

"ABYSSUS ABYSSUM INVOCAT"  
*The Sheridan Tapes - Season 03, Episode 74*  
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by

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Based on story and characters from  
"Homestead on the Corner"  
By Trevor Van Winkle

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1. EXT. WELL - DAY - 5/21/93

SPLASH.

The sound of someone struggling in water, trying desperately to stay afloat. THEIR SMALL CRIES echo in a narrow shaft of earth and stone, and the water sounds muddy and oily.

AMY STERLING (10 Y.O.)  
(weak, THROUGH COUGHS)  
Anna...! Please...

Then they're pulled down -- down into the dark water far deeper than any well, sinking into the infinite.

2. INT? UNKNOWN - NIGHT? - ??????

All becomes dull and distant -- and then a voice speaks.

AMY STERLING (ADULT)  
(bitter, but strong)  
I had a friend named Anna Sheridan.  
That much I know -- that much is  
all I know for certain now. Her  
name burns through my every waking  
moment like a firebrand, like a  
ribbon of flame through the  
nightmare that is my existence in  
this place. Anna. Sheridan.  
(beat)  
I remember a well, and a school,  
and a face -- a face staring down  
at me from a circle of light far  
above me as I floundered and  
drowned... and that face was my  
own. And the face staring back up  
at me out of the black water as I  
stood in front of Anna on that  
sunlit morning in early summer...  
it was mine too. I knew it. I saw  
it. And I ran away in terror from a  
fate I could not possibly escape.  
Because I was already in that  
well... had always been in that  
well... had never walked in the sun  
beneath an open sky with a friend  
by my side. Because I was never  
born. Because I was never meant to  
exist.

(MORE)

AMY STERLING (ADULT) (CONT'D)

And as I ran away from that gaping wound in reality masquerading as an old, abandoned well, someone else looked down into the waters as I struggled to stay afloat. My friend. Anna.

(beat)

The person I was when I walked above the surface -- the one who was and was always meant to be Anna's faithful friend, her constant companion -- did not remember the well. She did not see it before her eyes in the clear light of day, mocking her hateful half-existence as she carried on the empty, useless work of living. She did not remember the sight of her own face twisted in abject fear as she flailed in the oily waters that could not and did not exist at the bottom of that sealed-off well. She did not recall the terror she felt that day, except in frozen nightmares that faded with the sunrise and the brief rush of fear each time she glimpsed the well sitting in the corner of that disused field. She couldn't know -- the girl I was should never have seen that well... should never have felt that fear... should never have glimpsed her own face staring back at her from the dark.

(beat)

But the well was open. I *did* see my own face staring back at me. I gazed into the abyss... and the abyss called to me.

(beat)

That well remained open for as long as her hollow half-life carried on its pretense in the land of the living. For there was another story... one that was also meant to be, and was pressing itself into the skin of the world inch by inch until it suffocated all others. Where I was never born. Where I never grew up, never met Anna, never existed at all. Through some accident in time or twisting of the strands of fate... history changed.

(MORE)

AMY STERLING (ADULT) (CONT'D)

Something in the past shifted,  
almost imperceptibly... and like a  
pebble knocked loose from the side  
of a hill, it grew into a  
landslide. I was just unlucky  
enough to get caught in its wake.  
My life was undone and unmade,  
after it had already begun.

(beat)

I can feel it here... how that  
world I used to know, the one that  
felt so real and solid and  
everlasting was nothing but the  
shallow, shifting surface of the  
waters that consumed me. How the  
movements of the minds within this  
place change past and present and  
future as easily and thoughtlessly  
as breathing, and most of the time,  
no one notices. Not that they try  
to change it -- they are not the  
kinds of beings with wills and  
goals and motives... not the way  
humans think of, at least. But it  
does happen. Occasionally.

(beat)

But something else happened after I  
was pulled out of that world --  
after my timeline was plucked from  
the cloth of history and unraveled  
from its weave... something that  
shouldn't be possible. Anna  
remembered me. As the well consumed  
my life day by day by day, stealing  
my past and future from a world  
that used to know me... Anna  
remembered those missing days. In a  
way I still cannot understand, her  
mind held both histories within its  
grasp. And that made the powers of  
this place shake with a fear they  
have never felt before.

