

THE HIDDEN PEOPLE

Episode 3.03

"Intercepted Transmissions"

Written by

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TEASER

23. Isolation Cell.

LEE

There are some things that fetches go through that we just don't talk about. There are things that even the fetches themselves don't discuss. Things that they never say outright but that we can guess. Any of the information that Mackenna and her friends have is from limited sources: Shaylee's time training in Arcadia or the other Mackenna's life before the gauntlet. Information from recent fetches, all taken by members of the Unseelie Court.

MAD FETCH

(unintelligible mumbling)

LEE

This is different. As bad as they thought fetches had it before, this is a whole other ballpark. We'll never know what that poor creature had been through, but it was certainly unspeakable torture, both physical and mental.

MAD FETCH

(faster, still can't make it out)

LEE

The Unseelie Court at least had rules, an order to how fetches were treated, what their purpose was.

MAD FETCH

(we begin to understand)

So spake Wodan, so spake Wodan.

LEE

But a fetch taken by an Old One would be as mad and senseless as the exiled creature itself.

MAD FETCH
So. Spake. Wodan!

END TEASER

24. Thorne House

NISSA
Goddess. What the fuck happened to this woman?

SHAYLEE
Well, she is a fetch.

FETCH
Your continued insults do not bother me.

RILEY
We've established this, but since you keep commenting on them, I think they might.

FETCH
Sticks and stones create your bones; therefore, your words are meaningless.

THOMAS
That's not quite the saying.

FETCH
But it is accurate. And I prefer it.

ALFIE
Murder and mental illness are fetch one-oh-one, but those photos in the police report, though? They're grainy, but I'm still gonna have trouble getting that out of my head.

RILEY
I have some eye-bleach pulled up on my phone.

ALFIE

Puppy pictures! Aw, wook at their widdle faces.

RILEY

I know! They're so cute!

NISSA

The autopsy report Sam was able to get us isn't much better. Let's just say you don't want to know what parts of her family were missing.

MACKENNA

What do you say, she a buddy of yours, Fa--Fe--Macken--what am I supposed to call you?

FETCH

Nothing. Do not address me. Speak to me through Thomas. And I have no buddies. Especially people I have never seen before.

SHAYLEE

She's a bit older...maybe from the series of reappings before yours?

FETCH

No. Older fetches initiated younger ones when they came of age for training. I remember all the faces of the ones who made me bleed.

RILEY

(under her breath)

What the fu-uck?

THOMAS

Is it possible that she might not be a fetch?

SHAYLEE

That she might just be a regular murderous psychopath? So many of those just running around.

NISSA

The evidence fits: her birthdate and age at the time of the killing matches with what you told us about the gauntlet.

FETCH

Her actions are not compatible with what fetches are taught. She killed indiscriminately. She did not hide to avoid capture. Her reclamation was drawn out and inefficient.

ALFIE

Is there any way she's from a different Arcadia? One that's more brutal?

RILEY

Like, a Durmstrang Arcadia as opposed to the Hogwarts Arcadia?

ALFIE

Yeah.

FETCH

There is only one Arcadia. And she was not there.

MACKENNA

Then where the hell did she come from?

MUSICAL TRANSITION

25. Wodan's Court

WODAN

To say I'm disappointed is a vast understatement.

ROBIN

Over hill, over dale...we've been everywhere, and no sign of any Old Ones.

WODAN

I might be more forgiving if you actually took more than one night for your search.

BLACK ANNIS

Wodan has been gone for so long, and Black Annis has heard of many Old Ones abandoning the old ways...or perishing.

WODAN

There must be more! The future, my plans, I demand it!

(beat, calmer)

It was foretold.

BLACK ANNIS / ROBIN / MASTER OF SHADOW

So spake Wodan.

WODAN

We have much to do, much to prepare for, and only a short time in which to do it.

BLACK ANNIS

The Wild Hunt is nigh!

