

the Magical History of Knox County

Episode Three

MORDECAI: We have an...interesting show this week.

Opening theme plays.

MORDECAI: One of the things Abigail left behind was a partial schedule for the show, and for this week she had an interview with Lumily and Divodit.

Tape clicks.

MORDECAI: Ned, who are Lilly and Divyot?

NED: What?

MORDECAI: Abigail's schedule just says "Call with... Lilly and... Divyot? Divolit? Daveit?"

NED: Was that English?

MORDECAI: Her handwriting is really difficult to read.

NED: Give me that.

Paper rustling sounds.

NED: Oh, Lumily and Divodit, see, that's a d?

MORDECAI: If you say so. Who are they?

NED: They're magical creature experts. I guess she wanted to do a creature feature or something?

MORDECAI: Is that something she did?

NED: Not successfully. They always turned into a different kind of story.

MORDECAI: Got a better idea?

NED: You're the reporter.

Tape clicks

MORDECAI: And the reporter was out of ideas. So I gave them a call.

Repeated ringing noise. Voicemail beep.

LUMILY: Hi, you've reached Lumily and Divodit laboratories. We're probably busy feeding the Snoligoster or grooming the Manta-- hang on Divodit, did you feed the Snoligoster today?

DIVODIT: I thought you did!

Growling.

LUMILY: It's your week!

Growling noises followed by a voicemail beep cutting them off.

MORDECAI: I tried three times and couldn't get ahold of them. What should I do?

NED: Again, you are the reporter.

MORDECAI: But you actually know these people!

NED: I dunno, why don't you just show up at their lab?

MORDECAI: The “lab”, as it was called, looked more like some kind of hunting lodge. It was a giant, old looking house with a few bizarre looking expansions jutting out from every side at strange angles. Like they ran out of space and shoved more rooms on. But besides its size, I would have never realized what it was. Well, until I walked in the front door.

MORDECAI: Aaaah! What the-- uh... my foot just sank into the ground and I swear I saw a tail. A big scaly tail. Did I just fall into a snakehole? Can you fall into a snakehole? Wait, what?

Whooshing noise.

MORDECAI: The hole was just disappeared.

MORDECAI: I swear there was something there just a second ago. Maybe I kicked dirt over it?

Tape click.

MORDECAI: I pressed on. The door was surprisingly normal for a lab that studies magical creatures. Just plain old wood. I was kind of expecting something, I don't know, higher tech? Higher security maybe.

Knocking.

MORDECAI: Hello? Anybody home? Hello?... I don't know what I do if they aren't here. I might have to interview the snake.

MORDECAI: I was just about to give up when I heard voices inside. Door opening sound.

LUMILY: Hi? Do I know you?

MORDECAI: That's Lumily. She's a rather tall woman with auburn hair pulled back into a messy bun, and one of those ageless faces that could be anywhere from fifteen to fifty. She seems a little frazzled at the moment.

MORDECAI: I'm Mordecai Dogwood with the Magical History of Knox County? I'm filling in for Abigail Redwine. I was hoping for an interview?

LUMILY: Oh, uh... it's kind of a bad time.

DIVODIT: Who is it?

LUMILY: It's the new guy from the radio station.

DIVODIT: Ms. Redwine's replacement? Invite him in!

LUMILY: But what about the—

DIVODIT: Oh, I'm sure Mr. Dogwood can help us.

MORDECAI: That was Divodit.

LUMILY: All right, come in, but don't touch anything.

MORDECAI: Oh, thanks, don't worry, I won't but... what can I help...

MORDECAI: As soon as I walked in I can tell something's up. The place smelled like wet-dog, and there was fur and feathers and other animal debris I can't really describe all over the place. I can see why the door wasn't heavily secured, though, because as Lumily leads me in, I see there's another heavy-duty looking door with a hand written sign on it that reads "BESTIARIUM KEEP DOOR SHUT, PLEASE". From the looks of it, someone didn't follow those instructions.

MORDECAI: Ah, well, maybe I should come back later...

DIVODIT: Nonsense, lad!

MORDECAI: As I turned to leave, I was suddenly approached by Divodit,. Despite the Scottish brogue, he's a small, thin man without a hair on his face. And unlike Lumily, he looked more excited than frazzled. He holds out his hand and shakes mine enthusiastically.

DIVODIT: It's delightful to meet you, you know Lumily and I caught your show last week and think you're off to a terrific start.

MORDECAI: Lumily said nothing, only giving both of us a skeptical look.

MORDECAI: Oh, well, thank you, Mr. Divodit.

DIVODIT: Please, it's just Divodit.

