

**THE HIDDEN PEOPLE**

Episode 1.08

"Double Rainbow"

Written by

Alexa Fett Fisher

TEASER

86. Recorder CLICK. Background recorder FUZZ.

SAM

Mackenna Thorne and unknown female still at the scene of the Thorne murders. They've walked into a more exposed area, and I can't make out what they're saying anymore. They seem to know each other; no physical contact, but body language is relaxed. Unknown female is turning towards me--no unique identifying features. Maybe red hair? The hood of her jacket is up, and I can see the tag on the back--she is definitely wearing it inside-out. I can see her face clearly now. I have never seen her before.

(beat)

Shit, I'd swear she's looking right at me. No way she can see me from this distance. But that's a hell of a glare. She's turning back to Mackenna and...away they go. Maybe I went undetected after all. But I think I have more questions than when I came here looking for answers. I was hoping catching someone here at the scene of the crime would be a fresh lead in the investigation, but every thread seems to somehow tie back to Mackenna Thorne. How did she get so tangled up in this? And is this new stranger the one pulling the strings?

(beat, sigh)

I know I'm dancing around Occam's Razor here. Maybe everything's leading back to Mackenna because...because...

NARRATOR

Because the Thornes were murdered by their dear, deranged daughter.

END TEASER

## 87. Café SOUNDS.

SHAYLEE

Good morning, Bathroom Girl! You were late, so I already ordered your usual.

MACKENNA

Ugh, would you quit it already with that nickname? It sounds so skeevy.

SHAYLEE

That's why I like using it. Maybe I'll stop if you quit blushing everytime.

MACKENNA

(mumbled)

I do not, jerk.

SHAYLEE

You're doing it now! I've called you Bathroom Girl every time we've met for coffee this past week, and every time you get all red in the face and look around like "Oh, god, did anyone hear her call me that?" You really ought to stop caring what other people think.

MACKENNA

I don't care what other people think, I just don't want you to call me that.

SHAYLEE

You only dislike it because of other people's impression of it. I'm rather fond of the way we met.

MACKENNA

I can't believe it was less than a month ago. It feels like we've been hanging out much longer.

SHAYLEE

Well, we have been getting together a lot recently.

MACKENNA

(hesitating)

I've had a lot to talk about. And you're cheaper than actual therapy.

SHAYLEE

And has it been helping? Going to the scene of the attack the other day, talking to me about this, instead of Alfie and Nissa?

MACKENNA

Yeah. They just don't see the situation the same way you and I do. And besides, they've been a bit distracted lately.

SHAYLEE

Ah, I was wondering if I was getting ghosted. Glad it's not just me.

MACKENNA

No, they've been up to something. Some project.

SHAYLEE

Something to do with the music store?

MACKENNA

Not that I know of. Maybe a campaign for some game? They keep talking about where they should look next and doing research--at least until they notice I'm around and they clam up.

SHAYLEE

Hard to believe that they would be embarrassed about you seeing their nerdy side! But, speaking of research, any update on the investigation?

MACKENNA

None.

SHAYLEE

Really? Jeez, it's been awhile since you've heard anything new. I hope it hasn't gone cold.

MACKENNA

Me too. But, even if it were ice, I don't think Sam would give up the trail.

SHAYLEE

No?

MACKENNA

She's pretty persistent. She's been around the house--and Thomas--more and more.

SHAYLEE

(playful)

Maybe she's "investigating" your brother.

MACKENNA

Ew, no. Totally professional. They've been going over the dog attack, or mom and dad's history. Quite literally no pebble unturned.

SHAYLEE

Sounds like she's getting desperate.

MACKENNA

She doesn't act like it. It's more like a force of will; that if she just keeps at it, putting pressure everywhere, eventually she'll either find a soft spot or make one.

SHAYLEE

That's...actually a great way to go about things.

MACKENNA

Yeah?

