

"TREMBLE AWAY"
The Sheridan Tapes - Season 03, Episode 54
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by

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"Homestead on the Corner"
By Trevor Van Winkle

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1. INT. TEMPLI PROPHE TAM COMPOUND - SANCTUARY - 11/25/19

A large, echoey room that is now all-but-silent. Labored breathing cuts through the stillness, with a faint tremble in the air that grows louder the longer it remains.

AMANITA

(mumbling, dehydrated)

When the Word is spoken to you,
little children... Remember well
these words...

Nearby, someone COUGHS and collapses to the floor.

HYDE

(weak, struggling)

That the Prophet will make...
(breaking trance)
Amanita...

AMANITA

...a new home once more...

AMANITA/HYDE

(trance resumes)

The Promise...

AMANITA

Of... new birth...

Another person slumps over nearby.

HYDE

(lucid, small cry of pain)

Amanita, we can't -- AH!

AMANITA

(more forceful)

Stand not against the roots of
heaven...

HYDE

(desperate)

It's been two days... please, we
need to call for help...

AMANITA

(telling them to get on
board)

Resist not the union of bliss.

HYDE

(no longer in trance,
frightened)

(MORE)

HYDE (CONT'D)
...be at One all the same and
remember--

HYDE/AMANITA
--The Name--

HYDE
Of Time and Creation's Kiss.

The tremble in the air fades away, as if it was never there.

AMANITA
(rapture)
...it's done.

HYDE
(disgusted, beaten down,
trying not to break)
No -- no no no...

AMANITA
(weak, but overjoyed)
...we are new, you and I. We made
it, Hyde. Can you feel it? The
union of bliss? I *feel* you, Hyde.
Do you feel me?

HYDE WHIMPERS, while AMANITA LAUGHS SOFTLY, in love with her
prophet.

AMANITA (CONT'D)
(hoarse whisper)
Be not afraid. We have withstood.
We are worthy.

A heavy fist bashes against the door of the temple.

OCPD OFFICER
OCPD! Open the door, now!

HYDE WHIMPERS IN RESPONSE, STARTING TO CRY. AMANITA'S
LAUGHTER BECOMES MORE AND MORE MANIC.

CLICK.

2. EXT. ALLEGHENY NATIONAL FOREST - CEDAR TREE - NIGHT -
11/13/19

The footsteps below come to a stop.... then, in the crushing
silence, one person steps forward.

AMANITA

(relaxed)

Well hi y'all. Told ya you
should've run.

BILL TYLER

(slowly, asleep)

Forever and ever. Forever and ever.
Forever and ever.

REN PARK

(under breath, terrified)

Christ.

AMANITA

(cheeky)

Ooooh hey now -- don't blaspheme.
Or do.

KATE SHERIDAN

(reassuring, hushed)

It's going to be okay, Bill -- shh.

BILL TYLER

(weak, half-conscious)

Her... Her...

KATE SHERIDAN

Shhh, shh.

AMANITA

I've missed you, Bill. Truly I
have.

MARIA SOL

(fierce, defensive)

You leave him alone.

REN PARK

(urging caution)

Maria...

MARIA SOL

Bill didn't ask to be in that
fucked up bunker with you. Leave.
Him. Alone.

AMANITA

(DRY LAUGH)

Maria, darling -- I couldn't, even
if I wanted to. He and I are bound
together by cords too strong to
break.

(MORE)

AMANITA (CONT'D)

The only difference is that I've embraced my pain, and grown beyond it. After all...

(concentrates, and a crown of caps sprouts from her skin)

We are what we will. I didn't ask to be there either. And when Hyde and I were brought to that place -- I will admit, I was afraid. But I did not understand. The true will of the Prophet. The true power that had come to reside in me.

(beat)

Funny, isn't it? How *something* has brought us all together. How *something* has give you that... rather handy cedar perch, just out of my reach. It would pain me to disturb your repose -- literally.

SAM BAILEY

(direct, aggressive)

What do you want with us?

AMANITA

(smiling)

I want what every living creature desires -- nothing more.

REN PARK

(skeptical)

I doubt that.

AMANITA

(more insistent)

I want belonging -- I want legacy. I want to transcend the petty hungers of this too too solid flesh. Soon... soon and very soon.

KATE SHERIDAN

(defensive)

What does that have to do with any of us? You can have that -- just leave us alone!

AMANITA

I could... but I'd like you to -- join me. I did say so, earlier.

MARIA SOL

(under breath)

You've gotta be fucking kidding me.

