

THE HIDDEN PEOPLE

Episode 1.18

"Share a Whisper"

Written by

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TEASER

191. Black Annis's lair.

BLACK ANNIS

(maternal, gentle whisper)

Such a pretty one Ainsley is. Children don't come quite so beautiful anymore. Ainsley's hair, eyes, smile. How fortunate Black Annis is to care for Ainsley.

(beat)

So ragged and tattered Black Annis is. There's nothing Black Annis could hide, even if this one wanted to. Nothing here at all. Ainsley, however...oh, all the things Ainsley could hide! None would even bat an eye at this fair child.

NARRATOR

Ah, Black Annis. Such a fascinating specimen. It's like it was just yesterday she was still approachable, starry-eyed, and simple. When I think about it, maybe she's still much of the latter.

Iron claws CLICKING on stone.

BLACK ANNIS

(cackle)

(more pointed and stern)

But what if one did catch a glimpse, hear a whisper? Saw the Ainsley behind that beautiful smile?

NARRATOR

Simple, but far from oblivious.

BLACK ANNIS

Would Ainsley still be the same, untarnished little girl? Maybe Ainsley would be just as ragged and tattered as Black Annis? Or...

Clicking STOPS. Child/doll's SCREAM. Doll construct EXPLODES.

BLACK ANNIS (CONT'D)

Does iron reveal the dirt Ainsley truly was?

END TEASER

192. Shaylee's Warehouse. Mackenna PACES methodically.

MACKENNA

(mildly frantic)

They could be dead. They could be tortured. They could be dead and tortured. They could--

SHAYLEE

(calming)

Mackenna.

MACKENNA

Brainwashed! They're in a night club, right? What if they're stuck in one of those dance cages that hang from the ceiling? Alfie wouldn't last a second in one of those...

SHAYLEE

(stern)

Mackenna!

MACKENNA

Yeah?

SHAYLEE

They're not dead; it's you the Hidden People are after.

DANE

And I don't think Arcadia is that kind of club.

NARRATOR

He obviously didn't make it to the summer solstice celebration.

MACKENNA

Still, Nissa and Alfie are in danger. I haven't even seen them since this shit blew up, and now they're in even further?

(exhales)

I have to do something.

SHAYLEE

We will. We just need to think about our options. Again, nothing's going to happen to them in the meantime.

MACKENNA

Okay, Shaylee, I get it. You know a lot. Like how the Hidden People don't have a sense of ethics like us. "Safe" could be a quadruple-amputee to them. We have to go!

SHAYLEE

We will, but not now, Mackenna. We need help.

DANE

Is it possible to overstate how much you should fear the Hidden People? How much you should avoid Arcadia?

SHAYLEE

Dane's right. You stroll in looking for a fight, and you're leaves and dirt.

MACKENNA

(frustrated)

Okay. Fine. Any suggestions?

SHAYLEE

We find another way in. The Hidden People are perceptive but hardly omniscient.

MACKENNA

I'm sure any one of them is just salivating at the thought of showing us the backdoor.

NARRATOR

They might have, if you asked them nicely.

SHAYLEE

Not one of them, Mackenna. Someone who knows but isn't well-received. We need a pariah. We need...

MACKENNA

(muttering)

Not her.

SHAYLEE

...an eight-foot-tall, senile pariah.

MACKENNA

Goddammit.

DANE

You need time to prepare, if you're going back to her. At least get some sleep. It's mid-morning, and you've been up a long time.

NARRATOR

They just can't get enough of the crone, can they? I'm beginning to wonder if they're shopping for another cohort. I'm certain Black Annis would make for a far more efficient colleague than Alfred, at the very least.

MUSICAL TRANSITION

193. Sam's cubicle. ACTIVITY at the police station.

SAM

I know. Everything here is still Defcon two. Every officer we have is working overtime, the literal kind.

THOMAS

(through phone)

I can't believe they're this worried about one woman.

SAM

It's not so much that they're worried about her. More like the chief is worried what else she might do before we catch her. He's still pissed that she slipped past us. If she hurts anyone else, it's on our heads. And the chief thinks he'll lose his job.

THOMAS

(through phone)

Is that likely? Could he get fired because crimes are committed? Isn't that assumed in his job?

SAM

I don't know. The mayor and city council would have to fire him. Whether it's likely or not, he's afraid of it. That fear is infectious around here.