SHAYLEE

It's like the power of intention. If you will something hard enough, eventually, you will it into being.

MACKENNA

That sounds like a lot of hooley.

SHAYLEE

It's not hooley! It's more like believing in your own ability. Believing in yourself to control the things around you, to take control of your own life.

(pause)

Don't give me that smirk! I have my shit together, don't I?

MACKENNA

Ah, and here I thought your secret was having all the confidence of a mediocre white male.

SHAYLEE

Well, yes, I'm confident as hell, but that's because I know I can control my surroundings and my response to them. I'm serious; you should really try it. Maybe it'll help you see the world a bit differently. And, hey, if it doesn't work, it doesn't work. It's not like you wasted any time or money on it.

MACKENNA

What could it hurt, right?

NARRATOR

Wrong question, Mackenna: whom could it hurt? You? Or, perhaps, everyone you love?

88. Car engine STOPS. Car door SLAMS. Sam WALKS. DOORBELL. After a beat, DOORBELL.

Another beat, and with persistence: DOORBELL DOORBELL DOOR--

THOMAS

(behind door, defeated)

Argh, quit it! I'll buy your darn cookies. Just quit harassing me, you--

Door OPENS.

SAM  
Harassment, eh? Need to file a report?

THOMAS  
Sam. I wasn't expecting you.

SAM  
Clearly. You look like you've genuinely  
been accosted. Wait, are those your  
pajamas?

THOMAS  
(depressed)  
Yeah, I was planning on staying in  
today.

SAM  
Today? You've bowed-out of lunches for  
the past 3 days, and honestly--  
(sniff)  
You smell like you haven't showered in  
that time, either.

THOMAS  
Yeah, maybe I'm getting sick? I'm just  
not feeling up to it, so--

SAM  
Oh, no. You are not ditching me again.

THOMAS  
Sam, not today, please.

SAM  
Yes, today, Thomas. Today of all days.  
You've hermited long enough. Shower.  
Clothing. Fresh air.

THOMAS  
(pathetic)  
Nooooo...

SAM

I can't force you, but know that I have no other commitments for today, and I am more than capable of annoying you into submission.

THOMAS

Sam, today I--fine. Just give me a bit to get cleaned up?

SAM

There we go. I'll just help myself to whatever's in the fridge while you make me wait.

THOMAS

Might not be much--I haven't gone grocery shopping recently.

SAM

I'm sure there's plenty.

Thomas slowly SHUFFLES away. Sam WALKS through the house.

Refrigerator door OPENS.

SAM (CONT'D)

Yeesh, or nothing. When's the last time he ate something other than instant noodles?

Refrigerator door CLOSES. Sam WALKS around.

NARRATOR

Oh, dear. Snooping again, Detective? Making quite a habit out of this, aren't you?

SAM

(softly)

Lots of photos of themselves for empty nesters. Wedding, honeymoon, Paris.

(exhaling laugh)

Aw, baby Thomas.

Distant shower RUNNING.

Recorder CLICK. Background recorder FUZZ.

SAM (CONT'D)

I'm looking through photos at the Thorne home, and there's a pattern. Thomas's first day of school, apple picking, senior prom, only one of Mackenna on the wall. Family photo at graduation, including, you guessed it, Thomas.

Sam WALKS around.

SAM (CONT'D)

Surely there's more. I'm looking through an old photo album.

Pages FLIP.

NARRATOR

Careful, detective. You might be trying to open something better left shut.

Pages FLIP.

SAM

Skipping wedding photos--ah, here we go. Baby Mackenna. Infant Mackenna. Newborn Thomas. Thomas's Baptism. Thomas's first Christmas. First birthday, second birthday, pre-school...Mackenna vanishes once Thomas is born.

Shower STOPS.

Frantic page FLIPS.

SAM (CONT'D)

High school, sports, college, all Thomas! What parents have so few photos of their eldest child?

FOOTSTEPS approaching, growing louder.

