benchmark?
Because if so, it's probably a
benchmark on the path to losing and
dying.

MACKENNA

Don't be too hard on yourself.

RILEY

Oh, I'm not. I mean, did you see me
fighting?! I almost blocked that one
time!

SHAYLEE

We should take a break from fighting.
We could try other things.

RILEY

I want to step sideways.

SHAYLEE

That's a really difficult one.

RILEY

I can totally do it.

MACKENNA

Shaylee's right. That's too advanced.

RILEY

Totes my goats.

SHAYLEE

Knock yourself out, then. Use the
circle of stones by the porch. Try to
step to that fire pit.

Riley walks across the sand.

RILEY

How do I do it?

SHAYLEE

Stand beside the circle. Close your eyes. Visualize the fire pit. Imagine the circle it makes. Reach out with your mind's eye, through the space. Feel the circle across the beach. When it's clear in your mind, when you've selected it like a particular book on a crowded shelf, step sideways into the circle.

MACKENNA

And look, it's fine that you don't get it right for a while. Nobody gets it on the first--

Stepping sideways departure. Stepping sideways arrival.
(panned apart)

MACKENNA (CONT'D)

--try.

RILEY

(calling back)

Woot! Look at me! I'm over here!

SHAYLEE

Damn. That's good.

MACKENNA

(muttering)

She can't fight for shit.

SHAYLEE

(calling out)

That was really good, Riley. You did well.

RILEY

(calling back)

I'm coming back!

Stepping sideways departure. Stepping sideways arrival.
(panned apart, opposite last time)

MACKENNA

Oh, look at my magical powers.

SHAYLEE

Mackenna Thorne. Are you jealous?

MACKENNA

No.

SHAYLEE

You are!

MACKENNA

Am not.

(beat)

Butthole.

NARRATOR

Ah. Envy. But what, exactly, are you envious of, dear Mackenna? What does Riley possess that you covet so? It certainly isn't minor tricks. Could it be...enthusiasm? Innocence? Happiness?

Riley hurries back across the sand.

RILEY

So that was good, right?

SHAYLEE

It was very impressive.

MACKENNA

Don't let it go to your head.

RILEY

Beginner's luck, I guess.

MACKENNA

I mean, yeah, okay, you did really well. I didn't make it on my first try.

SHAYLEE

Neither did I.

RILEY

I'm a prodigy! Smack my bitch up!

MACKENNA

Not so fast, firestarter.

RILEY

You get me.

MACKENNA

You still have a lot to learn, and probably a lot of failing to get through.

RILEY

I didn't fail at stepping sideways.

SHAYLEE

Were you present for the three hours of sparring where Mackenna kicked your ass for three hours?

RILEY

Point taken.

MACKENNA

Come on. We'll try something else.

They walk across the sand.

RILEY

Cool! What are we doing?

MACKENNA

I'm going to throw you off the roof. For science.

MUSICAL TRANSITION

149. Back at the bar with Thomas and Alfie.

ALFIE

That's how you do your taxes?

THOMAS

Well, that's how I do them. You could always just pay an accountant. Your parents just had them done for you?

ALFIE

Either that, or I'm wanted on felony tax evasion.

(beat)

Actually, with my income at the music store, it's probably just misdemeanor tax evasion.

THOMAS

Well, just make sure to pay them next year. I can help you with the program if it's confusing.

ALFIE

You're the best, Thomas. Look at us, drunkenly bonding like real dudes.

THOMAS

You haven't even finished half of your daiquiri.

ALFIE

Good point! Before I get too far in the bag, you need to teach me how to get a girlfriend.

THOMAS

Uh, that's kind of a big subject, Alfie.

ALFIE

Okay, but at least get me started. How do you talk to girls?

THOMAS

Well, you start by talking to women, because hopefully you're only flirting with adults. Calling women "girls" belittles their life experience.

ALFIE

Got it.

THOMAS

Next...I really don't know. Don't use cheesy pickup lines?

