

THE HIDDEN PEOPLE

Episode 1.14

"The Morrigna"

Written by

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TEASER

153.

NARRATOR

Murder, kidnap, torture. Mystical items and bargaining. Oh, so much bargaining. Tit for tat, heart of your lover for the heart of your enemy, and all without blinking an eye. It's *modus operandi* for the Court, but please, imagine a world where all of this is *verboten*. Juvenile and, well, boring for certain, but if the Court would indulge me for just a moment. Let me make my point. Close your eyes.

(beat)

I mean it. All of you. Close them.

(to the audience)

Yes, you too.

(beat)

Ah, yes, now you can see it, can't you? Such a utopian, sepia-toned, nauseating place, isn't it? So many rules about what you can't do, so many more limits to your power, so many more weak, insufferable beings surrounding you, crying out to be oppressed! But dig a little deeper. You were born into this world, know no other, and these rules are as natural as the concrete beneath your shoes. And the idea of our world, and our rules...well, it must seem a lawless and monstrous place, truly a Wild West where anything goes. But not everything goes. There are rules. The question is, in such a reckless place, what broken law would cause a being of great power to be banished for all eternity? And when Mackenna Thorne goes to her for aid, what would that wretched creature demand in return?

END TEASER

154. Soundscapes music store. Retail MUSIC.

ALFIE

It feels wrong to be here.

NISSA

You said the same thing when you had to work opening night of *Guardians of the Galaxy 2*.

ALFIE

Yeah, but this is bigger. This is real.

NISSA

Money is real. As is exchange of money for food and shelter.

ALFIE

Niss, there's a whole new world of fantasy and adventure out there, waiting for us to discover all its wonder.

NISSA

It's the exact same world as yesterday, Alfie. No magic, no fantasy--

ALFIE

That's not what your algorithm said last night! Wink-wink.

NISSA

Ew. Even with her current bug in the system, my computer is too good for you. Don't sexualize her.

ALFIE

I'm just saying, it's got to be true if your science-biased code-formula thingy says...you know.

NISSA

What, that Mack's a fuckin' fairy?

ALFIE

(nerdy hushing noises)
Don't say that too loud!

NISSA

Why not? If you're all gung-ho for it, you shouldn't be embarrassed if our few customers we have hear you.

ALFIE

It's not that. Forget the customers!

NISSA

Excuse you?

ALFIE

If Mack has an evil doppelganger from the fairy world, we don't know who else is out there that wants to get her.

(stage whisper)

The call could be coming from inside the house!

NISSA

Oh my god. Whatever. But you do have a point. Until we know what's going on, and who the hell that other Mack was--

ALFIE

Fack.

NISSA

--we should be more cautious. For now.

ALFIE

Kinda hard to be cautious in public. We could always close early for the day and--

NISSA

Yeah no. We can research things on this side of sanity right here.

ALFIE

Like what? You're still in denial about the answers.

NISSA

I refuse to believe in magic, but I was thinking about what you said yesterday--about how these made up stories were

explanations for real things. My guess is, if we can look into the basis for all this made-up junk, maybe we can get a lead on what's really going on.

Chair PULLS OUT. Keyboard TYPING.

NISSA (CONT'D)

I pulled some keywords from the results of the algorithm. And honestly, as gross as it is at this point, we're looking for fairies and fairy tales. Or at least, the real-world explanations.

ALFIE

Aw yes, looking up fantasy tales at work. My life-long dream.

(beat)

What are you finding?

NISSA

A collection of, quote, Epic Myths and Tales.

ALFIE

"The Fable of Munachar and Manachar." Those sound like twin names, like Fack and Mack!

NISSA

I highly doubt evil twin goes by "Fack."

ALFIE

Still. Click the link.

Shop Bell RINGS. Liliana WALKS in.

ALFIE (CONT'D)

(distracted)

Welcome to SoundSc--oh, hi. Piano's all yours. Have fun.

(to Nissa)

A lot of the story titles aren't very descriptive. Are we going to have to read them all?

Liliana WALKS to the piano. Liliana's piano theme begins to PLAY.

NISSA

Not necessarily, if I can save the text and upload the stories to my computer's database, I should be able to run them through the same algorithm to search for keywords related to fairies.