WODAN

Yes. For the first time in millennia, the first time since the Younglings of the Unseelie Court rebelled, we shall ride the night skies again, and bring woe and ruin to all mortals who would look upon us. The world shall begin anew.

ROBIN

Eye my bull and skin my hide, we're goin' a'hunting!

WODAN

Not like this we aren't. As powerful as I am, an army this small is unfit for my return. There are things that must happen on the Wild Hunt that the three of you alone cannot do.

VOICE

The Master of Shadow will offer a solution.

MASTER OF SHADOW

My lord, it would be but a small pittance compared to the might and majesty of your past parades, but might I offer a solution?

WODAN

Will it work?

VOICE

Yeah, actually, it might be the only way instead of just the preordained way.

MASTER OF SHADOW

To make constructs to replace the lost riders would require a location of deepest darkness--

WODAN

If it will work, then do it.

(beat)

What are you waiting for? You have a job that you are maybe competent enough for. Move!

MASTER OF SHADOW

Thank you for your faith, I vow it is not misplaced and I-

WODAN

(menacingly)

Why are you still here?

Rapid stepping sideways as he flees Wodan's wrath.

ROBIN

My my, I haven't seen an Old One flee for the hills that fast since spicy taco night at the bingo parlor!

BLACK ANNIS

(cackles)

That one thought it could prosper from Wodan's return without work! Without sacrifice!

WODAN

He is not the only one left with work to do, my loyal subjects.

ROBIN

Surely you're not denying us a well-deserved break? Can you imagine what dear cousin Annie will look like without her beauty sleep?

BLACK ANNIS

The Puck argues with Wodan and mocks Black Annis!

ROBIN

Collective bargaining actually does require some collectivism, you talking blueberry.

WODAN

Enough. If you want to lead armies during the Wild Hunt, then you'll have to make them yourselves. Or stay grounded.

BLACK ANNIS

That one may have a task, but surely Black Annis is worthy of the new world?

WODAN

As always, it must be earned. After. After the world is remade and rebuilt as I see fit, you can rest in your rightful places.

ROBIN

(clapping)

A race then! To the fleet of foot go the spoils.

BLACK ANNIS

Black Annis is worthy of a place at the true god's court. Black Annis has ridden the night sky and watched time repeat for eons.

ROBIN

(mischievous)

But of course. No need for you to trouble yourself, then. Just let me and our shadowy slip of a friend carry on in our little chores. No need to worry; some young upstart couldn't possibly replace you. Don't even bother one teensy little brain cell at the thought.

(giggles)

Toodles!

Stepping sideways departure.

BLACK ANNIS

The Puck thinks to fool Black Annis. That one thinks Black Annis doesn't know what that one is doing. Black Annis knows. Black Annis does not play games. Black Annis shall form legions of new dolls and outrank that one in the new world!

Stepping sideways departure.

VOICE

The best and brightest of the bunch you have there.

WODAN

It's not what I expected for my return.

(beat)

You said there were more, and they found no one.

VOICE

I said there will be more by the end. I didn't say when you would find them.

WODAN

You're playing games. Telling half-truths.

VOICE

I cannot lie to you, but is a life without surprises really worth living?

WODAN

All the useless, banal trivia you prattled on and on about for thousands of years--

VOICE

I thought you would be grateful for the entertainment during your imprisonment.

WODAN

--and now you play keep-away with important information, when complete return to power is so nearly in my grasp?

VOICE

If you were supposed to know, you would ask the right questions. What will be, will be. Maybe try being more direct.

WODAN

I still feel them. Where are they?

VOICE

I did use the word "direct," didn't I?

WODAN

(gritted)

Where. Are. The Anthropophagi?

MUSICAL TRANSITION

26. Thorne House

RILEY

Does the "where" really matter? She's here, and she's the only clue we've got.

THOMAS

The clue to what, exactly?

RILEY

To whatever Wodan is planning! If we can't go directly to the source, then the fetch that's going Girl, Interrupted is the next best thing.

ALFIE

But she's mad. What's to say she even knows anything?