THOMAS

(through phone)

They wouldn't believe us if we told the truth, would they?

SAM

Thomas, I don't even know that I believe us. And I saw it.

THOMAS

(through phone)

Okay, but what about a version of the truth?

SAM

I don't think that's going to cut it. The best thing we can do is have Mackenna--your Mackenna--keep her head down while I try to aim the loaded gun of the department at the real killer.

THOMAS
(through phone)
Sam...

SAM
Sorry. Bad metaphor.

THOMAS
(through phone)
I don't want some trigger-happy rookie
gunning her down.

SAM
Neither do I. But what do you think
she'll say if we catch her? Is it...are
those things that should be said
publicly?

THOMAS
(through phone)
I don't know. Mackenna said that we
should stay away from the Hidden
People. I imagine they like their
privacy. I don't think they would want
her exposed.

SAM
Realistically, people would just think
she's crazy. And after what she's done,
that might just fit their idea of her.
Maybe it would be fine.

THOMAS
(through phone)
Maybe. I don't want to take that
chance, though. Not with you. Make sure
you aren't there if they arrest her.
Just in case the Hidden People decide
they don't want her questioned.

SAM
I'll try to keep the investigation
stalled for the time being.

THOMAS

(through phone)

Okay. Thank you. I think with a bit more time we can get to the bottom of this.

SAM

Time isn't necessarily something we have.

THOMAS

(through phone)

(defeated)

I understand.

SAM

Hey, I didn't say we can't do anything. We'll just have to tread a bit lightly. I'll do what I can to focus my squad's attention on the Atomic Blonde, and you do what you can to avoid getting decapitated.

THOMAS

(through phone)

Practicing ducking as we speak.

SAM

(stern)

I mean it, Thomas. The other Mackenna could be anywhere. Don't get gung-ho with this thing.

FOOTSTEPS approaching.

SAM (CONT'D)

I gotta go. We'll talk soon.

194. Phone HANGS UP. Ron WALKS up.

RON

Two black coffees with "the works," as Cheryl put it. The office wasn't too keen on custom orders. They've got plenty of jokes, though.

SAM

Sounds like Cheryl. Too bad her wit isn't super sweet. Although it might make for a decent sour if this were whiskey.

RON

If only, right? I've had to drown my sorrows in reconnaissance instead. Oh, take a look at this.

Heavy file folder DROPS onto Sam's desk.

SAM

And this is?

RON

My work on the Thorne file. You can tell by that little label on the front.

Papers RUFFLING.

SAM

Impressive. You did all this extra work on your own?

More RUFFLING.

RON

Yeah, so far. They say to act like you have the job you want, right? C'mon, take a gander.

NARRATOR

Careful, detective. Last we checked, you're far better at digging up dirt than you are at putting it back.

SAM

(reading)

Mackenna, Alfred, Nissa...

RON

Yep, thought this might do you proud. I was due to pick up a bit of the slack, anyway.

SAM

(reading)

...Thomas, Shaylee, life insurance.

(beat)

Wait, slack? You're not picking up the slack, Ron. These are our findings, remember?

RON

Okay, yeah, obviously, but have you really had the time to take it all in, see it all laid out like this? You wouldn't believe the correlations--

Sam CLOSES the file abruptly.

SAM

(frustrated sigh)

RON

(taken aback)

I know you're a quick reader, but maybe spending an extra second with that could be valuable. It'd at least make me feel a bit better.

SAM

I'm just having some trouble finding the relevance in this, you know?

RON

But...I...are you serious, Sam?

SAM

I think we could focus our efforts elsewhere is all.

RON

Elsewhere?! Not on any of her closest connections?

SAM

We're past them for now. We've got more immediate leads.

RON
(frustrated)
Such as?

SAM
Well, for one, the description of
Mackenna Thorne could be--

RON
Before you answer, I'm going to assume
you just missed my note of her
coworkers' absences. In your defense,
it was highlighted and then starred in
red.

SAM
And?

RON
Well, I dunno. Given our girl butchered
her parents and tried to do the same to
her brother, maybe she'd opt for the
next closest thing to family? Just a
baseless hunch, of course.

SAM
It's a valid observation, but given
what we've seen, our killer isn't going
to just abandon her M.O. like this. You
really think she'd filet two people in
a parking lot, try to do the same to
Thomas, and then just opt for a
traceless abduction?