(beat)

Maybe it was because she chose to  
look down into that well at the  
moment I began to disappear. Maybe  
it was because her father carried  
that touch of the beyond with him  
from the day the veil tore opened  
beneath the earth and passed it on  
to her. Maybe it was something else  
-- some unknown, unknowable  
movement in the world behind the  
world. But whatever it was...

(MORE)

AMY STERLING (ADULT) (CONT'D)

Anna remembered, long past the point where all traces of my life had vanished. And because of that... I endured. In the waves and the dark, I endured -- refusing to fade, refusing to despair... refusing to die.

(beat)

Creatures more vast and powerful than the world I'd known came to destroy me: this blemish upon the unformed perfection of their cosmic chaos. They were driven by some instinct older than all universes and a fear deeper than any mortal has ever felt -- but I was born across the veil, and in this place the influence of my mind was greater than that of the old gods. I turned back each and every attack with a force of will I never knew I possessed, each time fleeing deeper and deeper into the unknown regions of this dark and shifting underworld.

(beat)

As my life above vanished completely and I realized I was trapped below, I caught glimpses of other places... other times. My own world, forever beyond my reach -- but other worlds too, feeding and fed by the sea of dark and swirling cosmic energies undergirding all. Pocket universes, born of the will of eldritch beings and grieving children. Worlds like my own where there was no Anna Sheridan, no Amy Sterling, no dark and terrible wells opening up into the infinite. Dimensions I could not bear to look at for the light that shone within... or the darkness that seeped from them like oil. I saw the last moments of ancient cosmos long gone dark and finally falling in on themselves... and I saw the birth of new universes, blazing into existence and life from a single point of light... a seed of existence, gifted by this place.

(beat)

(MORE)

AMY STERLING (ADULT) (CONT'D)  
 And eventually -- though I could  
 never say or know or guess how long  
 -- I found myself standing on the  
 shore of a strange sea: black sands  
 meeting black waves beneath a black  
 sky without a moon. And there --  
 beside a door which was not a door  
 on a beach that was not a beach --  
 stood my friend. Anna Sheridan.

CLICK.

3. INT. ANNA SHERIDAN'S HOUSE - "BEDROOM" - NIGHT - 1/29/20

The howling wind begins to die down as Sam and Kate stare at  
 the figure before them. Waves crash in the distance.

SAM BAILEY  
 (stunned)  
 Wait... you're... you can't be...

MYSTERIOUS VOICE  
 (realizing he knows)  
 Amelia Rae Sterling -- at your  
 service.

KATE SHERIDAN  
 (beat, confused and  
 worried)  
 ...who?

A moment of awkward silence.

AMY STERLING  
 (disappointed, bitter)  
 So... you did forget me. Why am I  
 not surprised?

KATE SHERIDAN  
 (completely lost)  
 Sam -- who is that?

AMY STERLING  
 (growing angry, voice  
 distorting on the tape)  
 Don't you dare look away from me!  
 He doesn't know me -- you did!

The house begins to shake, windows rattling at Amy's voice  
 grows louder.

SAM BAILEY

(worried)

Amy, please -- just calm/down--

AMY STERLING

(ignoring him, growing  
madder)

How many summer evenings did I spend at your old home? How many times did Anna bring me for dinner with your family? How many times did your mother joke that I might as well be another daughter? You've known me since I was six years old, Kate -- look me in the eyes, and tell me you don't remember.

KATE SHERIDAN

(worried, but knowing she  
can't lie)

I... don't remember. I'm sorry.

AMY STERLING

(almost a growl)

Not sorry enough.

SAM BAILEY

(before Amy can destroy  
the house)

Amy, *STOP*.

Sam's voice distorts on the tape, and after a moment, the house stops shaking. There's a moment of silence -- then AMY CHUCKLES TO HERSELF.

AMY STERLING

(chagrin)

Sorry... didn't mean to lash out like that.