SHAYLEE

The phrase she keeps repeating, "so spake Wodan?" It's basically an Old One catch phrase. We've heard Black Annis say it in her Bower, Robin in his potion shop...

MACKENNA

And those two were chanting in the courtroom when...before Wodan...

NISSA

According to Dane, that was the motto of all the Old Ones that followed Wodan. Somewhere between a pledge, a prophecy, and a threat.

RILEY

You think she might have some connection to Wodan? Or the Old Ones?

THOMAS

There's no other way for her to know the phrase, right? Not in a wikipedia anywhere, or maybe something you might have heard in Arcadia?

FETCH

We were only told that the Magister killed Wodan and thus was as a god. Any teaching of Wodan and the Old Ways would be considered heresy.

MACKENNA

Well, she had to learn the phrase from somewhere. And chanting it now, after Wodan broke free? She has to know something.

RILEY

Let's go ask her!

NISSA

I don't like going in blind. The more we know about her, the better prepared we are.

ALFIE

Are we really going to waste time doing more research on things we won't find?

THOMAS

This isn't a mythical god; this is a human, with family and a life. There will be records of her.

FETCH

Her family is irrelevant, as is her changeling. They are dead and had no role in her upbringing.

MACKENNA

So, hypothetically, if we wanted to learn about what makes you tick, where would we look?

FETCH

My master--the one who created my changeling. If I had one.

MACKENNA

Were there any Alders, or Lairds or whatever, in the Court crazy enough to have a fetch turn out like this?

SHAYLEE

None I encountered.

FETCH

The Magister would have had them put down for their inability to control their wards and for risking their secrets.

ALFIE

Okay, so I have three possibilities. One--

MACKENNA

The fetch isn't from Arcadia. They were taken by someone outside the Court. Someone who knew of Wodan, and the Old Ways, and now their fetch knows, too.

RILEY

Anything else you were going to add?

ALFIE

Well, yes, but when Mack says it, it sounds so much cooler.

THOMAS

Is there any chance Dane had a list of the Old Ones that were exiled from Arcadia?

NISSA

The only ones with details are the ones we already know: Robin Goodfellow and Black Annis. There are mentions of others, but everything is speculation: their names, their abilities, if they're even alive.

MACKENNA

There's only one place where we can get the information we need, Niss.

NISSA

I know. I just don't like it.

SHAYLEE

We'll be dealing with the human world, not the Hidden. We'll need help getting to the mad fetch.

THOMAS

I can call Sam for a favor, but I don't know if her contact in Richmond owes her big enough to get us into a high-security facility.

ALFIE

Thomas, I know your first instinct is always to roll for charisma, but we have a rogue that can lock pick technology.

RILEY

And a bard with a dex that can pull credentials out of thin air.

ALFIE

And a tiefling paladin with the strength to punch a hole in space-time!

MACKENNA

Come again?

NISSA

I think they're talking about the three of us.

SHAYLEE

Aye, you missed the adventure of role-playing in Alfie's brain.

ALFIE

What I'm saying is that this is a three-member party stealth mission. And Nissa, Shaylee, and Mackenna have all the equipment, spells, and experience they need to avoid a T.P.K.

SHAYLEE

T.P.K.?

RILEY

Total-party-kill.

MUSICAL TRANSITION

27. Anthropophagi coven.

VOICE

Nothing left but bodies. Or parts of
bodies.

Wodan walks through the cave. Echoes of footsteps on stone,
with the occasional squish of stepping in something
organic.

VOICE (CONT'D)

Not enough predators to reduce them to
bone, but something--or someone--has
been gnawing on them.

Wodan stops walking and stoops down to the body of a fallen
Old One. The decayed body squishes as he prods it with his
finger.

WODAN

A hole in the chest. Are internal
organs still used for rituals?

VOICE

As if mortals could cause such damage
to the Hidden. Look closer...what else
is missing?

WODAN

Headless. Not even the neck still
attached.

VOICE

Headless, heartless. Sound like anyone
we know?