MORDECAI: All right. Well, I came here for an interview, but from the looks of it you have your hands full at the moment with... something.

DIVODIT: Oh, don't worry about the mess, we've taken care of most of it already. We're only missing one tiny creature.

LUMILY: Yes, one tiny little creature that can dig a hole in anything, jump through it, and then pull the hole in with it.

MORDECAI: What?

DIVODIT: Oh, don't you worry, we've been able to keep the beastie contained before, we can catch him again.

MORDECAI: I'm sorry, did you say it can pull the hole in with it? What... what does that even mean?

LUMILY: It's exactly what I said. The hole disappears making it virtually impossible to follow. Which we have been trying to do.

DIVODIT: Well, I'm sure Mr. Dogwood here can help us, good to get some practice for your field work, right?

MORDECAI: I... I'm not sure what you're talking about. I'm a reporter.

DIVODIT: Exactly! Just like Ms. Redwine. I can't tell you how many times she's led us onto some rare finding, the woman was brilliant.

MORDECAI: So I've heard. But how exactly do you want me to help?

DIVODIT: Well, first we ought to show you the 'ol Beastiarium, help you get your bearings.

MORDECAI: With little reverence, he opened up the heavy door with the sign on it, and the thing must have been soundproof, because the moment he did there was a chattering of more different animal sounds than I had ever heard in any zoo.

Animal sounds.

MORDECAI: Wow.

MORDECAI: It's a difficult place to describe. There were more cages in there than I'd ever seen--and not all of them were typical cages. There were some kennels and wire bar chambers, but some were colorful, weirdly shaped, made out of material I can't name. Then I noticed the floor.

DIVODIT: Sorry you have to see it like this lad. It's usually a lot neater.

MORDECAI: There were a bunch of creatures scurrying around the floor.

DIVODIT: Wapaloosie!

MORDECAI: Wha-ah!

Glass breaking.

MORDECAI: Divodit dove to the ground by the closest rack of cages.

DIVODIT: Lumily! I need a container!

LUMILY: Which one?

DIVODIT: Any will do! Quick now!

MORDECAI: Can I h-- oh okay.

Wapaloosie squeaks.

MORDECAI: Divodit and Lumily got the creature under control. Divodit held up a dog kennel. Inside is a...caterpillar, mouse, dog?

DIVODIT: Here we are.

MORDECAI: Who is or what is “we” exactly?

DIVODIT: That, my friend, is a Wapaloosie. It’s a wee baby one too.

MORDECAI: Sorry, can you just spell that for me?

LUMILY: W-A-P-A-L-O-O-S-I-E

MORDECAI: Ok. What is that?

DIVODIT: This.

MORDECAI: Uh well radio— you know...

LUMILY: His audience can’t see that.

DIVODIT: Right. Well, it’s a critter with a really long body that moves like a bit a caterpillar.

MORDECAI: What he’s neglected to mention is that this thing is the size of a small dog.

DIVODIT: I suppose it would be considered larger than your average caterpillar.

MORDECAI: I’m going to handle description from here.

LUMILY: I’m going to take this back to its kennel.

DIVODIT: One more capture!

MORDECAI: How many have you got to go?

DIVODIT: That's an excellent question, actually. Lumily how many have we still got to put back, not counting the Hodag?

LUMILY: We don't have a count.

DIVODIT: Right, no idea! Not too many probably.

MORDECAI: So this...Hodag is breaking into the cages?

DIVODIT: More like burrowing

MORDECAI: But like, this one's plastic and that one's glass. It burrowed through that?

DIVODIT: He's a very determined little fellow!

LUMILY: He also can make holes disappear. Physics doesn't really apply.

MORDECAI: Wait a minute! That's what I saw outside!

DIVODIT: You saw it?

MORDECAI: It made a hole right under my foot! I thought it was a snake!

LUMILY: It's nothing like a snake.

DIVODIT: Did it go back in its hole?

MORDECAI: I think so? I mean, it wasn't there when I looked down. Do you want to see where it was?

DIVODIT: I'm afraid by now it's long gone.

MORDECAI: Ok well... What are you going to do with the Wapole--with that?

LUMILY: Wapaloosie. It's had a stressful day, probably needs some comfort food and a nap.

DIVODIT: My thoughts exactly.

MORDECAI: Is it dangerous?

DIVODIT: This lad? Of course not! Wouldn't hurt a Snow Wassat.

MORDECAI: A what?

LUMILY: You really don't know much about magical creatures do you?

MORDECAI: Well I know a fair amount about giant squids.

DIVODIT: Haven't you met Snickers?

MORDECAI: Uh, no?

