

THE HIDDEN PEOPLE

Episode 3.12

"The One with the Fetch"

Written by

Chris Burnside

121. Maybe start with a sitcom version of the theme song?
And some sitcommy opening titles?

ANNOUNCER

The Hidden People is filmed before a
live studio audience.

The Thorne house. Alfie sets the table.

ALFIE

Okay, so that's forks, spoons, knives,
plates...put the salad in the
middle...oh, salad bowls!

Alfie rushes away and rushes back juggling bowls. He
distributes them on the table.

ALFIE (CONT'D)

A bowl for each of us. Perfect.

(beat)

What am I forgetting? I have the dinner
rolls, the napkins...

Smoke alarm goes off.

ALFIE (CONT'D)

(obviously)

The pot roast.

Studio audience laughs.

Alfie runs to the kitchen. He opens the oven.

ALFIE (CONT'D)

Whoa, that's a lot of smoke!

Studio audience laughs.

Thomas bursts in.

THOMAS

Alfie, what's going on? Is the house on
fire? Are the Hidden People attacking?

ALFIE

I made dinner.

Studio audience laughs.

THOMAS

Oh. Let me just clear this smoke.

Opens a window and fans the smoke. Smoke alarm stops.

ALFIE

So much for trying to help out around here.

THOMAS

Making dinner was a really nice gesture. I'm sure it's a delicious...um, what is that?

Studio audience laughs.

ALFIE

It was supposed to be a pot roast.

THOMAS

Of course. Well, now it's...Cajun style. Blackened pot roast.

Studio audience laughs.

ALFIE

I don't think I can serve this. It's extra crispy, but it's definitely not the colonel's secret recipe.

Studio audience laughs.

THOMAS

No worries. We can pull together a replacement in no time.

Nissa enters the kitchen.

NISSA

What the hell happened in here?

ALFIE

(sheepish)

Pot roast?

Studio audience laughs.

NISSA

There's too much smoke in here for you to see me rolling my eyes. So I'm making sure you know that I'm rolling my eyes.

ALFIE

Hey, how do you know that Thomas didn't mess up dinner?

NISSA

Because he's Thomas. Also, if you're going to put the napkins in the glasses like a fancy restaurant, make sure they're not filled with water first.

Studio audience laughs.

ALFIE

That was a creative decision. It's easier to wipe the sauce off your fingers when the napkin is wet.

NISSA

What kind of sauce did you put on pot roast?

THOMAS

The world will never know.

Studio audience laughs.

NISSA

I suppose I should help you clean this up.

Fetch enters.

FETCH

What's everybody doing?

THOMAS/ALFIE/NISSA

Fack!

Studio audience applauds.

FETCH

Why is the house filled with smoke?

NISSA

Alfie decided to punish a pot roast.

Studio audience laughs.

FETCH

The real punishment would be eating something Alfie cooked.

Studio audience laughs.

ALFIE

Hey!

THOMAS

It's fine. You can all go sit down and relax. I can take it from here and get an entrée together. And maybe find some dry napkins.

Studio audience laughs.

Fetch, Nissa, and Alfie go into the dining room.

FETCH

I should help Thomas. I am very skilled in a kitchen.

NISSA

Didn't you mostly clean up after the cooking portion?

FETCH

Yes, but I am also very good with a knife.

ALFIE

That's true, but I think we'd like our food sliced rather than murdered.

Studio audience laughs.

FETCH

Killing with a knife is all about precision. If I can strike three vital arteries in a single motion, I can julienne carrots.

Studio audience laughs.

NISSA

I hope you're getting your other skills ready for your interview tomorrow. You know, the non-murderous ones.

ALFIE

Nissa, you have to remain impartial on this, remember?

NISSA

I know; I know. I'm not going to go easy on her just because she's Thomas's sister.

FETCH

I expect no special treatment, Nissa Sifsdottir. Rest assured, I have many skills beyond killing. I am also proficient with fighting, maiming, torturing, and doing dishes.

Studio audience laughs.

NISSA

Riiight. I think I'll go see if Thomas needs any help.

Nissa leaves.

ALFIE

Maybe don't mention all the ways you can hurt people when Nissa asks for your relevant experience. I only had to maim a customer in the music store that one time.

Studio audience laughs.

