

THE DARK TOME
SEASON 2

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Production Script
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Unlike Season 1, we do not mark each story with having the characters announce the story name. Instead, we'll announce it in pre-roll credits. This enables a smoother transition in and out of the Dark Tome Worlds. ALSO -- As a podcast strategy, may release the 'container' episodes completely separate from the 'interior' episodes so that the vignettes (approx 10 mins apiece) are all contained together.

MUSIC - Theme of THE DARK TOME, eerie, sense of mystery, wonder...

CASSIE

(narrating)

I started hanging out with Mr. Gussy because things weren't going well in my own life. Stories took me away from all the problems in my life. But then something happened. The Dark Tome took me further than I ever wanted to go.

FX - The book is humming now.

GUSSY

It's... um... it's glowing.

CASSIE

The book was here. It heard the story.

GUSSY

You think... ? You think you being here... and me telling... you think that's enough to... to open a...

OLIVIA

Gussy... Gussy are you there?

GUSSY

Olivia?

FX - Distant, a baby cries.

CASSIE

Mr. Gussy?

GUSSY

Olivia. Oh my God. Olivia!

CASSIE

Mr. Gussy. I didn't hear any ---

GUSSY

OLIVIA!

FX - Teleport WHOOSH!

CASSIE

Mr. Gussy?!

FX - Door bangs open out front.

COUNSELOR

Mr. Gussy! I've got the police with me! We have a search warrant! We have probably cause to believe you're endangering a minor.

CASSIE

Oh... Oh... crap... No choice but...

FX - Phone bzzt. Bzzt!

CASSIE (CONT'D)

Mom... Oh... Gee... I'll have to catch you next time!

SERGEANT

We're breaking the door down!

FX - Door of Mr. Gussy's book-shop is smashed open, police come barging in.

CASSIE

Here goes!

FX - Portal WHOOSH!

2

INT CITY APARTMENT - NIGHT

2

Cassie flings out of a portal and into the bedroom of a city apartment. She's stumbled upon two sisters, Xuemei, the younger, who wakes, and finds her sister Liin Jie sneaking out.

CASSIE

Nnnuffff! (stagger, looks about)
Mr. Gussy? Hey Mr. Gussy? What is this? A closet? What's out here?

Cassie presses on a door -- THUMPF!

LIIN JIE

(Hisses) Ow!

In the next room:

XUEMEI

Liin jie? Is that you?

Cassie's not alone.

LIIN JIE

(whispered)

What the hell -- who are you --

CASSIE

(whispered)

Hey, um, I just stumbled out of --

LIIN JIE

A spirit. Damn. I knew I'd be haunted for what I intend to do.

XUEMEI

Liin Jie? Who are you talking to?

LIIN JIE

(calling out) Go back to sleep, kiddo. (to Cassie) Okay spirit, you can stick around, but stay out of my way.

CASSIE

I'm just looking for my friend.

LIIN JIE

There aren't any friends here.

Liin Jie pushes open the door from living room to her sister's bedroom.

LIIN JIE (CONT'D)

Sweet dreams, okay, sis?

XUEMEI

Are you sneaking out to see a surgeon again?

LIIN JIE

No.

XUEMEI

You are! Ba's gonna be angry when he finds out.

LIIN JIE

He won't be back til Tuesday. And he's not going to find out, is he?

XUEMEI

Where are you getting the money for this?

LIIN JIE

It's not important. Ba won't notice.

XUEMEI

What if he hits you again?

LIIN JIE

He's not going to hit me.

XUEMEI

But he might hit me.

LIIN JIE

I'm leaving.

Liin Jie picks up a jacket, zips it up.

XUEMEI

Don't!

LIIN JIE

You're fine.

XUEMEI

I'm gonna miss you.

LIIN JIE

I'll be back soon.

XUEMEI

I mean, when I go...

LIIN JIE

Hey, at least one of us is getting out of here.

XUEMEI

It should've been you. You're the one who wanted to go to university.

LIIN JIE

Yeah. Well. Didn't work out that way. Where's your acceptance letter?

XUEMEI

On the table over there. I still can't believe it's actually happening. You're not jealous, are you?

LIIN JIE

(smiling) Sleep tight, kid. Don't lock the window or I won't be able to get back in.

XUEMEI

(yawns) Okay. Be safe, jie. It's dangerous out there.

Xuemei quiets, falls back asleep.

LIIN JIE

(whispered) Goodnight. (beat) She's falling asleep. You coming then?

CASSIE

Yeah...

Liin Jie pushes open a window and climbs out.

3

EXT. STAIRWELL - CITY - NIGHT

3

The climb out onto a fire escape, we hear the WIND from a snowstorm blow, and some light night Ambi. Liin Jie starts padding down the stairwell.

CASSIE

(narrating)

We descend a rickety fire escape as snow falls down around us.

LIIN JIE

So what's your name, evil spirit?

CASSIE

I'm not an evil spirit..

LIIN JIE

Then you don't have a name.

CASSIE

I'm Cassie.

LIIN JIE

Ah.

CASSIE
And you?

LIIN JIE
Liin Jie.

CASSIE
And you're the book?

Liin Jie stops.

LIIN JIE
The what?

CASSIE
Never mind. (shivers) Cold out here.

LIIN JIE
That's Toronto for you. Cold as hell. Keep up, would you?

Liin Jie descends the rest of the stairs, hops off and onto the street. Pads down the sidewalk.

4 EXT. TORONTO - NIGHT

4

Now we hear a bit more night ambi. Liin Jie and Cassie pad along the street.

CASSIE
I've never been in a City this big. But. It's not my world, is it? It's like that movie...um.. (snaps fingers) Bladerunner, right?

LIIN JIE
Never heard of it.

A heckler whistles from across the street.

MAN 1
Hey sis! Where you going? It's dangerous to be out, walking all alone. Why don't you keep us company

MAN 2 laughs.

CASSIE
Hey! She's with me!

LIIN JIE
 Shut up. I don't need your help.
 (raises voice) Piss off!

Liin Jie trots off faster.

LIIN JIE (CONT'D)
 I told you to stay out of my way.

CASSIE
 I was just trying to help.

LIIN JIE
 They don't see you. They don't hear
 you. You're a ghost, ghost girl.

CASSIE
 I'm not --

LIIN JIE
 You don't know anything about me.
 You don't know anything about this
 place.

CASSIE
 The Book, it's taken me --

LIIN JIE
 Down here- subway.

5 INT. SUBWAY UNDERGROUND 5

Track them trotting down subway steps, onto an arriving subway car. Incomprehensible SPEAKER playing announcements in BG. Subway car starts moving along.

LIIN JIE
 We're headed to Chinatown.

CUT TO:

6 EXT. CHINATOWN MARKET 6

Sound design abruptly shifts from underground Subway to aboveground Night Market, alive with chatter. Clamoring customers, shouting merchants, etc.

CASSIE
 (narrating)
 We walk up from the subway into a
 street market, wide awake despite
 the late hour.

URCHIN

Hpow about some data infusions,
jie?

They come across a vendor selling data injections. We can't tell exactly what he's offering but we get the sense it's illicit.

CASSIE

(under breath) Yep, definitely
straight out of Bladrunner...

A STREET URCHIN approaches, selling wares.

URCHIN

Untraceable, DRM-free, nice and clean. The newest books from all your favorite authors, or maybe a package of answer keys for the standardized tests of your choice. How about it? A perfect MCAT could be your ticket to a white coat and a surgeon's degree?

LIIN JIE

I'm good, thanks.

CASSIE

He just offered to *inject* you with data?

LIIN JIE

(sighs) Keep walking.

URCHIN

Hey hey! How about a tattoo, huh? You can get one that lights up, like mine.

LIIN JIE

Do I look like an info junkie to you?

URCHIN

Aint's gotta be salty, jie. I only sell high quality, highly reputable stuff. Intravenous, too! Just one injection in the port of your choice and it goes straight to your brain.

LIIN JIE

Move it --

URCHIN

I'll cut you a deal. Two of
whichever bundles you want for the
price of one. All the needles are
sterilized and in a few days you
won't even see the mark.

LIIN JIE

I don't have a goddamn port. See?
Natural Status.

CASSIE

(narrating)
She shows him a patch on her gray
jacket.

URCHIN

Bull. Anyone can buy a jacket.

LIIN JIE

You're barking up the wrong tree,
you'll be lucky if I don't report
you at the next police station--

URCHIN

Your eyelids are definitely fake. I
can even see the scars.

LIIN JIE

Get the hell out of here.

URCHIN

Yeah. Alright. Your loss. Your
friend?

LIIN JIE

What friend?

URCHIN

I heard you talking -- maybe on
Messneger?

LIIN JIE

I don't have any friends.

Vendor tracks away. Liin Jie stops moving, she's upset.

CASSIE

(narrating)
Liin Jie's thoughts suddenly pour
into my head.

Liin Jie's thoughts whirl past, sound designed weirdly, last
through the bottom of this exchange.

LIIN JIE
(whispered)
Fake, fake, fake. Everything is
fake. Everyone's going to know.

CASSIE
Liin Jie, are you okay?

LIIN JIE
Shut up.

CASSIE
Your eyelids look fine to me.

LIIN JIE
SHUT UP!

Liin Jie's thoughts OUT.

Some onlookers stop and start looking at Liin Jie. CROWD
MURMURS.

LIIN JIE (CONT'D)
What the hell are you all looking
at! (to Cassie) Let's go.

Liin Jie and Cassie move along.

CASSIE
Is that what your sister was
talking about? This surgeon thing?
Body modifications? Is that what
they do down here?

LIIN JIE
Let me focus. It's sketchy down
here. Gotta watch out for creeps.

CASSIE
(narrating)
Liin Jie leads me deeper through
the Chinatown night-market; the
crowds get smaller, the street
lights fewer, the snow gets
heavier. At last we stop in front
of a pool hall with a flickering
neon lamp.

FX - Neon lamp humming, crackling.

CASSIE (CONT'D)
Liin Jie kept a stern face while
walking, but now it cracks, just
for a moment.

CASSIE (CONT'D)
 (to Liin Jie)
 This is it?

LIIN JIE
 According to the Dark Net.

Liin Jie presses a buzzer. Bzzt!

Nearby the door to the pool hall opens, a couple of men GUFFAW then one of them accosts Liin Jie.

MAN 3
 (whistles) Hey sweetie...

LIIN JIE
 (to self) Don't make eye contact.

MAN 3
 I'm talking to you!

