

THE HIDDEN PEOPLE

Episode 1.06

"Sneaky Things"

Written by

Stephen Kallenberg

65. Café MUSIC. Fingers TAPPING in sequence on an interior table.

NARRATOR

Mackenna. Sitting all alone, just the way you like it. Waiting on friends you hope do not show, in a café you'd rather not visit, at a time you care not to be awake. You really must change your facial expression before someone sees. Go ahead, pull out your phone and wish that all of them cancelled at the same time.

Café entrance bell CHIMES.

SHAYLEE

Hi, Mackenna.

MACKENNA

Morning.

SHAYLEE

Thanks for inviting me. Even if it was Nissa who sent the actual message.

MACKENNA

Yeah, no problem.

SHAYLEE

Did you order yet?

MACKENNA

Still trying to wake up, actually.

SHAYLEE

I hear that coffee helps, oddly enough.

MACKENNA

It's too early for sarcasm.

SHAYLEE

I get it. I just got up, too.

NARRATOR

Isn't it odd the things people lie about?

TEXT MESSAGE on Mackenna's phone.

MACKENNA

Oh. Text from Nissa.

(reading)

"Hey, you know that I hate it when people cancel plans last minute, so I'm the worst, but Alfie and I can't make it. Having some car issues. So sorry!"

SHAYLEE

I guess we're not waiting for anyone else?

MACKENNA

Nope. Looks like it's just us.

SHAYLEE

Do you want me to get you something?

MACKENNA

Oh, uhh--

SHAYLEE

My treat.

MACKENNA

Um, sure. Thanks.

SHAYLEE

I'll surprise you...unless you have allergies I should know about.

MACKENNA

No allergies to anything you would put in coffee. Thanks.

Shaylee WALKS away.

MACKENNA (CONT'D)

I hate surprises.

MUSICAL TRANSITION

66. Fast TYPING on a keyboard.

ALFIE

Just texted her with your phone. I feel sorta bad that we're lying to them.

NISSA

I am having car issues. That's just not why we're cancelling. It isn't so much a lie as...okay, it's basically a lie, but it's for a good cause.

ALFIE

Well, when you put it like that, lying sounds so dishonest.

NISSA

What do you think secret agents do for a living?

ALFIE

Okay, when I said we were like secret agents, I just meant being all cool and sleuthy.

NISSA

Sleuthy?

ALFIE

What are you researching, anyway? Are you done yet?

NISSA

Alfie, the police have no leads. That means we have no leads. We can't just up and find a killer with a quick keyword search of "Thorne murders."

ALFIE

Sounds like a Guns N' Roses song.

NISSA

For someone with no children or even a girlfriend, you have somehow already mastered dad jokes.

ALFIE

Anyway, you'd be surprised what I can find with a simple googling.

NISSA
Leave my second monitor alone.

ALFIE
I'm not touching your second
monitor...this is your third one.

NISSA
Alfie.

ALFIE
It's fine. Like you always tell me, two
eyes can miss something, but four
eyes--

NISSA
Make you a nerd.

MUSICAL TRANSITION

67. Back to café MUSIC.

MACKENNA
What could Nissa and Alfie be up to?
They never have anything going on.

SHAYLEE
Could they be out on a date?

MACKENNA
Absolutely not. They've been attached
at the hip for as long as I've known
them, but it's a very unromantic hip.
In her meaner moments, Nissa has joked
that her pansexuality encompasses
everything but Alfie.

SHAYLEE
I see.

MACKENNA
What about you? Married? In a
relationship? It's complicated?

SHAYLEE
Well, I am complicated, but my
nonexistent love life is pretty simple.

MACKENNA

As nonexistent things often are.

SHAYLEE

You?

MACKENNA

If it wasn't so early, I'd be laughing so hard right now.

SHAYLEE

Sooo...equally nonexistent?

MACKENNA

My ant farm is almost more commitment than I can stand.

SHAYLEE

I travel too much to even have a pet, six-legged or otherwise.

MACKENNA

I guess I also have a dog.

SHAYLEE

How does one guess that one has a dog?

MACKENNA

It was my parents'. We've always had something with four paws ever since I was little. Whenever it got old, my parents would get another one to sort of ease the transition.

(beat)

I guess he's mine now.

SHAYLEE

Maybe Thomas will keep him.

MACKENNA

Here's hoping. He just got a condo last year. It's probably big enough for a...I don't know what the dog is. Golden Labrador?