FETCH

This job feels like it is not a good match with my abilities.

ALFIE

What? You wanted this job, remember?

FETCH

I did?

ALFIE

Of course you did! You begged Nissa for the interview. You must want to do well, right?

FETCH

I...suppose I do. I do not like to fail.

ALFIE

Of course not. Nobody wants to fail. But only one person can get this job.

FETCH

I am well aware of my odds. She also wants this job. She wants everything that should be mine.

ALFIE

Well, I guess you'll just have to give a better interview.

VOICE

(faint, ghostly)

Mackenna...

FETCH

Did you say something?

ALFIE

I said that you'll just have to give a better interview. Maybe don't put listening on your list of skills, either.

Studio audience laughs.

FETCH

No, I thought...never mind.

122. Stepping sideways arrival.

Studio audience cheers.

ALFIE

Shaylee!

SHAYLEE

Hello, Alfie. Fack.

FETCH

That is not my name.

SHAYLEE

Where are the others?

ALFIE

Thomas and Nissa are in the kitchen.
Riley and Mack aren't here yet.

FETCH

Something is wrong. What happened?

SHAYLEE

Aye, something is...what's that smell?

FETCH

Alfie cooked dinner.

SHAYLEE

Oh. Of course.

(beat)

Anyway...

Studio audience laughs.

SHAYLEE (CONT'D)

I'm tracking a new changeling. The
fetch will come soon to reclaim, and
the changeling is not ready.

ALFIE

Mack and Riley could help.

SHAYLEE

I don't have time. I need to get back to my surveillance.

FETCH

I could accompany you. I know everything about reclamation. I probably know this fetch personally.

SHAYLEE

Are you sure? Field work isn't really your thing.

ALFIE

Sure it is. Fack's always wanted to help out in the field.

FETCH

I have?

ALFIE

Sure! You were just talking about it the other day. How you could do so much good out there.

FETCH

I...do not remember this. But it makes sense. I am a good person.

Studio audience laughs.

SHAYLEE

But you haven't eaten yet.

FETCH

Smell that. Fighting barghest would be easier than chewing Alfie's charcoal.

Studio audience laughs.

FETCH (CONT'D)

But I will bring these dinner rolls for our stakeout.

ALFIE

But those are the only things I didn't ruin!

Studio audience laughs.

SHAYLEE

If you're serious, I could use your help.

FETCH

I am ready.

Stepping sideways departure.

ALFIE

(grumbling)

Still better than that birthday cake.

Studio audience laughs.

SITCOM MUSIC TRANSITION

123. Café in a country you've always wanted to write music for.

FETCH

You still hide in plain sight when studying changelings?

SHAYLEE

I'd rather sit in this café and drink espresso than wear all black and lurk in the shadows in the alley across the street.

Studio audience laughs.

FETCH

Yes. You would rather spy from just across the room. Or perhaps even befriend the changeling by donning a fake persona and accent.

SHAYLEE

How would you know that?

FETCH

You think I never watched you
with...her? At the café? Or at the
place where I...where our parents died?

SHAYLEE

I didn't realize--

FETCH

Because I am very good at remaining
hidden. I don't need to lie and play
dress-up.

SHAYLEE

Dress-up? I'll have you know, American
Shaylee's wardrobe was on point!

Studio audience laughs.

FETCH

American Shaylee's wardrobe. As if that
is the second Shaylee.

SHAYLEE

I'll have you know that my characters
are very well-developed.

(American Shaylee)

American Shaylee is the second Shaylee.

Studio audience cheers.

FETCH

Incorrect. You are the second Shaylee.
If American Shaylee is anything other
than you, it is merely a copy of a
copy, too thin to be anything real.

SHAYLEE

Excuuuse me!?

Studio audience laughs.

FETCH

I knew the first Shaylee. Before she died. Because of you. Because of your cowardice. She was a formidable warrior and would have easily bested you in a fair fight. You think you deserve her name? Imposter. You are a pale imitation, a barely-animated collection of debris posing as Shaylee. You are the second Shaylee.

SHAYLEE

Oh.

(long beat)

I'm sorry.

(beat)

I...I didn't know she was your friend.

Studio audience awwws.

FETCH

I had no friends in Arcadia. She was awful, and I hated her.