Liin Jie presses several more times on the buzzer.

LIIN JIE
 Please please please...

CASSIE
 The Dark Net? What is this place?

CASSIE (CONT'D)
 (narrating)
 Liin Jie doesn't speak, but I can see the answer in her eyes: Hope.

SURGEON
 (over buzzer)
 Neh yiu mut lun?

CASSIE
 What's --

LIIN JIE
 Cantonese. Um. (in bad Cantonese)
 Nei di Zhao zung ji-si?

Beat.

SURGEON
 Faan uk kei.

LIIN JIE
 No, please!

Liin Jie grabs the door - locked - and pulls at it several times.

LIIN JIE (CONT'D)
I need to see the ji-si. Please! I
have an urgent request. He's the
only one who can help me.

Beat. Then Door buzzes, lock clicks, Liin Jie enters. Cassie follows.

7

INT. SURGEON'S APARTMENT

7

They take a few steps. Approach elevator.

LIIN JIE
Third floor.

Press elevator button, wait for it to arrive.

CASSIE
Um, if I may ask --

LIIN JIE
Don't.

CASSIE
Why?

Beat. Liin Jie doesn't answer.

CASSIE (CONT'D)
You can't tell your story if you
won't talk --

LIIN JIE
Don't touch me !

Sonic WHOOSH! - Cassie touches Liin Jie, and it triggers to see inside Liin Jie's memories

8

FLASHBACK - INT APARTMENT, TORONTO

8

We break mid-stream into a family argument.

XUEMEI
Ottawa? I don't want to go to
Ottawa!

BABA

I'm doing you a favor! It's what's best for the family and what's best for you! There are people who would sacrifice everything for the chance I'm giving you!

XUEMEI

Well let them!

BABA

You ungrateful bitch!

Baba SLAPS Xuemei, shocking her into silence. Both pant heavily for a moment.

BABA (CONT'D)

Look what you made me do.

Baba stomps off, sees Liin Jie.

BABA (CONT'D)

What are you looking at?

LIIN JIE

You're sending her to Ottawa? And I have to stay here? You wouldn't even sign my application, when I wanted to go...

BABA

Don't be stupid. Look at your face. How will you be successful with a face like that? Get back to work, Liin Jie.

CUT TO:

9

INT. SURGEON'S APARTMENT

9

Clang! The Elevator arrives. The magic flashback spell is broken.

CASSIE

(gasps)

LIIN JIE

Get out of my head!

CASSIE

So that's why... You had your eyes 'fixed'...

LIIN JIE

I don't know you are or why you're following me, but just. Don't. You don't know me.

Liin Jie gets on the elevator. Cassie follows.

CASSIE

It's this book. It sends me to other worlds.

LIIN JIE

Can it get me to Ottawa University?

CASSIE

No. I don't think. Um. It can't help you.

LIIN JIE

No one can help me.

Elevator DING! The doors open.

LIIN JIE (CONT'D)

No one except the surgeon.

BABA

(ethereal) Someone has to take care of the family while I'm away.

CASSIE

Do you hear that?

LIIN JIE

Hear what?

BABA

(ethereal) You'll never be as beautiful as your sister.

CASSIE

I think I can hear your um...

BABA

(ethereal) Everyone can see your flaws.

CASSIE

Thoughts.

LIIN JIE

That's messed up.

Liin Jie knocks on a door.

LIIN JIE (CONT'D)

First I get an evil little sister
who's perfect. Now I get some ghost
girl following me around who can
hear what's going on in my head.

CASSIE

I'm not a ghost.

LIIN JIE

That's what all the ghosts think.

A series of complex locks UNBOLT from door. Door cracks open.

LIIN JIE (CONT'D)

You're the Ji-si?

SURGEON

Neh yiu mut lun?

CASSIE

(narrating)

Without a word I know everything
Liin Jie's thinking. The ji-si. The
flesh broker. Urban legend. Miracle
Worker. Nightmare. Her stock and
trade is black market surgery, body
part swaps, butcher for the folks
who crave the most decadent,
forbidden meats. For Liin Jie -
Hope.

SURGEON

Are you deaf? Or are you just
stupid?

LIIN JIE

I'm here to sell.

SURGEON

You're gutsy. I appreciate that.

With a click, the Surgeon releases a final lock and the door
creaks open, Liin Jie and Cassie walk into the Surgeon's
apartment.

CASSIE

(narrating)

It's cold inside. Almost as cold as
it was outside, lit only by a
single bare bulb and a set of
computer monitors atop a work desk.

(MORE)

CASSIE (CONT'D)

There's a stack of laminated menus laying out surgical options, accompanied by photographs of carefully preserved body parts and posted, smiling portraits. And beyond that, the implements. Knives and surgical tools, woven through with electric cords and plastic tubing. A long table stretched beneath them with plastic sheeting.

A kettle is WHISTLING on the stove. Surgeons takes it off, pours a cup of tea.

SURGEON

Tea?

LIIN JIE

No thanks.

SURGEON

This blizzard's supposed to last all night. If the storm hasn't stopped by the time the anesthesia wears off, I can put you up until the morning. Cheap. Say, another thirty bucks.

LIIN JIE

I won't need to stay that long.

SURGEON

(chuckles) They never think so. But good surgery is about more than just hiding the seams. If you want cuts that'll heal without any of that ugly scarring, I'll need to take my time. Sure you don't want any tea? It'll warm you up. And make you dreamy, so you won't feel a thing when the knife goes in.

LIIN JIE

That won't be necessary.

SURGEON

Come here, let me get a better look at you.

Surgeon roughly grabs Liin Jie's arm.

LIIN JIE

Nnnuff--

SURGEON
(sniffs) Whose that with you?

LIIN JIE
No one...

SURGEON
I can smell something on you. A
spirit.

LIIN JIE
It's nothing.

CASSIE
That's not true --

SURGEON
You're right. No matter. Get on the
table.

Liin Jie reluctantly lays down on the table, which makes a
metallic SQUEAK.

LIIN JIE
What --

SURGEON
I need to see what I've got to work
with. Pretend you're at the
doctors.

Surgeon regards her for a moment. During her examination is
pushing, prodding, poking (but Liin Jie remains still)

SURGEON (CONT'D)
Mmm... You have an extraordinary
face. Nearly all artificially
constructed, from top to bottom.
Even though you're a "Natural."

LIIN JIE
Disappointed?

SURGEON
Oh no, darling. I think it's
beautiful. You're a walking display
of artistry. A testimony to
gorgeous knifework. It'll be a
shame to take you apart, but
well... That's what you're here
for, isn't it?

LIIN JIE
No, I, I want to make a sale --

SURGEON

The market's been strange recently. No one knows what they want these days. Skin, of course, but it would be hard for you to walk out of here without any of that. (hums to self) Breast, or belly? Mm, perhaps the thighs.

LIIN JIE

Wait.

SURGEON

Why? Mmm... The neck. So succulent, and sweet. So perfect. I could keep every one of your parts for myself, customers and profit be damned.

LIIN JIE

Wait! (gasps, pushing back) You're wrong. I'm not here to sell any of my flesh.

SURGEON

Are you playing some kind of game with me, little girl? You walked into my house and promised me a sale. And I intend to collect something for my coffers, whether you like it or not.

LIIN JIE

You'll get your money's worth. But not from me. I have a little sister. And she is much prettier than I am.

SURGEON

A sister?

CASSIE

(to Liin Jie) Liin! You can't.

LIIN JIE

I am.

CASSIE

She's your sister.

LIIN JIE

I said QUIET GHOST!

SURGEON

(chuckles) You do have a spirit. I knew it. My nose can sniff out the sideways worlds.

LIIN JIE

Never mind that. Take a look at this picture. Isn't she beautiful?

SURGEON

Mmm...

LIIN JIE

I came here to sell her to you. Every last inch of her.

SURGEON

A little young, isn't she?

LIIN JIE

I hear that's what people want these days.

SURGEON

(laughs) Auctioning off your own sister? God. You're a piece of work. (smiling) I like you.

LIIN JIE

Look at that picture and tell me she's not twice as beautiful as any of the girls on your menus. People will be clamoring for a piece of her.

SURGEON

So they will. She's almost as pretty as what I've got on the table now. Tell me. If I let you go, how exactly are you planning on getting her here?

LIIN JIE

I won't. You'll have to come to me. My father's away on business. I can drug her dinner so she'll be ready for you tomorrow night. I'll pay extra for your transportation.

CASSIE

(narrating)

There's something hungry in the Surgeon's eyes as she regards the picture.

SURGEON

Will you, now? You have this all planned out.

LIIN JIE

I want you to take every ounce off of her, every hair, every bone. Everything. I want you to package her into little bits and make her disappear.

SURGEON

My, such animosity. Wherever does it come from, I wonder.

LIIN JIE

What does it matter? You'll get your business, and I'll get rid of mine. We both go home happy.

SURGEON

I suppose that's true. She's not going to come back if you change your mind.

CASSIE

(narrating)

Liin Jie's memories flash in my mind again. She sees her Baba, admiring little Xuemei, his face softening at the very sight of her.

LIIN JIE

Good.

SURGEON

Well then. Nay hou duk yi, dan hai nay jun hai hou soh. We'll go fetch her tonight, under the cover of the storm, before the rest of the city's snowed in. I'm not about to let you waltz out of here and leave me empty-handed if your conscience decides to show up.

LIIN JIE

Fine. The apartment's not far from here, anyway.

SURGEON

That's what I like to hear. Come to the other table with me. Let's talk numbers.

CASSIE

(narrating)

The surgeon swings off of Liin Jie, leaving her alone on the cold table. Suddenly, it strikes me how painful it is to be invisible.

CASSIE (CONT'D)

Liin Jie, no!

LIIN JIE

Shut up.

CASSIE

She's your sister!

LIIN JIE

You don't get to change the story.

SURGEON

Hm? Who are you talking to? Your spirit?

LIIN JIE

It's not matter. What'll you offer?

SURGEON

A thousand.

LIIN JIE

A thousand, for a whole person?

SURGEON

You don't like it? Hm. Perhaps you'd prefer to give up your own flesh?

LIIN JIE

She's worth at least double.

SURGEON

I run an expensive business. So much money to keep things... discrete. What's wrong with a thousand? Think of all the things you could do with it. Buy a plane ticket, eh? Buy a new life. (beat) I'll even fix your face if you want.

LIIN JIE

Fine. A thousand.