ALFIE

But it's so difficult! It's not like a video game where you only have to choose from three things to say, and the one that leads to romance has a heart next to it. The possibilities are endless! I could make a joke, or talk about the weather, or compliment her eyes, or awkwardly ask her political affiliation so we don't fall in love only to get torn apart at the next election.

THOMAS

Whoa, whoa. Talking to women isn't a video game.

ALFIE

I know. I just said that.

THOMAS

No, I mean that you need to get that idea out of your head. It isn't just a bad analogy; it's completely incompatible. In video games, you choose dialogue options that lead to a very specific outcome. You're earning an achievement or reaching the endgame. Women aren't a game where you reach an endpoint or check boxes to complete tasks. They're human beings.

ALFIE

Ooohhh.

THOMAS

If you talk to women and constantly just wonder what to say in order to reach the next level, you're turning them into a challenge, an obstacle that must be conquered. If you want a partner, and you want to be a real man about it, then you treat that potential partner as equal in their personhood.

ALFIE

Oh. My. God. I just found your new job.
Life coach. Motivational speaker.

THOMAS

That's a bit of a leap.

ALFIE

No way! Guys need to hear this stuff.
Why did no one teach me any of this in
school? Or even out of school?

THOMAS

I don't know. I guess it is something
more people should hear. I took an
English class in undergrad that focused
on gender theory. Really opened my
eyes.

ALFIE

Well, professor, let's continue our
lessons over dessert. There's this new
crepe place downtown that's open all
night.

THOMAS

I like their business model. Crepes
should be available at all times of the
night.

ALFIE

Hazelnut banana caramel is calling my
name.

THOMAS

Sound good. I'll drive.

ALFIE

Good, because I don't own a car. Maybe
that's the next lesson.

THOMAS

Buying a car?

ALFIE

Stealing a car. Do you know how much I
make in a year?

MUSICAL TRANSITION

150. Sam's house. TV switches off.

SAM

How have I never watched that show
before night?

NISSA

I knew you'd like it. She kicks all the
ass. Not unlike us.

SAM

I guess I never realized how much we
had in common. What with all the ass-
kicking.

NISSA

Don't forget good taste in ice cream.

SAM

Thanks for sharing some of the cookie
dough.

NISSA

Thanks for not sharing yours.
Raspberry. Blech.

SAM

I really appreciate this. All Thomas
wants to do is make me talk about all
the big stuff. Every conversation with
him is like "hi, how was your day, tell
me how it felt to be possessed."

NISSA

Yeah, he's a big picture kinda guy.

SAM

This was great, though. Badass chicks
on TV, ice cream, nonjudgmental
company...

NISSA

Like I told you, I know what it's like to remember the bad stuff. And if you can't forget, then you distract. Wanna watch any more? I could go get us a bottle of wine, maybe some chips to balance out the sugar high.

SAM

I think I should probably call it a night. I'm actually supposed to be job hunting tomorrow.

NISSA

Job hunting? Ugh. The worst.

SAM

The actual worst.

NISSA

Are there a lot of openings for homicide detectives?

SAM

I detected other crimes, too. But no, not really.

NISSA

Any prospects?

SAM

I plan to start with cold calling and quickly follow with begging. Tears may play a role.

NISSA

Hey, I know it isn't your field. Or at all related. But we've got an opening at SoundScapes.

SAM

Oh?

NISSA

Well, one of our employees went to prison for murder, so...

SAM

Yeah, I never really thought of that.

NISSA

We are down a person.

(beat)

Okay, more like half a person because Mack's work ethic left a lot to be desired, but you get the point.

SAM

I appreciate the offer.

NISSA

I know it's not fancy. Just retail. But if you need money, we could use the help.

SAM

Again I find myself thanking you. That's really cool. I'm glad we could hang out. I know you weren't always my biggest fan.

NISSA

Eh. It's a cop thing.

SAM

I get it.

NISSA

But you're cool. Sure you don't want wine?