Studio audience laughs.

SHAYLEE

Oh. I never really thought about you knowing...my fetch...the other Shaylee.

FETCH

She was older, in a different cadre, but I knew her. As the fetch who belonged to the Magister and Liliana, I was introduced to many more people and situations than the other fetches. It's how I knew you were the trainer the moment I laid eyes on you. Because you looked just like her.

SHAYLEE

I see. Okay, well, I'm still sorry that--

FETCH

Just drink your coffee.

SHAYLEE

You sure you don't want any?

FETCH

Coffee is for the weak.

SHAYLEE

No, coffee is for the tired. Also for the weary and the exhausted. Not that you would know much about that anymore. You just lounge around the house all day.

FETCH

I know much about feeling exhausted. I live with my overly attentive brother and Alfie.

Studio audience laughs.

SHAYLEE

Fair point. Regardless, coffee helps me focus when I'm on assignment. And since I don't have Dane to talk to, stake outs can get pretty boring.

FETCH

Fortunately, you now have me to speak with in order to pass the time.

SHAYLEE

I suppose that is the smallest step up from total silence and boredom.

Studio audience laughs.

FETCH

I am an excellent partner for surveillance. I can watch for hours without losing focus, and I can strike at a moment's notice.

SHAYLEE

Strike? Ack, I knew I shouldn't have brought you. You do know we're not in this café to murder someone.

Studio audience laughs.

FETCH

Striking does not always mean murder, trainer. I know it might seem unbelievable, but I am capable of nuance. If the fetch suddenly bursts into this place seeking immediate reclamation, at least one of us will be ready.

SHAYLEE

Right. Murder isn't immediately your go-to move. Sure. You're definitely the type to discuss things rationally and then hug it out.

Studio audience laughs.

FETCH

Why does everyone assume I am capable of nothing but murder?

SHAYLEE

Um, let's see: every plan you suggest to accomplish anything involves stabbing someone. Also, you're a convicted murderer.

Studio audience laughs.

FETCH

It is not funny. I am tired of all of you laughing about the things I've done to survive. You weren't made to do what I've done.

SHAYLEE

Do you hear me laughing about it? When do any of us laugh about you killing people?

FETCH

Always. Just now. I hear you laughing.

SHAYLEE

I didn't laugh. I didn't even smile.

FETCH

But...perhaps I am mistaken about this moment. But I hear the laughter.

SHAYLEE

Trust me. None of us think you murdering the Thornes is funny.

FETCH

But you act as if this is all I am. All I can be. You have not been forced into a life of pain and fury from which the only relief is more pain.

SHAYLEE

You might be surprised.

FETCH

Oh? Then I assume you are still the cowardly traitor who works for the Unseelie Court. Who lied to the woman you now sleep with. You are all of your past flaws and transgressions and none of your present merits and aspirations.

SHAYLEE

I've come a long way since then.

FETCH

In the exact same amount of time I have had to reflect, nearly to the day. Why do you receive the benefit of change, of improvement, while I remain the cold and heartless killer?

SHAYLEE

I don't know. Why do you remain the cold and heartless killer?

Studio audience laughs.

FETCH

This is not funny. I know I have committed terrible acts. I take responsibility even though Thomas says it isn't all my fault. If I suggest stabbing someone when we are planning something, it is because this is what I know. This is what I can do. I will kill again. This is a certainty given what we face. But I will never do so lightly again. And perhaps, if you would all help me instead of laugh at me, I could learn other ways to solve problems that do not involve stabbing. But I suppose it's just easier to laugh.

SHAYLEE

No one's laughing at you. Honest.

FETCH

We have watched this changeling for hours, and nothing has happened. I should go home and rest. I have an important interview tomorrow.

SHAYLEE

An interview? For a job?

FETCH

Nissa is allowing me to interview for a job at the music store.

SHAYLEE

But doesn't Mackenna want her job back?

FETCH

Yes. We are competing for it. As usual.

SHAYLEE

You do realize that what we're doing here is more important than retail, don't you?

FETCH

I have been given this opportunity. I will not squander it. If you do not take me home, I will assume this is all just a ploy to make me fail my interview.

SHAYLEE

Do you really think I would do that?

FETCH

No. It's what I would do, and you are not nearly as smart.

