

"THE TWILIGHT APACE"
The Sheridan Tapes - Season 03, Episode 52
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by

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"Homestead on the Corner"
By Trevor Van Winkle

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1. INT. SHERIDAN-SLATE HOME - DAY - 11/12/19

Dial tone. After a moment, PETER SLATE picks up, closing the door to his room behind him.

PETER SLATE
(into phone)
...hi.

KATE SHERIDAN
(over phone)
Hey, love.

PETER TRIES TO SAY SOMETHING, STOPS, then SIGHS -- deeply worried.

KATE SHERIDAN (CONT'D)
(reassuring)
I know.

PETER SLATE
This is all so much.

KATE SHERIDAN
I know.
(SIGHS)
Well... we've landed in Pittsburgh.

PETER SLATE
(slightly confused)
I thought you weren't supposed to
tell me where they're taking you?

KATE SHERIDAN
(realization)
...shit.

PETER SLATE
(trying to ease tension)
Well, hello from the past!

KATE SHERIDAN
Huh?

PETER SLATE
The time zones... I'm an hour
behind you now.

KATE SHERIDAN
(trying to move past it)
Oh -- sorry, yeah.

PETER SLATE
Sorry, bad/joke--

KATE SHERIDAN
(tripping over each other)
--I'm just tired--

PETER SLATE
Yeah, didn't really give it/my--

KATE SHERIDAN
--no, no, it's/fine--

PETER SLATE
--tired over here, too.

They both pause, trying to get back on track.

KATE SHERIDAN
(hesitant)
Did you tell Andrew about...

PETER SLATE
The research stuff? Yeah, he's
actually pretty excited about that.
Fair warning though, he thinks
we're all training to be
astronauts.

KATE SHERIDAN
(SMALL LAUGH)
Oh.

PETER SLATE
Yeah. He keeps telling me: "don't
be sad, daddy, we're going to
space!"

KATE SHERIDAN
(that's just too precious)
Aww...

PETER SLATE
(brightening up slightly)
Yeah... I tried to tell me what
we're actually doing, but... well,
honestly, I'd rather you be the one
to let him down about that.

He stops -- that last sentence didn't come out the way he
meant it to.

KATE SHERIDAN
(hesitant, a little hurt)
I'm...
(beat)
Yeah. I know this isn't ideal.
(MORE)

KATE SHERIDAN (CONT'D)

(pause)

I'm glad you're both going to be there, though... be safe. And there's actually a pretty cool atrium in the facility, next to the living quarters -- some rocks, a little bridge over a pond, that sort of thing. I asked Ren, and they said Andrew could probably play on the rocks -- you know, with supervision. It wouldn't be the first time -- he says engineers get drunk and end up on top of them at all the staff parties.

PETER SLATE

(feeling a lot of feelings)

Yeah, that's... well, it's something, at least.

A momentary pause -- Kate turns and talks more quietly into her phone.

KATE SHERIDAN

(more honest, vulnerable)

Peter, I... I wish things had gone differently.

PETER SLATE

I know.

KATE SHERIDAN

I mean it.

PETER SLATE

(SMALL, SAD LAUGH)

I know, Katey. This is just a lot.

KATE SHERIDAN

(still isn't over what she learned about Anna)

Yeah -- it is.

PETER SLATE

I think you're right, though -- it'll be safer out there. And, well... I'll get to see you again.

KATE SHERIDAN

(needs him)

And I'll get to see you again.

PETER SLATE
(hearing her tone)
Our living quarters -- they don't happen to have separate bedrooms, do they...?

KATE SHERIDAN
(remembering)
Oh, right -- good news there, I convinced them to let us use the empty dorm across the hall, so Andrew will have his own room.

PETER SLATE
(relieved)
Finally, some good news.

KATE SHERIDAN
(qualifying it slightly)
I think it might be a converted closet? I don't know -- Ren said it was a little small. But I think Andrew will love it.

PETER SLATE
(trying to make a joke)
Well... you know, that'll be great for his astronaut training.

KATE SHERIDAN
(KATE LAUGHS, then remembers something)
Uh... Any word about mom?

PETER SLATE
(growing somber)
Well, uh... The nurses said she's...
(pause)
To be honest, she's not there most days. But she's happy, I think. They're taking good care of her, and they'll give us a call if anything changes.