WODAN

Don't be so hard on yourself, old
friend. I'd never call you heartless.

VOICE

Then you don't know how this story
ends.

WODAN

I would if you just told me.

Wodan stands and dusts his hand off.

WODAN (CONT'D)

Like this: I asked you where the Anthropophagi were, and it would have been so simple to say "dead," but instead you lead me here. To a tomb.

VOICE

I've told you: if you were supposed to know, you'd ask the right questions. Besides, you've been a storyteller for so long, it seems you've forgotten the most important rule: don't tell, show.

WODAN

You've wasted enough of my time.

VOICE

But that's the risk of showing, isn't it? You can lead your audience to the conclusion, but you can't make them see.

WODAN

See what? All that I've lost while imprisoned? How I was tossed away and forgotten, and all those who worshipped me were nearly erased? Oh, I'm aware. I know loss. I need them and they're dead, but so what? The Wild Hunt will come and the world will be remade, with or without them. I could have a thousand more, or none at all. It makes no difference.

VOICE

It makes all the difference, but nothing so deep. We both know you're not the sentimental type. No. See. Look at them, without all your assumptions of what they were or what happened to them.

WODAN

If they are dead, what does it matter?

VOICE

Perhaps you need more handholding than I thought. Can you count? How many bodies are there?

WODAN

One. Two...Eight.

(beat)

One still walks. One ignored my summons.

VOICE

There we are. Now, will you look again? Headless, heartless...do I really have to spell it all out for you?

WODAN

Ah. I imagine the Magister thought he was being clever? They stuck their necks out for me, and thus--

VOICE

Were relieved of them.

WODAN

And the last one...the summons were not unheeded but unheard. Where is he?

VOICE

But your summons were heard, oh great ruler of the Hidden. The better question is by whom?

WODAN

Being led all over creation for your amusement is exhausting. Out with it.

VOICE

I promise, you will be very amused by the next stop.

WODAN

Where?

VOICE

The anthropophagus's ears repose in the solitary ward of a high security mental institution.

WODAN

A human?

VOICE

A fetch.

MUSICAL TRANSITION

28. Nissa's apartment.

NISSA

Okay, the security checkpoint wasn't too bad, and you still have your weapons. Nice work. You should now be approaching main reception. Your IDs should be in their system, along with a "note" from the director that you are allowed unrestricted, private access to the patient.

SHAYLEE

(through speakers)

(American accent)

Doctor Sharon Donal, from Reid Health. This is my graduate student, Makayla Rose. We were called to assess a patient experiencing a psychotic break?

NISSA

Good on you to memorize the names. Maybe pass some of that expert-level training on to Mack.

SHAYLEE

(through speakers)

(snickers)

(beat)

Oh. Sorry. No, nothing's funny.

NISSA

Sorry about that. I don't mean to throw you off your spy game.

SHAYLEE

(through speakers)

Sure, my phone's my only electronic device.

(beat)

My Bluetooth? Are you sure?

NISSA

Well, shit. Sounds like this is where I leave you. I'll be watching from the security cameras.

29.

Security door buzzes open, Shaylee and Mackenna walk through the facility.

MACKENNA

You know I could have tried mind-tricking her, right? Could have waltzed right in without any hacking.

SHAYLEE

Maybe I'll try, next time.

MACKENNA

Can you do that?

SHAYLEE

I couldn't have done it before you. But I feel different now. Not stronger, but...trickier. Because now I'm your construct.

MACKENNA

Don't say it like that. You're my Shaylee. And if you want to practice, you should test it out on Alfie. Make him quack whenever Riley deadpans a joke.

SHAYLEE

So you want me to turn him into a duck.

(beat)

I might have a go.

MACKENNA

Well, you're welcome for any extra mojo I gave you.

SHAYLEE

(innuendo)

That's not the only thing you gave me.

MACKENNA

Did I also give you innuendo? I feel like there was less of that before.

SHAYLEE

Maybe you just weren't paying attention.

MACKENNA

No, flirty Shaylee is definitely new and improved.