Recorder CLICKS OFF. Book SLAMS CLOSED. No background fuzz.

SAM (CONT'D)  
Alright, ready to go?

THOMAS  
Yeah. Go where again?

SAM  
Fresh air. Sunshine.

THOMAS  
Sam, it's been April and raining all week.

SAM  
We'll figure it out when we get there.  
C'mon.

89. Shop bell RINGS

MACKENNA  
Catch you later, Shaylee.

SHAYLEE  
Later, Mack! Bike safe.

Helmet CLICKS. Bike chain SOUNDS.

SHAYLEE (CONT'D)  
Remember! Power of positive thinking!  
(laugh)

MACKENNA  
Yeah, yeah. Everything's just going to  
magically go my way.

NARRATOR  
You know what they say about being  
careful what you wish for? I never  
listened to it, either.

Bike PEDALS. Street NOISES.

MACKENNA  
(sarcastic, to self)  
Yeah, because everything's just going  
to be hunky-dory and smooth sailing.

NARRATOR

My, that was a convenient change in the street light. Nothing that hasn't happened before. Surely that second green light was just a coincidence. What's the saying: first time is luck, third time's a pattern? So what would you call the fifth green light in a row, Mackenna? Providence?

MACKENNA

(slightly out of breath)

Huh, I'm making good time today. Maybe I'll get home early.

NARRATOR

If you get home at all. That car looks like it has other plans for you.

Tires SCREECH. Car horn HONKS.

MACKENNA

Hey! Get the hell back!

NARRATOR

Just what do you think you can do? Push a two-ton metal machine made for speed away with one hand still steering your bicycle? And just what would you think when you succeed?

MACKENNA

That was a close one. Crazy asshole drivers.

NARRATOR

Of course.

Bike chain STOPS. Helmet CLICKS.

MACKENNA

Well, that was almost uneventful.

Keys JINGLE. Door OPENS.

MACKENNA (CONT)  
(calling out)  
Thomas, I'm back, you awake?  
(to herself)  
Finally?

Dog BARKS, happily pants.

MACKENNA (CONT'D)  
Ah. Dog.

Dog WALKS AWAY. BARKS in distance.

MACKENNA (CONT'D)  
What's that, Dog? Thomas is trapped in  
a well?

Mackenna WALKS. Door OPENS.

MACKENNA (CONT'D)  
Well, he showered at least.  
(calling out)  
Thomas, where are you?

Mackenna WALKS.

MACKENNA (CONT'D)  
Thomas?

NARRATOR  
Worried, are we? Whatever for? Even if  
there were a killer on the loose, why  
would you concern yourself about  
perfect, precious Thomas now? You've  
neglected him for so long, after all.

MACKENNA  
Did he go out, Dog? That's good. He was  
starting to mold. Coulda left a note,  
though, the jerk.

Dog WHIMPERS and WALKS AWAY.

Mackenna WALKS.

MACKENNA (CONT)

Unless he did. What's on the calendar?

(pause)

Shit.

(pause, then frantic)

Shit shit shit shit shit.

**MUSICAL TRANSITION**

90. Light retail MUSIC.

ALFIE

Ugh, this place is D-E-D.

NISSA

I think you're missing an "A" in there, Shakespeare.

ALFIE

Yeah, not A single customer. Do you really need me in here today?

NISSA

Do you really need a paycheck this week?

ALFIE

Yes. But I'd make just as many sales working from home. Possibly more.

NISSA

Irrelevant. You don't make commission.

ALFIE

Nissa, I'm dying here! I'm a delicate flower withering in the lack of sunlight and positive affirmation. At least let me make a coffee run. I'll even pick you up that fancy lavender-eucalyptus tea.

NISSA

Coffee's for closers.

ALFIE

Argh, you're impossible!

Phone RINGS.

ALFIE (CONT'D)

Hello, you've reached SoundScapes,  
where the sounds you hear are our  
employees trying to escape. How may I  
redirect your call?