KATE SHERIDAN
(uncertainty, regret)
I guess we'll just have to wait, then.

PETER SLATE
Yeah.

A long pause.

KATE SHERIDAN
(needing to end the call)
I've gotta get/going--

PETER SLATE
(cutting in, needing to
say this)
Look, I feel like you expect me to
be mad at you, but I'm not.
Honestly... I think I'm more scared
than anything.

KATE SHERIDAN
(softening)
I don't know where you got that big
heart of yours.

PETER SLATE
(weak joke)
Blue light special, K-Mart.

KATE SHERIDAN
(GROANS/LAUGHS)
God, I've missed your dumb jokes. I
can't wait to... it's been scary
for me, too. But I know it'll be
better once we're together.

PETER SLATE
(playing it light)
You can say that again.

KATE SHERIDAN
(smiling, fond)
I'll say it a hundred times.

PETER SLATE
(joking)
Nah, just one more time is good.

KATE SHERIDAN
(sincere)
It'll be better when we're
together.

PETER SLATE
(loving)
See you soon, love.

KATE SHERIDAN
(DEEP BREATH, collecting
her energy)
Love you both, bunches.

CLICK.

2. EXT. ALLEGHENY NATIONAL FOREST - NIGHT - 11/12/19

Mid-November in an eastern deciduous forest: slow-flowing water, the rustle of cold wind through fall leaves, a few squirrels chittering nearby.

SAM BAILEY

(slightly awkward, stiff)

Sam Bailey, recording Tuesday
November 12th, 2019 at 4:29pm
Eastern Standard Time. We're about
a mile and a half from the eastern
end of Mead Run in the Allegheny
National Forest, Northern
Pennsylvania. A fairly large team --
including myself, Maria Sol, Kate
Sheridan, Bill Tyler, Dr. Ren Park,
and a half-dozen ISPPA Researchers --
- landed at PIT earlier today
following an red-eye flight from a
private airstrip in New Mexico.
It's been a long day... a long day
after a long day, preceded by a
couple more very long days. None of
us are at our best right now. On
the bright side...

(glances around, CONTENTED
BREATH)

It is quite peaceful out here.

(pause)

I didn't have time to do any
research on this area besides
looking at its Wikipedia page. The
region used to be known for its
incredible biodiversity, but it was
almost completely clear-cut about
100 years ago to meet the rising
demand for housing, mining, and
manufacturing. It became protected
land in the 1920's, but by that
point it was little more than a
barren plain with most of the
native wildlife driven away. Most
of these trees are less than a
hundred years old. Hm. A young wild-
land, trying to come back from a
devastating fall.

(pause, realizes he's
still recording)

Sorry, it's... it's just so quiet
out here.

(MORE)

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)
(CLEARING THROAT)

This area is normally open to the public, but ISPRA sectioned this part of the forest off to make sure we're alone. I'm pretty sure they're posing as Forest Rangers, trying to shoo people away. Ren told us to stay at camp and not talk to anyone not wearing an ISPRA badge, so I'm pretty sure this expedition isn't entirely above board. I've tried to listen in on a few conversations between the researchers, see if I can catch any privileged information -- but they all seem to be playing this pretty close to the chest.

(beat)

All that being said, I did manage to catch a few hints. According to Ren, Anna was convinced that the four of us had a key role to play in the period leading up to the world-ending events she dreamed about. She referred to us as "the Searchers," and given ISPRA's insistence on investigating those incidents Anna would have sought out before her disappearance, all signs point to the conclusion that we're supposed to continue her work... which is why they brought us here, to Mead Run. As for why, Ren has adamantly refused to tell us what we're supposed to be looking for -- he said they "don't want to spoil the results." The only hint I was able to get out of Ren is that we all have a more... personal connection to the powers that Anna went up against, so we're supposed to operate as -- well, I don't want to say "canaries in a coal mine," but that is the phrase that comes to mind. ISPRA's here with their best attempt at a scientific survey of the supernatural, and we're here with nothing more than our instincts.

(beat)

Thankfully, I did manage to eavesdrop on a handful of less careful conversations once we arrived in camp.