Studio audience laughs.

SHAYLEE

(sigh)

Fine. Come on.

SITCOM MUSIC TRANSITION

124. Next morning. Thorne house.

THOMAS

Are you all set for your interview today, Fack?

FETCH

Why do you keep calling me that? You do not normally call me that.

THOMAS

What do you mean? I call you that all the time.

FETCH

It is not my name.

THOMAS

Of course it is. Would you prefer Fackenna instead?

Studio audience laughs.

FETCH

I do not understand what is happening here, but something is not right.

VOICE

(faint, ghostly)

Mackenna...

FETCH

What was that?

THOMAS

I was asking if you're all set for your interview.

FETCH

What? I...yes, I think...are you sure you didn't hear something?

THOMAS

Hear what?

FETCH

I am certain that, a moment ago, I heard--

Alfie walks in.

ALFIE

Hey, guys. Ready for your big day, Fack?

FETCH

Huh? I mean...

(clears her head)

Yes. I am as prepared as I can be. I have gotten an adequate amount of sleep and studied Thomas's list.

ALFIE

List?

THOMAS

I made her a list of words she should not use under any circumstances. Kill, murder, dismember...

Studio audience laughs.

THOMAS (CONT'D)
...stab, stabs, stabbed, stabbing...

Studio audience laughs.

ALFIE
Yeah, I agree with all of those,
although I'm really hoping you kill
this interview today!

Studio audience laughs.

FETCH
I would not use any of those words in
an interview, anyway. You are both
fools.

THOMAS
Okay, how about a practice question?
What would you do if a customer was
angrily complaining that you didn't
have the guitar he wants?

FETCH
I would sta--I would...discuss things
rationally, and then hug it out.

Studio audience laughs.

ALFIE
I mean, boundaries...but at least the
customer survives this imaginary
encounter.

FETCH
Do not worry. I would only kill a
customer if they truly deserved it.

Studio audience laughs.

FETCH (CONT'D)
I am not the butt of your jokes!

THOMAS
Uh, no one's laughing at you.

FETCH

But you...

ALFIE

Are you feeling all right, Fack?

FETCH

It's nothing. I am fine.

THOMAS

Maybe you're just stressed about the interview. It is the first one you've ever had.

FETCH

I have been interrogated. Are these not essentially the same? And I have completed far more dangerous tasks and overcome far more deadly obstacles. I shall prevail here, as well.

THOMAS

You do know that Mackenna is interviewing for this job, too. You need to do better than she does.

FETCH

I am well aware. She had her chance with this job. It is my turn now.

ALFIE

That's the spirit! I'll tag along with you to the store. I have a shift later, and we can practice interview questions along the way.

FETCH

Thank you, Alfie. The support you both offer is...appreciated.

Fetch and Alfie leave.

THOMAS

(calling after her)

Good luck! Remember not to murder anyone!

Studio audience laughs.

SITCOM MUSIC TRANSITION

Soundscape.

ALFIE

Okay, you can do it! Get in there and interview your ass off!

FETCH

Your phrases are strange. I shall win this competition and retain my ass.

Studio audience laughs.

Door opens. Fetch enters. Door closes.

125.

NISSA

Hi, Fack. Thanks for coming in today.

FETCH

That is not my name.

NISSA

No? It's what you wrote on your application. See?

Waves paper.

Studio audience laughs.

FETCH

Oh. Interesting. I don't even really remember--

NISSA

So, I have a few questions for you. This isn't a test. It's more of a way for me to get to know how you'd operate in this job.

FETCH

But you already know me.

NISSA

Most of these questions are about your work history, which I don't know.

(beat, clears throat)

Okay, first question. Tell me about a time when you disagreed with the direction a supervisor gave you.

FETCH

A supervisor? I have never had a job like this before.

NISSA

Not retail, but you've had other jobs in your life, right?

FETCH

You have referred to me and my past as "a human trafficked child soldier."

NISSA

See? That counts as a job.

Studio audience laughs.

FETCH

Well, I suppose the Magister was like my supervisor. He once commanded me to cease sparring with another fetch. I disagreed with his order and continued fighting.

NISSA

Why did you disagree with him? Was his direction unreasonable or unfair?