Piano ABRUPTLY STOPS, then CONTINUES SOFTER.

ALFIE

Nissa, I thought we were being careful! From now on we're calling them... butterflies.

NISSA

(deadpan)

Butterflies?

ALFIE

Yeah, you know, tiny and wings and... look, just keep adding stories to your "butterfly collection" and we can look at them later when we get back to your place.

NISSA

Right, well, why don't you take a look at this interesting story about "butterflies" I found.

ALFIE

"The Farmer and the Changeling."

Piano STOPS. Liliana WALKS to Nissa and Alfie.

ALFIE (CONT'D)

Mack's not a farmer, and we're nowhere rural enough for this to be relevant.

NISSA

No, read the actual...
(to customer)

Ahem, hello there. Is there something wrong with the piano today? Or did you have--

LILIANA
Where is Mackenna Thorne?

ALFIE
Oh, uh, she's out sick with the plague, so--

LILIANA
She is not ill. Nor do they have her. Where is she?

NISSA
Look, if you're with the police--

LILIANA
No. I am Liliana, Guardian of Urdarbrunnr, heir of the Aesir and the Vanir, daughter of Wyrð, lady of the Unseelie Court, and Queen to the Unnamed.

(condescending)
But, perhaps it would be simpler for you to think of me as a "butterfly."

ALFIE
(beat)
Holy shit my crush is a fairy.

MUSICAL TRANSITION

155. WAREHOUSE INT.

MACKENNA
(stretching)
What's next on the docket for today? More of Shaylee kicking my ass? How about some new magic I can suck at?

SHAYLEE
No, we're going out.

DANE
Whoa, Black Annis?

MACKENNA

Bam-ba-lam.

DANE

Shit, Shaylee. You're going to
Leicestershire now? I know you want to
move up the timetable, but this...

(beat)

Don't you need more time to...you
know...get a "gift" together?

SHAYLEE

There's no time. I'll make something
up.

DANE

Fuck. This is a really bad idea.

MACKENNA

Uh, maybe I should sit this one out?

SHAYLEE

'Fraid not, Mack. I need you there to
get what we need to know.

MACKENNA

Who my creator is?

SHAYLEE

Aye. Come here, we're going to step
sideways.

Feet SHUFFLING.

DANE

Bye bye, girls. Have fun storming the
castle!

STEPPING SIDEWAYS departure.

DANE (CONT'D)

(quieter)

Don't die.

156. Countryside SOUNDS. Wind RUSHING, distant animals BAYING.

STEPPING SIDEWAYS arrival.

MACKENNA

Whoa. It's so green and... ew, wet.

SHAYLEE

Aye, that's England for you. Ireland was the same, but you probably didn't notice much from the roof. On account of your crippling and irrational fear.

MACKENNA

I still haven't forgiven you.

SHAYLEE

Somehow, I'll survive.

(beat)

This way.

MACKENNA

Okay, so you want to find out who my creator is? Why? Can we convince them to call off the fetch?

SHAYLEE

Maybe, but there's more to it.

FOOTSTEPS through WET GRASS.

SHAYLEE (CONT'D)

For the Hidden People, lineage is intrinsically related to power. Children of the Hidden People inherit their power from their parents.

MACKENNA

Okay, so am I considered one of their children?

SHAYLEE

Fleck no. You're a toy they made, not their offspring.

MACKENNA

Then is the fetch--

SHAYLEE

Ach, you know the answer to that. You're not their child, neither is your Fetch, but you are their git. The power you possess--and the training your fetch possesses--are all relative to the power of the one who made you. And though you aren't taking to magic like a duck to water, your fetch is perhaps the best I've faced.

MACKENNA

So, my fetch gets her magic from my creator?

SHAYLEE

Human's cannot use magic, and your fetch is human. It's not in their blood. It's the training your fetch got whilst she was captive. The more important the maker, the more likely they are to get special training.

MACKENNA

Then how is knowing who my creator is going to help us?

SHAYLEE

For the Hidden People, power is both currency and legacy. When one of the Hidden dies, their children inherit their power and their memories.

MACKENNA

But I thought I wasn't their child?

SHAYLEE

Eh, think yourself a bit of a bastard. You'll inherit a very small portion of their power.