SHAYLEE

A nondescript retriever type. How very suburban of you.

MACKENNA

My family is a cliché. I mean, except for me. But I'm not in most of the photos, anyway, so...

SHAYLEE

Family is a lottery. Some people hit the jackpot; most are just lucky to win back their investment.

MACKENNA

I feel like we are the same person. But then I see your pep and simultaneously think we are polar opposites.

SHAYLEE

Are you that incapable of pep?

MACKENNA

It just seems like so much work.

SHAYLEE

Well, the pep is useful in my jobs. I do a lot of specialized training for people, so I have to get them to like me.

MACKENNA

Ugh. You interact with people all day?

SHAYLEE

Only when I'm on a job. It's not constant. A lot of the time, I'm just traveling.

MACKENNA

I would hate that.

SHAYLEE

The travel?

MACKENNA

The people.

SHAYLEE

Oh, it's not so bad. I just put on a professional face, present the material, and then sit back and watch them implement what I taught. When they succeed, it's very gratifying.

MACKENNA

Ugh, put me in front of a crowd of people and I think I would just run. And then get fired. Watching people isn't bad, I guess, as long as they don't talk.

SHAYLEE

Yeah, especially when they don't know that you're paying attention to them. People can be blind to what's right in front of them. I like fading into the background.

NARRATOR

Here's the classic Mackenna lull in the conversation.

TEXT MESSAGE on Mackenna's phone.

MACKENNA

Uh-oh. Nissa and Alfie just sent us something.

(reading)

"Hey friend. In our absence, please enjoy this fun online quiz."

SHAYLEE

What is it?

MACKENNA

It's just a personality quiz. They ask you a bunch of random questions and then tell you something about yourself, like--

SHAYLEE

No, I understand what a quiz is. I mean, what kind of quiz did they send?

MACKENNA

Quizzes, plural. I don't know. I guess we can check them out.

NARRATOR

Be careful, Mackenna. Do you think either of you wants the other to learn too much?

MUSICAL TRANSITION

68.

ALFIE

Nissa, I'm bored. Are we done yet?

NISSA

You insisted on using my computer. Now you're not allowed to stop until you find something useful.

ALFIE

But this is hard. I don't know what I'm doing.

NISSA

I know. A waste of a perfectly good second monitor.

ALFIE

Rude.

NISSA

Sorry.

ALFIE

Thank you.

NISSA

Waste of a third monitor.

ALFIE

I don't know how I got here, but I'm on this page about how to find your inner self. Something about sinking through the chair we sit in and becoming the chair. Something about the wind rustling the branches of your body, which totally--

NISSA

What site are you on?

ALFIE

Some guy named Richard has a page with the Mental Rehabilitation Center of Middle Ohio. I was trying to come at it from a "killer with mental issues" angle.

NISSA

No, the angle we need has to be different from the police angle; otherwise, they would have already found something. So while you've been busy being dumb, I've come across a local company that breeds and trains guard dogs. The owner doesn't live far from here.

ALFIE

Aw, sweet!

(beat)

What does that have to do with this?

NISSA

Dude, there was a dog attack as part of the murder, remember?

ALFIE

But how is that dog company connected to the Thornes?

NISSA

You didn't let me finish.

ALFIE

You very clearly stopped talking.

NISSA

I was just pausing for dramatic effect.

ALFIE

Please continue, Mr. Shatner.

NISSA

Here's a police report for a complaint about aggressive dogs coming from the dog trainer's house. The Thornes made the complaint, and it looks like this was the last complaint before the owner was forced to close his business.

ALFIE

Whoa, there's a motive if I ever heard one. You think that's it? They're enemies?

NISSA

It's a place to start.

ALFIE

Well, hot dog! The force is strong with this pooch.

NISSA

Yeah, yeah. Let's go.

ALFIE

Can we take a bus, like the Greyhound?

NISSA

My car is fine.

ALFIE

Shouldn't you retrieve your keys?

NISSA

They're in my pocket.

ALFIE

Sure they aren't back in the lab?

NISSA

Let's go.

ALFIE

Hold on. We'll need to make a pit stop first.

NISSA

Stop talking.

ALFIE

Wait, that one was serious.

MUSICAL TRANSITION

69. Alfie WALKS in a parking lot. Car door OPENS and CLOSES.

ALFIE

(humming Big Box jingle)

NISSA

Singing the jingle? You're such a nerd.