FETCH

No. I was just very angry with the fetch and wanted to stab him.

Studio audience laughs.

NISSA

Oh.

FETCH

Wait. I am not supposed to say that word. I wanted to...strike him very hard with the pointed tip of my sword.

Studio audience laughs.

FETCH (CONT'D)

This is not going well.

NISSA

No, it's...it's totally fine. You're doing great. Let's try another question. Let's see...

(beat)

Tell me about a time when you went beyond what was expected of you. How did it feel to accomplish more than you needed to?

FETCH

Went beyond what was expected? I always did what was expected of me.

NISSA

No, tell about when you exceeded what you were asked to do.

FETCH

I see.

(beat)

Once, when I was tasked with reclamation, I was accosted by three men on the street at night. When one of them suggested I should be imprisoned, I killed him with my knife.

Studio audience laughs.

NISSA

So you jump straight to murder.

FETCH

Yes.

(beat)

What is wrong? You asked about a time I went beyond what was asked of me. I was only asked to kill my changeling, but I went beyond that.

NISSA

No, no...I get it.

FETCH

It is an appropriate answer to your question.

NISSA

Um, okay. So would you say that you...stabbed him?

Studio audience laughs.

FETCH

(beat)

Can we restart the interview? I was told to not discuss any sort of stabbing.

NISSA

Maybe we can just move past these questions and try some role-playing scenarios. I can play the customer, and you play the employee.

FETCH

You want me to pretend to be someone I am not? I do not like this. I am who I am.

NISSA

And who is that?

FETCH

I...I am me.

NISSA

Is that who you're trying to be? With this job?

FETCH

This is...her job. But I want it. Don't
I want it?

NISSA

Don't ask me. You were the one who
applied.

Studio audience laughs.

FETCH

But I don't even remember--

Knock at the door.

126.

ALFIE

(through door)

Uh, Fack? We have a situation out here.

NISSA

Go away, Alfie. We're in the middle of
her interview.

SHAYLEE

(through door)

Just let me through.

Shaylee roughly opens the door and barges in.

SHAYLEE

Fack! I need your help! The changeling
is in danger.

FETCH

I am interviewing for my new job,
Shaylee. This is very important to me.

(beat)

Isn't it?

ALFIE

Of course it is! As soon as you found
out that it was open and Mackenna
wanted it, you wanted it, too.

FETCH

Yes. That's right. I want this job. I
cannot help you now.

SHAYLEE

I thought you wanted to be a hero.

FETCH

I...I did say that, didn't I?

ALFIE

Yeah, you did. You wanted to help people.

SHAYLEE

Well, this is your chance.

NISSA

Fack, if you leave now in the middle of the interview, I'm going to have to give the job to Mackenna.

FETCH

Can't the imposter help with your changeling, Shaylee?

SHAYLEE

I thought you and I made a good team yesterday. Let Mackenna have the retail job. You and I can be the heroes.

FETCH

I must decide now. That is what has happened here. A classic dilemma. I have seen such a story many times on television.

ALFIE

Um, Fack, this is real life.

Studio audience laughs.

FETCH

I hear it again. A sound I know. You are not laughing at me.

SHAYLEE

No one is laughing at you. We've been over this.

FETCH

No. Not you.

(beat)

I understand now. This is a dilemma,
but not between working in a music
store and becoming a hero.

ALFIE

That's exactly what's going on here.
You need to decide which path to take.

FETCH

Yes, but those are not the options. The
real dilemma is whether to continue
chasing her life. Mackenna's life. I
thought it belonged to me, that I
deserve all the things she has. But I
am not her. I do not want to be her.
Working retail. Fighting evil. These
are hers. No. I choose to be me. I
reject both.

ALFIE

But you can't just quit both!

FETCH

This is all wrong. Mackenna does not
want to work at the music store again.
Shaylee is not training changelings
anymore. And the laughter...

(beat)

I stab everything.

Studio audience laughs.

FETCH (CONT'D)

None of this is real. Nissa Sifsdottir
is not sitting here.

NISSA

(fading away)

I don't know what you're talking about,
Fack. I'm right here, waiting for you
to decide if you're serious about this
job.

FETCH

See? And Shaylee is also not here.

SHAYLEE

(fading away)

Fack, this changeling needs our help!
Lives are on the line! I thought you
wanted to be a good person.

