

[Sound of Camera]

Tommy

[pretty happy]

All, right, now look mean.

Give me a scowl.

[shutter clicks]

Tommy

[happy]

Perfect. Okay, now Rommel, stand in the back and just snark at the camera, keep your chin down, and Levi, can you look a little more, I don't know in charge?

Levi

[confused]

Like imperial? Arrogant?

Tommy

[trying to hide not understanding imperial]

Yeah, sure. Good. Yeah!

This is really good, guys.

Oh, um, I'm sorry I don't remember your name.

Mira

[trying to be in character tough]

Mira.

Tommy

Yeah. Okay. Put your hand on the knife handle, don't take it out of the belt yet.

Just look mean.

[camera]

Perfect.

All right guys, I think we got it.

I'll go get these developed and you can pick the ones you think are best for the album cover.

Hector

[begrudgingly pleased]

I honestly thought your friend was going to show up with a cheap camera, Rommel.

I think this is going to look cool.

Rommel

[happy to hear it]

We have to look as terrifying as we sound now.

And Tommy's a really good photographer.

We'll pick the photo and we'll start making album covers for the demo.

Hagbard

[serious]

Speaking of which, Chris Kendall from the Midnight Monsters Metal Show over at UNH said we can send him a copy of the demo and if he likes what he hears, he'll play it on the air. I think we should give it to him before we get the cover art done.

Hector

[excited]

Seriously? That's fucking amazing.

Mira

[also excited]

Let's fucking do it.

Rommel

[annoyed]

Whoa. No. No way. We need everything together.

It has to be perfect.

We should look like we came out of the abyss, fully formed.

Hector

[disagreeing with relish]

Disagree on that, bro.

I think it will make more sense if we give him one of the tracks to play.

Rommel

[seething]

Come on, man! This is the way to do it.

Hagbard, Levi, back me up.

Hagbard

[calm]

You know what, I agree with Hector.

What's more jarring than hearing the monster in the woods?

Let people wonder who and what we are for a couple of weeks.

Then we hit them with the whole demo.

Rommel
[pauses then begrudgingly]
Fine.

Witchever Path Presents
Part Three

Peter
[trying and failing to sound compassionate, slightly amused at Mira's fear]
Are you all right?
I can get you in the van pretty easily, but you seem really upset.

Mira
[regaining control]
I... forgot something inside. Excuse me.

Peter
[impatient]
Okay.
[sighs]
Maybe your friend can run it out to you?

Mira
[fear turns to anger]
I got this.

[dials Tara]
Hey, can you bring me my insulin bag?
I left it inside.

[pause to deal with confusion]
It's the black one with the the patch that says,
[threateningly]
"touch me and I'll stick ya."

[pause]
You can't find it?
Well, come let me in.
I'll look for it.

[to Peter]
I got to cancel the ride, sorry.

Peter

[annoyed]

I can wait for a couple of minutes. You already got me out here. I might be one of the only wheelchair accessible Lyft's in the area.

Mira

[trying to be calm, starting to wheel back]

I know. But this may take a while. And you're probably in high demand.
I'll just go back inside.

Peter

[losing patience]

That's fine. Just get your stuff, I'm not going anywhere.

Mira

[standing her ground]

I said I've canceled the ride. I'm not going anywhere with you. You hear me?

Tara

[coming out the door, calling out in Mira's direction]

Mira? Mira?

Is everything all right?

Peter

[menacingly]

Is this what you do in life, call out for what you want, and when it arrives, say no thanks?
Again?

Mira

[shocked]

It *is* you.

Tara

[near them]

What's going on here?

Peter

[fuming, but realizing this is a losing proposition]

Nothing. She canceled the ride.

Good luck finding your bag.

[slams van door, peels off]

Mira

[upset]

Oh thank God, you got out here.

Holy fuck!

Tara

[concerned and empathetic]

I'm here. Hold on.

[takes photo]

I got the license plate.

What happened?

Mira

[frightened]

That man. He was there when...

When we were at the tracks.

[music blaring]

[ratchet set working on a nut]

[walking]

Rommel

[friendly]

I remember sitting on that porch swing for hours, man.

Need any help?

Hagbard

[sighs, stops working, looking at Rommel in his yard]

I got it, thanks.

Rommel

[to Tommy, really proud]

This guy, he was always fixing things.

Smartest out of all of us.

Tommy

[to Hagbard. Matter of factly]

You're replacing that chain, right?

It looks older than the house.

Hagbard

[disgusted]

14 words?

Tommy

[recognized and relieved]

You know it, brother.

Hagbard

[stands up grunts out a "Well" as he rises]

I'm not your brother, asshole.

Get off my property.

[sound of a bat being picked up off of the porch]

Rommel

[trying to de-escalate]

Whoa. Whoa. Tommy, you can wait in the car.

Hagbard's just jumpy.

Tommy

[pissed]

Call me out if there's trouble.

[to Hagbard]

See you, snowflake.