(beat)

So... you're Bailey, huh? Have to say, I was expecting someone a bit more...

(shrugs)

SAM BAILEY

(suddenly on edge)

How do you know my name?

AMY STERLING

(nonchalant, challenging  
him)

How do you know mine?

SAM BAILEY

(confused)

I heard it from Anna... from one of her tapes.

(to Kate, lost)

I thought you listened to that one?

KATE SHERIDAN

(confused)

Which one?

SAM BAILEY

(growing confusion)

The one about the well -- it was all/about Amy and what happened to her--

AMY STERLING

(cutting him off, bitter)

Don't bother, Bailey -- there's no point. Chances are, she'll forget about me as soon as we're done here. I should have expected this -- she can't remember me, because I don't exist.

(beat)

The same way.

SAM BAILEY

(confused)

What?

AMY STERLING

You asked how I knew your name. The same way you know mine. From Anna.

KATE SHERIDAN

(stunned)

From... Anna?

AMY STERLING

(nods, slightly annoyed)

Yes Kate -- from Anna.

SAM BAILEY

(staggered)

You've seen her?

AMY STERLING

(gesturing behind her)

Just a few minutes ago, down at the shoreline. Well, I say shoreline... I say minutes. That's what it felt like, at least.

(MORE)

AMY STERLING (CONT'D)  
 (turns to Kate, annoyance)  
 She was actually trying to reach  
 out to you, Kate... not very  
 effectively, but she was trying.  
 Giving you hints. I guess it was  
 enough to get you here. Barely.

KATE SHERIDAN  
 (confused, trying to  
 understand)  
 A few minutes ago? The night I saw  
 Anna was nearly three months ago.

AMY SUDDENLY BURSTS INTO AN ECHOING, DISCORDANT LAUGH.

SAM BAILEY  
 (desperate to understand)  
 What's so funny?

AMY STERLING  
 (recovering slightly)  
 Sorry... it's just... after so long  
 in the Source, I'm not used to  
 jokes anymore.

KATE SHERIDAN  
 (utterly lost)  
 That wasn't a joke.

AMY STERLING  
 (trying to speak clearly)  
 I know, just -- you people and your  
 perspective on time! It's like a  
 toddler who thinks they can do  
 calculus.

SAM BAILEY  
 (annoyed)  
 Enlighten us, then.

AMY STERLING  
 (fully recovered, but  
 still amused)  
 Fine. When did you last hear Anna's  
 voice calling you, Bailey? From  
 your perspective.

SAM BAILEY  
 (trying to remember)  
 It must have been... nine months  
 ago? When I was running from the  
 Echo -- she sent one of her  
 doppelgängers after me, and Anna...  
 I guess she tried to warn me.

AMY STERLING  
 (smiling, a little smug)  
 From my perspective, Anna just  
 finished telling you to run.

SAM BAILEY  
 (taken aback)  
 What? Just -- now?

AMY STERLING  
 (shrugs)  
 It's hard keeping track of the  
 passage of time in the Source -- if  
 you can even say it passes at all.  
 It's all... intensely personal.  
 Relative. But from her  
 perspective... it probably feels  
 like a few hours ago. Maybe even  
 after she reached out to Kate.  
 Difficult to say. Impossible,  
 actually.

KATE SHERIDAN  
 (recovering from her  
 shock, insistent)  
 You've seen her? She's... in there  
 with you?

AMY STERLING  
 (growing annoyance)  
 Not on this clifftop, if that's  
 what you're asking. And I'm not  
 "in" anything -- it's more like I'm  
 pushing a part of *myself* back into  
 the world to talk to you -- which  
 is fucking painful by the way, so  
 you'd better be thankful I did.  
 Anna's bedroom was just a  
 convenient location to set up shop.  
 (beat, then more helpful)  
 But yes... she's here -- though  
 where exactly, I can't know. We  
 crossed paths very briefly, but  
 trying to follow her through the  
 Source is pretty much impossible,  
 even for me.

SAM BAILEY  
 (struggling to add this to  
 his mental picture)  
 What's that word you keep using?  
 What's "source?"