RON
Okay, maybe not, but you can't deny
it's suspicious, Sam. The department
needs to look into this.

SAM
Give it a few more days. Maybe they're
an item and wanted some time to escape
from this. There's no missing persons'
report, even.

RON

Fine, whatever. But what about this other chick, Shaylee?

SAM

What about her?

RON

You were the one who first documented her visiting the scene of the crime, remember? Also, I tried to find more on her, and it was almost impossible. No last name, no address...

SAM

I'm failing to see the connection.

RON

(defeated)

Okay, maybe the dots are a bit distant on that, but you can't deny how peculiar it is. We seriously need to question her.

SAM

(sighs)

Ron, I really appreciate your work. I do. But we've got a clear path. These are just tangents. They will sort themselves out if we pull the thread we already have. Did you bring this to anyone else's attention?

RON

Well, no. You've got a knack for snagging my typos. And my oversights.

(beat)

And my coffee stains.

SAM

Especially your coffee stains.

(beat)

Like I said, we need to focus on what we have. So tell me, who's most critical right now?

RON

Well, Mackenna Thorne, right? She's our white whale.

SAM

Blonde, you mean. The descriptions we've been relying on, they don't really take this into account.

RON

Okay, we add the bit about donning a wig when she's about to stab someone to death. What else?

SAM

She's got a phone, right? We should zero in on her movements specifically.

RON

Yeah, but that didn't really give us anything out of the ordinary.

SAM

You thought it was strange her coworkers went missing. If Thorne actually had anything to do with it, her movements should be a bit less linear, right?

RON

(disappointed)

Fair enough.

Papers SHUFFLING.

RON (CONT'D)

I'll get on it now. Well, right after I touch base with Cheryl again. I think I detected a grain of sugar in this coffee.

SAM

Yeah, she's off the rails. See you soon.

RON

Yep.

Ron WALKS AWAY.

SAM

Nissa and Alfie skipped town? That is suspect. Sorry, Ron.

(beat)

This is going to be a helluva lot harder than I thought.

NARRATOR

Oh, detective. Things will all be much simpler for you soon enough.

MUSICAL TRANSITION

195. Mackenna and Shaylee WALK in Black Annis's bower.

NARRATOR

For once, perhaps Mackenna should have gone with her gut instinct. It wouldn't have panned out any better for the poor orphan, but it would at least spare her another visit to Black Annis's abode. Maybe Shaylee isn't the most nurturing companion after all?

MACKENNA

How have you managed to meet with her so many times unscathed?

SHAYLEE

The old bird retains shite. She'll sooner stop calling her dolls kin than catch on that I trick her every time.

MACKENNA

You're really confident, aren't you?

SHAYLEE

Well-earned, I might add.

NARRATOR

Or not at all, changeling.

BLACK ANNIS

(muttering to herself, source: "Zeenty-teenty")

(FADING IN)

Eenty teenty tirry mirry
 Ram, tam, toosh
 Crawl under the bed,
 And catch a wee fat moose.

SHAYLEE

Hail, Black Annis.

BLACK ANNIS

Cut IT in slices,
 Fry IT in the pan.

SHAYLEE

(louder)

Hail, Black Annis.

BLACK ANNIS

(disregarding Shaylee)

(simultaneous, ends at shout)

Be sure and keep gravy
 For the wee fat--

MACKENNA

We don't have time for this.

(shouting)

Hail!

Few seconds silence.

SHAYLEE

(whispering)

Shite, Mackenna.

MACKENNA

(whispering)

She stopped, didn't she?

BLACK ANNIS

The changelings should know better than
 to interrupt Black Annis.

MACKENNA

I must've been trying to live a normal life when that was covered. We could maybe, um, bring you some more skins later to make up for it?

BLACK ANNIS

Oh? Do the changelings still owe Black Annis for last time? Black Annis cannot remember.

SHAYLEE

(whispering)

Told you.

BLACK ANNIS

But Black Annis is reasonable. What does it seek?

NARRATOR

Aside from her own demise?

SHAYLEE

We need to get into Arcadia. Tonight.

BLACK ANNIS

What does it plan to do in the Hidden realm?

SHAYLEE

They have something of ours. Something irreplaceable.