ALFIE

Big Box is the best place in the world. You should have come in. They've got lots of new stuff.

NISSA

That's the problem. They always have something new. Every time I go, I end up dropping way too much money at the Tech Deck.

Car STARTS. In a MOVING CAR.

NISSA (CONT'D)

So what did you get? What was so dire that we couldn't go straight to this guy's house?

ALFIE

We can't go unprepared. Haven't you seen any movie with someone doing sneaky things? I bought the essentials. Magnifying glass, walkie talkies--

NISSA

We have cell phones. Welcome to the 21st century.

ALFIE

Gloves.

NISSA

That's actually a good idea.

ALFIE
Really quiet shoes.

NISSA
Wait, what?

ALFIE
Also tweezers, M&Ms, and twenty feet of
this nylon cord.

NISSA
Nylon cord? Are you planning on
dropping in from the ceiling, Ethan
Hunt?

ALFIE
(overly serious)
I will do whatever it takes.

NISSA
Dare I ask about the tweezers?

ALFIE
For picking up evidence without
damaging it. Duh.

NISSA
Apparently, I need to watch more cop
shows. I assume you bought some
evidence bags, too.

ALFIE
(beat)
Can we go back real quick?

NISSA
Look, Spy Kids 3, if we find anything
so incriminating that we need to take
it, we can just call the cops. We're
not going to need all this junk.

ALFIE
Trust me, Nissa, this stuff will help.
You just don't know it yet.

NARRATOR

In case you haven't already figured it out, I refuse to further narrate these fools. Listening to them stumbling through their lives is already too much.

MUSICAL TRANSITION

70.

SAM

(calling out)

Hello? Thomas? The door was unlocked.

THOMAS

(calling back)

Come on in! I'm in the kitchen.

SAM

Hi. Sorry I'm early. Ooo, it smells so good in here? What is that?

THOMAS

Well, what you smell will eventually be a parmesan risotto with sautéed shrimp. Takes a while, but it always smells good. The candles are because Murphy rolled in something earlier.

SAM

They're a nice touch. Look at you being all fancy.

THOMAS

College changes a person.

SAM

College makes people appreciate Ramen as if it were food.

THOMAS

No way. I've learned a few things since high school. I can take care of myself, thank you very much.

(beat)

And I was more a mac 'n cheese guy, anyway.

NARRATOR

Oh, Thomas. A wink. A grin. Do you really think she's here because you're so irresistible?

SAM

You're in good spirits. You seem to be doing a little better.

THOMAS

Just taking it a day at a time. Being in this house is hard, but there really is no place like home, so I'm powering through.

SAM

How long will your job let you be away?

THOMAS

I had some vacation saved up, so I'm using that now. I'm not even sure that I'll go back. Death seems to put life into perspective. I want to be here for Mackenna.

SAM

How is she?

THOMAS

Wish I knew. She was gone when I got up. Left a note this time, at least

SAM

Well: progress. How does she seem when she's around?

THOMAS

She's so closed off. I can tell something's bothering her, but she internalizes all of it, so I can't figure out what it is.

SAM

You think she feels guilty? For how things were?

THOMAS

I don't know. God, this sucks.

SAM

Look at me killing the mood. I shouldn't have asked. I'm sorry.

THOMAS

Oh, it's okay. It all comes in waves. Not your fault.

SAM

So how can I help?

THOMAS

Just being here so I can talk through it is great.

SAM

Any time. But I meant how can I help with the food?

THOMAS

Oh, ha, um, let's see. Can you hand me that sauce pan over there? This meal prep is actually a really fun two-person job.

MUSICAL TRANSITION

71. In a MOVING CAR.

NISSA

That is the last time I let you navigate.

ALFIE

It wasn't my fault. Your map was upside down.

NISSA

No it wasn't. We were going south.

ALFIE

Ohhh...

NISSA

Well, we're here now. I'm gonna park back here, behind this brush. Don't want anyone to I.D. my car.

Car PARKS. Engine SHUTS OFF. Car doors OPEN and SHUT. Nissa and Alfie WALKING.

NISSA (CONT'D)

It's that house there.

ALFIE

I count four "Beware of Dog" signs. The plot thickens.

NISSA

But no cars in the driveway. Looks like no one's home.

ALFIE

Maybe they park in the garage. I'll check.

NISSA

We should also go in through that side door. I don't like being out front in full view.

Nissa and Alfie WALKING.

ALFIE

Garage is empty.

