

**THE HIDDEN PEOPLE**

Episode 2.10

"Excision"

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TEASER

105.

NARRATOR

We all have a monster. Something we keep in a cage, under lock and key, put a cover over and pretend doesn't exist.

Samnus rattles the bars to the cage she's held in.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Of course, some monsters are more literal than others. But there's a rule about a monster in a cage: at some point, that monster will get out. No matter how thick the bars or how strong the chains, monsters don't stay trapped forever.

Samnus strikes the bars angrily.

SAMNUS

(growls)

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Worried? That this monster's going to shed its bindings right in front of you to seek revenge?

(low chuckle)

Don't be. That's the other rule about monsters in a cage: more often than not, they don't escape. No, for monsters, freedom doesn't come through brute force or cunning...

SAMNUS

(taunting)

Thomas...

NARRATOR

...freedom comes from some idiot opening the cage door.

END TEASER

106. Abandoned jail cell.

Thomas finishes the last stroke and stands up from crouching.

THOMAS

That's the last blood glyph.

SHAYLEE

Let me double check.

THOMAS

This isn't my first time transcribing unknown symbols in animal blood, you know.

MACKENNA

Technically that wasn't your body, so it doesn't count.

THOMAS

It's not like it requires muscle memory.

MACKENNA

Regardless, we only have enough love-in-idleness potion for one more switching spell, so no dumb mistakes.

THOMAS

(totally offended)

Yeah, well I'll try not to be offended by your lack of faith in my calligraphy skills.

SHAYLEE

Your handwriting is very pretty, Thomas.

MACKENNA

Everything look good?

SHAYLEE

Aye.

THOMAS  
 (mumbled)  
 I told you so.  
 (normal)  
 Sam, we're ready.

Murphy barks from a short distance away, and then walks closer.

SAM  
 Yes, Thomas?

THOMAS  
 Not you.

SHAYLEE  
 Eventually her. Alright Sam-Murphy.  
 You've got to say what you've learned  
 while in this body.

Murphy barks twice.

MACKENNA  
 Umm.

Murphy growls, yips, then barks again.

SHAYLEE  
 That'll have to do, won't it?

SAM  
 My turn?

THOMAS  
 No.

MACKENNA  
 (sighs)  
 Yes. Its has to be everyone involved.

SAMNUS  
 Oh, the things I have learned.

THOMAS  
 Sam, you don't have to be here for  
 this.

SHAYLEE

Yes, she does. I'm sorry. To both of you.

SAMNUS

I haven't been in this body long. A blink of an eye in the span of my life. However, there have been so many new sensations in that short time.

SHAYLEE

No need to wax poetic. Get on with it already.

SAMNUS

I've learned to appreciate my food. Going from consuming mindlessly, inhaling the nearest meal to sate the unending hunger, to having to chew? To taste? What a wonder.

(beat)

I'm fond of bread, but what a shame Ron wasn't tastier. There are more humans than bakeries.

Murphy growls.

THOMAS

Okay, that's enough. Shaylee. Chant. Now.

SHAYLEE

Right.

### **MUSICAL TRANSITION**

107. Other room in abandoned jail. Door opening and Shaylee, Mackenna, Thomas, and Smurphy enter.

ALFIE

Did it work?

Murphy whines.

THOMAS

(terse)

No.

NISSA  
What went wrong?

SHAYLEE  
Hard to say. Maybe we needed the head  
as well, or--

MACKENNA  
Or maybe it was mocking us with the  
"what I learned" bit.

SHAYLEE  
Or Murphy needed to say what he  
learned, too?

ALFIE  
Wait, where is Murphy's consciousness,  
or whatever? It's... it's not in the  
creepy alien head, right?

Murphy barks.

ALFIE (CONT'D)  
The dog isn't allowed to die.

Murphy barks.

ALFIE (CONT'D)  
Smurphy, bark twice if Murphy's alive.

NISSA  
How would Sam know?

Murphy barks twice.

ALFIE  
Yes! I knew it!

MACKENNA  
This isn't really the time, Alfie. That  
was the last of the potion, but even if  
we had more of it, we couldn't have  
done anything different. We'll have to  
think of something else.