Hagbard

[to Rommel]

I think you misunderstood me, Rommel.

You're trespassing, too.

Rommel

[offended, trying to stay more hurt than mad]

Me?

Hagbard, it's been over twenty years, man.

I didn't come here to fight with you.

You're my brother.

Hagbard

[highly emotional and elevated as they are being both misgendered and seeing the man who killed one of their best friends]

I am *not* your brother.

Hagbard

I never wrote to you.
I never called.
I don't want to be your *anything*.

Rommel

[starting to seethe, but not wanting to lose his friend]
Man, stop. You know I didn't mean for Levi to die.
You know it!
He attacked me!
[realizing they are in a neighborhood, sound of dog's barking]

I ... Hagbard, I'm out and I'm ready to move on with my life.
But first, I needed to see you and ask you to rejoin
Illusory Redemption.

[long pause]

Hagbard

[that anger that builds with every sentence starting low]
Don't you ever utter his name within a mile of my home.
[walks down steps]

Rommel

[realizing his former friend has readied the bat]
Hey, Hagbard put the bat down.

Hagbard

And to think, after everything, I would be in a band with you?!

Rommel

[fight or flight]

You don't want to do this, man!

Hagbard

[angry]
Don't call me, "man!"
Since you been gone, everything's changed.
My life, my heart.
Get the fuck away from me, do not call, do not come back.
The cops will be called, if you're lucky.

Rommel

[About to scream]

You know what----

[regains composure]

Fine. Thing is, the band is getting signed.

People want to hear us.

And I came here to offer it to you again.

You'll change your mind.

And if you don't... well, enjoy your swing.

Tommy

[shouting from the car]

Rommel, you need me?

Rommel

[shout back]

Nah, he's fine.

Let's get out of here.

[turns back to Hagbard]

See you, buddy.

Hagbard

[shouts after him]

Rommel!

Rommel

[confused, but turns hopeful]

What?

Hagbard

[righteous]

My pronouns are They/Them!

[car takes off]

[industrial music playing]

Hector

[groans]

Shit. Okay... what am I missing?

[plays again]

Fuck.

[someone coming down the stairs]

Angie

[chiming in while walking down]

Guitar, perrito. Or those vocals like Al Journgenson.

Hector

[sighs, sort of relieved and charmed his wife is paying attention]

Yeah? You think so?

I don't know. I was trying to keep it as electronic as possible.

But it feels flat. Like.

Angie

[being coy but still supportive]

Like you're trying too hard to not get too angry?

Hector

[amused]

You know me way too well, Angie. I just. I'm frustrated.

[more serious]

I can't stop thinking about Hagbard and Mira.

And... Levi.

Whenever I get this close to making something I like, it just, it all comes back.

You know?

And I don't want to be that angry. It's scary, mama.

Angie

[serious]

I think you should have them over, Hector.

It's better to talk it over with the people who have seen the same thing as you than struggle alone. Not that you're alone. I mean, I'm here, but they were *there*.

Hector

[touched]

You're right. I should. I'm going to give Mira a call right now. Maybe she can come by.

Angie

[pleased]

There you go. Call Hagbard, too.
Get the band back together.

Hector

[surprised at that phrasing]

What?

Angie

You know, the saying. Get the band... right, sorry.
I'll be upstairs.

[dials]

[picks up fast]

Mira

[upset still]

Hector, I'm so fucking glad you called me right now.
I saw him today, he tried to pick me up in a Lyft, it was fucking terrifying.
I had to get Tara to come outside to witness and fucking get him away from me.

Hector

[ready to defend his friend]

Rommel came after you?

Mira

[shocked]

NO!

Sorry, not Rommel. The guy. The fucking guy from the tracks.
Remember?

Hector

[thinking, and having it dawn on him]

The security guy? The freak who made us finish that bullshit ritual?
He came after you?

Mira

[calming down]

No, he was actually the Lyft driver I called.

He came to pick me up in a van and when I saw him. His voice, his black stringy hair that hung in his eyes, that goatee. He looked exactly the same. I mean, like he stepped out of the 90s.

[more worked up again]

And he knew who I was, Hector.

Hector

[quiet shock]

Holy... holy shit.

Have you called the cops?

You can contact LYFT, report him.

Mira

When I looked up my ride history, the face and the plates didn't match him or the vehicle. So we called the cops about it being a potential kidnapping. Tara had taken a photo of his minivan as it took off, but she must have been shaking because the plate's illegible. But the cops said they'd be on the lookout.

Hector

[feeling remorse he hasn't been around]

I'm so sorry, Mira.

Where are you right now?

Mira

I'm at Tara's. I was going to go home to get some stuff before coming back here.

I was trying to reach Hagbard earlier, but they aren't even answering texts.

I'm getting a little worried.

Hector

Jesus. Do you need a ride?

Mira

Would you be able to? That'd be really great.

Hector

Don't worry about it, Mira.

I'm happy to help you. Maybe we'll swing by Hagbard's, check on them, too.