MACKENNA

And the fetch?

SHAYLEE

Her training, thankfully, is not hereditary.

MACKENNA

Shaylee, how do you know this? Did you...did you kill your creator?

SHAYLEE

Do you not remember the most important rule? We don't kill the Hidden People; they kill us. But knowledge can be its own power with them.

(beat)

And yes, my creator is dead. Most likely her proper children killed her to inherit her power--my becoming stronger was just a side-effect that they couldn't give a feck about. And coming here is the only way I know of to find out who your creator could be.

MACKENNA

Right.

(beat)

So, this is the Dane Hills?

SHAYLEE

Technically, we're halfway to Derby, not the proper Dane Hills. Urban sprawl forced her to move further north.

MACKENNA

Nissa always said nothing good ever came of gentrification.

(beat)

If she's trying to avoid people out here in the wilderness, does that mean she's one of the Hidden? Why would she help us?

SHAYLEE

Black Annis isn't just one of the Hidden; she's one of the Old Ones. There was a...regime change a couple millenia ago.

(MORE)

SHAYLEE (CONT'D)

Black Annis was loyal to Wodan, the god of the Hidden People. She chooses to live in exile rather than recognize the "murderous usurper."

MACKENNA

Very *Game of Thrones*. But why bother? If the old king is dead, is there a rightful heir, or something?

SHAYLEE

No, she's just old, and stubborn...and honestly more than a bit out of her mind.

(beat)

This way then. Almost there.

MACKENNA

That. Is a giant ass tree.

SHAYLEE

It's an oak. Keep walking.

MACKENNA

What's on its branches?

SHAYLEE

Don't look too closely.

MACKENNA

But it looks like...leather?

(beat)

This is it? This cave?

SHAYLEE

Aye. The Bower of Black Annis. Be wary. That leather isn't from animals.

From deeper in the cave, metal CLICKING on stone.

MUSICAL TRANSITION

157. Soundscapes music store. Retail MUSIC.

ALFIE

Just to be sure I'm not imagining things: you are a legit, magic-wielding, true-form hiding fairy?

LILIANA

I am of the Hidden.

ALFIE

Ha! I told you, Nissa! Fairies! This is incredible!

NISSA

Whatever. Did Alfie put you up to this?

LILIANA

(indignant)

If I will not be believed, then perhaps I shall seek aid elsewhere.

ALFIE

No no no no--

NISSA

If you're looking for Mack, then you have nowhere else to go.

LILIANA

Girl, I can--

NISSA (CONT'D)

No one knows where she is, but everyone else looking for her thinks she's a murderer. We know she isn't. I'll bet you know that, too.

LILIANA

Mackenna Thorne is facing dangers from both your world and mine. I only wish to help.

ALFIE

Help is good. We like help.

NISSA

Why? Why do you care about Mackenna at all? Who are you?

LILIANA

Do my titles mean nothing to you?

(scoffs)

The explanation would be nonsensical to humans. Suffice it to say I have an interest and responsibility in her preparation.

NISSA

Seriously, that's all you're going to give us to make us trust you?

LILIANA

(regally)

And how would you go about explaining your motivations to insects who know nothing about the world in which you live and are incapable of comprehending it if they tried?

NISSA

Oh yes, because insults will totally encourage us to help you.

LILIANA

Mackenna Thorne needs the proper preparation. Working in unison can help ensure she stands a chance in the coming duel. You require more encouragement than this?

ALFIE

Nope, dramatic need established. What can we do?

LILIANA

The other that you saw is incredibly strong. Too strong for Mackenna as she is.

NISSA

You expect us to fight?

LILIANA
Such is forbidden.

ALFIE
Ooo, training montage? I can blast "Eye of the Tiger" while Mack runs up some stairs. Bum. Bum-bum-bum.

LILIANA
There is another training Mackenna. What I propose is something only you two can attempt.

NISSA
Um, according to you, we're the insects here.

LILIANA
Insects can maneuver into the tiniest of crevices.

ALFIE
Maybe a bad time to bring this up, but I'm claustrophobic.

NISSA
I'm assuming it's a metaphor. A place that's guarded against...people like her, but not insects like us.

LILIANA
Precisely. There are, admittedly...deterrents against humans--

NISSA
Cuz that doesn't sound ominous.