NISSA

I don't see any movement in the window, either.

Chain link fence RATTLES. Dogs SNARL and BARK in the back yard.

ALFIE

That just gave me a heart attack. I'm now dead.

(beat)

But okay, if no one comes outside for that, I think it's safe to say no one's home. How do we get in?

NISSA

Can you reach that window? Is it unlocked?

TRYING TO OPEN a stuck window.

ALFIE

If it is, then it's super stuck.

NISSA

Forget it. I'll have to pick the lock on the side door. Did you bring those tweezers?

ALFIE

Can you do that?

NISSA

Tangy Mesquite can.

ALFIE

Tangy Mesquite of the Tangy Mesquite podcast?

NISSA

The very same. He's got a whole series on survival essentials. I've been wanting to try this for a long time.

Lock CLICKS, door CREAKS open.

NISSA (CONT'D)

There.

ALFIE

You are way too cool.

NISSA

Now why don't you say that when people are around?

(beat)

Alright, let's get in before someone sees.

Door CLOSES.

ALFIE

Now what?

NISSA

Now we search the house. We're looking for anything connected to the Thornes. Any papers, notes, messages. Or anything suspicious.

ALFIE

Maps with yarn webs on them that point to the next victim?

NISSA

That would qualify as suspicious.

ALFIE

Man, this guy has a lot of stuff. Look at all this!

NISSA

Keep your voice down.

ALFIE

No one's here.

NISSA

So? Let's keep moving.

ALFIE

He sure likes his dogs.

NISSA

Or she.

ALFIE

Or it...or It! Maybe it's a dog-training evil clown.

NISSA

Shhh. This is what I'm talking about, on this side table. Remember what killed Mrs. Thorne? Here are some receipts for Extra Tough tent spikes. Now why would someone buy those and not the actual tent?

ALFIE

Look at these books.

NISSA

You're not even paying attention.
Alfie, don't touch anything.

ALFIE

I have my gloves on. These dusty books
are so cool.

BLOWING dust off books.

NISSA

No! Alfie, don't you realize that if
this person comes back and sees that
book with all the dust wiped off,
they'll know someone was here?

ALFIE

Oh. Oops. How do we put dust back on
books?

(beat)

Look at these! The Collective
Unconscious of Carl Jung, Evolution of
Humankind, World Mythologies...ooo,
something written in ancient runes.

NISSA

Yeah, this person is a hoarder for
sure. They have everything.

Heavy book OPENS, pages TURN.

ALFIE

Hey, do you have a Rosetta Stone on
you?

NISSA

Not what we're looking for, Alfie. Put
it away.

ALFIE

Bummer. Those runes are super cool.
Oops--

Book CRASHES onto piano. CLANGING of piano keys.

ALFIE (CONT'D)

Someone dropped that.

NISSA

Mack probably heard that from the café, dipshit. Stop fooling around. We need to hurry. We need to split up.

ALFIE

Think of the children.

NISSA

I mean search different parts of the house.

ALFIE

What? No! Haven't you seen any movie ever? Bad stuff happens when people split up.

NISSA

We're not covering enough ground this way. The owner could come back any minute. We need to spread out. If we don't find anything, then this is a big waste.

ALFIE

Okay, okay. But only if you turn on your walkie talkie.

NISSA

Fine. I'll make my way upstairs. You work on this floor. And we're not looking for books, Alfie. Remember: any connection to the Thornes.

ALFIE

I'm on it. My spider-sense is active.

Nissa CLIMBING stairs.

NISSA

Alright, pictures on the wall are old and faded and of nothing but dogs. I'm guessing no children. This looks like an office. Let's see what we find.

ALFIE

(through walkie talkie)

This is Foxtrot to Killjoy. Killjoy do you copy? Over.

NISSA

I'm going to hit you with this walkie talkie. What do you want?

ALFIE

(through walkie talkie)

I haven't found anything.

NISSA

You're not supposed to tell me when you don't find something.

ALFIE

(through walkie talkie)

There's a broom closet down here in the kitchen. I think I found all those stakes on that receipt.

NISSA

So you were paying attention. Wait, they're in a broom closet?

ALFIE

(through walkie talkie)

Yep. The back door is right here. Maybe they use them to tie up their dogs? Also, this dude needs to wash his dishes. The place is overflowing. Find anything upstairs yet?

NISSA

I found a filing cabinet. Looks like they could be business records. I'm checking those now.