THOMAS  
So, we're back to square one?

SHAYLEE

Not square one. We have the beast captured now. We just need to find a way to expel it from Sam's body.

NISSA

And get Sam out of Murphy and back into said body.

MACKENNA

So, any brilliant ideas?

ALFIE

I mean, technically you could say that Sam is possessed, right? Why don't we try an exorcism? Like they do on Ghost Chasers!

NISSA

Ghosts aren't real, Alfie.

ALFIE

You aren't the font of all supernatural knowledge, Nissa.

SHAYLEE

But I am. And ghosts aren't real.

ALFIE

Well excuse me for not keeping my mythical versus real spreadsheet up to date!

SHAYLEE

But that might be a place to start. Myths versus reality. Body switching humans is one thing, but call it something else, possession or puppeteering? Sounds more like something the Hidden would do.

THOMAS

Do you know of any Hidden with those powers that would help us?

SHAYLEE

The number of Hidden that would help us can be counted on one hand. And the other hand would be holding the knife to stab us in the back.

THOMAS

Why even bring it up if it's hopeless?

MACKENNA

It's not hopeless, Thomas.

(beat)

Shaylee, if it's something the Hidden can do, would Liliana have known about it?

SHAYLEE

I suppose, but it's not a guarantee. Besides, she's gone, so it's not like...oh.

NISSA

Mack, you can't.

THOMAS

Can't what?

NISSA

Do you remember how her memories affected you in the In-Between? What we went through to put those on lock-down? Because I do!

MACKENNA

Of course I remember. But this is different. We're in a controlled environment, without anything trying to kill us, and I know how to turn off the flow now.

SHAYLEE

(awed)

You gained all of Liliana's memories. She was second only to the Magister, and he had no living heirs. You...you might have more innate knowledge than any of the Hidden.



NISSA

And how long will it take you to sort through all that knowledge, Mack? Or, stop the flow of memories if Cygnus--

ALFIE

Samnus.

NISSA (CONT'D)

--gets free and starts attacking? It's too risky.

MACKENNA

It's worth the risk. We have nothing else to go on.

SHAYLEE

Nissa's right. It's not likely Liliana would've had the information we need.

THOMAS

Do we seriously have nothing?

SHAYLEE

No. Mackenna gave me an idea. A while ago, I mean, when she was me.

MACKENNA

You're going to sass the Court?

SHAYLEE

I'm going to sneak into the Hall of the Sagas and steal a page.

THOMAS

Would they have the information we need?

SHAYLEE

If it exists, it's there. The trouble is finding it. And I'll have to be fast.

THOMAS

And, what do we do in the meantime? Twiddle our thumbs?

ALFIE

Uh, maybe someone should keep an eye on the murderous body-snatcher we have locked in a cell?

Murphy growls.

THOMAS

We're not babysitting that thing.

NISSA

I'll take first shift. Mack, can you use my laptop to find a few back-up locations and create some circles nearby? I'd like to have some hidey-holes in case things go south here.

MACKENNA

I feel like an abandoned jail in a no-name town in middle America is as hidey-hole as you can get, but whatever makes you happy.

ALFIE

Hey, I can do that and radio the coordinates to Mack.

NISSA

Do not touch my computer, Alfie.

ALFIE

Aw, come on! I get crumbs in the keyboard one time...

NISSA

It was ten crumbs in seven keys, Alfie. You're perma-banned. Thomas, keep him away from my shit.

THOMAS

Right. Babysitting.

SHAYLEE

I'll be back as soon as I can. Best of luck, the rest of you.

ALFIE  
The luck o' the Irish!

SHAYLEE  
Never again, Alfie.

Stepping sideways departure.

NISSA  
Come get me when she's back.

108. Nissa walking to the cell. Audio follows her. Door opens and closes, and Samnus taps on the bars of the cell.

SAMNUS  
I was getting lonely.

NISSA  
You can stay that way. I'm not one for  
small talk.

SAMNUS  
I prefer quiet ones. Screaming upsets  
my appetite.  
(beat)  
You're not going to just wipe up all  
that blood, are you? I could use a  
drink.