(MORE)

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)

Over the years, this area has gained a reputation for a variety of otherworldly apparitions: mysterious floating lights, specters with average humanoid torsos on six-foot-long legs, and to top it all off, multiple reports of time-slips -- people who wander out of the forest only to discover that hours or days have passed without their knowledge. Put this all in front of someone a little less skeptical than me, and I'm sure they'd cry "aliens!" right off the bat. I'm not ready to hang my hat on that quite yet, though. Even with some of the encounters Bill and Maria had in October. Which reminds me: I took advantage of our flight time and the drive to the site to review Kate and Maria's tapes, along with the body cam footage Bill copied to his laptop before things fell apart at OCPD... although the audio's pretty much the only usable part of it, given how badly the footage has degraded. I'm guessing we can chalk that up to the presence of Ned Leroux in most of the recordings. But in any case... it seems like all of us were running into supernatural forces more often than usual before we met up. Sometimes even on the same days, despite being hundreds of miles apart. Now that ISPHA has us all together in one place... I have to wonder what we might drag over from the other side.

(beat, forcing down his unease)

I'm... still trying to operate with caution. I want to know what Ren isn't telling us, but I'm not going to go rifling through his files or try to get into his office... not yet, at least. We don't quite know what we're dealing with, and I want to be careful about looking for answers. Something tells me there's more to ISPHA than meets the eye.

CLICK.

3. EXT. ALLEGHENY NATIONAL FOREST - LATER

Sam restarts his recorder as he returns the main camp. Maria notices him and steps over.

MARIA SOL
There you are Sam, I was wondering
where you --
(notices the recorder)
Ah. Pinching off your daily log?

SAM BAILEY
(audibly grimacing)
You really don't have to phrase it
that way.

MARIA SOL
(raised eyebrow)
Since when have I done things the
way I "have to?"

SAM BAILEY
(DRY, KNOWING CHUCKLE,
beat)
Maria... what's your take on all
this? With ISPRA?

MARIA SOL
(pause, considered answer)
I'm not sure. This all makes... a
lot of sense, all things
considered. I mean... the dreams
Anna had...
(beat, remembering)
I think she tried to tell me about
them. She mentioned dreaming about
a storm, but I never took it very
seriously. I mean, it was
interesting, but it didn't sound...
well, apocalyptic. But the fear in
her voice... I don't think she
meant to tell me as much as she
did. And the way she was acting and
talking about her work that last
year, it's just...

(beat, SIGHS)
I don't know why ISPRA thinks they
need to fly four exhausted idiots
out to Pennsylvania for a haunted
sleepover, but... I kind of get the
feeling ISPRA doesn't know either.
I think they're just following what
Anna told them to do.

(MORE)

MARIA SOL (CONT'D)
(DRY LAUGH)
"The more things change..."

CLICK.

4. EXT. ALLEGHENY NATIONAL FOREST - CAMP - LATER

Sam sits at the edge of the camp near the water with Bill and Kate around a crackling campfire.

SAM BAILEY
(mid-sentence)
[I'm just looking]--for a sentence
or two about how you're doing, is
all.

KATE SHERIDAN
(SHIVERING,
straightforward)
I'm freezing, is what I am. It's
going to get so much colder once
the sun's below the horizon.
(SIGH, more serious)
I... have a knife in my gut. I told
Peter and Andrew they'd be safe at
Meriwether, but... I don't know if
that's true. I guess... I hope it's
safer than being at home. If I
could only be...
(cuts off, long pause)
I believe what Anna saw in her
dreams was... accurate.

SAM BAILEY
(intrigued)
Are you saying that... Do you
remember Anna having any dreams
that seemed -- prophetic? When you
were growing up?

KATE SHERIDAN
(shutting down)
I... no, not that I remember. I'm
sorry, I don't have anything else
to tell you. Maybe later.

Sam, somewhat disappointed, turns to Bill.

SAM BAILEY
Bill?

No response -- Bill stares into the fire, completely lost in
its shifting patterns.

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)
(nudging him)
Bill.

BILL TYLER
(snapping out of it)
Huh? Oh... I don't know. Maybe
things will start making sense when
I start sleeping through the night
again. Maybe tonight will be better
-- I always did like camping.
(beat)
You said we're in New York?