SURGEON

Don't think I haven't noticed what you're doing. I can make you look exactly like her, if you'd like. Think on it. Though to be honest, I like you just as you are. It suits you.

LIIN JIE

I'll think about it.

SURGEON

(Chuckles) Okay. How's this. A shot of baiju.

Surgeon pours a drink.

SURGEON (CONT'D)

To your fortune. And mine. Chinese cuts are selling well. Per ounce, almost as profitable as the Japanese.

LIIN JIE

To beauty.

They clink shot glasses and suck them down.

10

EXT. TORONTO APARTMENT STAIRCASE

10

CASSIE

(narrating)

The way home is faster; they find a cab willing to brave the blizzard. They're dropped off before the fire escape just as the snow starts to double its efforts.

LIIN JIE

Up here.

SURGEON

You look cold.

LIIN JIE

I'm fine.

SURGEON

Take this.

CASSIE
 (narrates)
 The surgeon drapes a heavy coat
 over Liin Jie's shoulders.

SURGEON
 It's going to be a long night.

The two start climbing up the stairwell, CLANG-ing as they
 go.

CASSIE
 (narrating)
 They stop before the closed window.
 Inside, Xuemei lies sleeping.

LIIN JIE
 There she is.

SURGEON
 Open the window.

LIIN JIE
 No. Do it yourself.

SURGEON
 I can't. She must invite me in.

LIIN JIE
 What?

SURGEON
 Old rule.

CASSIE
 (narrating)
 Liin Jie's eyes lie on Xuemei's
 college acceptance letter, lying
 atop her bedroom table.

SURGEON
 Last chance.

LIIN JIE
 I know.

Liin Jie opens the window.

CASSIE
 (narrating)
 She opens the window.

LIIN JIE

Xuemei? I brought someone I'd like you to meet. Would you like to meet her too?

XUEMEI

Huh, who? A friend of yours?

LIIN JIE

Yes. Say, yes, Xuemei.

XUEMEI

Yes. Yes I'd like to meet her.

SURGEON

Hello, child. Here's to good fortune. (starts laughing)

FX of a BLADE pulled, Xuemei SCREAMS, blended with the sound of opening portal... as sound design rises to PEAK

BREAK

CUT TO:

11

INT. OLD BOOKSHOP

11

Portal crackles closed, and Cassie is left back in the bookshop, breathing hard.

CASSIE

Xuemei... Xuemei... Oh no... No... (recovers) Wait. Where the hell am I now? Is this... Is this the bookshop?

CASSIE (CONT'D)

(narrating)

I'm back in Mr. Gussy's bookshop alright, except it's not the same at all. A fire gutted the place; most of the books were burned to ash, the ones that weren't are scattered across the room and covered in fire extinguisher goo. The windows and door are boarded up. And Mr. Gussy's still missing.

CASSIE (CONT'D)

Mr. Gussy...? Um, hey, Mr. Gussy, are you here? (beat) No, of course not.

(MORE)

CASSIE (CONT'D)

You went sideways again, Cassie.
(sighs) Let's see if I can get out
of here.

She rushes to the door, tries to push on it, door shakes,
does not give.

CASSIE (CONT'D)

Whoever put these boards up, it
would've been REAL helpful if you'd
left a hammer!

Cassie starts beating on the door.

CASSIE (CONT'D)

Hello! Hello! Someone! Anyone! I'm
trapped in here! Help!

A WOMAN, off the street, hears her and stops by

WOMAN

Hello?! Is someone in there!?

CASSIE

Get me help! I'm locked in!

WOMAN

How'd you get in there, honey?

CASSIE

What?

WOMAN

Are you homeless? I'll call a
social worker.

CASSIE

Me. No. What?

WOMAN

I'll get the police, hold on.

CASSIE

Hey - never mind -Don't call them!
I - ah - forget you even talked to
me!

Cassie runs off.

CASSIE (CONT'D)

(narrating)

I spin around and see that the Dark
Tome left me a little present.

Cassie picks up a scalpel.

CASSIE (CONT'D)
A scalpel, how cute. Oh! Maybe I
can use it to get out.

CASSIE (CONT'D)
(narrating)
I take the scalpel to the boarded
up door.

CASSIE (CONT'D)
Not the best tool, Dark Tome, but
maybe I can juuuuust sneak the
knife's edge here, and ...

CREAK as she pries at the door.

CASSIE (CONT'D)
Yes! I can pry back the boards.
Come on... Come on...

SNAP! One of the boards breaks through.

CASSIE (CONT'D)
Okay! Good.

She pries some more. Creeeeeakkk! SNAP!

CASSIE (CONT'D)
One more...

Creeaakk... SNAP! She pulls aside the boards. Fights her way
through the door. CRACK of glass

CASSIE (CONT'D)
Ow! Since when was this a *glass*
door?

She fights her way out, and onto the street.

12

EXT. OUTSIDE DESTROYED BOOKSHOP - DAY

12

Ambi of small town exterior. Woman regards Cassie.

WOMAN
Oh my God. Are you the missing
girl? Were you locked in there the
whole time?

CASSIE
Sorry, I gotta go.

WOMAN

You can't! The police will be here
in a second.

CASSIE

Bye!

WOMAN

Hey, stop! (raises voice) Someone
stop her! I think she's the missing
girl!

CASSIE

(narrating)

Mistake Number One: drawing
attention to myself. Mistake Number
Two: running straight back to my
apartment. I should say, my *old*
apartment...

CASSIE (CONT'D)

Oh. Holy crap.

CASSIE (CONT'D)

(narrating)

...Because the building's no longer
there.

Rattling of HEAVY MACHINERY

CASSIE (CONT'D)

They're building... condos?

CASSIE (CONT'D)

(narrating)

Mr. Gussy's gone. So is my Mom.
Yep. Things are so bad, I'm
considering calling her. But I got
someone better, don't I. Someone
who I know will answer the phone.

CASSIE (CONT'D)

(to self) Call Kim.

FX - phone rings.

KIM

(over phone, tired)

Cassie? Holy crap is that you?

CASSIE

Kim, I need your help.

KIM
I bet! Where are you?

CASSIE
By my old apartment.

Police squad car rolls up. SQUAWKS sirens just once.

SERGEANT
(off) Yeah I got visual. It might
be her.

CASSIE
I need to keep moving. Hey. Can I
meet you by the school?

KIM
Yeah. When?

CASSIE
Now. Get there as fast as you can.

KIM
Okay, I'm on my way!

Phone hangs up.

SERGEANT
Can we talk?

CASSIE
Sorry officer!

SERGEANT
Stop! Police!

Cassie splits. Chase sequence. Cassie leaps onto chain-link
fence.

WORKER
(yells) Authorized personnel only!

CASSIE
(narrating)
I scramble over the chainlink fence
and across the construction zone.

SERGEANT
Someone stop her!

POWER TOOLS zizzing by all around.

CASSIE
Thanks for picking me up.

KIM
Cassie... We all thought you were
dead.

CASSIE
I was worried about that too.

KIM
So what happened?

CASSIE
You won't believe me.

KIM
Try me. (beat) What?

CASSIE
Sorry. I should have told you
sooner.

KIM
Obviously.

CASSIE
The night of the prom, it was just
too fun, I didn't want to ruin the
night with --

KIM
Out with it, Cassie!

CASSIE
I went on a trip with a magic book.

KIM
You *what*?

CASSIE
I said you wouldn't believe me!

KIM
Hold on a minute --

CASSIE
You got your question, here's mine:
What happened to the bookshop?

KIM
You didn't hear?

CASSIE
No. Why else would I be asking you?

KIM
It burned down.

CASSIE
What?!

KIM
They say the guy was a nut. Hoarded books in there, it was super sketchy, the fire department had been on him for years. I guess he was smoking a cigar or something, and a book caught on fire. The fire spread pretty quickly, burned the place flat in like fifteen minutes. They assume he burned alive in the fire, but they never found a body. (beat) This is really the first you're hearing this?

CASSIE
Mr. Gussy? Everyone thinks he's a nut?

KIM
I thought that was obvious. Are you okay? Should we take you to a hospital?

CASSIE
No! No hospitals!

KIM
How about your mom's then?

CASSIE
We were just there. They demolished the building.

KIM
I meant the new place.

CASSIE
New place?

KIM
The place over on Fox Ridge. Is that news to you too?

CASSIE
Fox Ridge? The fancy development?

KIM
That's the one.

CASSIE
Yeah, it's news to me. Can you take
me?

KIM
Sure.

Car drives down the street

KIM (CONT'D)
So... "magic book." Is that code
for a new brand of ecstasy?

CASSIE
I knew you wouldn't believe me.

KIM
You're not giving me a chance to
believe you, Cassie. You're not
telling me anything.

CASSIE
I'm sorry I disappeared.

KIM
I didn't ask if you were sorry, I
asked for an explanation.

CASSIE
Later, I swear.

KIM
Uh-huh.

CASSIE
Seriously. We'll hang out after I
see my mom, okay?

KIM
Whatever. We're here.

Car slows to a stop.

CASSIE
This is nice.

KIM
Guess she got lucky after that car
crash.

CASSIE

Car crash?

KIM

You really have been missing, haven't you? (sighs) It was the talk of the town for a bit. She got hit by a drunk driver, she made it out okay but they gave her a pretty big settlement. Made the paper.

CASSIE

Lucky her.

KIM

She really misses you, Cassie.

CASSIE

Bull.

KIM

Like, I think she was trying to do her own detective work, since the police wouldn't. She got Mr. Carter to interview us at school --

CASSIE

Mr. Carter? What does he have to do with this?

KIM

Maybe he was just trying to help?

CASSIE

Maybe.

KIM

Whatever. Go talk to your mom.

CASSIE

Yeah. I guess I should.

Cassie cracks the door to car open, starts to leave.

CASSIE (CONT'D)

Kim?

KIM

Yeah?

CASSIE

Thanks.

KIM
No problem.

CASSIE
I mean it. If you hadn't --

KIM
I mean it, too. Bye, Cassie. Good
luck.

Door shuts, Car drives off.

16

EXT. OUTSIDE SUBURBAN CONDO

16

WATER SPRINKLERS fill the air. It's a ritzy suburb.

CASSIE
(narrating)
Mom's fortunes had definitely
changed. Here I was in Fox Run
Heights, the nicest neighborhood in
town. Before I went sideways, my
mom would more likely be their
cleaning lady than a resident.

CASSIE (CONT'D)
Home sweet home, I guess?

Cassie heads up the stairs, knocks on a door.

CASSIE (CONT'D)
Hey? Hello?