#### **MUSICAL TRANSITION**

109. The Hall of the Sagas. Shaylee flips through pages.

NARRATOR  
A room containing all the knowledge of  
an ageless species. Unmarked,  
unorganised tomes bound and left  
undisturbed for millenia. It would take  
a lifetime to find what you were  
looking for, if you even knew what to  
look for.

SHAYLEE  
(sighs)

Shaylee closes a book, slides another closer to her, and begins to look through it.

NARRATOR

Of course, Shaylee might have had better luck had she not started in the section generally considered to be "gourmet recipes."

SHAYLEE

(reading aloud softly)

"Waybas: To sate endless hunger."

(normal)

Closest thing I found so far.

Pages flipping as Shaylee skips to the recipe.

SHAYLEE (CONT'D)

(reading)

"Prepare the loaf by lighting a tarro candle and heating the room to the identical warmth of a soft flame. In a bowl made of the shell of a cocos drupe--"

NARRATOR

But, Shaylee's venture into mystical baking is interrupted by you, Alder Niamh. Something terrible must have happened for you to call on her so soon after your last tete-a-tete.

SHAYLEE

Shite.

Shaylee rips the page out of the book and stuffs it into her pocket.

NARRATOR

Defacing the possessions of the Hidden. The halfling has had a bad influence on you, trainer.

Stepping sideways departure.

110. The Hidden Court. Stepping sideways arrival. Door to court opens.

ALDER NIAMH

Trainer. You came quickly. Good. This is an urgent matter for the Court.

SHAYLEE

Esteemed Alders. Inquisitors. Sentinels. How may I serve?

ALDER ODHRAN

There has been an intrusion into the most sacred spaces of the Court.

ALDER NIAMH

We should hardly consider your quarters "sacred," Alder Odhran.

ALDER ODHRAN

I demand answers!

ALDER NIAMH

And we shall have them. Trainer, Alder Odhran's room was broken into and his fetch killed.

SHAYLEE

My condolences.

ALDER ODHRAN

Save your sympathies; our thief was sloppy. If not for the body staining my floor, I would not have known of the true violation: the scoundrel absconded with the personal writings of our late Magister!

ALDER NIAMH

(pointed)

To think, the villain would have gotten away completely undetected if not for being caught by your little wretch, Odhran.

ALDER ODHRAN

My possession killed, an heirloom of the Court stolen...I will not stand for such disrespect!

ALDER NIAMH

And answers we shall have. I suspect an enemy to the Court. One brought to attention at our last assembly.

(beat)

The Old Ones.

SHAYLEE

(sigh of relief)

ALDER NIAMH (CONT'D)

Only the ancient ones have the power to break your protection enchantments and leave no trace, as well as harbor the resentment to commit such a blatant act of desecration. You disregarded my concerns to your own ruin, Alder Odhran. But I perceived the true threat and stand to lead the Hidden into a brighter future.

(beat)

That bright future requires elimination of all threats to the Court, trainer. Including the ones that stooped so low as to attack an Alder's possessions.

SHAYLEE

How do you wish me to serve the Court, Alders?

ALDER ODHRAN

You have had contact with the Old Ones, haven't you, changeling?

NARRATOR

At this point in my retelling, you've all realized what she's doing, surely. Counting the number of Inquisitors in the Court, sizing up the various Sentinels, stalling for precious seconds to twist her words into truth.

SHAYLEE

I sought the aid of the ancient one called Black Annis.

ALDER NIAMH

That witch! I knew she escaped the fate of her sisters. What of her now?

SHAYLEE

She is exiled in the Hills of Dane. Same M.O. as always: oak tree, cave, baby skins.

(beat)

She talks like she's more than half-mad. Maybe she's crafty enough to sneak in and take a young fetch by surprise, but a single Court Sentinel could eliminate one crazy old woman, right?

INQUISITOR

She speaks true.

NARRATOR

Words as precise as a sharp-shooter, never quite untruthful. You all didn't pay close enough attention then, too caught up in your own hubris to believe a mere changeling could outwit you.

ALDER NIAMH

Sentinel Padraig, you are tasked to the Bower of Black Annis. Return with her head, or not at all.

Stepping sideways as Padraig leaves.

NARRATOR

Spoiler: we haven't seen him since.