AMANITA

(hears her)

Why wouldn't I want you by my side?
All of you.

(looks at each of them in
turn)

Bill Tyler. Loyal, charming,
adaptable. A tireless worker. One
who longs for the freedom to stop.

(beat)

Kate Sheridan. Brave, sly,
principled. You turned your pain
into action, and action into
change... just like me.

(beat)

Maria Sol. Patient, deep-hearted,
protective -- a kind and quiet
soul, beneath all that grief and
pain... just waiting to emerge.

(beat)

Ren Park. Clever, proactive,
optimistic. You're a slippery one
to catch, but I've a feeling you're
more than worth the chase.

(beat)

Sam Bailey...

(pause, more serious)

There is so much I could teach you.

(beat)

Lawrence, and... Teller, was it?

Yes... you'll do. *Join Me.*

Amanita's last words echo unnaturally on the tape, and
Lawrence/Teller begin to scramble down the tree, kneeling
before her.

REN PARK

Wait -- stop!

MARIA SOL

(terrified)

Don't!

KATE SHERIDAN

(stomach dropping)

Oh my god.

SAM BAILEY

(drawing on his power)

No! Lawrence, Teller, *Come Ba--*

TWO GASPS OF SURPRISE AND PAIN ARE CUT SUDDENLY SHORT as
Amanita touches Lawrence and Teller. A horrible sound of
organic growth marks the moment their lives end.

AMANITA
 (proud parent)
 That's better. Now -- tell me, my
 children... do you feel pain?

LAWRENCE
 (raptured, hypnotized)
 No.

AMANITA
 And what do you feel?

TELLER
 (refreshed)
 ...completion.

AMANITA
 Good. Now... go and join your
 family.

The late-ISPCHA scientists stand and walk into the crowd,
 vanishing into the throng a moment later.

MARIA SOL
 (whispered, urgent)
 What the hell are we going to do?

REN PARK
 (frustrated, terrified)
 We'll... figure something out.

AMANITA
 (slight annoyance)
 I can still hear you, you know.

KATE SHERIDAN
 (angry)
 And I can see you, bitch.

BILL TYLER
 (worried)
 Kate, don't--

He cuts off, his voice changing -- when he speaks again,
 Amanita's voice is layered over his.

BILL TYLER/AMANITA
 I see far more than you ever could,
 Kate. Deeper. Further back. You
 want to know what Bill really
 thinks of you?

KATE SHERIDAN
 (rising alarm)
 Sam... do something...

SAM BAILEY
 That's enough, Amanita -- let him
 go!

BILL TYLER/AMANITA
 Tell me. What is it that repulses
 you so about this unity? The beauty
 of togetherness?

SAM BAILEY
 (word of command)
 Amanita, Go Away.

AMANITA GASPS SLIGHTLY, her presence leaving Bill. KATE
 SHUDDERS, shaking off her disgust and fear.

3. EXT. ALLEGHENY NATIONAL FOREST - CEDAR TREE - CONTINUOUS

Down on ground level, Amanita comes back to herself, smiling
 ear-to-ear.

AMANITA
 (amused, impressed)
 Oh. *Oh ho ho*. Yes, Sam Bailey... I
 have so much I could teach you.
 Power makes its home in you -- I
 can feel it. The weave of your will
 against mine.

REN PARK
 (looking from Sam to
 Amanita in stunned
 surprise)
 What the hell just happened?

AMANITA
 (LAUGHS)
 Doctor Park -- I see that we've
 impressed you.

REN PARK
 (hesitant to engage)
 You've... piqued my scientific
 curiosity, let's say.

AMANITA
 I'm sure.
 (glances around,
 nonchalant)
 (MORE)

AMANITA (CONT'D)

Well, it seems our little stalemate will continue for the time being. But the night is long. The air is cold. And I'm rather enjoying the slow-burn. Aren't you?

(CHUCKLES, then more serious)

Doctor Park... I know you tried to contact Hericium. Many times.

REN PARK

(no point in hiding the truth)

I did.

AMANITA

And why do you suppose he never called you back?

REN PARK

(can't hide from her)

I... assume... because he didn't want to be caught. He was handling dangerous, stolen property, and people died because of that. Including him.

AMANITA

Wrong.

REN PARK

(INCREDULOUS SCOFF)

Alright. Why don't you tell me, then?

AMANITA

(slowly, trying to make him understand)

If you had understood... if you could truly understand what Templi Prophetam was... but no. Hericium knew your ignorance all too well. He confided his fears to me on many occasions. He had other, closer confidants, but... we shared a special bond.