(beat)

Hey, whoa, slow down Mack. What's going  
on?

NISSA

Mack! Is she okay? Alfie, what's wrong?

ALFIE

Uh, hold on, Nissa's here, too. I'm  
going to put you on speaker.

MACKENNA

(through phone)

--of course I fucking forgot. I never  
remember, but shit, today's his  
birthday.

NISSA

Mack, start from the beginning. What's  
going on?

MACKENNA

(through phone)

Today. Today is Thomas's birthday, and  
I didn't remember until I saw it on the  
calendar. How did I miss it? My mom  
decorated it with so many colors and  
hearts.

NISSA

Ookay...but Mack, I don't think Thomas  
will be disappointed. You've sort of...  
uh--

ALFIE

--purposely skipped every family  
celebratory event you possibly could  
since the beginning of forever?

NISSA

You're just not the gift-giving, party-throwing type.

MACKENNA

(through phone)

No, but our parents are...were. He's always had some big to-do with cake and food and...he's barely gotten out of bed this week, and I didn't put it together.

NISSA

Where's Thomas now?

MACKENNA

(through phone)

I'm not sure. Out? His phone and keys are gone. Maybe he's out with Sam?

(pause)

Or visiting our parents' graves again.

ALFIE

We can come up with something, Mack-A-Lack. If you think he'll be out for a while, maybe we can pull together a birthday dinner. A surprise feast!

NISSA

Alfie, that's great! Mack, can you put in a call to that Italian place for a carry-out family order? We'll pick it up on our way over to your place after work. And I'll ask Shaylee if she'll grab some decorations from the party shop.

MACKENNA

(through phone)

But I don't know what gift to get him.

NISSA

I'm sure doing this for him is more than he could have expected. Everything will be fine! See you soon.

Phone HANGS UP.

NISSA (CONT'D)

Turing in a toaster. I thought something else awful had happened. Giving me a heart attack in my late 20s.

ALFIE

Yeah, it just seems to be one thing after another. But we were able to make a daring escape from those vicious dogs last week!

NISSA

(scoffs)

So vicious.

ALFIE

And, the repairs to your car weren't super expensive, and didn't take too long!

NISSA

Just because I was able to afford it doesn't mean it wasn't stupid expensive. Just cheaper than ride-sharing.

ALFIE

Nissa, you're making it really hard to shine the lining until it's silver.

NISSA

I'm just frustrated. The store's been dead, we've hit a dead-end with investigating, and we have no idea who wants Thomas--

ALFIE

Dead? I'm sensing a rather morbid theme to your moroseness.

NISSA

Any idea for next steps, your astuteness?

ALFIE

Uh, the cops? You know, the ones who are trained and paid to investigate unsolvable mysteries 9-to-5? What have they figured out?

NISSA

One: this unsolvable mystery is way beyond the capability of our small town force, and two: even if there were anything new, Detective Pucker-Up has been as tight-lipped as a sour-sucker. No way she'd let anything slip with us around.

ALFIE

So don't go through her.

NISSA

What?

ALFIE

A small town police force has to be lax in cyber security. Know any clever, music store-owning, chaotic-good hackers who would be willing to help clear Mack's name?

NISSA

Hmmm. It'll take some time, and some extra equipment than what I have at home, but it's a start. We'll see what they know.

NARRATOR

Careful, Nissa. There are some things in this world that you'll wish you never knew. And that you can never unknow.

**MUSICAL TRANSITION**

91.

NISSA

(through phone)

Everything will be fine! See you soon.

Phone HANGS UP.

MACKENNA  
 (deep breath)  
 Everything will be fine.  
 (deep breath)  
 Everything will be fine.

Phone DIALING.