DIVODIT: Doesn't Nedezhda bring him to the station anymore?

MORDECAI: Who?

LUMILY: Ned.

MORDECAI: Well now I know why she goes by Ned.

MORDECAI: Oh! You mean that ferret she dyed green?

DIVODIT: I assure you she's done nothing of the sort. Wassets naturally turn green in the summer to better camouflage themselves during hibernation. Fantastic critters!

MORDECAI: Wait, in the summer? Don't animals normally hibernate in the winter?

DIVODIT: Yes but not wassets. In the winter they shed their legs and quite literally live in the snow. Well, except Snickers, he's just a wee lad. Takes wassets years to mature, and the poor pup was the runt of the litter--of an endangered species no less.

MORDECAI: Oh, so how big do they get?

DIVODIT: Well, Snickers' mother is actually right over there.

MORDECAI: Divodit took me over to an enormous glass enclosure where a giant green ferret is sleeping.

MORDECAI: Whoa!

MORDECAI: This thing is at least 10 feet long.

MORDECAI: Why did Ned think this would be a good pet! It's huge!

DIVODIT: I gave it to her for Christmas!

LUMILY: He's a runt, so he'll probably only grow to be...5,6 feet.

MORDECAI: Oh what a relief.

LUMILY: Also he would have probably died if he'd stayed here with his siblings. He couldn't make it up to suckle.

MORDECAI: Awww.

MORDECAI: Lumily and Divodit showed me around the bestiarium. There were hundreds of creatures, each weirder than the last. They all had their own habitats, their own care instructions, their own labels. This lab seemed as well kept as any zoo. When animals weren't burrowing through their cages, that is.

MORDECAI: So why are you keeping all these creatures here? Why not study them in the wild?

DIVODIT: Well, it is easier to study them here, we have more resources to do so. We do usually let most go after we've catalogued them, the majority of the creatures who have a permanent residence in the bestiarium were either injured and taken in to be cared for or were causing too much trouble in the wild for the ecosystem.

MORDECAI: What do you mean too much trouble?

DIVODIT: Magical creatures are found all over the world, but there are a few areas where they're more densely populated. Knox county is one of those areas. It means that some predatory creatures, like the snow wasset, for instance, prey on non-magical creatures and are more likely to cause a non-magical species to become endangered or go extinct. Our ecosystem doesn't really allow for magic.

MORDECAI: But haven't magical creatures existed around here for hundreds of years? Wouldn't the ecosystem have balanced out by now?

DIVODIT: Typically, yes, in other pockets where magic is concentrated that's exactly what happens. But for some reason in Knox county there's a continual influx of new creatures being introduced to the environment every few years.

MORDECAI: Why is that?

LUMILY: We've been trying to figure that out. But right now we're working on containment, and there are still dangers we haven't figured out how to contain.

MORDECAI: Like the Hodag.

DIVODIT: Well, yes for now. What Lumily means, is that there are some creatures we have trouble capturing and keeping. The Hodag is normally in a lovely little habitat, safe and sound.

LUMILY: There are things we haven't even begun to study or explain. The Flock, for example.

DIVODIT: They're a nasty bunch.

MORDECAI: And that would beeeee...?

LUMILY: One moment you see a flock of birds. A moment later you're in a Hitchcock movie.

DIVODIT: That's putting it mildly. They feed on the flesh of their victims... sometimes those victims are human. Live humans.

MORDECAI: Seriously?

DIVODIT: They also wreak havoc on the ecosystem.

LUMILY: We've been trying to do something about them, but they are way beyond our expertise. Their migration patterns indicate that they are more of a magical phenomenon than a zoological one.

DIVODIT: Abigail used to help us with this sort of thing.

Tape clicks.

MORDECAI: Is there anything Abigail didn't do?

NED: Nope.

Tape clicks.

MORDECAI: Okay, so I understand why you would want to contain some creatures. But what about the injured ones, wouldn't you let them back into the wild after they've been rehabilitated.

LUMILY: We try to when we can, but a lot of the creatures we find who've been hurt have been hunted by poachers. If we release them back into the wild they'll probably be hunted again.

MORDECAI: There are magical poachers?

MORDECAI: I was about to ask just how many people would want to poach Magical creatures, but before I could ask this happened.

DIVODIT: Shhh. It's back!

MORDECAI: The Hodag?

MORDECAI: Out of the corner of my eye I saw a hole appear on the wall and then vanish.

Whooshing noise.

MORDECAI: There! Wait! Where'd it go?

LUMILY: Don't move.

DIVODIT: By the Snow Wasset! 4 o'clock!