SAM BAILEY
(slightly concerned)
Not quite. Northwestern
Pennsylvania.
(beat)
I'm sure a night in the woods will
do us all some good. And those
ISPHA cots don't look half bad.

BILL TYLER
(SCOFFS WEAKLY,
distracted)
At least they're off the ground.
Wouldn't want to set your feet on
that tonight.

Nobody replies, not sure what to make of that.

KATE SHERIDAN
(worried, uncertain)
What was that, Bill?

BILL TYLER
(thinking he's repeating
himself)
The food. They're tying it up, away
from the bears? Wouldn't want to
have that on the ground tonight.

SAM BAILEY
(concerned, curious)
That's not what you said the first
time, Bill.

BILL TYLER
(badly masking worry)
Huh.
(beat)
Maybe I should get to bed a little
earlier than I thought.

KATE SHERIDAN
(standing up)
Here Bill... let me help you get
settled.

BILL TYLER
(smiling, a little wobbly
as he stands)
Thanks, Kate.

SAM BAILEY
(as they walk off)
Goodnight.

Kate and Bill make their way to a canvas tent, unzipping the flap. Sam sits in silence next to the crackling fire -- then something splashes in the water nearby.

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)
(surprised)
Wha--
(beat, quiet)
Huh...

Sam stands and makes his way to the edge of the river.

5. EXT. ALLEGHENY NATIONAL FOREST - RIVER - CONTINUOUS

SAM BAILEY
(hushed whisper)
There's something in the water...
there's a tree draping into the
stream, but I can't see--

Sam pushes the leaf-covered branches aside to find Ren, dunking a series of canteens into the water.

REN PARK
(cheerful)
Don't worry -- this'll all get
filtered.

SAM BAILEY
(surprised)
Uh, Doctor Park -- hi.

REN PARK
(note of warning)
You're not leaving the camp, are
you?

SAM BAILEY
(defensive)
No, I just... didn't realize you
were over here.
(beat)
You need any help with those
canteens?

REN PARK
Nah, it's alright -- I've got most
of them already.
(looking up, distracted)
Boy, would you look at those fall
colors?

SAM BAILEY
(slight whiplash)
Uh... yeah, they're -- very
beautiful.

REN PARK
(nodding)
I grew up in Florida, so I didn't
get to see stuff like this very
often. Makes me feel like a kid all
over again.

SAM BAILEY
(caught off guard)
Yeah?
(realizes something)
Yeah -- me too. Grew up in Northern
Nevada, so... some fall colors, in
the bits that weren't desert.
Mostly place we had to drive to,
and even then... not like this.
(beat)
Although there were these two
gorgeous maple trees in front of
the precinct. Turned bright red
every fall. Still the most
beautiful trees I've ever seen.

REN PARK
(shrugs)
I'm partial to aspens, myself.

SAM BAILEY
(curious)
Really?

REN PARK
(nodding)
Oh, yes.
(MORE)

REN PARK (CONT'D)

They're beautiful of course, and the leaves make the best sound in the wind, but... it's the symbolism that always stuck with me.

SAM BAILEY

(confused)

What do they symbolize?

REN PARK

Well, the aspen has been called the tree of heroes. The quaking of their leaves represents someone who knows the trembling path between this world and the next. And they say that if you place an aspen crown in the hands of the dead... it allows their spirit to be reborn.

SAM BAILEY

(chill up his back)

Interesting.

The wind picks up slightly, causing the leaves the quake and shiver.

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)

You know, you really don't strike me as the folklore type.

REN PARK

(CHUCKLES)

You'd be surprised. If you knew half the superstitions I've picked up from engineers and researchers over the years... well, I guess we're just better at rationalizing them.

(beat)

I think it's a universe trait -- myth-making, creating folklore. Finding answers, even if there aren't any. Keeps us human.

(beat, picks up canteens)

I'm going to head back. Don't stay up too late, alright?

Ren takes off towards the camp, canteens rattled and bumping in their arms.

SAM BAILEY

(remembering his question)

Hey, Dr. Park?

REN PARK
(CHUCKLES)

You can just call me Ren, Sam --
we're going to be spending a lot of
time together, and it's much more
efficient.