SAM

Well, my initial excuse of job hunting isn't very valid if you're giving me a job for the interim. So maybe wine is back on the menu.

NISSA

Perfect. I'll swing by my place for some more DVDs. I think you need to meet Veronica Mars.

MUSICAL TRANSITION

151. Night outside Shaylee's beach house.

RILEY

(out of breath)

Okay. So, recap. I can step sideways, but I can't fight, can't hide things in pockets, and can't fall.

SHAYLEE

Oh, you can fall.

MACKENNA

Yeah, you definitely fell.

RILEY

Good point. But like Neo, everybody falls the first time.

MACKENNA

To be fair, you also fell the second through fifth times.

RILEY

A minor detail. I'll keep jumping off the roof until I get it.

SHAYLEE

You're further along than I expected after just one day, even if you can't do most of the magic. The first day is usually spent answering questions and arguing.

MACKENNA

We didn't argue my first day.

SHAYLEE

You charged me and tried to hit me.

MACKENNA

Yeah, but we didn't argue.

RILEY

You two are adorbs.

SHAYLEE

Uh...

MACKENNA

No.

SHAYLEE

We are anything but.

RILEY

It's so cute.

MACKENNA

Look, I can put up with a lot. I'm friends with Alfie, after all. But you gotta understand a few--

SHAYLEE

She's coming.

MACKENNA

The fetch?

SHAYLEE

Aye. Alder Niamh just summoned me and then revoked it. That was the signal.

MACKENNA

Well, she's human, so she isn't stepping sideways. And we can see down the beach in both directions.

RILEY

I don't know. It's pretty dark.

MACKENNA

I can see just fine. No one's around. So is she just going to come up the driveway? On foot?

SHAYLEE

I don't know. But be ready. She may only be human, but...okay, I can't come up with any scenario where a fetch beats you in a fight.

MACKENNA

No fighting necessary. I'm gonna zonk her out, and then we'll--

152. Stepping sideways arrival.

RILEY
(screams)

MACKENNA
Who the hell?

ALDER NIAMH
Hello, Mackenna. So nice to finally
meet you.

SHAYLEE
Shite.

MACKENNA
Niamh.

ALDER NIAMH
Alder Niamh. Show the proper respect.

MACKENNA
Yeah, you must not have heard of me.

ALDER NIAMH
Oh, I've heard so very much. Too much.
Certainly all the rumors cannot be
true.

RILEY
If the rumors are that she's Wonder
Woman, then they're all true.

SHAYLEE
Where is the fetch?

ALDER NIAMH
Fetch? Oh. Very dead. Died two years
ago in the Gauntlet. The changeling
won't be fighting anyone. She is free.
Go on, little changeling. Shoo.

MACKENNA
Stay right where you are, Riley. I
can't protect you if you leave.

RILEY

Because my plan was to walk ten miles
to the nearest phone.

ALDER NIAMH

Do you really think you could protect
her from me?

MACKENNA

Let's test that theory.

Mackenna draws her scythe.

ALDER NIAMH

That weapon does not belong to you.

MACKENNA

She's not using it anymore, so I
figured, why not?

ALDER NIAMH

It did not belong to her, either. I
forged it with my own hands for my
fetch. She took it from him after she
had him executed.

MACKENNA

Y'know, that is really on brand.

ALDER NIAMH

Give it to me.

MACKENNA

You're welcome to come take it.

ALDER NIAMH

(laughs)

I am not here to fight.

SHAYLEE

Why are you here, then? Just to catch
me with Mackenna?

Alder Niamh paces in the sand.

ALDER NIAMH

Your answers are always so measured in the presence of the inquisitors. I knew you were hiding...something. I assumed it was her. And I knew that you would call for her assistance in the rushed training. It seems you've betrayed the Court yet again, trainer.

MACKENNA

Do not look at her. Look at me. Look at her again, and she'll be the last thing you ever see.

SHAYLEE

Mackenna, don't.

ALDER NIAMH

A simple word from me and the trainer dies. How fast do you think you are, changeling? Do you think you can kill me before I can speak? Do you think you can kill me at all?