It takes a minute.

MOM
(off) No solicitations!

CASSIE
I'm not selling anything. Mom?!

Mom approaches the door. Door opens.

MOM
Cassie. Cassie! Ohmigod ohmigod
ohmigod --

CASSIE
I heard you had a new place.

MOM
Cassie.

Mom suddenly grabs Cassie in a huge, overwhelmingly bear hug.

CASSIE

Mmmm - Mom - don't remember you
being so - huggy.

MOM

Ninety-three days, ohmigod, Ninety-
three days without my little girl.
I worried I'd never see you again.

CASSIE

Funny, you never noticed me when I
was around.

MOM

Listen, Cassie. My old life? It's
over. I don't drink anymore.

CASSIE

Really.

MOM

I mean it. I haven't touched a drop
since the night of the accident.

CASSIE

I heard. Getting hurt pays well.

MOM

Cassie, it's really, really, you --

Mom pinches her

CASSIE

Ow! Yes it's me!

MOM

Come in, come in please, baby girl.

17

INT. MOM'S APARTMENT

17

Cassie enters the condo.

CASSIE

It's so - ah --

MOM

Nice?

CASSIE

Ritzy.

MOM
(chuckles) I thought I'd treat myself. The last place was a dump.

CASSIE
Yup. It was.

MOM
Can I get you something? Orange juice?

CASSIE
You don't have any soda?

MOM
Gotta keep it healthy, sweetie.

CASSIE
Yeah, sure, I guess.

The mom opens the fridge and pulls out the juice, starts making a drink. Cassie flicks through letters on the kitchen counter.

CASSIE (CONT'D)
"Recovery Associates Inc." Who are they?

MOM
What are you doing reading my mail?

CASSIE
Sorry, it was just sitting here --

MOM
Here's you juice. (softens) Sorry. I'm still sensitive to the whole recovery thing. Don't like people learning about it.

CASSIE
But isn't that the point? Aren't you supposed to make amends to people you've hurt... Like... You know... Me?

MOM
Drink your juice, sweetie.

Cassie drinks.

CASSIE
Thanks. (slurps) Mm... It's good. Guess I was thirsty.
(MORE)

CASSIE (CONT'D)

Been a while since (Cassie slumps)
Unf.. You know I'm kind of feeling
beat all of a sudden.

MOM

Oh, Cassie. You want to lie down?

CASSIE

I don't... Not...

Cassie drops to the floor.

MOM

Cassie!

CASSIE

(yawn) I'm fine. Just...

MOM

There's a bed for you in here. I
kept it made. Just in case...
Hoping...

Mom cracks open the door.

MOM (CONT'D)

Here you go.

18

INT. CASSIE'S BEDROOM

18

CASSIE

(narrating)

It hits me when I walk into the
room. My mom has no idea who I am.

MOM

Look, all your favorite things. Mr.
Tuffles. The Faraway Tree books.
All that art you used to draw. I
tried to set it up the way things
were.

CASSIE

Mr. Tuffles, mom?

MOM

Your favorite.

CASSIE

Yeah, when I was eight!

MOM

And weren't those good times?

CASSIE
You mean back when you were sober
enough to cook dinner?

MOM
Excuse me?

CASSIE
Yeah, they were good times, Mom.
Good times.

Cassie staggers forward, hits the bead.

CASSIE (CONT'D)
(sleepy) What - what did you put...
Orange juice...

MOM
They said you'd be like this. That
the drugs were messing up your
mind. Turning you into a different
person. I just hoped... Hoped it
could be different.

CASSIE
Mom... What are you... What are you
saying...

MOM
Take a nap, Cassie. You'll get
help, soon.

CASSIE
No, Mom...

MOM
Sleep it off.

Door closes. LOCKS.

CASSIE
What does... She... She mean...

A subdued humming, that buzzes with power - the dark tome.

CASSIE (CONT'D)
(mumbling)
No, go away you stupid book. I've
had enough of you.

The humming increases.

CASSIE (CONT'D)
 Don't you hear me! You ruined my
 life, book, you and Mr. Gussy...
 You took me away... Took me...
 (beat, then groggily) Why are you
 in my head! Dark Tome! You can't be
 in my head...

CASSIE (CONT'D)
 (narrating)
 My eyes are closed, but instead of
 dreams, I see the Dark Tome. I
 don't want to open it, but it seems
 able to open me.

GORDON
 (crackly, as if over long distance)
 Are things as wrong for you as they
 are for me?

CASSIE
 (mumbling)
 No no no no... I don't want to go
 on another... I can't...

GORDON
 Your world is wrong, I can feel it.
 So is mine. I need to talk to
 someone. Will you talk to me?

CASSIE
 Okay.

FX - Fwwwooooommmssshhhh!

19

INT. GORDON'S APARTMENT

19

Cassie staggers into the scene. We are in an apartment
 building with a PARTY going on outside.

CASSIE
 Hello?

GORDON
 I'm here.

CASSIE
 It's dark.

GORDON
 It's all dark.

CASSIE

What's going on? Are you holding...
A fish?

GORDON

Yes. A statue. (chuckles) A statue
of a fish... To think... How could
I ever care more about this thing
than a blind fish stumbling through
a poisonous river?

CASSIE

What?

GORDON

Sorry, I need to go back. Can you
sit for a moment?

CASSIE

Sure.

GORDON

My name's Gordon.

CASSIE

Cassie.

FX - There's a knock at the door.

OLIVIA

(raises voice) Gordon!

GORDON

That's Olivia. I need to hurry.

CASSIE

Why...

GORDON

It started the day I got this
statue in the mail.

MUSIC: Transition. Earlier.

20

INT. GORDON'S APARTMEN - EARLIER

20

FX - Apartment door opens.

GORDON

Oh my God, Olivia, you will not
believe what I just saw. That
woman? From 2-19?

(MORE)

GORDON (CONT'D)

She was in the elevator, wearing --
I thought it was a cape, okay --
but I when I got closer, I saw it
was her dog. She skinned the thing!
And she was wearing it, like it was
nothing.

OLIVIA

You think this is funny?

GORDON

Funny? No, I was horrified --

OLIVIA

You bought a glass fish?

GORDON

What?

Gordon has recently bought an extravagant statue of a fish
that Olivia has just noticed.

OLIVIA

Everything is dying in our world,
and rather than do anything about
it, rather than try to make
anything beautiful, you buy a glass
fish!

GORDON

Look at it, Olivia. Don't its eyes
seem to glow? It's almost alive.

OLIVIA

And you know why it glows like
that? Europium. You know how many
people died digging that Europium?

GORDON

It's a piece of art, Olivia.

OLIVIA

I thought you understood, Gordon, I
really did.

GORDON

What? Honey, I understand, our
world has gone to hell, and doesn't
it make sense to have art --

OLIVIA

This isn't art, it's an insult to
nature. Of everything you killed to
make this world the way that it is.

GORDON
Everything *I* killed?

OLIVIA
Radiation turned our oceans to goo,
the Amazon rainforest is a barren
wasteland, birds dying in the
thousands from pesticides and
butterflies are going extinct
because they die when they land on
flowers. And you, you make a
mockery of it all, by buying... a
glass... FISH!

GORDON
I saw it in a market. I thought it
was beautiful.

OLIVIA
You don't understand beauty.

Olivia storms to the door.

GORDON
Olivia, sweetie?

OLIVIA
What?

GORDON
Are we still on for the play
tonight?

OLIVIA
You don't have to go.

GORDON
But I want to. You said it'll help
me understand. Don't you want me to
understand?

OLIVIA
Okay. Then be there. 6 o'clock.

GORDON
See you.

OLIVIA
And listen to the tape.

GORDON
Tape?

Olivia walks out, then THOOMPF! She slams the door.

GORDON (CONT'D)
Tape...?

Cassie squints, looks out the window.

GORDON (CONT'D)
I guess she means the answering
machine.

CASSIE
Answering machine? Old school.

FX - Button pressed on analog answering machine. Tape reel goes. Hissy silence.

GORDON
What the hell is this... Nothing
but...

Silence turns to distant NATURE CHORUS, grows louder, turns to shrieking, we start to hear GROWLS of coyotes and then HOWLING, SNARLING, etc. Peaks, then.

FX - Message cut off.

CASSIE
Were those... Coyotes? Someone left
you a voicemail of coyotes?

GORDON
I played it back. Over and over.

Sound design of rewind, play, re-play, etc.

GORDON (CONT'D)
Who did I know in the country? What
were they trying to tell me? I
brooded on it for a long time. But
then I had to get to work.

FX - CLICK! Button finally presses on stop.

21 EXT. CITY PARK - DAY

21

A fine autumn morning, in a post-apocalyptic landscape under the HUM of a protective dome. Gordon and Cassie walk along.

CASSIE
What happened to your sky?

GORDON
Beautiful, isn't it?

CASSIE
In a zombie movie kind of way.

GORDON
That blue... It's like, you could just stick your fingers in it, and they'd leave your hands wet.

CASSIE
What's going on with your trees?

GORDON
What about them?

CASSIE
Some of the leaves are green and some are this...

FX - "Melting" FX as a leaf crumbles

CASSIE (CONT'D)
Brown goo.

GORDON
Guess you get used to that stuff after a while. World's strange these days. Hey. You wanna feed the birds?

CASSIE
Do I look like I'm five?

GORDON
Olivia told me I should do it, to help me connect... Come on, I got a stale croissant. Tk - tk - tk - here little guys...

Flock of birds start twittering, about.

LITTLE GIRL
Hi Mister, they like you!

GORDON
They do, don't they? You want to try?

LITTLE GIRL
Sure!

Little girl takes the croissants, breaks them up, suddenly the air comes alight with the chatter of birds.

CASSIE
Um, hey. What's that?

LITTLE GIRL
Here little birdies, go!

Sound design WHHUMPPPPFFF! As something huge comes into the scene

CASSIE
(narrating)
For a moment the sky is blotted out, like a total eclipse blocked the sun. But it isn't an eclipse, it's a gigantic bird.

THUMPF! A huge bird lands in the park, starts savagely slaughtering the other birds. MONSTER FX of the giant bird.

LITTLE GIRL
(Squeals in delight)

CASSIE
(low) That bird is killing all the pigeons!

GORDON
Hey, girl! Come on! Get outta here!

LITTLE GIRL
I want to pet it!

GORDON
You can't! It'll tear you to shreds!