BLACK ANNIS

(cackles)

Like the help of Black Annis?

MACKENNA

Yes! Please, do you know a way in?

BLACK ANNIS

Black Annis is foggy. Black Annis hasn't wandered into Arcadia since, well, longer than the changelings could recall. Maybe the children have an idea.

(to her dolls)

Does Preston remember? No? Then Tilda!
Tilda remembers all!

(beat)

No, Tilda?

MACKENNA

(whispering)

Stellar idea, Shaylee. We should quiz
her on Xena trivia next.

SHAYLEE

(whispering)

Hush. I have this.

(louder)

Surely there's something we can do to
help you jog your memory? Another gift,
or perhaps--

BLACK ANNIS

Hmph. Memory. Black Annis could use
more of it.

(beat)

Wait. It went to Mimisbrunnr, didn't
it?

MACKENNA

My clothes aren't even completely dry.

BLACK ANNIS

It received more than a bath, didn't
it? Perhaps it could share a whisper
with Black Annis? Maybe this will bring
back Arcadia.

MACKENNA

I'm not quite sure how to start
playback, you know?

SHAYLEE

She just needs to touch you. It should
be harmless.

MACKENNA

"Should" isn't terribly inspiring.

(beat)

Fine. If it will get you to help us.

Black Annis SHUFFLES closer.

BLACK ANNIS

This should only take Black Annis a moment.

MACKENNA

Again with the "shoulds."

NARRATOR

As in, never "should" you allow Black Annis to touch you?

BLACK ANNIS

Let Black Annis see what this one knows.

MACKENNA

(pained)

Ah!

NARRATOR

Of all your actions, Mackenna Thorne, letting a child-eating witch into your subconscious might be the worst.

BLACK ANNIS

(inquisitive)

What does Black Annis find? Hmmmm. No need for this. Nor this. What is a "big box"? Interesting, but useless. There should be more.

GRITTING of iron teeth.

MACKENNA

(screams weakly)

(strained breaths)

SHAYLEE

On with it, Black Annis.

BLACK ANNIS

Quiet, changeling. Black Annis will take its head if you squeal once more.
(humming with search)

What's this? No, this is not what it seems.

(surprised)

Or perhaps it is?

(pleased and lucid)

Oh? Ooooh. This is...delicious.

Mimisbrunnr has given this one far more than she realizes.

(delighted laugh)

MACKENNA

(ragged gasps)

SHAYLEE

Black Annis, enough.

BLACK ANNIS

Ooooh. The possibilities.

SHAYLEE

Enough! Let her go and help us.

(beat)

Mackenna!

MACKENNA

(struggling to catch her breath)

What the hell...

(a few heavy breaths)

...was that?

BLACK ANNIS

(peevied)

The changeling would do well to mind itself.

SHAYLEE

You got what you wanted. We need a way into Arcadia. Spare us these games.

BLACK ANNIS

Come back later, and with skins this time. This one, however, stays with me.

SHAYLEE

I just brought you skins, remember?

BLACK ANNIS

(fully lucid)

Remember? Listen to Black Annis,
Shaylee the changeling, Shaylee from
Donegal. Black Annis remembers. Black
Annis remembers far better than
Shaylee. Black Annis remembers all of
the skins never brought. All of the
babes never delivered.

(beat)

And Black Annis remembers how foolish
the changeling believes Black Annis to
be. The changeling should run as fast
as it can and leave its friend, before
Black Annis slices it in twain. Black
Annis will rise up to destroy all
enemies. So spake Wodan. And now, Black
Annis has a plan.

MACKENNA

(nervous)

Shaylee...

SHAYLEE

You remember everything?

BLACK ANNIS

(growling)

Everything.

SHAYLEE

Even my pistol?

BLACK ANNIS

(confused)

What?

Pistol FIRES.

BLACK ANNIS

(screams in pain)

SHAYLEE

Mackenna! Let's go.

Mackenna and Shaylee RUN.

BLACK ANNIS
(ghastly yell)
Go, my children! Drag them back by
their torn flesh!

196. Mackenna and Shaylee RUN. CHITTERING and CLICKING of
dolls RUNNING gets closer.

MACKENNA
(running)
Great job, Shaylee. You somehow
converted her dementia into rage.

SHAYLEE
(running)
Yeah, yeah, yeah, Shaylee's a right
moran. You can have the floor when
we're out of here.