FETCH

But Alfie...what's that?

ALFIE

What's what?

Fetch stabs Alfie.

ALFIE (CONT'D)

(cry of pain, bloody gurgles)

FETCH

You are not Alfie. You have been
encouraging me, convincing me this
entire time to take over her life. You
have been orchestrating this show, Old
One. And we are not in the real world.
We are in my imagination.

MASTER OF SHADOW

Very perceptive, fetch. I have taken
residence in your mind. I control you.

FETCH

No. This is my imagination. I control
this world. And I say this knife is
made of iron. And with it, I will
stab--

Stabbing. Studio audience laughs.

FETCH (CONT'D)

--stab--

Stabbing. Studio audience laughs louder.

FETCH (CONT'D)

--stab you.

Stabbing. Studio audience laughs manically.

FETCH (CONT'D)

Congratulations. Your game has only served to give me new resolve. I will be waking up now.

WHOOSHY TRANSITION

127. Fetch enters the Thorne living room.

THOMAS

Oh, hi, Mackenna. We still have some bacon and pancakes left, if you want breakfast.

MACKENNA

Yep. Sleep in our beds and eat our food.

SHAYLEE

Mackenna...

FETCH

What is everyone doing here? Are we plotting against Wodan?

NISSA

We're always plotting against him, but we haven't heard a peep from his side since Mack took him swimming.

ALFIE

Hopefully, he's still in a memory coma.

THOMAS

We just got off a video chat with Sam. She's in New Zealand looking into a case that might involve a changeling.

FETCH

I see.

(beat)

Alfie, tell a joke.

ALFIE

Huh?

FETCH

Say something funny.

ALFIE

Um, uh...okay...um, why was six afraid of nine on New Year's Eve?

(beat)

Because nine, eight, seven!

Long silence.

FETCH

Can someone else say something funny?

ALFIE

No, see, it's an inversion of the classic "seven eight nine" joke.

SHAYLEE

We get it, Alfie.

MACKENNA

What is this? Are you trying to learn stand up comedy now? Tired of just watching Jerry Seinfeld? Now you want to be him?

FETCH

I do not want to be anyone else. Neither Jerry Seinfeld nor...anyone.

THOMAS

Is something wrong?

FETCH

Let me try.

(beat)

If you're having trouble with Wodan, perhaps I should stab him.

(beat)

Stab. Stabby stab stab.

(beat)

Good. I am conscious.

Fetch sits down on the couch.

NISSA

Uh, am I missing something here?

ALFIE

Nope. Pretty sure we're all in the same situation here, feeling the same confusion.

SHAYLEE

I appreciate your enthusiasm, but I don't think stabbing Wodan is going to accomplish anything.

THOMAS

Are you sure something's not wrong?

FETCH

I am fine.

MACKENNA

Just let her be, Thomas. If she wants to be weird, she can be weird.

FETCH

Thank you. I can be whoever I am, and that is who I will be.

MACKENNA

Yeah, maybe you didn't catch my inflection, but I wasn't trying to be supportive.

FETCH

Your intention does not matter. I can still appreciate your suggestion to let me be me.

ALFIE

Silver lining. I like that.

FETCH

You told me on numerous occasions that I could have your life, share your name. But I now see that this, while supportive of my situation, was not the way. You may keep your life.

MACKENNA

Gee, thanks.

FETCH

I do not want your life. I want mine.

(beat)

I just...do not know what that is yet.

THOMAS

We'll help you find what it is.

FETCH

I know this. But I wanted to say it out loud. To Mackenna.

Silence.

MACKENNA

Did...did you just call me "Mackenna"?

FETCH

Of course. It is your name. What else would I call you?

SHAYLEE

Imposter.

NISSA

Usurper.

ALFIE

Inferior.

NISSA

Fraud.

SHAYLEE

Pretender.

FETCH

All true. But she is also Mackenna.

THOMAS

So are you.

FETCH

Yes. I suppose. We shall see.

(beat)

Our enemies will try to turn us against each other. Exaggerate our disagreements and frustrations. We cannot let them win.

(beat)

I am hungry. Thomas, get me a knife. I feel the need to stab some pancakes.

EVERYONE

(laughs)

THE END