CASSIE
(narrating)
The little girl goes running to the massive black bird, which is now bathed in the blood of the slaughtered pigeons. Its rampage over, it clacks its beak, and turns to the little girl.

The bird makes a dinosaur-like CROAK as the little girl approaches.

LITTLE GIRL
Hi there, beautiful. I was just going for one of these.

CASSIE
 (narrating)
 She reaches down, plucks a bloodied
 feather from the mass.

LITTLE GIRL
 I'll keep it as a souvenir, okay?

The bird CROAKS again. A maternal sound.

LITTLE GIRL (CONT'D)
 Go get the next ones.

Bird SCREECHES and spreads its wings, Flaps off.

GORDON
 I think we should go.

LITTLE GIRL
 Mister, can we do that again?!

GORDON
 Not today.

They flee.

CASSIE
 Is that what you mean by the
 'world's strange.'

GORDON
 This is really just the beginning.
 I made it to the play. Told Olivia
 all about it.

MUSIC - Transitions to orchestra recital

22

INT. OPERA HOUSE - NIGHT

22

Orchestra plays in the background, hub-bub of people all
 around.

OLIVIA
 I don't see what's so weird. Eagles
 kill things, that's what they're
 made for.

GORDON
 But here? In the middle of the
 city? I mean, where did it come
 from? I thought they were extinct.

OLIVIA

I think you just don't like it when things don't go as you expect them to. Even if it's the way things really are supposed to be. Like an eagle killing pigeons.

GORDON

Maybe. When's intermission over?

OLIVIA

You've got a couple minutes.

GORDON

I'm going to run to the restroom. Just. (beat) Hey.

OLIVIA

What?

GORDON

That thing on your neck, is that new?

OLIVIA

Do you like it?

CASSIE

(narrating)

Olivia has a mark on her neck, incisions the shape of a crescent moon. Blood still oozes from some of the holes.

GORDON

Jesus, what the hell did you do? Does it hurt?!

OLIVIA

A little.

GORDON

But why?

OLIVIA

A melted tiger.

GORDON

A what?

A horn bleats out.

OLIVIA

Show's starting again.

GORDON
What did you say?

OLIVIA
Come on. We'll miss the second act.

CASSIE
(narrating)
They go into the show. The theater is packed to see "The Bacchae" by Euripides. (beat) I'm pretty sure I was supposed to read that in Classics class.

MUSIC - Drumbeat Starts to thrum, low and steady

23

INT. THEATER - NIGHT

23

In the theater. Drumbeats THRUM, a SOLDIER speaks while the BACCHANAL women cry in bg.

The scene is a classic climax in THE BACCHAE, when the bacchanal women tear apart Pentheus. This should come across as so realistic (the killing part) that it's hard to tell if it is really theater... It should play scary.

SOLDIER
The wild crowd, more deeply
maddened then, through the angry
rocks and torrent-tossing glen,
tore the coif from his head away,
that she might know him, and not
slay. He touched the wild Cheek,
crying: "Mother, it is I, thy
child, Thy Pentheus, born thee in
Echîon's hall!"

But she, with lips a-foam and eyes
that run Like leaping fire, with
thoughts that ne'er should be on
earth, possessed by Bacchios
utterly -- round his left arm she
put both hands, set hard against
his side her foot, frew . . . and
the shoulder severed!-

A grinding CRUNCH in the auditorium. An actor SHRIEKS! Crowd CACKLES in delight.

SOLDIER (CONT'D)
The torn flesh cried, and on they
pressed, all the crowd of ravening
arms.

(MORE)

SOLDIER (CONT'D)

Yea, all the air was loud with
groans that faded into sobbing
breath, dim shrieks, and joy, and
triumph-cries of death.

BACCHANAL

Evohe! Evohe! (Continues, under)

Actor SCREAMS more, slashing of rending meat.

SOLDIER

With rending; and swift hands
ensanguinèd, tossed as in sport the
flesh of Pentheus dead.

OUT.

24

EXT. PARK, NEAR THE RIVER - NIGHT

24

Night ambi.

OLIVIA

Marvelous! Just marvelous! The Post
finally did it justice, for a
change. (beat) Gordon, are you
okay?

GORDON

Me? Yes. Of course. It was
wonderful.

OLIVIA

You didn't like it.

GORDON

I didn't say that.

OLIVIA

I see it on your face.

GORDON

It was a bit violent...

OLIVIA

Violent! (cackles) A man says
something is violent! Now that,
that is comedy there!

GORDON

You asked my opinion, okay! I --
it's fine, I --

Clank! Gordon stumbles on a glass beer bottle and scatters it across the walk.

GORDON (CONT'D)

Ow.

OLIVIA

Are you okay?

GORDON

I'm fine. Tripped on a beer bottle.

OLIVIA

Who does that?

GORDON

It's fine. Got good shoes on.

OLIVIA

They littered.

GORDON

It's no big deal, Sweetie.

OLIVIA

Are you defending them?

GORDON

What? No. Of course not.

OLIVIA

Who are these people who think they can just... desecrate the earth?

GORDON

Look, the Queen Anne's Lace. It's glowing.

OLIVIA

That's not natural.

GORDON

But it's pretty, right? Tell me it isn't pretty.

OLIVIA

Oh. Look at that bridge!

GORDON

The bridge? It looks like it's crumbling.

Olivia rushes ahead. CREAK as she steps on the rusted metal.

OLIVIA

It's not crumbling. It's like a stage! Isn't it great! (beat) What was it they were saying... Evohe! Evohe!

GORDON

That's not funny...

OLIVIA

It means "Oh Ecstasy," isn't that right? The delight, the unbridled passion, of giving yourself completely to Dionysus. "Evohe! Evoh--- huh?

Olivia stops mid-sentence to regard something in the water. Gordon hurries over.

GORDON

What is it?

Gordon rushes a few steps across rickety metal bridge.

OLIVIA

Poor thing.

Olivia pulls a fish out of the water.

GORDON

What is it? A fish? Olivia, don't touch it - there could be something wrong with it.

OLIVIA

Of *course* there's something wrong with it, Gordon, it doesn't have any eyes.

GORDON

I'm sorry. That's obvious.

OLIVIA

It's dying. It's poisoned. Everything is poisoned!

GORDON

For Christ sakes' drop it, Olivia, don't be playing with it then!

Olivia SHRIEKS! And throws the fish, it PLOPS! Into the water. Beat.

OLIVIA
 (lower, hissed) I wasn't playing
 with it. You don't care, do you?
 You don't even notice what's
 happened. There'd be nothing left
 at all if it was up to people like
 you -- to men like you --

GORDON
 Hey, Olivia, it wasn't me - it w-
 Olivia? Olivia?

Olivia storms off the bridge and into the park. Gordon rushes
 after, ditches off bridge and onto mud.

ROBBER 1
 Stop right there.

GORDON
 Oh, crap.

ROBBER 1
 You're going to reach into your
 pocket real carefully and give me
 your wallet, or else I'm going to
 blow your brains out. Got me?

GORDON
 Yeah. Of course.

ROBBER 1
 Real easy.

Olivia suddenly appears.

OLIVIA
 (howling)

With a wet CRACK! Olivia smacks Robber over the head with
 BEER BOTTLE - bottle SHATTERS and gun SPLATS into the mud.

GORDON
 Olivia!

Olivia brutalizes the robber, PUNCHING and KICKING, CLAWING
 at him.

OLIVIA
 (howls as she beats the robber to
 death)

With a wet SMACK the fight is finally over.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
 (whispered) Who does that... Who
 does *that*...

25 EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

25

GORDON
 Olivia and I walked out of the park
 like nothing happened. I walked her
 home and we said our goodnights.
 What else was there to say? So then
 I took a cab to my place. Something
 was going on.

Near Gordon's apartment. The sounds of a CROWD. DANCE MUSIC
 playing, a street party.

CASSIE
 A party?

GORDON
 Not just any party. A party run by
 her. The girl from 2-19. The one
 who wore her skinned Rottweiler
 like a cape.

CAPE WOMAN
 Heeyyyyyy neighbor!

GORDON
 Hey.

CAPE WOMAN
 Wanna smoke?

GORDON
 Uh, no. I'm good. You look
 different.

CAPE WOMAN
 Decided to let my hair down a
 little bit.

GORDON
 Yeah. So what is this? A block
 party?

CAPE WOMAN
 Isn't it great?

GORDON
 Sure. Hey, gotta get to my room.

Gordon pushes past, entering doorway.

26

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING

26

CAPE WOMAN

I said, isn't it great? You should come down.

GORDON

I'm good, thanks.

Cape woman gets further away as Gordon climbs stairs.

CAPE WOMAN

Promise me you'll come down, mmm?
We need more guys so we can dance
and stuff. There's just never
enough guys anymore. (giggles)

SMASH! A beer glass shatters, crowd CHEERS. More SMASHES from elsewhere outside. Music overheard distorted, the scene outside is growing chaotic.

Gordon is still climbing stairs. People are hanging out, drinking, etc.

GORDON

Yeah, excuse me.

Someone offers a bottle to Gordon, SLOSHES.

PARTY-GOER

Take a hit, man?

GORDON

I'm good. I mean, bad. I'm. I'm not interested.

Gordon pushes open stairwell door. He enters apartment floor and a couple is heard HAVING SEX in the hallway.

GORDON (CONT'D)

Hey... Please...

CASSIE

Why kind of apartment do you live in, Gordon?

GORDON

It hasn't always been like this.
The poison...

CASSIE
The poison?

GORDON
It's getting into people...

Gordon trips over a wine bottle that skitters across the floor and SMASHES against a wall.

The SEX COUPLE slows down for a minute.

SEX WOMAN
Stop staring you perv!

MAN 1
Unless you want to join!

GORDON
I live here!

Gordon struggles to find keys for his apartment door, unlocks, stumbles in.

GORDON (CONT'D)
I'm trying to live here...

27

INT. GORDON'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

27

CASSIE
(narrating)
The lights are off in Gordon's apartment, but it's far from dark. Moonlight floods the space, glimmering across the dark wooden floor, making the shadowed bulk of armchairs and sofa and electronics seem black and strange and ominous.

The TAPE from earlier is playing, on repeat. SCREAMS and HOWLS, followed by a STOP. Then player rewinds itself to beginning, plays again.

CASSIE (CONT'D)
(narrating)
Gordon ignores the tape, and stumbles to the windowsill, sits, and cradles something in his arms.

CASSIE (CONT'D)
Gordon?

GORDON
So now you see where we left off.