ALDER NIAMH

Any others, trainer?

SHAYLEE

No.

INQUISITOR

She speaks false.

SHAYLEE

Robin Goodfellow. Known to the Court as Puck.

ALDER ODHRAN

And what did you seek him out for,  
trainer?

SHAYLEE

(carefully)

He is known for his ability to procure  
certain rare flora--

ALDER NIAMH

You sought out an Old One for drugs?

(beat)

How did you even find him?

SHAYLEE

It was when I was with Mackenna Thorne.  
A construct of Lady Liliana would be  
imbued with powers that would have  
interested him. He let us find him.

INQUISITOR

She speaks true.

NARRATOR

Technically, technically true. I'm sure  
you're all kicking yourselves now for  
what you missed seeing then, but really,  
her ability for verbal gymnastics is of  
olympic quality. Tens across the board.

ALDER NIAMH

Then to pull this thread, we need what  
we have already tasked you to: find.  
Mackenna. Thorne, trainer. This Court  
will not be safe until you do.

SHAYLEE

As the Court wills, Alders.

Shaylee walks away, the door closing behind her.

ALDER ODHRAN

How much faith do you have in this  
trainer, Alder Niamh? Thus far her hunt  
has been fruitless, and the urgency  
rises every day.



ALDER NIAMH

She has yet to be useless, Alder Odhran,  
and she does as she is told.

ALDER ODHRAN

Without a Magister, I fear we shall  
become victim to more intrusions by the  
Old Ones, seeking retribution for the  
overthrow of their god.

ALDER NIAMH

Our god, Alder Odhran. We are still  
bound by his magic, and it was he who  
gave the Magister power over all of the  
Hidden, including the Old Ones.

(beat)

Power that might protect us once again.

ALDER ODHRAN

Alder Niamh?

ALDER NIAMH

Histories specifically said that...I  
must go. Send for me when there is  
progress on this front.

NARRATOR

What new secret have you uncovered,  
Alder Niamh? And who else will die  
because of it?

### **MUSICAL TRANSITION**

111. The abandoned jail. Stepping sideways arrival.

SHAYLEE

I've got something, but it might also  
be nothing. How're things here?

MACKENNA

We've got abandoned shopping malls,  
amusement parks, and/or nuclear test  
sites to step to if needed, all with  
their own security room and one-size-  
fits-all cell.

ALFIE

What do you have to do wrong to be locked up in an amusement park? Not have fun?

THOMAS

Crowded area, with a bunch of excited children running out of sight for "just a moment?" It's a hunting ground for terrible people.

MACKENNA

Wow, Thomas. I never thought I'd have to say this to you, but can you not be such a downer?

THOMAS

I'm...irritable.

MACKENNA

No kidding.

THOMAS

(sighs)

Shaylee, you said you have something? Something that will work this time?

SHAYLEE

Maybe. It's a hunger spell, but the description had almost the exact phrasing that Cygnus used earlier: "to sate endless hunger." I don't think it's coincidence.

THOMAS

And you couldn't find anything else that's definitely not a coincidence?

MACKENNA

Thomas, back off. She did her best.

SHAYLEE

I was called to the Court. I couldn't do more without being caught. This is what we have, and we're going to work with it. Alright?

THOMAS

Right. I'm sorry, Shaylee.

SHAYLEE

This is trying for everyone, but especially you. I'd be out of my mind if Cygnus was in--

NISSA

(from the cell room)  
Mackenna!

ALFIE

(calling out)  
Nissa? What's wrong.

Alfie runs to the cell room and opens the room door.

NISSA

(scared)  
Shift's over. Someone else watch it.  
Please.

ALFIE

Al-alright. Come on, Shaylee's back.

MACKENNA

Nissa, what happened?

NISSA

N-nothing, just...I'm done.

MACKENNA

Nissa, you're not acting like yourself.

NISSA

(gritted teeth)  
I'm. Fine.

ALFIE

Hey, uh, Cygnus can't jump to other people, can it?

NISSA

I'm me, Alfie.

ALFIE

Can you prove that?

NISSA

(sighs)

The first day of fall break of senior year I drove us to Tom Turkey's Fried Chicken because they had an all-you-can-eat special--

ALFIE

Yup, that's Nissa. I'll go watch the hungry prisoner.