MARIA SOL

(disgusted)

Ugh.

AMANITA

(to Ren)

He was protecting the Prophet from the careless hands of you and your *institute*. He knew the truth of you: that if it couldn't be flayed, or questioned, or dissected, or killed -- then it would be taken from this world and buried in a metal box. Your people have never known what to do with true power. You would have locked away humanity's only salvation to die in silence and darkness, forever! Christ, kept from his incarnation! An abomination too great to withstand!

Behind her, the ORACULITES SHIVER AS ONE.

AMANITA (CONT'D)

(calming)

And so Hericium, in his final wisdom, protected the Prophet. Protected all of us, as he ushered in redemption. Even you Ren. He had mercy, even for you. And I am the fulfillment of that work. I am here to preserve what was too precious to lose... though he never would have guessed the instrument of our transfiguration.

(to Sam)

Have you guessed yet, Sam? Whose hand it was that lifted me to such great heights? Who lifted all of us out of the mire?

(to Ren)

You're a smart person, Doctor Park. Haven't you figured it out yet?

SAM BAILEY

(confused)

What's she talking about?

REN PARK

(frustrated, strained)

If I knew, I'd tell you.

AMANITA

(disappointed)

Dear me. The cold must be slowing your mind tonight.

(MORE)

AMANITA (CONT'D)

You know, I *was* able to hear a little of your postulating on my way here. I have ears everywhere I want them... well, within a certain distance. And only where there's earth to grow in. You were so close... would you like a hint?

REN PARK

(frustrated)

I'm certainly not getting any younger.

AMANITA

(LAUGHS, tickled)

You're not at that! Decay still holds court in the temple of your body, as it always has.

(beat)

Well. I'll give you a clue. You were noting certain... attributes of mycelium. One in particular caught my ear. The one about... having no control center. Remember that one?

REN PARK

(annoyed)

Obviously.

AMANITA

Then what do you suppose I am? Why don't I shamble to and fro in silence, like my brothers behind me?

SAM BAILEY

(irritated)

You're really going to make us play 20 questions before/you--?

REN PARK

(cuts him off, seeing her point)

It's alright, Sam -- I think I see where she's going with this.

(beat, to Amanita)

So, what -- you're the brain? Did the Oraculites develop one stunning weakness your ancestors never had -- one brave step back down the evolutionary ladder?

4. EXT. ALLEGHENY NATIONAL FOREST - CEDAR TREE - CONTINUOUS

AMANITA

(TENSE LAUGH)

Not quite. You almost had it -- but it's not a weakness.

(beat)

You were right about the original nature of the Oraculites. Myself and Hydneum, wherever they might be. We were the only two strong enough to endure. All the way to the end. Had we the time... well, I'm certain we would have worked together to build a new temple. Bring in new acolytes. Teach them the ways we were taught -- and one by one, changing those we deemed worthy.

(beat)

But it was a... difficult path. Four ceremonies a week, almost constant upkeep, the need to buy and sell goods to feed our mortal flesh while it clung to our souls... it was too much for many who heard the call. Even among those who stayed, they all fell short at the final threshold -- they lacked the strength to endure the Prophet's indwelling.

(beat)

We lost too many. Even before the ritual, many chose to leave and return to their old lives, ruined though they might be. But we were assured time and again by the urging of the Prophet within our veins, and the wisdom of Hericium's words. Like the mycelium we adored, we did not need a central brain -- we shared leadership. When we lost members, we simply kept growing. We re-formed. A true utopia, manifested in each and every soul who joined with us. An equal sharing of power than ensured that no one was ever truly lost, nothing was destroyed -- and yet...

(beat)

When Hyde vanished into death, I found myself the last... the final disciple of the Prophet.

(MORE)

AMANITA (CONT'D)

I felt Morrison's puppet reach into my mind day by day... but every time, I was ushered into the Prophet's true home instead. It was terrifying. A universe within universes, endlessly evolving. If my understanding was multiplied tenfold when I first beheld the Prophet... this was ten thousand fold. I heard the Prophet singing in my ear, leading me on, telling me how to bring his kingdom fully into being, faster than I ever dreamed possible. The pain of that revelation was greater than I thought possible. But I endured, and the knowledge I now possess made Hericium look like an ignorant babe. He did always tell us that we would do greater things than he, in time. If only he knew...

(beat)

The next step of human evolution shall come by my hand. I have been gifted this burden, and there is no greater honor I could bear than to share the world I know with all humanity. A world without pain. Without death. Without loss or want or need.