CASSIE

It's the fish. You're that upset about the fish?

GORDON

How could I... How could I ever care more about this statue than a blind fish stumbling through a poisonous river? How could any of us?

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK! Someone's at the door.

GORDON (CONT'D)

Hello?

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK!

GORDON (CONT'D)

Olivia? Is that you? I thought you were going to bed.

Door creaks open, STICKS when a chain holds it shut.

OLIVIA

It's hard to sleep with all the chaos out there, Gordon. Are you going to let me in?

GORDON

Yeah, of course.

He gets up and opens the door.

GORDON (CONT'D)

It used to be different. Don't you remember that world, Olivia? Before the riots?

OLIVIA

Gordon. Get on the floor.

GORDON

What?

OLIVIA

Down!

CASSIE

(narrating)

She shoves him to the floor, pulls his shirt off, his trousers. As he reaches for her blouse she slaps him away

SLAP!

CASSIE (CONT'D)
 (narrating)
 And she tears it off herself,
 revealing the moon-shaped scar on
 her shoulder, blood still dripping.

GORDON
 Olivia. Are you angry?

OLIVIA
 Yes. Very.

Gordon suddenly SCREAMS as Olivia BITES him.

GORDON
 Ahnnnnggkkk!! You bit me!

OLIVIA
 Did I?

CASSIE
 (narrating)
 She stands now; walks to the
 window.

OLIVIA
 Look at them. Partying. Smashing.
 Burning. Evohe. *Evohe.*

THRUM. THRUM. THRUM. Drumbeats enter the room around them.

GORDON
 Evohe. From the play?

BACCHANAL
 Evohe. Evohe. Evohe.

GORDON
 Hey... Hey... Hey... What are you
 all... Why are you...

A crowd of naked bacchanalians enter the room, giggling,
 chanting, laughing.

BACCHANAL
 Evohe. Evohe. Evohe!

CASSIE

(narrating)

They ring around him, forcing him to the ground again, like they are going to make love to him, but no...

SMASH!

CASSIE (CONT'D)

(narrating)

The glass fish smashes. Olivia picks up a long sharp fragment and reaches down to Gordon's thighs.

GORDON

I didn't mean to... I thought...

OLIVIA

You should have taken better care of us. All of us.

CASSIE

Gordon looks at me.

GORDON

Do something. Save your world... Before this happens.

OLIVIA

Stop talking, Gordon!

GORDON

No... No... Noooooo!!

BACCHANAL

Evohe! Evohe! Evohe!

They start doing squishy, violent things to Gordon, who continues screaming. A FLAP OF WINGS as large eagle creature settles down nearby

CASSIE

(narrating)

A dark shape blackens the moon behind me.

EAGLE CRIES!!!

CASSIE (CONT'D)

And then, all is dark.

BACCHANAL

EVOHE!!!

FX - Portal WHOOSH!

28 INT. CASSIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

28

CASSIE

(gasps, pants) Ohmigod ohmigod
ohmigod... Just a... Just a... Just
a... Was that... (blinks) Olivia?
That woman's name was Olivia. Was
she Gussy's Olivia? Is that why she
was so angry?

Muffled, off, someone talking.

CASSIE (CONT'D)

Huh? Mom?

Cassie gets out of bed, creeps to the door. Eavesdrops:

MOM

(talking on phone)
It's like you said... She appeared
out of nowhere, like nothing was
wrong. I gave her some of that
stuff and now she's sleeping in her
room, shouting in her sleep. I
thought someone was attacking her --
oh yeah, they're on they're way
already.

Mom hangs up.

MOM (CONT'D)

(off) Wish I still drank
sometimes...

CASSIE

I've got to get out of here.
Window?

Cassie gets out of bed again, creeps over. Tries the door
knob. Sure enough, it's locked.

CASSIE (CONT'D)

Locked. Guess she's gotten smarter.
How about the ceiling tiles.

OFF - People are at the door. Knock! Knock! Knock!

Cassie struggles to lift the ceiling tiles. It's not working.

CASSIE (CONT'D)

Come on!

AGENT 1
(off) She's here?

CUT TO:

29

INT. CONDO - FRONT ROOM

29

"Recovery Associates Inc" arrive, masqueraded as medical assistants, but really AGENTS for the Parabellum. The Agents are immortal beings with magic powers who have been conducting misdeeds for centuries in their search for the Dark Tome on behalf of the Parabellum, a transdimensional demon species. They look like humans and dress like people on official business.

AGENT 2
Came home to the nest, just like I told you.

AGENT 1
Shush.

MOM
You'll help her?

AGENT 1
We have a Doctor prepared to see her immediately.

MOM
It won't hurt ---

AGENT 2
Not nearly as much as it should --

AGENT 1
It's for her own good. Thank you, ma'am.

MOM
Of course. You've all done so much to help me.

AGENT 2
The assistants in your Full Recovery. That's us.

CUT TO:

30

INT. STUCK IN CASSIE'S BEDROOM

30

AGENT 1

(raises voice) Cassie Pinkham! Your good friends at Recovery Associates Inc would like a quick word!

CASSIE

I'm stuck! Come on... Come on... Tome? Tome? What have you got. What I really need to do, is to go sideways. (beat) Is it possible to make yourself go sideways?

MOM

Wait!

AGENT 1

Excuse me?

MOM

Maybe she could stay here tonight? We could talk about it.

AGENT 1

She goes now.

MOM

I just got her back. Please, can't she stay?

AGENT 2

Not if you want those friendly settlement to keep coming.

CASSIE

(narrating) I closed my eyes, and this time, instead of visualizing the Dark Tome, I envisioned the Parking Lot. Down the very last sprinkler.

FX - With a whooshing FWOOM! Cassie teleports outside.

31

EXT. OUTSIDE CONDO

31

MUSIC - Deep trouble now!

CASSIE

Whoa! I did it!

We now hear the agents from far away -- shouting from window.

AGENT 1
What the hell is this?

MOM
I locked her in, just like you
said!

AGENT 2
(busting out the front door) Run
little fox, run!

CASSIE
I did it, I really did it --
except, now what --

AGENT 2
Come on, Cassie, we just want to
talk!

With a sudden SCCHWOOOOOSSSHHH! a magic HOLDING SPELL grabs
Cassie.

AGENT 2 (CONT'D)
The kind of talking that involves
us cutting out your tongue.

CASSIE
Auckk - I can't move.

AGENT 1
It's the simplest of holding
spells. I'm surprised you've lived
so long without it.

AGENT 2
Though you won't live much longer.

CASSIE
What do you want from me?

AGENT 1
You have something of ours that we
want back. Badly.

AGENT 2
Very, very badly.

CASSIE
You have magic too?

AGENT 1
You think you understand what you
carry, but you don't.

AGENT 2

Just like all the others. Every few centuries, one comes along, thinking they're so smart. Joan of Arc, Abe no Seimei, St. Cyprian... So many fools.

CASSIE

You can't have it. The book is mine. And Mr. Gussy's.

AGENT 1

So many ways we can solve this problem.

AGENT 2

Like garroting, that's my favorite.

AGENT 1

How many dismembered fingers do you think it'd take for her to give it up willingly?

AGENT 2

She doesn't need to give it willingly. They don't care.

CASSIE

They? They who?

AGENT 2

(Chuckles) You really are just a girl. I thought the Tome would choose us a worthy opponent.

AGENT 1

Give up the book or we start counting fingers.

SQUEAL! Car tires from across the parking.

AGENT 1 (CONT'D)

Huh?

CASSIE

(narrating)

It's Kim, careening across the parking lot, straight into the two goons.

Car tires careen into the two Agents - SMACK! SMACK!

KIM

Get in!

Cassie opens car door, car squeals away.

CASSIE

How'd you --

KIM

I got a weird feeling about your mom. I decided to hang out for a little bit, see what happened. Then I saw those two show up in the Oldsmobile. No one's up to any good who shows up in an Oldsmobile.

CASSIE

Thanks. You saved me.

KIM

Hey, what are friends for?

CASSIE

Have you ever seen those people before?

KIM

I thought they were a new church or something, I've seen them knocking door to door.

CASSIE

They said some weird stuff.

KIM

Weirder than talk about a magic book?

CASSIE

I'm losing perspective on what's weird these days.

KIM

So are you going to fill me in?

CASSIE

Kim... Do you really want to be involved in this?

KIM

Cassie, I just whacked two would-be kidnappers with my car. I'd say I'm involved.

KIM

If only. I think the guy invented some penis drug.

CASSIE

I had no idea this place was even out here. It's like it just... appeared. Oh. It did.

Cassie stops, realizing this house appeared after she 'went sideways'

KIM

What?

CASSIE

Nothing.

KIM

I thought you were going to let me in on your secrets, Cassie.

CASSIE

Right, sorry. Um. So one of the consequences of this magic book is that sometimes I come out in a world that's different from the world I went in. A new neighborhood can spring up. A rich person's house can appear that I didn't know about before.

KIM

Wicked.

CASSIE

It sounds cooler than it is. Mostly it's just confusing. (beat) You really want to do this?

KIM

So *serious*, Cassie. It's not like we're going to have sex or anything... (beat) Are we?

CASSIE

(flustered) Um, no. Not tonight at least -- I mean -- um --

KIM

(laughs) Then I guess I'll have to settle for your magic book.

CASSIE

Yeah. Here.

Cassie digs around in her belt pack, produces the Dark Tome.

KIM

That's it?

CASSIE

Yep.

KIM

Liiiiike... Hocus pocus, pull a rabbit out of your hat, magic?

CASSIE

More like, trip through time, accidentally make fancy houses appear out of nowhere magic.

KIM

Hell yeah.

CASSIE

Hey! Dark Tome! Can I get a little action here! Kim needs to see what you can do!

The Dark Tome is motionless.

KIM

Wow. Some magic book you've got there.

CASSIE

It works, Kim, I swear!

KIM

Can I look in yo ur eyes, Cassie?

CASSIE

What?

KIM

Give me a look in your eyes. A real solid...

CASSIE

Come on, Kim!

Kim leans in, examines Cassie.

KIM
Yeah, look at your pupils, all
dilated to hell.

CASSIE
No.

KIM
Yes. You are freaking out. Who'd
you just make me run over? Your
drug dealers? What kind of stuff
are we into here?

CASSIE
I wish you believed me.

KIM
I wish you'd tell me the truth.
Cassie? Now you're closing your
eyes. Looking really serious.
You're scaring me. Cassie?