MACKENNA
(running)
They're gaining on us.

Shaylee's pistol FIRES. Doll construct EXPLODES.

SHAYLEE
(running)
Shite. I need to reload.

MACKENNA
(running)
You know they make guns that hold more
than two bullets, right?

SHAYLEE
(running)
These are iron musket balls.

MACKENNA
(running)
Oh, sorry. I didn't realize you were a
gun hipster.

SHAYLEE

(running)

Now would be a good time to use some of those powers, Miss I-Can-Turn-Invisible.

MACKENNA

(running)

You think I'm not trying? So far, I can only do it when I'm really desperate.

SHAYLEE

(running)

And how would you categorize this?

MACKENNA

(running)

Are we fucked?

SHAYLEE

(running)

Only if we can't get out of here. Her hold should subside outside of the bower.

NARRATOR

The swarm of dolls closes in on the pair just as they catch a glimmer of moonlight up ahead.

SHAYLEE

There! Almost!

NARRATOR

The hapless duo exert as much force as they can, passing over the threshold and collapsing just outside the bower's entrance.

CHITTERING horde of dolls halts.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

The dolls halt at the threshold, empty eye sockets glaring, little knives gleaming.

SHAYLEE
 (catching breath)
 Woo! I bet the hag will remember that!

MACKENNA
 (catching breath)
 That's it? We're good?

SHAYLEE
 Though she might not have been senile,
 she was never clever enough to mask the
 scope of her power. We are definitely,
 absolutely, without a doubt--

CHITTERING resumes. Horde of dolls POURS forth.

SHAYLEE (CONT'D)
 Fucked. Run.

NARRATOR
 Shaylee's arbitrary assessments of
 mystic beings are really starting to
 catch up with her.

MACKENNA
 (running)
 You know, Shaylee, I'm beginning to
 think maybe Black Annis isn't an area
 of your expertise after all.

SHAYLEE
 (running)
 Shut up. Over here, behind the brush!

Bushes RUSTLING.

MACKENNA
 (whispering)
 Alright, we can step sideways anytime.

SHAYLEE
 (whispering)
 Chalk isn't really useful on grass. We
 need to get back to the circle of
 stones in the field.

MACKENNA

(whispering)

Sure. Just a bunch of child-sized,
knife-wielding, terrifying dolls in our
way. How much harm can they do?

NARRATOR

Save gouging your eyes out? Surely not
much.

Branches RUSTLING.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Oh, they can also climb the trees above
you.

Doll SCREAMS and DROPS beside them.

MACKENNA

(screams)

SHAYLEE

Dammit!

Shaylee's blade SPRINGS forth. Blade STABS doll. Doll
construct EXPLODES.

SHAYLEE

Fuck you, Tilda.

MACKENNA

Is there anything you don't have
literally up your sleeve?

SHAYLEE

Yeah, a hula hoop. Stay focused on the
kindergarten.

MACKENNA

What do we now?

SHAYLEE

Here, take the doll's knife and head
west. I'll be right behind you.

MACKENNA

But which way is...I don't have a
compass.

Dolls' CHITTERING grows LOUDER.

SHAYLEE

West. Go!

Mackenna RUNS. Dolls CHITTER around Shaylee behind her.
Maniacal GIGGLING from the dolls. Mackenna STOPS.

MACKENNA

(to self)

You've seen *Child's Play* before. You've
got this.

(deep inhale)

(battle cry)

NARRATOR

Mackenna turns back to face the three
dolls swarming Shaylee. She readies the
knife and aims.

Knife THROW. Knife THUDS into ground. Dolls GIGGLING.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

The knife sticks in the ground six feet
in front of her. There's no "movie
magic" here to make sure your reckless
throws aren't complete misses,
Mackenna.

MACKENNA

Well, shit.

Doll MOVEMENT and VOCALIZATIONS intensify.

SHAYLEE

(desperate cries)

MACKENNA

Shaylee! No!

NARRATOR

It begins with reaching out her hand helplessly toward Shaylee, unable to cover the distance to the fight in time to help. But Mackenna squeezes her eyes shut and closes her outstretched hand into a fist.

Three dolls SCREECH. Three doll constructs EXPLODE.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

The power of intention, causing constructs to disintegrate with only force of will.