(beat)

I walk in the power of the Prophet, as the hand of his will. As his vessel. I lead my Oraculites as the first among many, faster and farther than ever before as my will drives us on. I can create them... instantly... through my own indwelling power. No years of faithful service. No endless weeks of ceremony and ritual. They do not even need to believe to change. I have found a new way forward for all of my children. It is difficult, but... it's so much easier, with my family at my back.

(beat)

And if ever I'm choked out... if ever I'm destroyed, impossible as that seems... all that I am will return to the Prophet and flow out into my children, waiting for rebirth. Like a drop of rain, returning to the sea that bore it.

(MORE)

AMANITA (CONT'D)

We have gained an unimaginable strength, Sam Bailey -- and it's all thanks to one Edgar Morrison and the trial of suffering he gifted me. The Prophet used him... as it uses all men.

(LAUGHS)

Ignorant as he was.

5. EXT. ALLEGHENY NATIONAL FOREST - CEDAR TREE - CONTINUOUS

A stunned silence falls over the forest.

SAM BAILEY

I can't believe this...

AMANITA

Why shouldn't you? Your story is much the same... do you not realize this?

SAM BAILEY

(taken aback)

What... what do you mean by that? What could you possibly mean?

AMANITA

Ah, now, don't get upset. This is a good thing... a miraculous thing. Morrison's meddling in your life gave you a gift you can never fully know... fully appreciate. You'll see what I mean, in time.

MARIA SOL

(nervous about his reaction)

Sam?

BILL TYLER

(coming to his senses)

Don't... don't listen to her.

SAM BAILEY

(momentarily distracted)

Bill, careful...

BILL TYLER

She's manipulating you -- she always bends the truth--

BILL TYLER/AMANITA
 --she's a goddess of the Earth... A
 destroying angel--

SAM BAILEY
 (words of command)
You. Will. Stop.

AMANITA GASPS SLIGHTLY as she's pushed from Bill's mind. BILL
 COUGHS, recovering slightly.

BILL TYLER
 (angry, sarcastic)
 "She's beauty, she's grace, she's
 miss *fucking* United States..."

AMANITA
 (DEEP BREATH, gathering
 herself)
 Alright. I think I've had enough of
 explaining myself. You have all
 that you need to make your
 decision. You know our calling: to
 bring about the birth of a new
 humanity. You know our promise: to
 see the power of death broken once
 and for all. And you've see our
 rituals: the little death that we
 all partake in day by day. We are
 restored each twilight, born anew
 as the sun dies... and you can be
 too.

(beat)
 Any takers?

A long moment of silence in the forest -- no one is climbing
 down that tree.

AMANITA (CONT'D)
 (shrugs, kind of knew this
 would be their answer)
 Very well. I wonder how long it
 will take, to break your feeble
 wills.
 (beat)
Oraculites. I need you.

BILL CRIES OUT AS SHE TAKES CONTROL AGAIN.

AMANITA/BILL TYLER
 (pausing between each
 line)
 (MORE)

AMANITA/BILL TYLER (CONT'D)
 Eve, when she saw the fruit good to
 eat
 and Adam, standing nearby...

SAM BAILEY
 You... sto--

SAM CUTS OFF, COUGHING AND CHOKING.

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)
 (confused)
 Why did -- why didn't that work?

AMANITA/BILL TYLER
 Could not bear the sting of
 separateness more
 Unity, lest they die...

KATE SHERIDAN
 (dread, fear)
 No, no...

CLICK.

6. EXT. ALLEGHENY NATIONAL FOREST - CEDAR TREE - LATER

A few hours later, Sam restarts the recorder.

SAM BAILEY
 (directly into recorder,
 urgent)
 Sam Bailey, sometime in the early
 morning hours of Wednesday,
 November 13th. Still up in this
 cedar tree, and this--

AMANITA/BILL TYLER
 Tie, bind, joining yet still
 Adam and Eve in their mirth...

SAM BAILEY
 ...has been going on for over an
 hour. We're all freezing. Kate's
 doing her best to keep Bill warm,
 in spite of whatever state
 Amanita's trapped him in.

AMANITA/BILL TYLER
 Knew the mind of God, the Father of
 God
 The Prophet of the Earth.

SAM BAILEY
 (quieter, exhausted)
 They're trying to break us.

CLICK.

7. EXT. ALLEGHENY NATIONAL FOREST - CEDAR TREE - LATER

Sam starts the recorder again.

SAM BAILEY
 (worried)
 Shouldn't the sun be coming up by
 now?