SHAYLEE

I can stop if it bothers you, bathroom girl.

MACKENNA

I did say improved. Keep everything except "bathroom girl."

SHAYLEE

No promises.

Continued walking.

SHAYLEE

The isolation ward is just up ahead. Nissa hacked into the facility's security system, so we know the fetch wasn't very active from the security camera, but the camera doesn't have a mic, so we can't hear her.

MACKENNA

Right. We'll stay back as much as we can, but if she is a fetch, she's only human. Without metal, without iron, there's nothing she can do to actually hurt either of us.

SHAYLEE

And if she is a fetch, she's not going to like Shaylee the changeling very much. You'll have to get her on your side. She should respect and fear the Hidden parts of you, at least.

MACKENNA

If she's not the kind predisposed to killing the halfling abomination.

SHAYLEE

Like you said: with what weapon?

MACKENNA

Your concern for my safety is touching.

SHAYLEE

We just need her to agree to come with us and hopefully get the full story from her back at the safehouse.

MACKENNA

Right, because that worked so well with the other Mackenna when you and Thomas tried.

SHAYLEE

This time it's me and you. And I think your magical compulsion will make all the difference.

MACKENNA

(exasperated)

Fine. We get in, Jedi mind-trick her, Nissa cuts the cameras while you step her sideways, and then we pull the alarm and say she's escaped. The less time we spend alone with her in there, the better.

Walking stops.

SHAYLEE

This is it.

MACKENNA

Well, here we go. Time to deprogram another fetch. If that's what she is.

SHAYLEE

Be careful, Mack.

30. The door buzzes open. They enter, and it shuts behind them. The Mad Fetch is lowly mumbling incoherent words.

LEE

Mackenna and Shaylee know right away that they will not be taking the Fetch back to their friends. In fact, they want to keep their loved ones as far away from this monster as possible, even if the one each cares about most is already in the room with her.

MACKENNA

Ugh, gross. Ever hear of hygiene?

LEE

There's dried blood all over the room, brown streaks and smears on every surface. Its metallic scent clouds the air like smog, even if the volume of it is less than a mortal amount. The evidence of the blood's origin is all over the Fetch's hands: old scars and fresh scabs in the crescent-moon pattern of teeth, on fingers so wounded it was a wonder they could work at all.

FETCH

They came. They came. It's almost over, they finally came.

LEE

She leers at them, cracked lips pulling back to reveal jagged and broken teeth stained with the evidence of her self-harm.

SHAYLEE

(whisper)

I'll try first. Maybe a familiar accent would make her more comfortable?

(American accent)

Hello. My name's Sharon. We've been told you were having some trouble and would like to help.

FETCH

The trainer and the halfling have finally come!

SHAYLEE

(Irish accent)

Or, you know, she already knows who we are.

MACKENNA

Fine, you know who we are, so you know why we're here.

(magical voice)

You're feeling very tired. You're going to fall asleep and not wake up until I tell you to.

FETCH

Oh, no, no-no-no-no, no no!

I know this game.

(sing-song)

And I don't want to play it.

LEE

The Fetch rises from where she was curled on the floor, pulling the bed sheet covering her tighter around her shoulders, but they can still see the enormous scar marring her bare chest: ribs and sternum indented, skin puckering inward, like a mouth ready to devour a meal straight into her torso.

MACKENNA

(magical voice)

You're going to sleep and come with us.

FETCH

I can't sleep. I can't leave. I'm supposed to be here.

SHAYLEE

(aside)

Mackenna, I don't think magic is going to work on her. We can't take her back like this. It wouldn't be safe.

MACKENNA

You know what? You're right. You are absolutely supposed to be here. But we're not. So, if you could just answer a few questions, we'll be out of your...well, it looks like you pulled all of your hair out, but you get it.

FETCH

You are supposed to be here, halfling. I've waited so long. You were supposed to come. You were all supposed to come.

(whispered)

And I am supposed to tell you.

SHAYLEE

(suspicious)

Tell us what?