ALFIE

(through walkie talkie)

Hey, I can see the murderous dogs from the window. Woah, they're big. Yeah, they definitely did it.

Window SLIDES OPEN through walkie talkie.

ALFIE (CONT'D)
(through walkie talkie)
Now why was that window so much easier
to open than the one at the front?

NISSA
Alfie, close the window.

ALFIE
(through walkie talkie)
Relax, I'm not doing anything. Just
looking at the big...uh-oh.

NISSA
What is it?

ALFIE
(through walkie talkie)
Nothing.

NISSA
Alfie. What happened?

ALFIE
(through walkie talkie)
My M&Ms just spilled out of the window.

NISSA
You've got to be kidding me.

ALFIE
(through walkie talkie)
They landed on the big AC unit in the
back yard.

NISSA
Leave them.

ALFIE
(through walkie talkie)
But what if the dogs find them?
Chocolate is poisonous to dogs.

NISSA
They might be murder-dogs.

ALFIE
(through walkie talkie)
I wouldn't be able to sleep at night.

NISSA
Are the dogs watching? Can you reach
the candy?

ALFIE
(through walkie talkie)
The dogs are over by the fence. I'll
have to lean out of the window, but I
think I can reach...
(beat)
Almost got them...
(beat)
Just...a bit...

Alfie CRASHES onto AC unit.

NISSA
Alfie!

MUSICAL TRANSITION

72. Back to café MUSIC.

MACKENNA
What is your ideal vacation? A beach
house, a log cabin, a mountain resort,
or a big city suite?

SHAYLEE
Let's go with mountain resort. I
imagine that you like being alone, so
I'm putting log cabin for you.

MACKENNA
Perfect. If you were stuck reading one
book forever, which genre would you
choose? Romance, comedy, biography,
thriller, or comic book?

SHAYLEE
Thriller, I think. I need a little
tension in my life. You?

MACKENNA

Hmm, well, love is a lie, so romance is out. Comedy doesn't work in books, the only words in comic books are punching sound effects, and you picked thriller, so I guess biography?

SHAYLEE

Choosing by omission.

MACKENNA

I think taking this personality quiz is revealing too much about my actual personality.

SHAYLEE

You're silly. So what'd I get? Which white male fictional character am I?

MACKENNA

Okay.

(reading)

"You are Gandalf. You are old, wise, and powerful. You spend your days guiding other people towards the light. You're often grumpy, and you take no nonsense but delight in inspiring people to courageous deeds."

SHAYLEE

That's ridiculous. I'm not old.

MACKENNA

Because that's the part that makes this quiz ridiculous. What character did I get?

SHAYLEE

You got Doctor Jekyll.

MACKENNA

What?

SHAYLEE

(reading)

"You are a smart, sly individual who draws people in without trying, and yet you're always in a battle against your inner demons."

MACKENNA

Never mind, I'm with you. These are ridiculous.

NARRATOR

Or perhaps the internet knows you better than the people who claim to love you.

SHAYLEE

I wonder how much my results would have changed if my drink of choice had been orange juice?

MACKENNA

Not sure, but now I know the truth about you. I didn't realize you had a secret life.

SHAYLEE

What?

MACKENNA

You've been holding out on me.

SHAYLEE

I don't know what you--

MACKENNA

I had no idea that you're secretly a bobcat who is meant to live in the Canadian mountains and whose Hulk color is red. And now apparently, you're also an old wizard with a big pointy hat. Alfie will be so jealous.

SHAYLEE

Ah yes. Well, looks can be deceiving.

MACKENNA

Good, because apparently I'm a turtle
destined for a swamp.

SHAYLEE

Don't forget green Hulk.

MACKENNA

How dare I leave that out?

SHAYLEE

Internet quizzes are never wrong.

MACKENNA

That's because they track my purchases,
my google searches, even my movements.

SHAYLEE

Someone's always watching.

MACKENNA

Yeah: Nissa.

SHAYLEE

She did track your phone the other day.
I pointed them in your direction. I
hope that was okay.

MACKENNA

Their worrying is infuriating, but it's
also kinda nice. In an infuriating way,
mind you.

SHAYLEE

It's not so bad to have people care
about you, right?

MACKENNA

But like, maybe if they could just care
over there, where I don't have to
always see them caring.

SHAYLEE

I get that.

MACKENNA

Anyway, I didn't even see you that day.
You should have said something.

SHAYLEE

You looked busy.