AMANITA/BILL TYLER
 When the Word is spoken to you,
 little children
 Remember well these words...

MARIA SOL
 (flat)
 I want to go home.

REN PARK
 (regretful)
 I'm so sorry, Maria.

KATE SHERIDAN
 (afraid)
 Andrew... Peter...

AMANITA/BILL TYLER
 That the Prophet will make a new
 home once more--

CLICK.

8. EXT. ALLEGHENY NATIONAL FOREST - CEDAR TREE - LATER

At the foot of the tree, AMANITA BREATHES HEAVILY in the
 frozen air, fists clenched in rage.

AMANITA
 That damned tree... that out of
 place... abomination!

REN PARK
 (exhausted, firing back)
 You know, that word loses a lot of
 meaning when you use it more than
 once.

AMANITA

(exasperated)

This... *Fucking Tree!* You shouldn't be able to resist! It shouldn't be possible for you to endure this!

SAM BAILEY

(exhausted, but firm)

We're not... going... anywhere, Amanita. The sun's coming up.

Amanita stops, then takes a step back, regaining some of her composure.

AMANITA

(begrudging acceptance)

I can only assume this means the prophet has other plans for you. I have to accept that.

SAM BAILEY

(confused)

What?

AMANITA

(genuinely regretful)

He has... condemned you. You will not be counted amongst our numbers when the final judgement comes.

(beat, then TIRED GIGGLE)

Doctor... one other thing you said -
- amused me. That bit about our only weakness: " a disruption to the passage of time itself."

(beat)

That's the heart of the matter, isn't it? We can't be stopped. We'll always grow back, find food... endure. Our only weakness is the one impossible thing. Hm.

She thinks on this a moment, then turns, beginning to walk away.

REN PARK

(under his breath)

Are you serious?

SAM BAILEY

(hushed, confused)

Is that all?

Amanita pauses, glancing over her shoulder.

AMANITA

It's like you said, Sam -- sun's coming up. I'm about ready for a nap, and I prefer the dark... like all my children.

(beat)

Rest easy, y'all. I will not attempt to harm you again. You may not believe me, but I revere the Prophet. I obey him. I will respect the boundaries that are put in my way...

(beat)

...few as they are.

She turns and begins to walk away, then calls over her shoulder.

AMANITA (CONT'D)

(amused)

I'll find you when the time is right, Sam Bailey.

Stunned, the group watches her leave as the horizon begins to grow brighter, illuminating a forest that is empty and quiet once more.

CLICK.

9. INT. ISPHA TRANSPORT - MORNING - LATER

The group is just settling into one of the ISPHA vans, SHIVERING as the heater is switched on.

REN PARK

(calling back)

Everyone got their seatbelts on?

KATE SHERIDAN

(logistical mind)

How are they going to get the rest of the vans back from here?

REN PARK

(rattled)

Not my problem. The only thing I'm worried about right now is staying awake long enough to reach the airport and get the hell out of here.

He turns up the radio, puts the van in gear, and begins driving away down the narrow asphalt road.

ADRIAN BRIGGS (V.O.)

(fast, sharp, too chipper)

You're listening to Adrian Briggs,
live and alert with Morning Brew
AM! Bringing you the best and
brightest tunes of the year to put
that pep in your step, and the news
you need to know, all served with a
piping hot blaze of energy you
won't find anywhere else.

(beat)

Doctors hate him! Renowned Silicon
Valley tech mogul Carter Banks is
launching a new healthy food
startup based around -- you guessed
it folks, what else would we talk
about on here -- coffee! He calls
it "Mushee," and if you can get
past the name that sounds like a
gift from a bitter marketing
intern, you may go *wild* for its
benefits!

(beat)

"Mushee," which I'm being told
quite emphatically has just joined
the ranks of our proud sponsors, is
a proprietary blend of organic fair-
trade coffee, adaptogenic herbs,
and the secret ingredient -- wild
organic medicinal mushrooms!
Customers boast of heightened
cognitive function, lower stress
levels, improved mood, and "mush,
mush more!"

(to producer)

Next time, could you tell me I'm
doing an ad read before handing off
the card? Before I insult our
sponsors? Just a bit of a heads up,
alright?

(back to audience)

With "Mushee," you can/expect--

Kate reaches over and turns off the radio.

REN PARK

(slightly annoyed)

Hey wait, that sounded interesting.
Could you turn it/back--

SAM/KATE/MARIA/BILL

(extremely emphatic)

NO.

CLACK. The recording ends.