SAM BAILEY
(hesitant)

Ren... is there anything we should
be looking for? Specifically? I
mean... for us non-scientists.

REN PARK
(shrugs)

I've told you everything I know,
I'm afraid. This is a potential
touch point for supernatural
activity, and we need you four to
tell us if and when you sense
anything out of the ordinary.

(beat)

Anything else?

SAM BAILEY

(hiding disappointment)

No, that's... that's it. Thanks
Ren. I'll head back in a bit.

REN PARK
(a little too cheery)

Roger that! See ya later,
alligator!

Ren strolls back towards the camp, the sound of muffled
conversation and movement filtering through the trees.

6. EXT. ALLEGHENY NATIONAL FOREST - CONTINUOUS

Sam stares out at the slow-moving water of Mead Run, then
SHIVERS SLIGHTLY.

SAM BAILEY
(chilled)

Kate's right -- it is getting
colder.

Sam zips up his coat, then begins to walk along the
riverbank, HUMMING TO HIMSELF.

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)
(hummed)
*Row, row, row your boat
Gently down the stream...
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,
Life is but a--*

Sam cuts off, noticing something across the water.

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)
(quiet)
I think I saw a deer on the other
side of the river.
(SINGLE, PLEASED CHUCKLE)

The noises from the far bank don't stop, however -- something scuttles from the undergrowth on all fours, creaking and croaking softly.

SAM DRAWS A SHARP, FRIGHTENED BREATH.

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)
(not quite terror, but
close)
No, it's not a deer -- it's...

The thing on the other side of the river suddenly dunks its head into the water with a noisy, horribly splash.

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)
(trying to document, lost
in the fear)
It came out of the forest on all
fours, but it's... it's human, and
it just...

On the far bank, the figure begins to struggle, gargling and bubbling as their body shakes and shudders.

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)
(fully alert)
They're drowning themself -- how
are they keeping their own head
underwater like that?
(shakes off the question)
Shit, they're going to drown!

Sam turns, scrambling back up the bank towards the camp.

7. EXT. ALLEGHENY NATIONAL FOREST - CONTINUOUS

As he gets closer, cries of alarm are heard rising from the ISPHA scientists.

TELLER

There's another one!

LAWRENCE

Does anyone have eyes on where
they're coming from?

TELLER

Shit -- how many are there?

SAM BAILEY

(reacting to something
unseen)

What's... oh my god.

Across the river, more figures have appeared -- first 2, then 5, then 10, then an uncounted number crawling to the edge of the water, thrusting their heads below the surface with a horrible splashing, gurgling noise.

LAWRENCE

(trying to take charge)

Nobody touch that water!

TELLER

Everyone, to your stations!

Commotion in the ISPHA camp as people move to grab instruments, protect the perimeter, and begin to take photos and readings.

After a moment, Sam spots Ren standing at the edge of the camp and rushes over to him.

SAM BAILEY

Ren, what's going on?

REN PARK

(slightly speechless)

I guess we've found what we're
looking for -- not what we were
expecting,/but--

SAM BAILEY

(suspicion creeping in)

I thought you said you didn't know
what to expect?

REN PARK

(tenses up, all business)

We'll discuss it later.

(turning)

Anyone have binoculars?

An ISPHA assistant runs over, handing theirs over.

REN PARK (CONT'D)

(to assistant)

Thank you.

(looking through them,
adjusting focus)

Now, let's see what we've got to
work with...

LAWRENCE

(curious, slightly
worried)

Doctor -- do those look like *gills*
to you?

SAM BAILEY

(assumed they were human)

Gills?

REN PARK

(frustrated)

Damn this light -- I can't see a
thing. Someone get a spot on those
things!

Behind them, a tent quietly opens and footsteps approach --
then...

BILL TYLER

(unconscious, flat
muttering)

The Source of all that was... and
was not... and will be again... is
within me... and without me... and
beyond me... and below me... and
before me...

KATE SHERIDAN

(stepping out of her own
tent)

Bill? Bill! Are you awake? Bill,
stop!

REN PARK

(dawning realization and
horror)

Wait...

(authoritative)

Kate, you need to make him stop,
now!

KATE SHERIDAN
(concerned, scared)
Bill! Shhh shhh... Bill, come on...