MACKENNA (CONT'D)  
 Yes, hi. I'd like to place an order?  
 For pick up? Later today?  
 (beat)  
 Oh...the...uh--  
 (groan, then deadpan)  
 "Easy-Cheesy Family Feasty?"  
 (beat)  
 Um, one, two, three--six. Six people?  
 (beat)  
 Okay, great. Thanks. Wait, um, do you  
 guys do dessert? Cake or pie or--  
 (beat)  
 Cannoli? That's it, really?  
 (beat)  
 Okay, yeah. Thanks. Uh-huh, you too.

Phone HANGS UP.

MACKENNA (CONT'D)  
 Birthday cannoli? Half-assed is one  
 thing, but that barely counts as  
 quarter-assed.

Cabinets OPEN.

MACKENNA (CONT'D)  
 Dog, where would Dad have put the  
 candles?  
 (beat)  
 Can I even put candles in cannoli?

RUMMAGING.

MACKENNA (CONT'D)  
 How many candles can a cannoli hold?  
 Wait, how old is Thomas?  
 (beat)  
 How old am I?

Rummaging STOPS.

MACKENNA (CONT'D)

Oh. Dad's recipe book.

NARRATOR

Oh no.

Pages FLIPPING.

MACKENNA

"Thomas's Birthday Cake." Flour, eggs  
sugar...I think we have all that.

NARRATOR

This won't end well. But like any good  
train wreck...

### **MUSICAL TRANSITION**

92. Outdoors in a park.

SAM

I'm sorry there's nothing new I can  
tell you about the investigation. I  
promise, we're not giving up. There's a  
few small leads we're still pursuing,  
but nothing's come of them...yet.

THOMAS

(distracted)

Yeah.

SAM

I mean it, Thomas. I'm not going to  
give up, and I'm not going to let the  
department give up, either. We're going  
to find whoever did this.

THOMAS

(distracted)

Mm-hm.

SAM

I know you're still shaken up about the  
run-in you had with those dogs last  
week--

THOMAS

It's not that.

SAM

--and with everything else that has happened: the deaths, the interviews, the funeral. Thomas, you've been through hell, and it's wreaking havoc on you. Have you been sleeping? At all?

THOMAS

Yeah. If anything, too much.

SAM

And eating? Something that doesn't have more preservatives than pronounceable ingredients?

THOMAS

Sam, what's this about?

SAM

I'm worried about you. You haven't been yourself this past week. The department had a lecture series about victim trauma and posttraumatic stress last year--

THOMAS

Sam, I don't have PTSD.

SAM

It's hard to realize the level of trauma you're personally experiencing, especially for someone like you.

THOMAS

Someone like me?

SAM

Someone who always has it together. You know, "Perfect Thomas."

THOMAS

I am far from perfect. No one thinks of me like that.

SAM

I have.

(beat)

I'm just saying you've been in constant fight-or-flight mode, and now that you have a chance to feel safe, you need to process all that. And healthy processing includes taking care of yourself.

THOMAS

Sam, I'm not processing my grief, I got through that with the funeral. It's...today's my birthday, okay?

SAM

And you're upset I didn't wish you a happy birthday sooner?

THOMAS

No, I just...I didn't think about it until it was happening. The normal things I would think...would mom and dad want to do something today? Did they buy me any gifts, or am I too old for that now? All these normal things that won't happen anymore.

SAM

It's your first birthday without them.

THOMAS

Today is, yeah. Then Mother's Day will come, and I can't do anything for Mom anymore. Same with Father's Day. B, Thanksgiving, Christmas...it's going to be a chain of firsts without them.

(beat)

But, that's not what's been keeping me in bed the past week. That's not the worst of it. It isn't just the firsts, Sam. It's the everys. Every birthday. Every holiday. For the rest of my life, my parents won't be here. And I...I'm not ready for that. They were supposed to be here. For marriages, grandkids, all these things I expected and took for granted, and now they'll never have that. I'll never have them.

SAM

I'm so sorry, Thomas. I can't imagine. I know it sounds trite, but they say the first year is the hardest.