Alfie walks away.

SHAYLEE

I'll need to head out again to get ingredients for the hunger spell, most of which seem to be food.

NISSA

(quickly)

I'll go with you.

(beat)

I need to get away from here for a bit. Far away.

MACKENNA

Sure, take the time you need. But hurry back?

SHAYLEE

Yeah, see you soon.

Stepping sideways departure.

112. Alfie walking to the cell room closing the door behind him.

SAMNUS

Hello, you rich morsel.

ALFIE  
 (clears throat)  
 (with gusto)  
 Exorcizamus te! Omnis immundus  
 spiritus! Omnis--

ALFIE/SAMNUS  
 (together)  
 --satanica potestas, omnis incursio  
 infernalis adversarii.

SAMNUS  
 Omnis legio, omnis congregatio et secta  
 diabolica.  
 (beat)  
 "Sticks and stones," little Alfie. I  
 hope that wasn't the best you could do.

**MUSICAL TRANSITION**

113. Nissa's apartment, door unlocks and Shaylee and Nissa enter.

SHAYLEE  
 Tarro candle is a bit rare. Glad you  
 have one. Stepping sideways into an  
 Amazon warehouse to steal is something  
 I'd only do once.

NISSA  
 They need to step up their same day  
 shipping. The candle's in the bathroom,  
 I'll go get it.

SHAYLEE  
 Nissa, you know I have to ask.

NISSA  
 Why I ran from Cygnus like a bat out of  
 hell?

SHAYLEE  
 Aye. Typically, you're rather...  
 unflappable.

NISSA  
 Yeah, well, I'm thoroughly flapped.

SHAYLEE

What did it do?

NISSA

Sat in its cell. And talked.

SHAYLEE

About?

NISSA

Everything. The In-Between. What it did here. Me.

(beat)

It's not just what it said; it's how it said it. It got under my skin, like no one else ever has. I-I can't explain it. And I don't want to.

SHAYLEE

Nissa...

NISSA

I can't forget what it said. Not ever. And it knew that. It knew everything, Shaylee. It's a monster.

SHAYLEE

I know. We'll stop it--

NISSA

No, you don't get it! It's not mindless, Shaylee. It's not just hunger and feeding. It thinks. It has a plan, and us keeping it behind bars, trying to find a way to stop...it isn't enough. It's barely contained as it is, and if we don't destroy it before it breaks free, we're all doomed. Everyone.

SHAYLEE

Nissa, you said "destroy."

NISSA

(sad)

I know. But it will come to that. And I...I couldn't look at Thomas and Sam stuck in Murphy and know that. I can't.

SHAYLEE

Nissa, you remember everything from the past. But that doesn't mean you know the future. We'll do what we can, and if you're right, and it does come to that...Mackenna and I know what to do. And we move on from there.

NISSA

How can we possibly move on after killing Sam's body?

NARRATOR

You'll find out soon how your little group moves on after the death of one so dear.

#### **MUSICAL TRANSITION**

114. The abandoned jail.

MACKENNA

Thomas, what's "ganache?"

THOMAS

About two parts chocolate melted by one part heavy cream. Why?

MACKENNA

It's one of the ingredients in the spell.

THOMAS

What kind of spell is that? Are we going to put it in a sugar coma?

MACKENNA

It's not all food...but yeah, there's a lot of food. The spell preparation sort of reads like a recipe, too.

THOMAS

Right, because you've read so many recipes.

MACKENNA

Just the one for dad's birthday cake.

Murphy whines.

THOMAS

(sighs)

I'm sorry, both of you. I'm being an ass.

MACKENNA

At least you know it.

THOMAS

I'm trying Mackenna, it just...

(beat, sighs)

It feels like none of this will work. We're grasping at straws, and here we are hoping some coincidence will be the key, but we've really hit a dead end. I don't know what else we can do.

MACKENNA

Okay, you're really not Thomas right now. You're supposed to be annoyingly perfect, and optimistic, and "we can do anything we put our minds to." I get you're having a bad day--

THOMAS

That is a severe understatement.