CASSIE
(narrating) I think of how it felt
at my mom's. How even though I
wasn't touching it, I was connected
to the Dark Tome. I picture it in
my mind's eye.

The Dark Tome immediately starts humming.

KIM
What's that?

CASSIE
Dark Tome. I told you. WAKE. UP!!!

FX - Portal Whoosh!

36

EXT. HOUSE ON AZALEA STREET

36

Fwoosh! We're now on Azalea Street, a sweet suburban
neighborhood that is reeling in an early morning murder
scene.

FX: crime scene murmur of squad cars, etc. with endless
flocks of BIRDS in the BG

KIM
Wha!?!? What the heck just
happened!

CASSIE

It worked! (with glee) I told the Dark Tome to wake up, and it did!

KIM

Hunnhh? We're... We're in a totally different neighborhood. Azalea Street? What the hell? There's no Azalea Street in Simpson Falls.

CASSIE

We're not in Simpson Falls.

KIM

What?

CASSIE

Check it out. It's a crime scene.

TASHA

(approaching) Yep, that's for Leonard.

KIM

(screams!) Who the hell are you?

TASHA

Tasha. Look at them, out there.

Suddenly it's evident

CASSIE

The police?

TASHA

The birds.

KIM

The birds. Why are you talking about birds?

TASHA

Look at them, they're all hanging out, fat and happy. Satisfied. The birds are fed and Leonard is dead. The grownups are the same way, all lined up on the sidewalk, feasting on something else. Gossip. Talk about what happened to Leonard. Leonard, the sweetest man at church. Leonard, the guy who got a tough break. Leonard, the A - Plus plus cook. Oh, everybody's sad about poor Leonard.

CASSIE
And you're not?

TASHA
Leonard was a creep.

KIM
Cassie, what's going on here? Where
are we?

CASSIE
We're in a story. Let's listen to
what Tasha has to say. Can you do
that?

KIM
(meek) Okay.

Music - Mysterious

TASHA
See my house is next door to his
house, and my parents always felt
bad for him. They'd bring him over
for dinner and drinks, right, and
they wouldn't notice that, instead
of the art on the wall or the
delectable cheese plate, he'd be
staring right at me.

One time, he cornered me outside
the bathroom.

37

INT. HOUSE ON AZALEA STREET

37

FX - Toilet flushing, sink runs, door opens. Tasha exits the
bathroom and SQUEAKS as she bumps into Leonard.

LEONARD
Do you have a boyfriend yet?

TASHA
What?

TASHA (CONT'D)
He shuffled away, fast, making me
wonder if I'd really heard what I
thought he said. I saw back down at
the dinner table as dessert came
out. Leonard's Apple Strudel
Delicious.

Kitchen table FX, a lovely dinner meal.

TASHA'S MOM
(stuffing face) Oh my goodness, you
have to give me the recipe.

LEONARD
I'd love to, but it's a family
secret.

TASHA'S DAD
We'll just have to have you over
more often.

The adults all chuckle.

TASHA
My parents got up to wash the
dishes. Leonard was across the
table from me. Just staring. His
black rimmed glasses fogging up...

TASHA'S MOM
(off)
Tasha, won't you show Leonard the
painting you've been working on?

TASHA
What? No. It's in my room.

TASHA'S DAD
You know Leonard's quite the
photographer. You had that show in
New York, right?

LEONARD
Years ago. A tiny little venue.

TASHA'S DAD
He knows people. With galleries,
that sort of thing. Maybe he could
show you some tips.

LEONARD
I'd love to see your work. I love
all kinds of art.

TASHA
No, I, uh... I have to go. Forgot
all about it. Paisley and I were
supposed to study late for an exam.

TASHA'S DAD
Isn't school finished --

TASHA
Never too early to get ahead!

Tasha busts out of the scene.

CUT TO:

38

EXT. PAISELY'S HOUSE

38

Some music playing. A teenage girl's room.

FX - Tasha knocks on the Window.

TASHA
Paisley! Paisley!

PAISLEY
(in her own world) Hunh -- Tasha?

Paisley opens the window.

PAISLEY (CONT'D)
What the hell?!

TASHA
I had to get away.

PAISLEY
So you climbed a tree? You could've
texted or something.

TASHA
It's that creep, Leonard. My
parents have him over for dinner.

PAISLEY
Oh.

TASHA
(narrating)
You see, I wasn't the only girl
who'd had a run-in with Leonard.
Paisley told me about this time...

Flashback within a flashback...

PAISLEY
It was a mistake, I wanted to test
him. To test myself.

TASHA
You really went over there?

PAISLEY
My mom asked me to go over there
and ask for a recipe.

TASHA
She couldn't just email him?

PAISLEY
He doesn't do email, remember?

TASHA
Yeah, weird.

PAISLEY
Plus, I kinda wanted to see if it
was all in my head. You know? I
went over in my field hockey skirt.
When I knocked on the door. He told
me to come in. He was elbow deep in
flour.

CUT TO:

39 INT. LEONARD'S HOUSE

39

LEONARD
Why hello there.

PAISLEY
Hi.

A bird squeaks behind her.

PAISLEY (CONT'D)
Hunh?

LEONARD
Those gold finches. They love the
smell of yeast. Come in.

40 INT. PAISELY'S HOUSE

40

PAISLEY
(telling her story)
He looked at me like he was hungry
and I was a delicious piece of
meat. So I decided to mess with
him.

TASHA
No!

PAISLEY

I went in, just to see what would happen.

Back to Leonard's house.

41

INT. FLASHBACK - LEONARD'S HOUSE

41

PAISLEY

What are you doing?

LEONARD

I'm making bread. Would you like to learn?

PAISLEY

Uh, sure.

LEONARD

This is a special family recipe for braided bread. It's important to -- oh my goodness, you've come at just the right time, would you like to try kneading it?

PAISLEY

Sure.

LEONARD

Kids today, all texting and tweeting and whatnot, they've forgotten how important it is to make food. To make something come alive with ingredients from scratch. To work with your fingers. Oh, you have small hands there. Put them in the dough. Work it. Do you feel it? You need to put effort into it?

PAISLEY

(telling her story)

He kept on talking but it wasn't him I was paying attention to. It was the bird. It perched on the windowsill, and screw me if it didn't seem to be staring at us. Judging us. Judging him.

Back to Scene. Leonard has worked himself into a kind of frenzy.

LEONARD
Paisley, dear? Would you like to
work the dough?

PAISLEY
Uh, No.

Paisley SHOVES Leonard aside and runs for the door.

LEONARD
Come back!

Door slams open

LEONARD (CONT'D)
I'm sorry! I didn't mean to! I'm
lonely! Okay! I'm lonely!

Birds are fluttering all around, chirping in the trees.

PAISLEY
If you're that lonely, get a dog!

LEONARD
I can't. I'm allergic.

PAISLEY
Then get a blow-up doll. They're
easy to get online. (leaving) I'll
send you a link!

CUT TO:

42 INT. PAISELY'S HOUSE

42

TASHA
You really said that?

PAISLEY
Okay. Maybe not that last part. I
thought it.

Both girls chuckle.

GIRLS
But the weirdest thing was the
birds...

TASHA
What?

PAISLEY

There were birds all around us, in the trees. Studying us.

TASHA

Crazy.

PAISLEY

I confirmed my theory. Leonard's a creep. (beat) Hey, you want to do a sleepover tomorrow night?

TASHA

Where?

PAISLEY

Your place.

TASHA

Sure. I could use the company.

Back to scene with Cassie.

43

INT. HOUSE ON AZALEA STREET

43

TASHA

(narrating)

I left Paisley's house probably around midnight. When I got home, my parents were waiting for me.

TASHA'S DAD

Tasha, we were worried sick.

TASHA

I told you, I went to Paisley's.

TASHA'S MOM

Well it was very rude, how you took off.

TASHA

Are you guys under some kind of spell or something? Do you not see how he was looking at me?

TASHA'S DAD

Leonard's a little eccentric, honey, but he means well. Life's been tough on him.

TASHA

He asked me if I'd ever had a boyfriend.

TASHA'S MOM

He was probably just trying to be polite.

TASHA

Yeah. Whatever. Goodnight. By the way, Paisley and Katie-Marie are coming over tomorrow night. (to self) To protect me!

Tasha slams her door.

KIM

Is this really happening, Cassie?

CASSIE

What is your definition of 'happening' exactly?

KIM

What?

CASSIE

It's a story. It happens in the sense that the book likes to show us something.

KIM

What exactly is it trying to show us?

CASSIE

Damned if I know.

MUSIC - Transition

44

INT. TASHA'S BEDROOM

44

Girls GIGGLING. Music playing in BG.

TASHA

If you squish your forehead much harder, the wrinkles might stay there forever.

KATIE-MARIE

Ssssh! I'm thinking really hard!

PAISLEY

Thinking really hard is not going to get Mike to like you.

KATIE-MARIE

I'll send you the link if you don't believe me! Intention creates reality.

TASHA

Wow, that sounds like the meditation tapes my Mom was into that time.

PAISLEY

I thought the Ouija board was better.

TASHA

Too bad your dad burned it.

Outside, a car drives up.

TASHA (CONT'D)

Hey, what's that?

PAISLEY

What?

TASHA

Turn off the music!

Music OUT. The girls run to the window.

PAISLEY

What?

TASHA

Over at Leonard's house. Do you see?

KATIE-MARIE

Can you two keep it down? I'm trying to concentrate.

PAISLEY

No, Tasha's right. There's someone at Leonard's house. A woman.

KATIE-MARIE

Like, a living woman?

TASHA

She's not in handcuffs or anything.

PAISLEY

But look at her jacket, it's like she just got out of the North Pole or something.

KATIE-MARIE

Maybe she's Russian. I hear you can mail order them.

TASHA

No, it's not like a Russian jacket, it's like... Feathers.

KATIE-MARIE

Feathers? Who wears a feather jacket?

PAISLEY

This lady does. Oh my god. She's standing there, right next to Leonard, and she's not running away. She doesn't even look nervous. Wasn't he stalking you like two days ago, Tasha?

TASHA

Yeah.

PAISLEY

And now he has a brand new lady all of a sudden?

KATIE-MARIE

Maybe he took you up on your suggestion to buy her online.

TASHA

That didn't really happen.

KATIE-MARIE

What?!

PAISLEY

Tasha called me on it. I made that part up.

KATIE-MARIE

You liar!

PAISLEY

Not about the other stuff!

TASHA

She's staring at all the empty bird-houses.

PAISLEY

What?