The Fetch makes one slow step forward at a time.

FETCH

Tell you where he is. Where father is. Athair. He's waiting. Oh, he's waited so long. And now, the halfling is here and I heard the call, I finally heard his voice! Do you know what it's like? Have you heard it?

SHAYLEE

Whose voice? Your...father's? The Old One who took you?

LEE

Mackenna and Shaylee have been backing away as the Fetch moves closer, but the room is so small that there's barely enough space to get as much distance as they'd like.

FETCH

No, no, you've heard it. Not the summons, but his voice. My father's athair's voice. He spake. And he comes!

MACKENNA

(utter dread)

Wodan.

LEE

There's enough room now, with Mackenna and Shaylee pressed against the wall, for the Fetch to drop her blanket as she spins; she's a compass needle and the sheet its marker, the cotton fabric falling in a perfect circle around her.

FETCH

So spake Wodan!

Wodan stepping sideways arrival.

FETCH

(rapturous joy)

Father's athair!

SHAYLEE

(terrified)

Wodan!

FETCH

You spake, and I listened. You bade, and I obeyed.

WODAN

My, my. What big ears you have. For a lowly fetch to have heard the summons only meant for the Old Ones.

LEE

Still with their backs to the wall, Mackenna and Shaylee can only watch, frozen in fear, as Fetch throws herself prostrate in front of the god of the Hidden.

FETCH

(babbling)

Athair was a true disciple. He kept to the old ways and took a fetch during the reaping. Athair had no eyes, no ears, but was always searching for the signs of Wodan's return. I was always searching; I was taught the signs, as were all the fetches before me. Athair never lost faith. Never, never. Athair knew he would be rewarded when the time came.

(laughing, weeping)

And it is time, isn't it? I heard it, I heard your voice, and I screamed the summons, but athair can't hear his fetch from here. Athair was a true disciple. I am a true fetch. Please, please believe me!

WODAN

Using a human as an answering machine. How creative. Tell me then, little fetch, where is your father, hm? Where is the last anthropophagi?

FETCH

There was no more to feed us in Scythia. We stayed as long as we could, eating until the food that remained was rotted. Athair said that was where you would look for him first, but we couldn't stay. I'm sorry. I'm sorry!

WODAN

Yes, but where is he now?

FETCH

The caves of Blemmyes! That was where we lived until I was sent out to reclaim and I was captured. Please, will you take me home? Tell athair what a good fetch I was?

VOICE

I think the trainer is happy to see you. Or is that just a pistol in her pocket?

WODAN

Yes, such a good fetch, but I'm afraid your job is not yet done here. You need to deal with the changeling that thinks I don't notice she's reaching for her weapon.

LEE

Shaylee halts the slow creeping of her hand towards her front pocket, but it's Mackenna who reacts faster, pushing herself off the wall to stand between the ones she loves and fears most.

WODAN

You know you can't stop me from hurting her. I could turn her leaves to dust with a thought. Or I could torture her until she screams and begs for a death so instant.

VOICE

Well, you could. But then she wouldn't be there at the end. Paradoxes and whatnot.

MACKENNA

Don't you touch her!

WODAN

Not this time. No, I think it's much more fun to let you wallow on the idea that I can. Maybe you'll think twice about just how far you'll go to defy me. Maybe you won't. But it'll all end the same. Until then, be patient, won't you?

Wodan stepping sideways departure.

FETCH

(anguish)

No no no! Do not leave me!

LEE

Wodan left the way he came, and the fear that kept the room's three original occupants still is broken. The Fetch scrambles forward, hands grasping for a god that is no longer there, sprawling limbs breaking the circle of cloth into a tangled mess.

MACKENNA

Fuck. Oh, fuck.

SHAYLEE

Mackenna, we need to get out of here!

FETCH

You! You drove him away! I'm left here because of you! I waited and waited, and you ruined everything! You! Ruin! Everything!

MACKENNA

Shit, the door's locked! Nissa! The door!