MACKENNA

--but you've just got to have a little faith that this will work. Or faith that we'll keep trying until something does.

THOMAS

I just feel so helpless.



MACKENNA

You are helpless. But you're not alone.  
You have us.

THOMAS

I know. I just wish there was something  
I could do. You and Shaylee have magic  
powers, Nissa's a super hacker...

MACKENNA

Well, apparently you give very good  
belly rubs.

THOMAS

Huh?

MACKENNA

Sam-Murphy's been blissed out for the  
past five minutes while you've petted  
them.

THOMAS

Wha--oh! I'm sorry, I didn't mean...I  
just, normally, with Murphy...

Murphy shakes off, collar tags ringing.

MACKENNA

I don't think she minded. He minded.  
Whatever.

THOMAS

Still, that's weird, right? I shouldn't  
have done that.

MACKENNA

Yes, your girlfriend being trapped in  
your dog's body is weird. But I don't  
think she'll bring up the belly rubs  
when she's back in her old body if you  
don't.

THOMAS

Sam's not...we're not...I mean, we  
didn't really get a chance to talk  
about things...

Murphy barks.

MACKENNA

(teasing)

Maybe she wants to talk now. Hear what you think about being "a thing."

Murphy eagerly pants.

THOMAS

Uh, well...

115. Stepping sideways arrival as Shaylee and Nissa return.

SHAYLEE

We've returned, burdened with glorious spell ingredients.

MACKENNA

Great. I've been looking over the spell, and I think you'll need my help.

SHAYLEE

Two casters couldn't hurt. Let's set up at the table over there.

MACKENNA

(stage whisper)

You brought extra chocolate, right?

SHAYLEE

(stage whisper)

Fuck yeah I did.

THOMAS

Everything went well, I take it?

NISSA

Yeah, everything acquired. I wouldn't have minded staying away a bit longer, though.

THOMAS

Still disturbed? What happened while you were in there with it?

ALFIE  
 (in the other room)  
 G-guys? I need a tag out! Please?

A forceful silence.

THOMAS  
 (resigned sigh)  
 Right. I'll go.

Thomas stands. Murphy barks.

THOMAS (CONT'D)  
 Sam, you don't have to--

Murphy barks again.

THOMAS (CONT'D)  
 Right. Thanks.

Thomas and Murphy walk into the room where Samnus is being held.

**MUSICAL TRANSITION**

The cell room.

THOMAS  
 You can go, Alfie.

ALFIE  
 Thank you!

116. Alfie leaves in a rush. The door closes behind him and there's a pregnant silence. Murphy begins to growl lowly.

SAMNUS  
 I've been waiting for you, Thomas. I wish it were just the two of us.

THOMAS  
 You can sit down and shut up. I have nothing to say to you.

SAMNUS

I have a lot to say to you.

(beat)

You'd really give me the silent treatment? I don't remember you being so rude.

THOMAS

You don't remember me at all.

SAMNUS

Oh?

(as Sam)

I remember calling you to rescue me from my horrible date with Jacob Hornsby. Even with your face all puffy from having your wisdom teeth pulled, I thought you were so cute.

THOMAS

How do you know that? It--it has to be some sort of trick. You read Sam's diary or something.

SAMNUS

You think so little of me?

(beat)

I think you really do want to know. How I can talk like her, act like her, remember every little thing she's ever thought of any one of you? I think you're curious, aren't you?

THOMAS

None of that matters.

SAMNUS

That's not a "no," Thomas.

Samnus grips the bars of the cells.

SAMNUS (CONT'D)

Go on: tell me no. Look me in the eyes and tell me you don't want to know anything about me. It always did break her heart when you rejected her in all those little ways. One small crack at a

time. And now, her heart's just one, tiny, two-letter word away from shattering. Go on then. Say it.

THOMAS

You don't know that.

Samnus leans back, victorious.

SAMNUS

I knew you couldn't.

(beat)

And I do know that. All of it. I'm a hunter, Thomas. Hunting energy, power, sustenance. So, really, following all the little electrical trails in Sam's brain, pulling together the memories, finding even the forgotten bits that she hadn't thought of in years? It was child's play compared to the hunting I did to survive in the In-Between. That was your name for my home, wasn't it?