AMY STERLING

(annoyed)

*The Source*. And you seriously don't know?

SAM BAILEY

(exasperated)

I'm *trying* to figure it out. I've been trying to figure it out for most of a year, and all I've gotten is hints and riddles and breadcrumbs from things that can't even explain it to me because they're so lost in their own metaphors/they just keep talking circles around--

AMY STERLING

(amused by his anger)

No need to be petulant, Bailey... I'll tell you. That's why I'm here.

SAM BAILEY

(surprised)

You're... what?

AMY STERLING

(realizing worry)

I don't know how much time I have -- this projection isn't as stable as I'd like. But I think... yes. I think it's about time you got some answers. Can't promise you'll like them, but they're true.

(beat, collecting thoughts)

*The Source* is... complicated. We sometimes call it "the world behind the worlds," but that makes it seem like just... another universe. Another reality. And I suppose it is, but... talking about it like that is mostly unhelpful. Gives you all kinds of wrong ideas about how it works, how it feels. Those of us who exist within it -- those who are human enough to even use a language, I mean -- we call it the *Source*.

(beat)

I've been trapped here since 1993, ever since that well began to eat away at my life.

(MORE)

AMY STERLING (CONT'D)

I know this place better than nearly any human ever could... not that I've been too keen to share that knowledge, up to this point. I could've. I could've reached through the veil at any point and told someone what waited for them behind the dark... but I didn't want to. The whole world forgot me, left me for dead in this place. If you ask me, they deserve their ignorance. Except for Anna of course, but... I couldn't reach out to her.

SAM BAILEY

(confused, trying to process)

Why not? Couldn't she... I don't, try to help you?

AMY STERLING

(giving a roundabout explanation)

The Source is not... kind to human beings -- to things and people that fall through the veil, that are pulled into it from the worlds beyond. The laws of physics don't quite... they just don't. After a while, matter and energy just... dissolve. Like stones being worn away by the tide.

SAM BAILEY

(seeing where she's going)

But you didn't. Because Anna remembered you.

AMY STERLING

(annoyed, but relieved he gets it already)

So you have been paying attention. Good. Human minds -- any mind from outside the Source, really -- exert an influence on it. And because Anna remembered me, she pushed that image through the veil, and I continued to exist, even if I... didn't stay entirely the same. I tried to reach out to her a few times but... it was like staring at the sun, or trying to swim upstream.

(MORE)

AMY STERLING (CONT'D)

My existence depended on her memory, so I couldn't be in her presence without being destroyed... not until she was in the Source as well. Until we were both trapped in here.

KATE SHERIDAN

(growing worry)

What do you mean, trapped in there? Can't you just... walk out?

AMY STERLING

(irritated, like she's talking to a four year old)

No, I can't just "walk out." I don't exist in your world anymore, Kate -- and if I tried to, I'd lose my connection to the one thing keeping me alive... Anna's memory, pushing on the veil.

SAM BAILEY

(confused, slightly concerned)

But Anna's not here anymore.

AMY STERLING

(deeply annoyed, glaring)

I am -- deeply -- aware of that fact, Bailey. That's why I'm here... to make sure you find her and bring her back before I stop *existing* altogether. So ask your questions, and ask them quickly... I'm guessing we have about ten minutes before this projection falls apart.

Kate and Sam glance to one another, suddenly unable to put words to any of the millions of questions running through their heads.

SAM BAILEY

(struggling to prioritize)

Is there a... the Source, is it... Ned told me that... no, that doesn't make sense... can you...

KATE SHERIDAN

(going for the obvious)

Is my sister okay?

AMY STERLING

(scowling)

No. She's trapped in the nightmare I've been living my entire life, trying to find a way out and failing. But she is alive for the time being, and still herself... though I can't say how long that will last. You can only hold onto your sanity for so long in this place.

SAM BAILEY

(going for practicals)

Why didn't you just bring her out though this door? If she can survive outside the Source, then she/must be--

AMY STERLING

(sharp)

Finding Anna was a one-in-a-million chance, Bailey. The only reason it happened at all is because we're connected the way we are. Trust me, it won't happen again... at least, not before she escapes the Source, or she's destroyed by it.