SHAYLEE

The fuck?

NARRATOR

Not a lesson Shaylee taught in changeling training. Not a lesson she could teach, I suppose.

(beat)

Such an apt pupil, Mackenna. Wanting teacher's undivided attention.

MACKENNA

Whoa. Did I just--

Doll SCREECHES and RUNS from behind Mackenna. Shaylee RUNS from the other direction.

NARRATOR

Shaylee runs, drops into a roll, scoops up Mackenna's thrown knife, and rises to throw it at the doll bearing down on Mackenna from behind.

Doll construct EXPLODES. Shaylee HURRIES to Mackenna.

SHAYLEE

That's how you throw a knife.

MACKENNA

In my defense, that was my first time throwing a knife.

SHAYLEE

Did you or did you not see one of those five-year-olds with better aim?

MACKENNA

Totally doesn't count. Those were fake five-year-olds.

SHAYLEE

Come on. We must hurry before she makes more dolls.

MACKENNA

Can the Hidden People build constructs so quickly?

SHAYLEE

Not from scratch, but if one as powerful as Black Annis gets hold of the pieces--the leaves and twigs that are left behind--the same constructs can be rebuilt on the spot.

Mackenna and Shaylee MOVE QUICKLY.

SHAYLEE

How did you do that? Just make three of them explode?

MACKENNA

I have no idea.

SHAYLEE

But how did you even know to try?

MACKENNA

It just...I don't know...felt right?

SHAYLEE

I've never seen a changeling able to do that. When Liliana created you, she must have given you some upgrades.

MACKENNA

Yeah. I think Black Annis wanted them for herself.

SHAYLEE

Yeah.

Few seconds silence.

SHAYLEE (CONT'D)

The circle of stones isn't too far. We can regroup with Dane and figure out where to go next.

MACKENNA

Arcadia.

SHAYLEE

Well, yes, but we need a way in.

MACKENNA

The front door seems like a viable option.

SHAYLEE

You can't just walk right in.

MACKENNA

Why not?

SHAYLEE

It's dangerous.

WALKING stops.

MACKENNA

And going to Black Annis wasn't? And leaving Nissa and Alfie in Arcadia isn't? What I'm learning is that everything involving the Hidden People is dangerous. We've faced a lot, and we're still here. No more sneaking. No more hiding. We're going to make the Magister give them back.

SHAYLEE

That isn't going to be easy. Calling it impossible would be closer.

MACKENNA

I have a plan.

MUSICAL TRANSITION

197. Deep in a dank dungeon of Arcadia.

FAST TYPING on a smart phone.

NISSA
Just about done.

ALFIE
Yeah?

NISSA
Almost there.

ALFIE
You got this.

NISSA
Got it!

ALFIE
Heck to the yes! Let's go.

NISSA
What are you talking about, Alfie?

ALFIE
You didn't just find us a way out of here?

NISSA
What? I told you, Alfie: I have literally no signal. I was just able to restore *Plague, Inc.* on my phone.

ALFIE
We are so screwed.

NISSA
There aren't many carriers that offer coverage in a magical realm.

ALFIE

We're going to die here, aren't we?
They're going to end us for sure.

(beat)

Oh no, what if they broadcast our
execution online? I haven't showered in
three days. My hair looks terrible.
Nissa, you have to punch my face until
it's unrecognizable.

NISSA

Okay, first: I don't think our captors
would be very "hidden" if they
published their murders on Wikileaks.
Second: that is not out of the ordinary
for you. And finally: I'm not going to
do that, even if you really, really,
really deserve it.

ALFIE

Aww, you mean it?

NISSA

Don't go testing my conviction.

FOOTSTEPS echo closer.

LILIANA

(faintly)
(hums theme)

NISSA

Do you hear that?

Footsteps and humming STOP.

LILIANA

(exasperated sigh)
My disappointment in you both cannot be
overstated.

NISSA

And good evening to you, too, your
fucking majesty.

ALFIE

A bit of help would be appreciated.

Or--

(sniffs)

--maybe some deodorant?

LILIANA

If you'll recall, it was I who came to you with a mission. A mission of which you have utterly and spectacularly made a mess.

NISSA

Exactly. We were doing your dirty work, and now we're the ones in a cell.

LILIANA

I clearly made an error in judgment, thinking you two were capable of aiding your friend. And now we're all in a situation most...unpleasant.