MACKENNA

I just ran into someone I knew when I
was a kid.

SHAYLEE

I'm sure it was nice to catch up.

MACKENNA

It was, I guess. I was having...it
wasn't a great day, all things
considered. Maybe best that you didn't
say hi.

Shaylee's phone VIBRATES.

SHAYLEE

Oh no. This is work. I think I need to
go.

MACKENNA

That's okay.

SHAYLEE

But Mack...sometimes the not great days
are the ones where we need someone the
most. If you're ever having another of
those, call me, okay?

MACKENNA

I think I will. Thanks, Shaylee.

SHAYLEE

This was fun. I think I really...I had
a lot of fun.

MACKENNA

Yeah, this was a good day. We should do
it again some time.

SHAYLEE

I'm up for any quiz you want. You can ask me anything, Mack. Except now. Cuz I need to jet.

MACKENNA

Bye, Shaylee.

MUSICAL TRANSITION

73.

THOMAS

I just can't believe you made detective so quickly.

SAM

Hold on, hold on. I still have a boss. It's not like I run the place.

THOMAS

You're being modest. You totally run the place.

SAM

I'm just driven. But that's not different than you. I mean, you're determined to be successful, too.

THOMAS

I've got my mom to thank for that. Bringing home bacon requires determination. Hey, thanks for helping with this meal, by the way. It's always more fun to cook when you have company. And that was something my dad taught me.

SAM

My pleasure. Could you excuse me a second? Bathroom.

THOMAS

Of course. Take your time.

Sam WALKS through the house and then softly DOWN the stairs.

SAM

(whispering)

I am now in the basement of the Thorne's house. This must be Mackenna's room. I see a bed, a tv, a closet, a few dressers. Nothing calling to me. No red flags. I'm walking over to the closet. I see a few pairs of shoes. A pair of heels with the store tag still on them. Let's look at this sneaker.

RUMMAGING through shoes.

SAM (CONT'D)

(whispering)

The tread from the boot print found on Mrs. Thorne's chest doesn't match anything here, but the shoe size does match. Can't rule it out yet.

THOMAS

Sam? You down here? Oh, there you are.

SAM

Oh, hey.

THOMAS

Dinner's ready.

SAM

Great!

THOMAS

What are you doing?

SAM

I thought the bathroom in the basement would be closer. Then I got distracted. Then I got turned around.

THOMAS

You've been here so many times.

SAM

In high school. It's been a while. I haven't seen the basement since it became a bedroom.

THOMAS

Oh. Yeah, I guess you haven't.

SAM

Sorry. Let's go eat. I don't want your masterpiece to get cold.

THOMAS

You mean our masterpiece!

SAM

I held a spatula.

THOMAS

So you get spatula credit.

NARRATOR

"Spatula cred--" Is it possible for one man to be so naïve?

MUSICAL TRANSITION

74. Outdoors in the dog trainer's yard. AC unit fan WHIRRS.

ALFIE

(groan)

Oh, what happened? Window. Backyard. M&Ms, that is the last time I come to your rescue.

NISSA

(through walkie talkie)

Alfie, are you okay? Talk to me. Alfie!

ALFIE

Hey. Yeah. I'm, uh, I think I'm okay. But I'm seeing double.

Big dogs GROWLING.

ALFIE

Dogs.

NISSA

(through walkie talkie)

What? Alfie get out of there.

ALFIE

Why couldn't I have seen stars instead?
Nissa, I double-dog-dare you to get me
the hell out of here. Um, good doggos.
Nice scary doggos with enormous
drooling teeth.

More GROWLING.

ALFIE (CONT'D)

Much bork. Heckin scary.

Dogs BARKING.

ALFIE (CONT'D)

Nope, here they come. This is it. Tell
the piano lady at the store that I love
her.

Dogs CHARGING, SNIFFING, happy WHINING, LICKING.

NISSA

(through walkie talkie)

What's happening? Alfie? Oh god. Alfie.
Hang on! I'm coming!

ALFIE

Agh, okay, dogs. Stop licking me. Too
close. Agh. Drool on my face. Yuck. I
don't get it. You're supposed to be
scary. Nissa, they're a bunch of canine
cuddle bugs. No, no, don't eat the
candy.

Car door SLAMS.

ALFIE (CONT'D)

Oh shit. Nissa, someone's home. Get out
of there!

NISSA

(through walkie talkie)

I can't make it. Someone's unlocking
the door.