(beat, a little softer)

Besides, even if I could bring her here, she'd be the same half-there ghost Kate saw in her projection. She couldn't walk out that door. It might even kill her to try.

KATE SHERIDAN

(trying to figure out deadlines)

How long do we have before Anna... before she's gone?

Amy doesn't answer... she just shoots Kate an "are you kidding me" look and a thunderous silence.

KATE SHERIDAN (CONT'D)

(annoyed at herself (and Amy))

Right, right... time doesn't work like that.

AMY STERLING

(trying to explain)

I could tell you how long it would feel to Anna, but that wouldn't help... if anything, you'd either panic and rush into danger, or take too long and lose her. Anna couldn't tell me much, but it sounds like you've got one chance to save her. Only one... and it's coming. Soon. Very, very soon.

All three of them fall silent for a long moment... then Sam speaks up.

SAM BAILEY

(asking a question he's wanted to know for years)

What is the Source?

AMY STERLING

(long beat, scowling, bitter)

Hell. The Source is hell. For me, for Anna, for any soul unlucky enough to be trapped inside -- it's hell. A shapeless, sleepless, lightless half-existence with no hope of escape where everything that makes you who you are is stripped away until you are nothing and no one... just energy and matter, reduced to their most basic forms. Then -- only then -- is your consciousness allowed to die. Occasionally, you can see the worlds beyond the veil -- see those living beneath the light of a billion different suns go about their days with a peace you can never know again... but you can't join them. Not once you've been inside long enough.

(beat)

I was one of the lucky ones. I had a friend who remembered me, whose mind was powerful enough to hold onto that memory as history changed around her. Most people who are pulled through the veil are completely unwritten within a couple of months... all memory of their lives, gone. Like they were never even born...

(MORE)

AMY STERLING (CONT'D)  
 because they weren't. The rest of  
 the universe just shifts to  
 compensate, and goes on like  
 nothing ever happened.

SAM BAILEY  
 (trying not to be  
 insensitive, but needing  
 answers)  
 But what... *is* it? A shadow-world,  
 some kind of... reflection of the  
 real world?

AMY STERLING  
 (blunt as anything)  
 It *is* the real world, Bailey.

SAM BAILEY  
 (taken aback)  
 It's... what?

AMY STERLING  
 (bitter, but pushing on)  
 The Source is not a reflection of  
 this world -- this world is a  
 reflection of the Source: a false  
 and hollow illusion that only feels  
 real because you're a part of it,  
 like a dream before you wake up.  
*This* -- this dark and roiling ocean  
 of unformed pre-existence -- is the  
 true shape of reality. Endless  
 chaos, infinite possibility...  
 unknowable dangers.

SAM BAILEY  
 (stunned)  
 I'm... going to need more than  
 that.

AMY STERLING  
 (SCOFFS, annoyed)  
 Of course you will.  
 (DEEP BREATH, gathering  
 thoughts and pushing down  
 vitriol)  
 Before the first moment of time --  
 before any world was born or any  
 mind had its first thought -- there  
 was the Source. The ageless,  
 endless, infinite potential of all  
 universes, unmanifested and  
 waiting. I don't mean ageless to  
 say that it's just very old...

(MORE)

AMY STERLING (CONT'D)

I mean ageless as in timeless,  
ageless as in eternal, ageless as  
in, having no beginning, no middle,  
and no end.

(beat)

There were beings within it, but  
they were shapeless and inscrutable  
as the Source itself... or perhaps  
they were the Source. Are the  
Source. Maybe they were all one  
mind, seen from different angles  
and in different forms... or maybe  
not. There might have been a whole  
pantheon of old gods who ruled in  
the silence before the worlds...  
but I doubt it. The Source is not  
kind to things like identity...  
individuality... free choice. It  
wears them down, burns them out --  
makes them fade.