THOMAS

That's where you'll be going back to when we're done with you. If you're lucky.

SAMNUS

Sam knew you had a tell for when you were lying to yourself, did you know that? "False bravado." Her words, not mine. When you have to lie, you get scared. When you get scared, you try and put on a brave face. So why don't you try to tell me again what it is you're going to do to me?

(beat)

Oh my, that combination of words. What a train of thought they lead to. Not exactly a stale fantasy either. Samantha, you naughty girl.

Murphy growls angrily.

THOMAS

Shut up!

SAMNUS

Quite a few descriptors for you in that daydream, Thomas. "Tasty, delicious..."

(laughs)

She thinks you're "a snack," Thomas!

How about you let me have a taste, hmm?

THOMAS

(yelling)

I said shut up!

Thomas punches the wall and puts a hole in the old drywall. Murphy whimpers.

SAMNUS

She's never seen you angry before. Not a single memory of you raising your voice to her. But now there it is, etched in her brain, all that rage and hate in your eyes, directed right here.

THOMAS

I don't hate her, I'll never hate her. The only thing I hate is you, and once we get you out of Sam's body, I'll make you wish you had just died when your head got chopped off.

SAMNUS

If you want me out of this body, then you shouldn't have stopped me.

THOMAS

What?

SAMNUS

What, you think I want to be human? Hrmph, of course you do. You walk around, thinking you're "apex predators" and "omnivores," but really, you all overestimate your abilities. I want my body back, a body that can actually hunt and eat and doesn't break down like this when put to the tiniest bit of strain.

THOMAS

We're trying to get you out.

SAMNUS

No, you're trying to put her back in. You don't care what happens to me after--no, that's not true. Now you won't settle until I'm suffering and dead. Isn't that right, Thomas?

THOMAS

You've caused enough suffering and death.

SAMNUS

I haven't done a fraction of the damage I wrought in the In-Between. And I'm sick of babying this weak and pathetic body! I'm done playing nice, trying to get my way. I'm leaving. Now. And you're going to be the one to open the door for me.

THOMAS

That's not going to happen!

SAMNUS

I didn't want to hurt this body, not until I was sure the Sunstone could return me to my true form. But, if that's what it takes--

Samnus bites off Sam's finger.

NARRATOR

I feel like I should add some important context here. You see, in some human cultures, the left-hand ring finger is considered a romantic digit. Jewelry adorning it indicates love, commitment, and a vow tying two humans together for the rest of their short lives. And that is the finger of former-detective Sam Mulligan that Cygnus chose to eat.

Murphy howls in pain.

THOMAS

Sam!

SAMNUS

(mouth full)

Now, Thomas...

(swallows)

Will you unlock that cell door for me,  
or do I need to move on to the next  
finger?

Slowly, silently, Thomas walks to the cell door, slides the key in, and unlocks it. The door slides open.

117. Door opens, Shaylee and Mackenna enter.

MACKENNA

Thomas, we finished the spell, it  
should--

SHAYLEE

Oh, gods...

MACKENNA

Holy shit...

SAMNUS

There, was that so hard?

Samnus pats his cheek.

SAMNUS (CONT'D)

Don't worry, once I have my new body,  
you all can have Sam's back. Whatever's  
left of it, at least.

MACKENNA

You're not going anywhere!

Mackenna runs up to Samnus with the spell in hand. Samnus pushes her, sending Mackenna flying through the wall Thomas punched a hole through. The bottled spell rolls across the floor.



NARRATOR

Cygnus's push launches Mackenna across the room and through the wall Thomas so recently punched a hole into. And that pathetic hunger spell rolls across the floor to Cygnus's feet.

SAMNUS

You won't stop me.

Samnus begins to walk away, then stops.

SAMNUS (CONT'D)

But I am still hungry. How about a bite for the road?

NARRATOR

Rather than continue its streak of cannibalism, Cygnus instead sets its sights on the hunger spell, consuming it in one large bite.

SAMNUS

(small belch, laughs)

Wouldn't you know, I feel a little... full. Pity it won't last.

Samnus walks away. Thomas falls to his knees. Murphy whimpers and cries.

THE END