THOMAS

I'd believe it. I knew adjusting to the new normal was going to take some time, but I didn't expect it to hit me so hard this week.

SAM

How's Mackenna been holding up?

THOMAS

She did finally visit the cemetery. But she's still always so stoic. I'm just worried it's going to be even rougher on her when she finally feels it.

SAM

Some people just don't experience grief like the rest of us.

THOMAS

Mackenna is not a sociopath, Sam.

SAM

No. Of course not. But you think holding it in and having it build up will make it worse for her?

THOMAS

That's what I'm afraid of.

SAM

Does she have anyone she can talk to? A professional? She mentioned she had a therapist when we spoke at the station.

THOMAS

The therapist was always my mom's idea. I don't think she's been back to see her since they died.

SAM

Does she at least have a good support system? I know Nissa and Alfie, but is there anyone else?

THOMAS

Nissa and Alfie have been her closest-- well, only--friends her whole life. She doesn't take to people easily.

SAM

Oh. Are you sure? Alfie said they made a new friend a couple weeks ago. A woman, I think. She dresses funny?

THOMAS

Oh, that might have been Shaylee.

SAM

Shaylee?

THOMAS

She's their new friend. I haven't met her yet, but Mackenna's talked about her.

(beat)

I didn't think about it before, but maybe making new connections...maybe that's her outlet for grieving.

SAM

Could be.

Distant THUNDER.

SAM (CONT'D)

Sounds like a storm's moving in. So much for the spring sunshine. Let's head back to the car before we get drenched.

THOMAS

(inhale)

It smells like rain. Dad loved the smell of rain. Used it as an excuse to put off yard work an extra day.

(sigh)

Showers and sunshine...maybe we'll see a rainbow at the end.

SAM

Wishing for a pot of gold, Thomas?

THOMAS

No. The things I wish for...they're impossible things.

**MUSICAL TRANSITION**

93. Cabinets OPENING and CLOSING. Bowls and utensils BANGING.

NARRATOR

Oh, dear. What a mess. Truly, be thankful you can't see this. It's watching the train you know is about to crash, but it just keeps blissfully chugging along.

MACKENNA

Okay, three cups flour. Easy. Flour... flour...flour! There you are.

Flour bag SHUFFLES.

MACKENNA (CONT'D)

Wait, why is there more than one type? It doesn't say which.

NARRATOR

I mean, I could stop a train wreck.

MACKENNA

Well, all-purpose is all purpose, but mom was always on a health kick, so maybe whole wheat? Cake flour is kinda the obvious choice, though.

(beat)

Screw it. Equal parts of each.

NARRATOR

I don't, but I could. It's just more fun to watch.

MACKENNA

Next, one-hundred twenty grams of sugar. Why is it in grams?

Cabinet OPENS.

MACKENNA (CONT'D)

Argh, and why are there three types of sugar?! Who needs that much?

(exhale)

Okay, same rules, just a bit of each.

Sugar POURS.

MACKENNA (CONT'D)

That looks about right. Well, er, maybe a bit more.

NARRATOR

Except this isn't fun.

Sugar DUMPS.

MACKENNA

Shit, that was too much. Cake can't be too sweet, right? What's next, baking powder? Baking powder, baking... baking...

Refrigerator door OPENS.

MACKENNA (CONT'D)

Baking...ah-ha! Baking soda! Why is it in the fridge?

NARRATOR

This is just pitiful.

MACKENNA

No eggs. When was the last time Thomas went grocery shopping? Um...oh, carton egg whites!

(beat)

Mom's egg-white omelettes. Guess she won't need these anymore. Can these go bad?

(sniff)

What are egg whites supposed to smell like?

NARRATOR

I'm neither chef nor baker. I can't even say for certain that I've ever stepped foot in a kitchen for the purposes of meal creation.