MORDECAI: I turned in time to see the Hodag jump into the Snow Wasset enclosure. I didn't get a great look at it, but looked like a large lizard with spikes on its back. It left its hole in one of the glass panels. It was a big hole. Big enough for a Snow Wasset.

MORDECAI: What sho—

LUMILY: Shhh!

MORDECAI: The Snow Wasset was still asleep. The Hodag darted back and forth around the cage, but the snow wasset stayed asleep.

MORDECAI: what should we do?

DIVODIT: Hope she doesn't wake up.

MORDECAI: The hodag ran back and forth and back and forth until finally it leapt into the air...and landed directly on the Snow Wasset's tail.

DIVODIT: Oh no.

MORDECAI: The Snow Wasset woke up. The Snow Wasset took one look at the Hodag and didn't like it. It lunged forward, but the hodag leapt back in its hole and disappeared. Once it does, though, the Wasset just curled up on the ground again.

MORDECAI: It just went back to sleep!

DIVODIT: She really doesn't like being disturbed.

MORDECAI: Is the hodag gone?

DIVODIT: Maybe.

MORDECAI: We waited for a minute, but nothing happens. It disappeared.

MORDECAI: How the heck do you plan to catch this thing?

DIVODIT: We're working on that..

MORDECAI: Okay, well, how do you plan to keep him contained?

LUMILY: He has a cage.

MORDECAI: How? How does this thing have a cage?

DIVODIT: Abraham, the guy who retired a while back, made us a cage for it. It's stuck in a magical loop so every time the hodag makes a hole, the hole takes him right back into the cage. It's perfect. He gets to dig holes to his little heart's content and we get to study him.

MORDECAI: So then how did he get out?

DIVODIT: There was a...feeding incident.

LUMILY: He forgot to shut the cage.

Rotary phone rings.

MORDECAI: In the corner of the room, an old rotary phone rang. I had thought it was there for decoration. Lumily went over to answer it.

LUMILY: Hi, Lumily and Divodit laborator-- Oh, hi, how are you...

Unintelligible squeaky voice on phone.

MORDECAI: I could just barely hear the person on the other line, but I was a bit confused because their voice sounds exceptionally high pitched and almost... squeaky.

LUMILY: I'm sorry, we've been trying to catch him all day... uh-huh... uh-huh... you think he went--? Oh, thank you, that's very helpful. And sorry again, we'll be sure to catch him before he can come back. Thanks! Those were the moles, the Hodag burrowed right into one of their services. Nearly took out half the congregation.

DIVODIT: Oh, that was good of them to call. The moles often help us with our subterranean creatures, they have gatherings throughout most of the county.

MORDECAI: Oh, you know the moles?

LUMILY: ... do you?

MORDECAI: Yeah, I met one a couple of weeks ago. Helped us with a kraken.

DIVODIT: Aren't they fascinating creatures? Did you know the average mole spends 15 hours a week in church?

MORDECAI: I did not. That's... very interesting

DIVODIT: It sounds strange, I know, but they believe that their God, The Lowest, gave them the ability to talk. It's based on some old legends from around here. These legends say there's something buried underground. Old relics from gods, ancient beings--

MORDECAI: huh

LUMILY: Anyway, they said the Hodag attacked congregation 626, heading southwest.

DIVODIT: Oh, the congregation of the Holy Oak! I love them!

LUMILY: You love all of them. We have all the mole gatherings catalogued, now we just have to go out to 626 and get him back in his cage.

DIVODIT: Speaking of which, I'll go get that right now, Lumily, you gather up the motion tracker.

MORDECAI: Both of them dashed off, leaving me feeling a little lost as they got together their equipment. At last, Lumily came back with what looked like a metal detector, where Dividot came back with a horrified look on his face.

DIVIDOT: The cage is gone!

MORDECAI: For the first time during my visit, Lumily looked almost beside herself, and I could tell that meant more than having to find a new cage.

MORDECAI: Is that bad?

LUMILY: I didn't move it, did you?

DIVIDOT: I didn't touch it. And I just saw it this morning!

LUMILY: We're running out of time. I say we go track it so we know where it is and what it's up to.

DIVIDOT: That would probably be best.

MORDECAI: But how will you contain it without the cage?

DIVIDOT: We probably won't, but if we don't have the cage we won't be able to for some time. The best we can do now is damage control. Here, Mr. Dogwood.

MORDECAI: Dividot handed me the metal detector looking device, and I took it.

DIVIDOT: We'll be busy readying a way to keep him still before he creates another hole, we'll need someone to help track his location while he's underground.

LUMILY: We'll explain how it works on the way, let's go!