LILIANA
--but nothing that cannot be bypassed by a force of will and some basic counter-magic.

ALFIE
"Force of Will" is my middle name!

NISSA

I suppose your parents just use Wilhelm for short?

ALFIE

Nissa, please stop shooting me down, I'm trying to be impressive here.

LILIANA

There is only one other obstacle that would hinder you--

ALFIE

Please says it's a sphinx that speaks in pop-culture riddles.

LILIANA

You may only take one item from the vault.

NISSA

So, don't get greedy?

LILIANA

It's cursed in such a way to prevent arming a rebellion.

NARRATOR

Clever. Learning from past mistakes, it seems.

LILIANA

The sum of all the artifacts in the vault would make one more powerful than the gods themselves. But Mackenna doesn't need power; she needs to stay hidden. And she only needs one item from the Hidden treasury for that.

MUSICAL TRANSITION

158. Light ACTIVITY at police station.

SAM

(steadying breath)

KNOCK on door. Door OPENS.

SAM (CONT'D)

You wanted to speak to me, Chief
McIlveen?

CHIEF

Close the door, Mulligan.

Door CLOSES.

CHIEF (CONT'D)

I'd like to hear from you exactly where
we are on the Thorne murders. I know a
lot has happened in the last thirty-six
hours, and I need the details.

SAM

(clears throat)

The evidence we currently have points
to Mackenna Thorne as the prime
suspect. She hasn't been seen since
immediately before we executed a search
warrant on the Thorne residence. We
currently have an APB out with
neighboring jurisdictions as well as
24-hour points-of-exit monitoring for
all major transit companies and
interstates.

CHIEF

This was all after she attacked her
brother?

SAM

Yes. After the attack on Thomas Thorne,
we had an emergency warrant approved
and put in a request for assistance
from the city SWAT team to enter her
residence--

CHIEF

(interrupting)

You waited on a SWAT team to take in
one girl?

SAM

I considered her armed and dangerous,
sir.

CHIEF

You were also armed, detective.

Papers RUSTLING.

CHIEF (CONT'D)

Inventory says you fired three rounds from your weapon that night. What did you hit, Detective Mulligan?

NARRATOR

What do you say to explain the unexplainable? When the truth is too incredible to be believed, but rationalization can damn you?

SAM

Nothing, sir. I aimed for the dogs that were with Mackenna. I must have missed.

CHIEF

Must have? You're a good shot, aren't you, detective? These dogs were at close range?

SAM

They didn't react to either the sound of the gun or the bullet hitting... whatever it hit. It was dark.

CHIEF

But you saw the dog with Miss Thorne? And someone was with you to corroborate what you saw?

NARRATOR

What do you say when the truth is a betrayal?

SAM

Yes, Chief. I was with Thomas Thorne. Before the attack. He...he was the one Mackenna was after. He also provided the positive ID. I wasn't close enough to see her face.

CHIEF

But you had reasonable suspicion before that night that Mackenna Thorne was a viable suspect in her parents' murders.

SAM

All the evidence was circumstantial--

CHIEF

No alibi, a matching boot print, and DNA on her mother's corpse, detective.

SAM

We couldn't find the matching shoe in her home, and we couldn't confirm when the hair was placed on the jacket.

CHIEF

But they pointed to Mackenna Thorne.

SAM

They didn't rule her out.

CHIEF

How long have you and Thomas Thorne been personally involved?

SAM

(sharp inhale)

Chief McIlveen, I--

CHIEF

Goddammit, Mulligan! I can ignore the media making their snide jokes for attention; I can console the higher ups by saying my men have it under control, but you actually have to do your damn job. Ignoring evidence? Delaying a raid? Being romantically involved with the suspect's brother?! Dammit!

(beat, sigh)

You came to the force highly recommended, Sam. Young, yes, but you had great drive and focus. You were doing incredibly well and had a great future ahead of you.

SAM

You're speaking in past tense, Chief.

CHIEF

You're going down the wrong path, Samantha. I saw a great deal of myself in you, but your recent actions have sullied the reputation of this department. Nothing has been done that can't be fixed, but you're going to have to work incredibly hard to make this case air-tight.

SAM

Of course, Chief.