NISSA

Judging by the horde of faeries that ambushed us, and your terrifying husband, "unpleasant" seems to be your shtick.

LILIANA

A modicum of discretion on your part and there would have been no ambush.

(sighs)

I knew you were foolish, but I had hoped concern for your friend would have tempered your recklessness.

NISSA

(sarcastic)

Oh no. I've never disappointed an undeserved authority figure before. However will my self-worth survive?

ALFIE

And, honestly, I'm sort of predestined to disappoint every girlfriend I'll ever have, so you really should have seen this coming.

LILIANA

(sighing)

Clearly. But desperate situations call
for the most desperate of measures.

NISSA

(scoffing)

Rude.

LILIANA

I should have known such disrespectful
creatures could never follow the
intricate rules required to--

DISTANT MURMUR.

LILIANA (CONT'D)

What?

(beat)

How? She just--

(beat)

I see. I'm coming now.

(to Nissa and Alfie)

These are why I came.

Beans CLINK onto floor.

LILIANA (CONT'D)

These should keep you from starving to
death. It won't stop the hunger, but it
will keep you alive.

NISSA

Great. Prolonged torture via magic
beans.

LILIANA

You may be useful in the future. To me,
or to your friend. Consider this the
minimal effort to keep you alive until
then.

(hums theme as she fades)

Liliana WALKS away.

NISSA
Cool. Thanks for nothing.
(under her breath)
Asshole.

ALFIE
Nissa.

NISSA
Yeah, Alfie?

ALFIE
I think...

NISSA
(panicked)
We don't know what that is Alfie. Drop
it.

ALFIE
I think she was hiding something.
(chewing)

NISSA
Alfie, don't! Spit it out!

ALFIE
(chewing and blissful groans)
Mmmmmmm. Pot roast.

MUSICAL TRANSITION

198. Outside on a relatively quiet street, approaching the
Arcadia night club. MUSIC from inside is faint.

NARRATOR
Sometimes, Mackenna Thorne's lack of
understanding is a boon. For instance,
learning she could assume invisibility
in a time of need was convenient.
Willing Black Annis's dolls into
spontaneous combustion? Even more so.

Mackenna and Shaylee WALK to Arcadia.

SHAYLEE

Mackenna, I know my recommendations haven't panned out all that well, but please, this isn't going to work the way you think it will.

MACKENNA

You know, Shaylee, after I convince the Magister to free my friends, that's when we can talk about what works.

NARRATOR

Assuming you can just walk into Arcadia and end your peril, however, might just be a bit too presumptuous.

Passing through the front entrance. PULSING DANCE MUSIC immediately encapsulates them. The music is dark and ethereal but still has a modern, dancy rhythm.

MACKENNA

Move. Move. Step aside, tiny dancer. You looking to get poofed? Didn't think so.

SHAYLEE

(practically shouting)

Shite, Mackenna! They're going to notice us.

MACKENNA

That's the idea.

SHAYLEE

These aren't constructs. These are the Hidden People.

MACKENNA

I wonder where those two massive, fairytale-looking doors go? If I were an ancient, god-killing king, I think I'd live behind doors just like that.

SHAYLEE

You don't need to hide when you're as all-powerful as he is. Rethink what you're doing.

Heavy doors OPEN, then SLAM SHUT after Mackenna and Shaylee WALK through. The music MUFFLES, then fades as they WALK further.

SHAYLEE (CONT'D)

You really just never listen to anyone, do you?

MACKENNA

The Hidden People think they're so hot. You know what? If I'm such an ant, why haven't they squashed me yet?

SHAYLEE

Because you've been an amusing ant so far.

MACKENNA

Well, get ready, cuz amusement won't even cover this.

Heavy doors OPEN. MURMUR of many voices RISES then FADES. Mackenna confidently WALKS across marble. Shaylee quietly WALKS behind her.

NARRATOR

What was it I mentioned about Mackenna Thorne's ideas earlier? Oh, that's right: letting Black Annis feast on her mind. Definitely among the worst.

MAGISTER

Welcome, Mackenna Thorne.

NARRATOR

But this. This is an exceptionally bad idea. This might just even...

Final STOMPING FOOTFALL.

MACKENNA

I'm here for my friends.

NARRATOR

...top them all.

THE END