BILL TYLER
(taping off, slightly more
lucid)
The Source of... huh? What? Where
am--

A COLLECTIVE GASP rises from the camp, cutting Bill off. The sounds of struggling and drowning across the river have ceased, and one by one the drowned figures go limp, falling into the shallow water completely.

KATE SHERIDAN
Are they--?

REN PARK
(forcing down fear)
Where's that searchlight? I need to
see what's going on, now!

A heavy switch is thrown, and a powerful arc lamp buzzes to life. Everyone goes fully silent as the row of bodies becomes fully visible. After a moment...

REN PARK (CONT'D)
(growing fear)
Lawrence -- they're not gills.

LAWRENCE
(realizing what he means)
You don't think...

Lawrence trails off. A moment of fearful silence before...

REN PARK
(shouting orders)
Everyone, we're evacuating, now!

The camp roars back into life as scientists run, packing and disassembling equipment as fast as humanly possible

KATE SHERIDAN
(confused, worried)
Evacuating? Wait -- why? What's
going on?

TELLER
Doctor Park, we can't just abandon
the camp/like--

REN PARK
(urgent)
Teller!
(under breath)
Those things on their necks are
foribus oraculi caps.

TELLER
(terrified whisper)
Oh Jesus...

BILL TYLER
(deep, personal fear)
No... No!

KATE SHERIDAN
Bill, please -- you need to calm
down...

MARIA SOL
(finally emerging from her
tent)
What's going on? Why are we
evacuating?

Ren is already rushing off to pack up his equipment, and Sam hurries to follow.

SAM BAILEY
How the hell did it get out here?
Did Templi Prophetam have other
compounds outside Oslow?

REN PARK
(trying to prioritize)
Questions later, Sam!

SAM BAILEY
(confused)
What are they doing this far from
Nevada?

LAWRENCE
(in the distance)
Doctor Park!

Run turns, then GASPS. Work in the camp stops as they all look to see the figures rising out of the water one by one on the other side of the river, dripping and swaying unnaturally.

SAM BAILEY
(hushed terror)
They're getting up... They're
all... How?

REN PARK
(suppressing terror)
Motherf-- Abandon camp! Everyone,
get to the vehicles, now!

The camp becomes a chaotic whirl of running footsteps,
shouting, and movement.

MARIA SOL
(pragmatic)
We're a mile and half from the
parking lot!

REN PARK
(urgent, half-panicked)
Then RUN!

Unseen by anyone, Sam has been wandering closer to the edge
of the water, mesmerized by what he's seeing.

SAM BAILEY
(half-unconscious)
The death... the rebirth... life
restored, through water.
Anything... Anything...

MARIA SOL
(noticing him wandering
off)
Sam? Sam, come on, we have to go!

Maria grabs hold of Sam's arm, shaking him out of his stupor.

SAM BAILEY
(suddenly lucid)
What?

MARIA SOL
(simple and direct)
Sam, run!

She doesn't have to say it twice. They take off into the
darkened forest, leaving the empty and silent camp behind.

CLICK.

8. EXT. ALLEGHENY NATIONAL FOREST - LATER

The recorder is bumped to life as it jostles in Sam's pocket. Running footsteps and panting.

TELLER
(half-panicked, shouting
to group)
Did anyone grab more flashlights?

Jostling -- CLICK.

9. EXT. ALLEGHENY NATIONAL FOREST - LATER

LAWRENCE
(out of breath, worried)
Can anyone see the road? It should
be close by now!

Jostling -- CLICK.

10. EXT. ALLEGHENY NATIONAL FOREST - LATER

This time, Sam starts the recorder intentionally. The ISPHA team has stopped and is trying to catch its breath, completely winded.

SAM BAILEY
(out of breath, talking
fast)
We've run over two miles, and the
road just -- it isn't here. The
road isn't here, and it used to be
here.
(CATCHING BREATH SLIGHTLY,
thinking this through)
Okay, if this is like the wildfire
at the cabin, then the loop won't
stop on its own. Not until I...
(realizing, trying to get
Ren's attention)
Ren -- listen. I think I know how
to get us out of here.

REN PARK
(completely out of breath,
not listening)
We must have passed it... a half-
mile back. Just missed it in the
dark. We need to... retrace our
steps.