MORDECAI: The two researchers didn't hesitate another moment. One minute later we were in their truck. Lumily was driving and Dividot was giving me a briefing on how to work the motion tracker. Lumily interrupted Dividot's rather complicated explanation of the device to say it's like

the thing they used to track the Alien in Alien. That almost helped, but I definitely felt out of my league.

LUMILY: So where is it going?

MORDECAI: Uhhh Northeast? No no Northwest! Uhhh...

Car tires screech.

LUMILY: Well which is it!

MORDECAI: Turn left!

LUMILY: Are you sure?

MORDECAI: Not really!

DIVODIT: That's it. Let's do this the old fashioned way. Drive toward the forest.

LUMILY: Fine.

MORDECAI: The old fashioned way?

DIVODIT: The forest can tell you a lot. The hodag may not leave behind a hole, but it does leave behind footprints and feces. It disturbs leaves, rocks and dirt. If we know where to start, we should be able to track it for a little ways at least.

MORDECAI: Look out!

LUMILY: Aaaah!

Car tires screech.

MORDECAI: The truck screeched to a halt in front of--

DIVODIT: Riddletoad!

MORDECAI: Riddletoad?

RIDDLETOAD: Good evening.

DIVODIT: It's late afternoon.

RIDDLETOAD: No matter.

LUMILY: What are you doing jumping in front of our truck? I was 3 feet from smushing you into the ground.

RIDDLETOAD: I have something that might interest you.

DIVODIT: Do you now?

RIDDLETOAD: Indeed.

MORDECAI: Riddletoad stepped aside and there was the hodag, in its cage.

LUMILY: You stole the cage!

RIDDLETOAD: And caught your beast. The whole operation took about 5 minutes.

DIVODIT: Riddletoad...he belongs in the bestiarium.

RIDDLETOAD: Does it? Last I checked it was digging holes all over the county. And letting loose the residents of your lovely Bestiarium.

DIVODIT: Riddletoad. Give it back. If he hits the black market...

RIDDLETOAD: So would the Bestiarium.

LUMILY: You don't know what you're messing with.

RIDDLETOAD: Au contraire mon ami. I know exactly what I'm dealing with.

DIVODIT: Riddletoad...don't.

RIDDLETOAD: Don't return him? My, I thought you'd be grateful I tracked him down for you.

MORDECAI: I'm sorry, I'm confused

LUMILY: Shockingly.

MORDECAI: Riddletoad, you caught the Hodag for Lumily and Dividot to take back to the Beasterium?

RIDDLETOAD: Of course.

DIVIDOT/LUMILY: What?

RIDDLETOAD: We can't have him unleashing all your wards, letting them run wild for any old poacher to snatch up, now can we?

DIVODIT: I don't understand...

RIDDLETOAD: Let's see if you can solve this riddle: The tides come and go with the waxing and waning of the moon... in the world of magical creatures, I am the moon.

LUMILY: What?

MORDECAI: OH! I get it.

LUMILY: You do?

MORDECAI: He means that he controls the magical creature market. If the Hodag lets all your creatures out, they flood the market and then he loses control.

RIDDLETOAD: Well, aren't you the clever chronicler? You're learning fast, I see. Abigail would have put it together the moment she saw me, of course, but then again she knew me quite well.

MORDECAI: Thanks? I think?

DIVIDOT: All right, Toad, give us the Hodag.

RIDDLETOAD: Certainly.

MORDECAI: He passed the cage over to Divodit and with one long hop, he was gone. And I finally got a good look at the Hodag. It's smaller than I thought it was. And there are so many spikes, wow! It's kinda like a tiny burrowing dragon.

DIVIDIT: Aww hello there little fellow. Good to have you back. You gave us all quite a fright.

Theme plays.

MORDECAI: So all's well in the Bestiarium, at least for now. I've been thinking a lot about what Divodit said about Abigail helping them. It's clear I've got some big shoes to fill. I can't do as much as she did, but maybe I can do the next best thing. Maybe I can help find her.

NED: How are you going to do that?

MORDECAI: Honestly, I'm not sure yet. But I'm a reporter. I'll come up with something. Maybe you can help...Nedejeda

NED: Where did you--Divodit. Don't you ever call me that again. Understand me? Ever.

MORDECAI: What are you going to do about it, Nedejda?

NED: One day Snickers is going to be huge and have lots of teeth and lots of claws. Would you like him in your house?

MORDECAI: Point taken. And that's the hole story... get it? Hodag? Hole?

NED: Just wrap it up, Mordecai.

MORDECAI: Well, that's all from us this episode. This has been the Magical History of Knox County, I'm Mordecai Dogwood, signing off. We'll see you again next time.