MACKENNA

You're not here to fight. I get it. So what do you want?

ALDER NIAMH

I will be candid with you, changeling. The Court is in disarray. The only leader of the Hidden People since the death of our god is also dead. By your hand, it seems. In the power vacuum, the alders are struggling to take power from one another. Only one of us can become the new magister.

MACKENNA

What does that have to do with us?

ALDER NIAMH

Unlike the other alders, I am not an old fool. I do not assume stories are real. I have little care for outmoded traditions that endanger us. I traffic in knowledge. Information. And you have that. I must know how a changeling caused the Magister and Liliana to meet their ends.

SHAYLEE

This is all just to find out how they died? I could have told you that.

ALDER NIAMH

As if I didn't ask. Repeatedly.

MACKENNA

I can tell you that. But I want something in return.

ALDER NIAMH

I would be sorely disappointed if you did not.

MACKENNA

I tell you something you don't know, and you release Shaylee from her contract.

ALDER NIAMH

I cannot. The Court holds the contract.

SHAYLEE

(whispering)

Mackenna, it isn't worth it. You can't tell her.

MACKENNA

(whispering)

Don't worry. I won't tell her everything. Obviously.

ALDER NIAMH

Adjust your terms.

MACKENNA

Fine. You cannot command Shaylee to die. And you'll prevent the other alders from doing so.

ALDER NIAMH

That is acceptable.

RILEY

Can I get into the fine print on this?

MACKENNA

And you leave Riley alone. Never mention her to the Court.

ALDER NIAMH

Done.

MACKENNA

Y' know what? Just never mention anything that happened here. To anyone. Ever. Seeing me. What I tell you. Riley being here. Never speak of it.

ALDER NIAMH

You're good at this. I accept.

MACKENNA

Fine. I'll tell you how I was able to kill the Magister.

SHAYLEE

(whispering)

Be careful.

MACKENNA

(whispering)

I got this.

(beat, to Niamh)

Liliana was my mom.

Shaylee smacks her forehead. Niamh stops pacing.

ALDER NIAMH

What? You...you are a halfling. Her half-breed child.

MACKENNA

Yep.

ALDER NIAMH

Hidden as a human.

RILEY

I see what you did there.

MACKENNA

Uh-huh. Wanna pose and threaten me some more? Still think I can't use your scythe to take your head?

Niamh steps back.

ALDER NIAMH

And you killed Liliana for her power.

MACKENNA

What? No! What is wrong with you people?

ALDER NIAMH

I killed my mother for her power and her position as laird.

MACKENNA

You are one fucked up chick. Liliana sacrificed herself so I could have the power to beat the Magister.

ALDER NIAMH

I see. For the first time in my life, the rumors fell short of the truth.

MACKENNA

We good, then? You take all this to your grave, including that I'm even alive. If knowing this helps you take out the rest of the Court, go for it.

ALDER NIAMH

Halflings are a threat beyond. You endanger everything about our ways, even our very world.

MACKENNA

Too bad you can't tell anyone.

ALDER NIAMH

This isn't over.

MACKENNA

Haven't you been paying attention? It is over. And as soon as I find a way to release Shaylee from your stupid contract, you'll never see us again.

ALDER NIAMH

If we ever see each other again, I will be prepared. That meeting will end in your blood.

MACKENNA

I'm looking forward to it. We're done here.

ALDER NIAMH

You do not dismiss me, half-breed.

RILEY

Oh, look at how pissed she is. She was half a tick from calling you a mudblood.

ALDER NIAMH

You will be dealt with, halfling. One way or another.

Stepping sideways departure.

SHAYLEE

What the hell, Mack?!

MACKENNA

What? She can't tell anyone.

SHAYLEE

The Hidden People are master manipulators. She'll figure a way around your terms.

MACKENNA
We'll be ready.

SHAYLEE
I thought the ultimate goal was to be
free of the Hidden People.