SAM BAILEY
(urgent, pleading)
No, Ren -- listen to me...

REN PARK
(shouted order)
Come on, everyone -- we're close!

The team begins to move with assorted GROANS AND GRUMBLING.

SAM BAILEY
(urgent, insistent)
Ren, we're not going to find that
road unless I lead us out.

REN PARK
(frustrated, annoyed)
Sam, I know you've been out of a
command structure for a while, but
I/don't--

SAM BAILEY
(sensing something wrong)
Everyone, STOP!

The ISPHA team, with the exception of Teller and Lawrence,
continues moving. Sam grabs Ren by the shoulder, stopping
them short.

TELLER
(concerned)
What is it?

REN PARK
(trying to shake Sam off)
Sam, let go of me!

SAM BAILEY
(terrified, urgent)
Tell them to stop, or they're all
dead!

The ground suddenly rumbles -- just once, low and hungry....
and then the dirt is torn aside as rapid, organic growth
fills the air -- along with the screams of the ISPHA
scientists.

THE REMAINING SQUAD GASPS/cries out in fear -- and then
silence. A group of silent, pale figures stands before them,
unmoving.

MARIA SOL
(dread)
Where did they come from?

BILL TYLER
(terrified, half-
unconscious)
Forever... and ever...

KATE SHERIDAN
(almost crying)
Bill, please -- please
stop...

LAWRENCE
(terrified)
Mother of god...

SAM BAILEY
(frustrated, pained)
I told you Ren. Those things were
right on our heel the whole time. I
don't know how -- they must be able
to travel faster underground. They
were trying to confuse us, turn us
around by erasing our path.

REN PARK
(looking around,
panicking)
Is everyone okay? Lawrence,
Teller... God, are you the only
ones left? Are the rest--

SAM BAILEY
Gone. Or... Worse.

REN PARK
(mind racing)
There's no way they could've -- not
unless...
(realizing, slight wonder)
They were chasing us through the
forest's mycelial networks. And now
they're--

SAM BAILEY
(defeated)
Freshly fed. With most of our team.

A slow, bemused clap drifts out of the trees. Unhurried
footsteps pace towards them through the lines of freshly fed
acolytes.

AMANITA
(amused, pleased)
Boy oh boy, the minds on you --
y'all figured that one out right
quick. Amanita's missed you,
babies.

BILL TYLER
(guttural terror)
Stay away!

AMANITA
Bill, sugar -- how on earth are you
still standing?

MARIA SOL
(challenging her)
How the fuck did you follow us out
here?

BILL TYLER
(more lucid, putting
things together)
The bunker... whatever Morrison was
messing with down there...

AMANITA
(disinterested)
All I know is one minute I was
underground, preparing for a very
satisfying feast -- the next I was
blown so far along the unseen paths
that I barely knew where I was when
I stopped. Had to make myself a new
family when I did. Family, meet --
old friends.

(beat)
Doctor Ren Park -- good to finally
meet you... officially. My sweet
old Bill... strong, fierce Maria...
brave, wise Kate... Teller and --
Lawrence, was it? Smart of you to
listen to...

(LIGHT LAUGH)
Oh... now you're the one they call
Sam Bailey, aren't you? Strange
name for such a... person. Sam
Bailey -- do you know who I am?

SAM BAILEY
(slightly shaky, feeling
the bad vibes radiating
from her)
You're... Amanita. The sole
survivor of Templi Prophetam.

AMANITA
(wicked smile)
Right you are darling.
(addressing the crowd)
(MORE)

AMANITA (CONT'D)

Well, now that's over with -- did I already say thank you? Oh, how rude of me. *Thank you* for the food offering. These disciples are all so new to this world, and as such... they can be quite hungry.

REN PARK

(terrified and trying to
hide it)

So... what happens now? What do you want from us?

ANNA SHERIDAN

(low and slow)

My invitation is and always will be for you to join us. We are the Children of the Earth, after all -- the Children of Adam, and at the end of all things, we'll be the only ones left standing. Barring that, well... we're not known for speed, us mycological folk -- but we always catch up. So I suggest you start running.

CLACK. The recording ends.

ROLL END THEME
AND CREDITS