MACKENNA

All right, that should be everything. "Bake at three-hundred fifty degrees for thirty to thirty-five minutes."

(beat)

Yeah, I don't have that much time.

Oven BEEPS.

MACKENNA (CONT'D)

Let's set it to four-hundred.

NARRATOR

The court can call an expert witness if it feels necessary. However, I am comfortable enough to say for certain--

MACKENNA

This is going to work.

NARRATOR

--this will not work.

**MUSICAL TRANSITION**

94. Car doors SLAM.

SAM

Looks like it was only a quick rain shower. The sun's starting to come out again.

THOMAS

Just in time for it to set. We were out all day.

SAM

Thomas, I picked you up at noon.

THOMAS

Well, my whole waking day.

SAM

You lazy bum! You slept half your birthday away?

THOMAS

Eh, I didn't have plans until you so rudely interrupted my open schedule.

SAM

(playful)

Count yourself lucky that I didn't just knock on your door unannounced.

THOMAS

(amused)

I'm pretty sure that's exactly what you did.

THOMAS / SAM

(laugh)

1-2 seconds silence.

SAM

(awkwardly)

Um, well, uh...here. This is for you.

THOMAS

(awkwardly)

Oh. I...I didn't expect you to get me anything.

SAM

I know. It's just, you know, something--

THOMAS

I didn't get you anything.

SAM

Of course you didn't. It's your birthday, not Christmas.

THOMAS

Oh, oh, right. I just...right.

(beat)

Um, do you want to come inside for a bit?

SAM

That sounds great.

THOMAS

(with a stupid smile)

Great.

95. Keys JINGLE. Door UNLOCKS.

MACKENNA / SHAYLEE / NISSA / ALFIE

Surprise!

THOMAS

W-what?

NISSA

Happy birthday, Thomas!

THOMAS

What is all this?

ALFIE

Well, that lovely smell wafting through the air is dinner via The Little Sicily Cafe. And those are streamers and balloons. And this is Shaylee. She isn't a decoration, but she did procure them.

SHAYLEE

Hello. Great to finally meet you, Thomas. Happy birthday!

THOMAS

Same, and thank you. Where's--

MACKENNA

Happy Birthday, Thomas.

THOMAS

Mackenna! Did you do all this?

MACKENNA

No way. I had a lot of help from everyone.

THOMAS

But...you remembered. You remembered my birthday?

MACKENNA

Mom did. It was on the calendar in big bubble letters. I know it's not what you're used to, but I thought--

THOMAS

No, it's perfect. Thank you. This is so thoughtful. Thank you, everyone.

ALFIE

Alright, we've said thanks, I say we dig in! The smell of garlic bread has been taunting me for hours.

NISSA

Alfie, we picked up the meal a half hour ago.

ALFIE

Did I say taunting? I meant haunting. And the only way to exorcise it is ingestion.

SHAYLEE

Gross, Alfie. Breathe!

ALFIE

(mouth full)

I fuggin' rove garic bread.

NARRATOR

Ah, domestic bliss. Ignore the murdered parents and disposable place settings, and it's practically a Norman Rockwell come to life.

Continued BACKGROUND CHATTER, EATING.

SHAYLEE

Are you sure you don't want more, Sam?

SAM

Oh, no, the grilled chicken and salad is fine. Special diet.

(beat)

You're new in town, aren't you?

SHAYLEE

Quite the detective! I moved here about a month ago. I met this bunch early on.

SAM

And you moved here for work?

SHAYLEE

That's right.

SAM

And what is it that you do?

THOMAS

(warning)

Sam--

SHAYLEE

It's a touch complicated, but I do training...mostly for overseas firms. A bit of people skills, a bit of number crunching. Not as important as a detective, by any means.

SAM

Oh?

SHAYLEE

I think it's really impressive that you're a detective and only Thomas's age. Reminds me of the young-genius characters on cop shows.

SAM

It's not really like it is on TV.