ALFIE

Then hide. I'll think of something.

Inside dog trainer's house. Door OPENS then CLOSES. KEYS on table. FOOTSTEPS. Dogs happy BARKING outside.

NISSA
(whispering)
Oh shit. Okay, stay calm.
(breathing)

OWNER
Did I leave that open this morning?

NISSA
(whispering)
Shit, the window.

Dogs BARKING.

OWNER
Shut up out there!

Barking STOPS. Walkie talkie STATIC.

OWNER (CONT'D)
What was that?

NISSA
(whispering)
Oh no.

Footsteps APPROACH. Doorbell RINGS. Footsteps LEAVING. Door OPENS.

ALFIE
Hi there.

OWNER
Who are you?

ALFIE
My name is, uh, Charles, and I'm with the church of Saint, uh, Xavier. I wanted to tell you that Jesus thinks you might be gifted. But your gifts might be hidden, so now would be the time to leave that hiding place and discover your power. In Jesus.

OWNER

I'm not interested. Thanks.

ALFIE

Actually, I'm with the, uh, scouts!
Yeah, I'm a boy scout!

OWNER

You look kind of old for the scouts.

ALFIE

I'm handsome for my age. But we're
selling, uh, boy scout candy. Would you
like M&Ms?

OWNER

That bag is empty.

ALFIE

Oh, well, I see you no longer need my
services. Farewell, uh, may the force
be with you, and, uh, with your spirit
and stuff. K'bye.

75. Nissa and Alfie RUNNING.

ALFIE

I can't believe that actually worked!

NISSA

That was way too close! I think my life
flashed before my eyes.

ALFIE

Nah. With your memory, it would have
taken hours to see every detail.

Car doors UNLOCK. Car doors OPEN and CLOSE.

NISSA

What happened when you fell out of the
window?

Engine STARTS, car PULLS AWAY. In a MOVING CAR.

ALFIE

Uh the dogs charged me, so I covered my head. Then they just sniffed and licked me all over. Really sweet dogs, actually.

NISSA

So they weren't aggressive?

ALFIE

Not at all.

NISSA

That was so close. He almost caught me. I was hiding in that broom closet you mentioned. Then the freakin' walkie talkie went off! I thought I was a goner.

ALFIE

Me, too. All that adrenaline and what did we even learn?

NISSA

Well, we learned that those dogs probably didn't attack the Thornes that night.

ALFIE

Neither did the owner. He only had one arm. And as much as I'd love for our killer to be a one-armed man, I think he would have had difficulty stabbing someone to death.

NISSA

One theory down. A thousand more to go.

(beat)

Hey, Alfie. Thanks. For ringing that doorbell. That was...that was really cool.

ALFIE

Now why don't you say that when people are around?

(beat)

Just messin'. Hey, you think Mack and Shaylee are still hanging out? Let's meet up with them.

MUSICAL TRANSITION

76. Outdoors.

SAM

That meal was delicious. Thanks for having me over. And for the ride home.

THOMAS

Hey, you're welcome any time. Just come on over.

House door OPENS.

THOMAS

I think I might pop over to the cemetery for just a bit. Haven't been in a few days.

SAM

It's getting pretty late. You sure you want to go out there in the dark?

THOMAS

I'll be fine. I've been out there a lot since the funeral. I've never felt unsafe.

SAM

Okay, well, I'll keep you posted on the case.

THOMAS

Thanks. Let me know if you need anything.

SAM

I might need food sometime.

THOMAS

That's so specific. I guess I can be free sometime.

SAM

Goodnight, Thomas.

THOMAS

'Night.

Door CLOSES.

THOMAS

Alright, time to go see mom and dad.

NARRATOR

Yes, Thomas, go pay your respects to your beloved, departed parents, whose graves cannot feel your tears, whose ears cannot hear your impassioned promises of eternal memory, and whose hearts no longer know your love. And still you do it. With your flowers and your prayers, you cling to the pedestal that raised you, forgetting that it cannot protect you. Caught up in useless emotion and gathering thunder clouds, you miss the chill down your spine suggesting what's to come.

Musical interlude. RAIN begins to fall, light at first and then INCREASING in intensity. THUNDER in the distance.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Later, as the rain begins to fall, Thomas heads back to his truck from the graves. She's watched him for days and followed him for the past hour. Now, she intends to be the only remaining Thorne.

RUSTLING of branches and leaves. Paws PADDING through the brush. Dog GROWLS.

THE END