CHIEF

Bring Mackenna Thorne in. Make sure all of the evidence, the interviews, the arrest, everything is beyond reproach, and there is no reason you should be disciplined. No reason there should be a mark on your record to put a break on any future promotions.

SAM

Yes, Chief.

CHIEF

I only want what's best, Mulligan. For you, for the community, for the department. Walk the straight and narrow until the case is closed, and we'll have no problems.

(beat)

Dismissed.

SAM

Thank you, Chief.

Door OPENS. Door CLOSES.

SAM (CONT'D)

(quietly furious)

Fuck you, Ron.

159. At the edge of a forested area.

NISSA

Seriously? This is supposed to be some sort of secret fairy treasury? It's like a little nature preserve sandwiched between neighborhoods. It's not a forest. Not even a copse. It's...I can probably count the actual trees.

ALFIE

I don't know, I could totally see some river-sprites and wood-nymphs and shit hiding out here.

NISSA

We're still in the township! It's like she's not even trying.

ALFIE

Everything around it is already developed or incorporated. Maybe the fairies made a deal?

NISSA

I checked the deed on the municipal registry. This land isn't even listed. No owner, no record of its existence.

ALFIE

Totally traded for some fairy gold.

NISSA

Except it's not gold they keep in the treasury. Piano Lady said we're looking for The Cloak of Fenrir?

NARRATOR

Ah, The Cloak of Fenrir. The most powerful cloaking relic in the Unseelie's repertoire. Under lock and key for the past three millennia, and one of a kind. Poor Fenrir. At least all dogs go to heaven?

(evil chuckle)

ALFIE

Excuse you. Piano Lady? Her name is Liliana, Guardian of...a burnt mirror? No, that's not right. You think she'd repeat her intro if I asked really nicely?

NISSA

I'm personally shocked you didn't take notes.

ALFIE

I paid attention to the important stuff! Like how to sneak past the warding.

Foot PIVOTS in leaves. Slow, backwards STEPS.

ALFIE (CONT'D)

...seven, eight, and nine! Nine backwards steps.

(the Count laugh)

Should be good to go now. Your turn, Nissa.

NISSA

This is ridiculous. I'm not walking in backwards.

FOOTSTEPS in leaves, then ABRUPT STOP.

NISSA (CONT'D)

Forget this. It's so stupid. I'm going home.

ALFIE

Come on, we'll do it together.

NISSA

I think I left the oven on.

ALFIE

No, Nissa. That's the warding making you want to leave! Turn around and walk backwards. I'll do it with you.

NISSA
(dreamlike)
Alfie...

ALFIE
All together! One, two...

Slow FOOTSTEPS in leaves.

ALFIE (CONT'D)
Nine! See you did it!

NISSA
Of course I did it. Walking backwards
isn't magical. You still get to the
same place.

ALFIE
But now you don't want to leave
anymore, right?

NISSA
Leave? What are you talking about?
Whatever. We're here. I guess we might
as well keep going.

NARRATOR
Oh Nissa. What happened to your
rational skepticism? Maybe if you'd
held on to your suspicion, you would
have survived what's to come.

MUSICAL TRANSITION

160. BLACK ANNIS' BOWER, EXT.

SHAYLEE
Stay close, let me do the talking, and
don't touch anything.

MACKENNA
Seriously, why'd you even bring me
along if--oh. Oh, these dolls are hella
creepy.

SHAYLEE
Don't touch them.

MACKENNA

Not on your life.

NARRATOR

Despite all the magical wards, the visceral warnings of human hides, and living in the middle of nowhere, Black Annis still can't soundly sleep at night without her security personnel. Not that they'd be very good at watching over her; her multitude of dolls are eyeless, afterall. Eyeless, yet Shaylee and Mackenna feel themselves being watched as they venture deeper into the cave.

METAL CLICKING on stone slowly grows LOUDER.

MACKENNA

I'm seriously getting the creeps. Do we really need to know who created me?

SHAYLEE

Trust me, Bathroom Girl.

CLICKING STOPS.

BLACK ANNIS

(sniffs the air)

Is that Shaylee dear? She should come closer and give Black Annis a kiss. It's been too long!

NARRATOR

Not too close, Shaylee. You wouldn't want those iron fingernails pinching your cheeks after she's seen how much you've grown.