(beat)

But eventually... that infinite  
potential had to pour out into  
something. So the Source began to  
waver, shifting in waves of  
probability like the wind across  
the surface of a lake. And when  
that wind grew into a gale and the  
waves crashed against the shore...  
universes were born. The Source  
poured out into the dimensions  
beyond itself, and worlds of time  
and space and matter began in their  
hundreds of billions. Some  
flickered in and out of being too  
quickly to be seen, some quirk of  
their physics not able to hold the  
weight of their existence. But some  
endured, growing out of the Source  
into their own realities... but  
they were still connected to the  
Source, influencing and influenced  
by the minds on the other side of  
the veil.

(beat)

All of these worlds -- every  
possible world -- exists within the  
Source. Every point in space and  
time, every life, every choice...  
they're all just ripples on the  
surface, a manifestation of  
probabilities and the chaos that  
birthed them...

(MORE)

AMY STERLING (CONT'D)  
and all it takes is a little  
willpower, properly applied, to  
push through that illusion and  
change it. I'm guessing that's what  
caused me to disappear in the first  
place... some supernatural power  
tearing through my timeline as it  
passed. The well was just there to  
clean up the mess. But it failed...  
because of Anna. And now, time  
itself is starting to come undone.

SAM BAILEY  
(worried)  
What do you mean?

AMY STERLING  
(suddenly worried)  
You don't know?

SAM BAILEY  
(growing confusion)  
Know what?

AMY STERLING  
(agitated)  
I sent you the book... didn't you  
read it? It's all there.

KATE SHERIDAN  
What's there?

AMY STERLING  
(growing desperation)  
The answers! The one's in Anna's  
mind! I pressed them into ink and  
paper so you could understand and  
sent them to that agent... haven't  
you read it?

SAM BAILEY  
(realizing the problem)  
He just got it a few hours ago... I  
don't think *he's* even read it.

AMY STERLING  
(exasperated)  
Ugh! You and your tiny perspectives  
of time are going to be the death  
of me!

SAM BAILEY  
Then just tell us -- what's  
happening?

AMY STERLING  
 (desperate, feels the  
 projection fading)  
 The end. The end of *everything*, the  
 one Anna dreamed about. It's  
 happening soon... it's already  
 started, and if you can't--

As she speaks, a rumbling sound begins to grow... and it suddenly cracks with a sound like shattered glass as the projection falls apart and the bedroom door slams shut.

#### 4. CONTINUOUS

KATE SHERIDAN  
 (needing more answers)  
 Amy!

Kate rushes for the door.

SAM BAILEY  
 Kate, stop!

Too late: Kate throws open the door...

Only to find an empty bedroom, exactly where it's supposed to be.

After a long moment, a completely overwhelmed Kate turns back to Sam.

KATE SHERIDAN  
 (shaken, mind reeling)  
 Please tell me you got all of that  
 on tape.

SAM BAILEY  
 (nodding slowly)  
 Yeah. I did.  
 (beat)  
 Do you think she's--

Sam cuts off... his phone is ringing.

SAM BAILEY (CONT'D)  
 (confused)  
 Who's calling me now...?  
 (picks it up)  
 Hello?

REN PARK  
 (close to panic, spotty  
 reception)  
 (MORE)

REN PARK (CONT'D)

Sam! Sam, where are you? I've been trying to reach you for hours.

SAM BAILEY

(confused)

Ren? We're at Anna's house... reception's a little spotty out here.

REN PARK

Is Kate there?

SAM BAILEY

(not liking the sound of this)

Yeah, she is... what's going on?

REN PARK

Something's happening at Meriwether... something bad. I don't know how long we have, but... we need you back here. Both of you. Now.

SAM BAILEY

(hearing the worry in his voice)

We'll be there as soon as we can.

(hangs up, to Kate)

We need to get back to Meriwether.

KATE SHERIDAN

(disbelieving)

That's nearly fourteen hours away!

SAM BAILEY

I'll drive this time. Not like I'll be able to sleep anyway, not after what Amy told us.

KATE SHERIDAN

(beat, confused)

...who?

SAM BAILEY

(DEEP SIGH)

Here...

(hands over recorder)

Listen to this.

CLACK. The recording ends.

ROLL END THEME  
AND CREDITS