MACKENNA
Okay, yeah, but did you hear how
sanctimonious she was? I can't be
expected to keep my cool in the face of
that.

SHAYLEE
Yes! Yes, you can! You must! So many
lives ride on you keeping your cool.

MACKENNA
Mine and yours.

RILEY
And mine. Don't forget mine.

MACKENNA
I won't let anything happen to you,
Shaylee.

RILEY
(clears throat)

MACKENNA
Or you, Riley.

RILEY
Aw, you're the best.

SHAYLEE
You don't know them like I do. You
don't know her. The Magister was
transparent compared to Alder Niamh.

MACKENNA
You know what? I'm hungry. You want to
step over to China? I've always wanted
to try actual Chinese food.

RILEY

Uh, yes!

SHAYLEE

(beat, sigh)

Fine. That's fine. You'll do what you want to do.

(beat)

Actual Chinese food is spicier than what they have in America.

MACKENNA

I like a little spice.

RILEY

Oh my god, did you just wink at her?

MACKENNA

Absolutely not.

SHAYLEE

I did not see a wink.

RILEY

You two are so adorbs!

Stepping sideways departure.

MUSIC/SOUND TRANSITION from the beach to the courtroom, which is in an uproar.

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NARRATOR

Now, now, alders. No need to become too upset.

ALDER ODHRAN

This is an outrage, Alder Niamh! You not only stole from me, but you also hid a halfling from us!

ALDER NIAMH

That happened mere days ago. What could we have done with the information in such a short time?

ALDER ODHRAN

Do not obfuscate the point. You kept her secret to deliberately gain power over the rest of us.

ALDER NIAMH

Inquisitor?

INQUISITOR AILSA

He speaks false.

ALDER ODHRAN

I certainly do not.

ALDER NIAMH

If you had been paying close attention, Alder Odhran, you would note that I did not learn of the half-breed's true nature until after agreeing to be bound to silence on the issue. So no, I did not keep her secret to deliberately gain power over the rest of you.

ALDER ODHRAN

But power was your motivation for agreeing in the first place.

ALDER NIAMH

Information was my motive. And has it not worked? Are we not about to turn the page into a much more promising future for all of the Hidden People? Who, do you think, Alder Odhran, should take the credit for this?

NARRATOR

Don't look at me, alders. I'm just the storyteller.

ALDER NIAMH

Exactly. I made this happen. I arranged everything that has happened in this court today. The next magister will be chosen, and it will be me, because while the rest of you squabbled and schemed and accomplished nothing, I

made things happen. I produced results.
Like a leader.

ALDER ODHRAN

As if we did not suffer a crushing
defeat between when you learned of the
halfling and now.

ALDER NIAMH

That is behind us. We are about to have
a new leader. And to exact our judgment
on the greatest threat to our
existence.

ALDER ODHRAN

Are you sure about that?

NARRATOR

Not yet, anyway. The story still has a
few more chapters before we catch up to
today.

ALDER NIAMH

I see that the others here need to be
reminded of my accomplishments. Fine.

(beat)

Sentinels! Bring in the accused.

Two sentinels march from the room.

ALDER ODHRAN

This show is unnecessary.

ALDER NIAMH

Apparently not.

ALDER ODHRAN

She should not be present during these
proceedings.

ALDER NIAMH

We will return her to her cell when I
am done with her.

Sentinels march back in with Mackenna, who is shackled.

ALDER NIAMH (CONT'D)

At last.

MACKENNA

Oh wow, there are a lot of Hidden People in here. I like the architecture, though.

ALDER NIAMH

Halfling calling herself Mackenna Thorne. You have been brought before the Unseelie Court to face judgment for treason, murder, and subversion of our ways.

MACKENNA

Don't forget "existing," you racist piece of shit.

ALDER NIAMH

Your trial begins now.

NARRATOR

Ahem.

ALDER NIAMH

(long beat)

Your trial begins when the story is ended.

NARRATOR

We are nearly there.

(evil chuckle)

THE END