BLACK ANNIS

Black Annis has missed Shaylee dear. It's so lifeless once she is gone.

(beat)

Ainsley! No need to be jealous. Ainsley got plenty of attention yesterday.

MACKENNA

(whispered)

Is she talking to--?

SHAYLEE

(whispered)

Shh, the dolls are real to her.

(normal volume)

It's been a while, hasn't it?

BLACK ANNIS

(breathy weeze)

Black Annis has been so cold and lonely
in her bower, Shaylee.

NARRATOR

So cold the poor creature has turned
blue, it seems. Ah, that was part of
her curse, wasn't it? Skin so deep blue
it became part of her name? Younglings
can be so cruel to The Old Ones.

(menacing)

So cruel.

BLACK ANNIS

(pouty)

Shaylee never visits anymore.

(eagerly)

What has Shaylee brought Black Annis?

SHAYLEE

Oh, I left some fresh skins on the oak
tree for you.

MACKENNA

What? We didn't--

BLACK ANNIS

(tsking)

Just the hides? So wasteful.

(beat)

Quite right, Preston. This new
generation! Turning up their noses at a
decent meal!

(leering)

There are starving children out there.

SHAYLEE

I thought they were too stringy for you?

BLACK ANNIS

(cackling laugh)

Too true! But at Black Annis's age, one learns to take what one is given, and steal what one is not!

(laughs, then abrupt stop)

Shaylee never comes unless she needs something. Out with it!

SHAYLEE

I need a creator name.

BLACK ANNIS

(sniffs)

As, yes. Black Annis was wondering when Shaylee would ask about who made her. Names are powerful things. Black Annis will tell Shaylee the fascinating tale-

-

SHAYLEE

You already told me my creator's name.

BLACK ANNIS

Oh?

SHAYLEE

Yes.

BLACK ANNIS

Is Shaylee sure? Black Annis would remember. Tilda?

(beat)

Oh. So Black Annis has. Tilda never forgets. Then what's creator does Shaylee need to know? Shaylee needs to bring it to Black Annis: Black Annis can't smell from a distance.

MACKENNA

Um, that would be me, um, Miss Annis...Ma'am.

BLACK ANNIS

(titters)

That's not this one's name, dearie.

(leans closer)

Would it like to guess this one's name?

This one can give it anything, free of charge, if it can guess this one's name.

MACKENNA

Betty.

BLACK ANNIS

(anticipatory inhale)

SHAYLEE

(interrupting)

That was not a guess; she did not enter into a contract with you; you hold no bargain over her.

BLACK ANNIS

Bah, always so quick to tighten those loopholes, isn't she?

(beat, then growl)

Is Winston laughing at Black Annis? Thinking he's so clever, pointing and laughing at Black Annis!

Necklace RATTLES.

BLACK ANNIS (CONT'D)

Black Annis will take his hands next, and then we'll see who will clap at Winston's jokes!

(loud, angry laughter)

MACKENNA

(whispering)

Her necklace is made of hands?!

SHAYLEE

Shh.

(louder)

Black Annis?

BLACK ANNIS
(laughter stops, angry)
What?

SHAYLEE
You said you would tell us her
creator's name.

BLACK ANNIS
Black Annis did no such thing! Nothing
is free, wretched girl!

MACKENNA
Tilda says you did.

SHAYLEE
(panicked whisper)
Mack!

1-2 seconds of SILENCE

BLACK ANNIS
(calm)
Oh. It speaks true. Black Annis has
become so forgetful in old age. What
would she do without Tilda?

PATS dolls head.

BLACK ANNIS (CONT'D)
Well, then it should come closer. Black
Annis need to breathe its essence to
taste which Fae crafted it.

MACKENNA
My...essence?

SHAYLEE
(softly)
Not too close, Mack.

BLACK ANNIS
Nothing it will miss. Nothing it
doesn't put out into the world without
thought to begin with.

Metal claws CLICKING.

BLACK ANNIS (CONT'D)
 (hissing)
 Black Annis just needs a little taste.

Feet SHUFFLE FORWARD.

BLACK ANNIS (CONT'D)
 (inhales deeply)
 (beat)
 (frantic sniffing)
 That's not possible.
 (deep sniffs)
 No, no--

MACKENNA
 You're holding too tight, let go!