FETCH

(angry scream)

SHAYLEE

Mack, the sheet!

LEE

While the Mad Fetch cuts a terrifying figure with her scarred and bloodied body, she is also so weak from malnourishment that she doesn't move at nearly the speed needed to be a threat to our heroes.

Mack and Shaylee run for the bedsheet.

LEE (CONT'D)

She is barely on her knees by the time Mackenna and Shaylee grab the edges of

the cloth and clothesline the poor creature, sending her flying backwards.

The Fetch screams and thrashes.

LEE

They wrap the sheet around her, pinning her arms to her sides, narrowly avoiding her gnashing teeth and flailing body.

MACKENNA

Let's get out of here. Nissa! Hurry!

SHAYLEE

Not sure how long the sheet will hold. She shouldn't be this strong.

Mackenna bangs on the door and the fabric of the sheet begins to rip.

MACKENNA

Come on, Niss!

The door buzzes open. They leave quickly and pause to catch their breath just outside the door.

SHAYLEE

That was...eventful.

MACKENNA

Just our fucking luck. Trying to follow a side clue to avoid going directly head-on with the all-powerful god, and who shows up but the all-powerful god?

SHAYLEE

He was looking for the same thing as us: whoever the fetch's "father" was.

MACKENNA

But if he's omniscient, why did he have to ask? And why does he need this Old One?

MUSICAL TRANSITION

31. The Caves of Blemmyes

WODAN

What was the point of all this? One word from you would have prevented hours of struggle.

VOICE

Those detours weren't for you. You're not the only character in this little story.

WODAN

How did my presence change future events?

VOICE

(sigh)

So eager to forgo all the surprises. The halfling needed to know what you were looking for, and she needed to know that you knew that she knew. An endless chain of mutual knowledge.

WODAN

Why?

VOICE

Hesitation. She needs to know what comes next but be afraid to take action.

WODAN

What purpose does that serve?

VOICE

You're like a human toddler, always questioning "why." I could swear there were times in the past millennia where you were begging me to shut up. But now? Oh, how the tables have turned.

WODAN

We had agreed on the correct course of action back then. What decisions would be made after I was freed.

VOICE

We had. And nothing has changed. We haven't strayed from the path. I just didn't bother you with a few minor details until the appropriate time. It's like you don't trust me.

WODAN

I don't.

VOICE

You shouldn't.

Sounds of chewing up ahead echo throughout the cave.

VOICE (CONT'D)

But you don't need to. You'll see the results for yourself, soon.

The chewing stops, and the Anthropophagi turns.

ANTHROPOPHAGI

Who goes there? What snack comes to...oh, could it be?

VOICE

They feel your presence.

WODAN

Come forward, Old One.

ANTHROPOPHAGI

Our lord Wodan, is it really you?

VOICE

But they cannot hear you. Cannot see you. The mouth in their chest is only for feeding and speaking. If you wish to be understood, you'll have to let them feel your lips.

WODAN

The depths I'll sink to for complete control.

Wodan crouches down, and grabs the Anthropophagi's hand, placing their fingers over his mouth.

WODAN (CONT'D)

Do you understand me?

ANTHROPOPHAGI

Oh, it is the return of the true god!
We felt the power that swelled in the
earth at your coming but did not
believe you would ever seek out ones as
lowly as the Anthropophagi.

WODAN

You did not answer the summons.

ANTHROPOPHAGI

The Younglings took so much from us,
from all the loyal Old Ones after the
rebellion. We sought a way to still be
wary of your coming, but...please,
forgive us!

WODAN

You have lost much: your head, your
senses, your siblings.

ANTHROPOPHAGI

But not all is lost! We still feed,
still speak, and we as a family exist
in one body now!

MIMIR

That's one way to justify cannibalism.

WODAN

If you speak, then speak the words.
Answer the summons and raise the steeds
that my party will ride. Join the Wild
Hunt and be reborn whole in the new
world.

ANTHROPOPHAGI

We answer the call! So spake Wodan!

THE END