Mira

Sounds good.
I'll text you the address.
Thanks for this.

Hector

No problem, Mira.
Take care.

[up the stairs]

Baby, get in the car. We're going to pick Mira up.

[jog upstairs]
Angie?

Angie

[sounding labored]

In here, perrito.

Hector

[calm]

Okay, why don't you come with me, I'm going to pick up..
[looks at her]
Are you okay? You look out of breath?

Angie.

[contractions on her]
No baby.
[pause]
Just having contractions.

Hector

[near panic]

What? Fucking Hell! Okay. Okay.
We're doing this!

I'll get the bag. Just sit down and ... I'll get ... I'll call Mira and tell her forget it.

Angie

[light breathing exercises but amused]

Baby, I barely ... I don't even know if she's coming yet. I only started contractions a little bit ago. It's just... let's get your friend. I think we got time.... Oooh. If it changes on the way, we'll call.

Hector

That seems like a bad idea. Let's call the doctor.

Angie

Ay, I'll call the doctor, Hector. But let's get in the car. I'll be fine. But um, can you get me pad from the bathroom, and new tights, too?

Hector

Sure.

[phone rings]

Hector

Yeah?

Rommel

[cold]

Don't hang up.

Hector

[furious]

Are you fucking kidding me?

Rommel

[serious]

I'll be quick. I want to meet with you.
It's important.

Hector

Who gave you my number?

Rommel

We live in a modern age, Hector.
But all of us are still bound together.
I'm going to ask you right now. Meet me at the Green Dart tomorrow.

Hector

You aren't asking me anything.
You're calling me, and making demands.
I feel threatened.
I will retaliate if I feel threatened again.

Rommel

[angry he's not being heard]

What we did before, none of you believed it was the real thing.
Not really.
But I'm going to prove it to you.
Right now.
[grunts and hisses in pain as he cuts his palm]
Hear us, Masters of the Night!

Hector

FUCK YOU.

[hang up]

Angie

What now?

Hector

It's fucking.... Nevermind. No. It doesn't matter, right now. Let me get the bag and we're getting the fuck out of here.

Angie

The lamp!

[lamp smashes]

Hector

Don't come close, baby, I don't want you to get hurt, I'll

[cuts palm]

AHHHHH!

Angie

Hector!

Hector

[pained]

I'll go wash my hand and get the first aid kit.

I'll be ok.

[hissing in pain]

Fuck.

[runs water]

[transition to Mira and Tara]

[sink running and then stopped]

Tara

[lovingly caring for her new partner]

Okay, I'm sorry if the water hurt worse. Let's get a towel and apply pressure.

I don't think it was deep enough for stitches, but we'll take a look at it in a second.

Mira

[wincing]

That's what I get for trying to help wash dishes while distracted.

I don't even know how I dropped the knife like that.

Shit.

Tara

[soothing]

It's okay. I was an EMT for a bit. I can check it out. Hold your hand and keep it elevated for a bit.

[transition to Hagbard]

Hagbard

[grunting]

[sound of duct tape]

Wasn't too deep, but fuck it hurts.

[cat meows]

I know, Freya. I should have come in after the sun went down, but I wanted to get finished.

Guess I'll hammer down the porch nails tomorrow.

Thank god for tetanus boosters.

[meows]

Hagbard

Well, it's not the first time I cut my hand open, but I can tell you that I don't think it hurts any less. But that time, I was doing it for a stupid reason and this time...

[phone buzzes]

Hold on, let me check my texts.

[concerned]

Looks like Mira's having a bad time, and here's one from Hector.
And... what the helllll.

[meow]

He hurt his hand, too, Freya.
What a coinci... wait.

[dials Mira]

Mira

[sore]

Hello?

Hagbard

Hey, I'm sorry I didn't get your messages until now. Are you okay?

Mira

This day is infinitely worse than the last time I saw you.

[grunts]

Thank you, Tara.

Hagbard

What's happening?

Mira

Right now? I'm getting my hand bandaged.

You?

[nothing]

Mira

Hagbard?

Hagbard's choices are:
Get in the car and get to Mira immediately
Call Rommel and see if he too is hurt
Drive off and clear their head

Vote today at Witcheverpath.com/vote
You have one week to help Hagbard decide what they are going to do.

This episode featured:
Lito Velasco (He/Him) as Hector
Vyn Vox (He/They) as Mira
DJ Sylvis (They/Them) as Hagbard
Mike Gagne (He/Him) as Rommel
Jas LaFond (They/Them) as Angie
JD Lauriat (He/Him) as Peter
Mandy Hall (They/Them) as Tara
Tyler Bell (He/Him) as Tommy

The story was written by Jas and Steven and produced by Steven.

The Witchever Path Theme Song was written and performed by Rydr.

On The Job was written and performed by ZapSplat.

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This week we want to thank Patrick Arseneault, Amanda Adams, and Kate Wallinga for choosing the path.