Mackenna BREAKS FREE.

BLACK ANNIS
 What is this? It has no essence, no
 dust of magic from the one who made it!
 What is it?

MACKENNA
 I...uh...

SHAYLEE
 That's not possible. Every construct
 needs the magic of its creator to
 maintain its form. We know her creator
 is strong--maybe strong enough to hide
 their essence?

BLACK ANNIS
 Hiding essence is a special trick. This
 one's creator must want to hide from
 Black Annis. Black Annis has many old
 enemies. Afraid Black Annis will track
 them down through their changelings.
 Black Annis will rise up to destroy all
 enemies. So spake Wodan.

SHAYLEE
 I'm sure it's nothing for you to worry
 about, Black Annis. Whatever enemies
 you have--

BLACK ANNIS

(formidable)

Black Annis is the matriarch of the Blue-Brow and the Iron Claw Clans! She slaughtered lesser witches and immortals alike in the nights of the Wild Hunt! She flew armies of her sisters across the midnight sky and reigned destruction across the land millennia before the very dust that makes these ones spewed forth from the stars!

Black Annis COLLAPSES back into her chair.

BLACK ANNIS (CONT'D)

(tired)

The last of her kind. And alone. And so tired. Leave. Black Annis cannot help these ones.

SHAYLEE

But there's no other way--

BLACK ANNIS

Black Annis does not want these ones here!

MACKENNA

There has to be something else, some way to find out who my creator is.

BLACK ANNIS

No, no, there's nothing--

(beat)

Ah, Ainsley has finally made herself useful.

(cackles)

But it will be dangerous. Perhaps that's what you deserve, Shaylee, for doubting Black Annis!

SHAYLEE

What is it?

BLACK ANNIS

Mimisbrunnr!

SHAYLEE

The Well of Wisdom? But that only--

BLACK ANNIS

Reveals a past forgotten, yes. But the little construct friend was there when it was created, hmm? And that one doesn't remember that one's creation. Hence, a past forgotten.

MACKENNA

That seems like a technicality.

BLACK ANNIS

It should know magic thrives best in the space of technicalities.

(harsh whisper)

That's also where it's most fun!

(cackles)

SHAYLEE

Where is the Well?

BLACK ANNIS

(gruff)

There's a fairy ring on the Mouria Cliffs.

(sneer)

If the drop doesn't kill Shaylee, maybe the vough will!

SHAYLEE

A vough guards it? What else are we getting into by going there, you hag?

BLACK ANNIS

So mean to granny! And after all she's given Shaylee! Out, ungrateful child!

SHAYLEE

Let's go Mack.

Shaylee WALKS away, footsteps ECHOING further and further away.

MACKENNA

Nice to meet you, I guess.

Mackenna STEPS to follow.

BLACK ANNIS
This one should wait.

MACKENNA
What?

BLACK ANNIS
This one shouldn't trust Shaylee. That one only cares for herself and does not work for this one. That one never keeps her promises!

MACKENNA
Yeah, of course. Whatever you say.

BLACK ANNIS
This one thinks it knows better than Black Annis!
(soft cackle)
It's so young it hasn't watched time repeat even once yet. But Black Annis has. What has happened once will happen over and over again. Black Annis knows.

MACKENNA
I should really get going--

BLACK ANNIS
Bah! It will end up like all the other ones.

Black Annis begins to SHUFFLE AWAY, claws CLICKING.

BLACK ANNIS (CONT'D)
All the ones that didn't listen to Black Annis!

Mackenna's FOOTSTEPS ECHO, and the clicking FADES.

NARRATOR
Mackenna has an audience as she leaves the bower: not just the echo of Black Annis's prophecy, but her eyeless dolls, as well. Their heads turn to

watch her go, to watch history repeat
itself.

(beat)

The witch is old, and when you get to
be that old, you often become more mad
than not. But even the completely
insane have one thread that ties them
to reality, one thing that they know so
deep in their marrow it anchors them to
the world. Something that they know so
well that even the barest hint of it
can drag them from the depths of
dementia. And what has Black Annis
experienced so profoundly it marked her
very soul?

(quiet rage)

Betrayal.

THE END