SHAYLEE

Of course not. It's so much more difficult! You're really inspiring.

SAM

(flattered, embarrassed noises)

SHAYLEE

I'll shut up. You probably don't want to talk about work at the dinner table.

THOMAS

No matter how impressive it is.

(beat)

Well, I'm full. I'll grab the dishes and clean up.

MACKENNA

Thomas, wait!

Mackenna WALKS away.

THOMAS

Where're you going?

Mackenna WALKS back in.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Oh my god.

MACKENNA

Uh, happy birthday cake?

THOMAS

Mackenna, that...that looks just like Dad's cake.

MACKENNA

I found his recipe book.

THOMAS

No, just like his cake.

MACKENNA

I just followed the recipe.

THOMAS

And you have the right number of  
candles on it.

MACKENNA

I know how old you are Thomas.

NISSA

You just subtracted one from your age,  
didn't you?

MACKENNA

Shut up, Nissa.

THOMAS

Mack...this is...I...

MACKENNA

Just blow out the candles before the  
wax drips?

Thomas BLOWS out the candles.

ALFIE

What did you wish for?

THOMAS

I wished--

ALFIE

No, no, you can't say it out loud, but  
someone has to ask.

NISSA

Alfie--

ALFIE

Seriously, that's how it goes in every  
form of media to ever exist. I'm just  
following the rules.

NISSA

Why do I bother?

MACKENNA

Here, I think I cut enough slices for  
everyone.

SAM  
None for me, thanks.

ALFIE  
Ooo, two for me, then!

NISSA  
(whispered)  
Have you tried Mack's baking? Do you really want to do that?

ALFIE  
Uh, on second thought, maybe the birthday boy should be the one to get seconds?

MACKENNA  
Ha-ha. Eat up.

Group EATING.

NISSA  
Oh.

ALFIE  
Wow. Mack--

THOMAS  
(awed)  
This tastes just like Dad's.

MACKENNA  
Yeah, I used his recipe.

THOMAS  
No, it took him a dozen tries to get this right. How? How could you make this?

MACKENNA  
I...I followed his recipe? Ish? We were missing a few things, but--

Doorbell RINGS.

MACKENNA (CONT'D)

Who the heck is that? No, don't get up  
I'll get it.

Mackenna WALKS away.

SAM

Cake's that good, huh?

THOMAS

Sam, it's impossible, but it's my dad's  
cake. Heck, it might even be better  
than--

(coughing)

Ugh, what is this?

ALFIE

(gagging noises)

I knew it was too good to be true! Joy  
has turned to ashes in my mouth!

NISSA

(gagging)

What the hell? The first bite was so  
good, but this tastes awful.

Mackenna WALKS back in.

MACKENNA

What's wrong?

THOMAS

(clear throat)

Nothing, just a weird bite. Maybe a bit  
didn't get mixed well enough?

ALFIE

That was weird. It tastes delicious  
now, though. Thomas, I'll fight you for  
that extra piece.

NISSA

Who was at the door?

MACKENNA

Delivery. Bit late in the day, but it's  
addressed to Thomas.

THOMAS

Me?

Package OPENS.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

There's a card. "Happy birthday, Son. We are so incredibly proud of the man you've become. We love you forever. Mom and Dad."

Long silence.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

It's a sign. They're here.

SAM

Thomas--

THOMAS

No, this isn't just coincidence. Dad's cake. The package coming here, today, addressed to me. It's a sign. From them. They're here, and they're trying to tell me that they're okay. That... that everything will be okay.

NARRATOR

Quite a leap to make, Thomas. But say you are right. That something supernatural is going on. Would that make you look at your perfect little world any differently? Would you look out the window, past the happy little gathering in your dining room to see the double rainbow in the sky?

Leaves RUSTLE.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Or would you look down to the darkness in the bushes, to see the pair of eyes glowering at you?

Louder RUSTLING. Dog GROWLS.

THE END