TASHA

He's been putting up all these bird-houses, recently, and I swear, he's been shooting them. In the middle of the night, I hear 'pop' 'pop' 'pop'

PAISLEY

Okay so in addition to seducing teenage girls Leonard also murders innocent birds. Why exactly is he still a free man?

KATIE-MARIE

Guys, I'm having a really hard time thinking about Mike right now.

PAISLEY

We got to go in there. We've got to save her from him.

TASHA

No way.

PAISLEY

Your parents made you water his plants that time, right? When he was on vacation? You must have a key.

TASHA

Yeah. I know where he hides his key. But what are we going to do? Blaze in there with a spray bottle of conditioner?

KATIE-MARIE

(growls) You morons! We can talk to her from here!

TASHA

How?

Katie gets up from the bed, trots over.

KATIE-MARIE

That's her, huh? What's she doing
in the kitchen?

PAISLEY

Cleaning her face, I guess.

KATIE-MARIE

Let's wave.

TASHA

Katie, no!

KATIE-MARIE

We've got to warn her. Anyone know
Morse code?

TASHA

No. We can't.

PAISLEY

How about we yell fire? She'll
think it's an emergency and come
out.

KATIE-MARIE

And so will Leonard. And Tasha's
mom and dad. No. That won't do.

TASHA

I'll text her. The old fashioned
way.

Tasha grabs a notebook and a pen and paper.

PAISLEY

You're writing a note?

TASHA

She should be able to read it from
here. WHO. ARE. YOU. Clear enough?

Tasha presses her papers against the window.

KATIE-MARIE

She's staring at it.

PAISLEY

And staring at it...

KATIE-MARIE

See, I told you. Russian.

TASHA

What?

KATIE-MARIE

She doesn't speak English.

PAISLEY

Of course she speaks English. They wouldn't let her into our country if she didn't.

TASHA

(sighs) That's not how it works, Paisley.

PAISLEY

Tell her our names. Maybe she's just shy.

TASHA

Yeah. Sure. (drawn out, as she writes) PAISLEY. KATIE-MARIE. Annnd me. "TASHA. I LIVE NEXT DOOR. HELLO"

PAISLEY

I don't get it.

KATIE-MARIE

She's looking at them, but she's not doing anything.

PAISLEY

Ask her if she's in trouble. Tell her we'll call 911.

TASHA

I don't think she understands any of it.

PAISLEY

Wait. No. She's doing something. She's got something in her hand.

KATIE-MARIE

It's a ball of light! She's a ghost!

TASHA

No, it's not. It's something white. A ball of... Oh!

PAISLEY

Oh....

KATIE-MARIE

What?

TASHA

It's a veil.

PAISLEY

A wedding veil.

KATIE-MARIE

Like, she married him?

TASHA

Apparently.

PAISLEY

No...

KATIE-MARIE

Oh my freaking god. Do you think he made her marry him? Maybe he stole her passport! Maybe... do you think her parents know where she is? What if he's keeping her a prisoner?

PAISLEY

It's my fault. I told him he could order a girl online, and he did.

CASSIE

Tasha, you look like you had your own theory.

TASHA

(to Cassie) I did. It occurred to me that maybe we called out to the universe to do something about Leonard, and this woman was the one who showed up to help us.

Tasha cuts in mid-stream to her friends who are still speculating on how Leonard got there.

KATIE-MARIE

I bet he found her on the side of the road and offered her a ride.

PAISLEY

Seriously, there are these websites, all you need is a credit card --

TASHA

We have to help her.

KATIE-MARIE / PAISELY

What?

TASHA

We have to get her out of that
weirdo's house.

PAISELY / KATIE-MARIE

Yes / No

PAISLEY

Seriously, Katie-Marie?

KATIE-MARIE

On one condition.

TASHA

Yes?

KATIE-MARIE

You help me get with Mike!

TASHA

Ohhh!

Tasha WHACKS Katie-Marie with pillow, and PILLOW FIGHT
ensues.

MUSIC - Transition

TASHA (CONT'D)

(narrating)

At some point, we all fell asleep.
And then later, I woke up. I heard
the screen door smack over at
Leonard's house.

FX - Screen door slams. Various late night noises, dogs
barking, a car here or there, etc.

TASHA (CONT'D)

(yawns)

TASHA (CONT'D)

(narrating)

I crept over to the window, and
sure enough, there she was. The
lady we thought was a mail order
bride, barefoot now, staring at the
sky. I thought she was counting the
stars, but no... She was looking at
the limbs of trees. They were
empty.

(MORE)

TASHA (CONT'D)

She went to one, and pressed her palm against it. Pressed her cheek against it, hugged it. It was just a normal night on Azalea street, and here was Leonard's bride, out on the lawn, hugging a gnarly tree instead of sleeping in bed with him. It was the saddest thing I'd seen all year, even worse than the time Miranda showed us her suicide notes and asked us to pick the best-written one so she could impress her dad.

OMG!

CASSIE

What?

TASHA

I was just thinking I should go out there and help her. Throw on some jeans, any jeans, and run down.

FX - A monstrous, thunderous swarm of birds arrives.

TASHA (CONT'D)

But then the birds came back.

MUSIC - Transition

TASHA (CONT'D)

(narrating)

By the time I woke in the morning, birds were everywhere, so many of them that the tree limbs sunk low with their weight.

TASHA (CONT'D)

We're going over there.

KATIE-MARIE

(yawns) You're not serious.

TASHA

We have to do something. Have you tried talking to your parents about Leonard?

KATIE-MARIE

Oh yeah, I told them about the time he took photos of me when I was running by, they said he is a 'nature photographer' and was probably shooting a gold finch.

TASHA

My point exactly.

KATIE-MARIE

How about the police?

PAISLEY

Everyone just thinks we're idiot teenage girls. They won't believe us. We need to do this ourselves.

TASHA

Did you bring your field hockey outfit with you?

KATIE-MARIE

No. It's the middle of June. Why would I do that?

TASHA

I got a spare, you can wear mine. Here's the plan. We get looking as pretty as possible, and we're going over there, telling him we're raising money for field hockey.

KATIE-MARIE

Ooooookayyy...

PAISLEY

Oh oh I know! We can dump out one of your mom's bags of sugars, and tell him we need to borrow some. We're baking cookies. For field hockey. So that's what we need him for. Can he invite us in.

KATIE-MARIE

You two... Tell me you aren't serious.

TASHA

Oh, we're serious.

MUSIC - transition

KIM

Cassie, these girls, can we help them?

CASSIE

No, that's not how the book works. We just get to watch.

KIM

But what if something bad happ--

CASSIE

Ssh!

45

EXT. LEONARD'S HOUSE

45

We're now outside, by Leonard's house. The sound of birds around us is encompassing. ALL A TWITTER.

KATIE-MARIE

Ohmigod I can't believe we're doing this.

PAISLEY

Sssh -- you'll blow it.

TASHA

Do you guys notice all the birds...?

KATIE-MARIE

They must think we're bringing bread

PAISLEY

I'm doing it.

FX - Knock knock knock!

Door opens, just a crack

LEONARD

Hello?

TASHA

Hey - uh - Leonard. Good afternoon. Um. I mean. Good morning.

PAISLEY

What Tasha's saying is, we're having a bake sale.

KATIE-MARIE
For field hockey.

TASHA
Sugar.

PAISLEY
Right! Sugar. We need sugar. So
(giggles) We thought you could give
us some.

LEONARD
What are you making?

TASHA
Cookies.

PAISLEY
Cupcakes.

KATIE-MARIE
Cake pops.

TASHA
All of that. Yeah.

The girls giggle, nervously.

LEONARD
Then you'll need a lot of sugar.
It's early. I'm not decent yet.
Wait here.

Door slams shut.

KATIE-MARIE
This was totally stupid!

PAISLEY
Sssh!! I'm trying to hear.

KATIE-MARIE
Hear, what? All I hear are the
birds.

PAISLEY
I don't hear any screaming or
anything.

TASHA
We need to get in there.

PAISLEY
Yup.

KATIE-MARIE

Paisley? What are you doing, are you insane?

Paisley pushes the door open, steps inside.

46

INT. LEONARD'S HOUSE

46

LEONARD

I told you to stay outside.

PAISLEY

Where is she?

LEONARD

Where is who?

PAISLEY

The girl. The girl with the feather coat. We saw you bring her inside. Where's the girl!

Outside, sounds of birds growing LOUDER and LOUDER.

TASHA

(narrating)

Leonard stands there in boxer shorts and a stretched out V-Neck shirt, clutching a sugar jar. He sets it down.

LEONARD

They're isn't any girl... Apart from you three. What did you really come over here for?

There is a sudden WHACKING from another room.

TASHA

Over there!

LEONARD

No!

TASHA

(narrating)

We run to a closed door off the main hallway and slam it open. Expecting to find her there, in a cage, tied up, cowering, or something, but instead...

TASHA (CONT'D)
(shrieks)

Paisley starts freaking out as well.

PAISLEY
It's us! Holy crap it's us!!

KATIE-MARIE
In my b-b-bbra-- changing in my
room...

PAISLEY
In the shower...

TASHA
(narrating)
It's a dining room, except, the
room is stacked so high with
pictures that no one would ever be
able to eat a meal in here. The
pictures are US. Me, Katie-Marie,
Paisley. Bending over in a skirt,
changing a t-shirt, lying in a
hammock, splayed out, zoomed in on
the crotch.

PAISLEY
(moaning) Mmm-mmm--mmeee...

LEONARD
My little birds... Come home to
roost...

KATIE-MARIE
Get out of the doorway, you creep.

LEONARD
I don't think so. We're just
getting started.

KATIE-MARIE
We outnumber you. We'll claw your
eyes out...

LEONARD
I cast a spell on you little girls.
I captured your souls... I brought
you in... And now, I get to have
you, like a hot, delicious pear
tart, straight out of the oven, I
think I'll start with... (beat,
then snaps) What are you looking
at!!!

TASHA
There she is.

TASHA (CONT'D)
(narrating)
Leonard turns every so slightly so
he could see what I am looking at -
WHO I am looking at. Her. The black
eyed girl. The woman in feathers.
And then she's on him.

The BIRD WOMAN devours Leonard, thrusts on top of him, starts
clobbering and SHRIEKING as she starts tearing him apart

LEONARD
(Screams)

KATIE-MARIE
Get him! Get him! Tear him apart!

TASHA
Come on, Paisley...

PAISLEY
He t--t--tttook pictures of us, he
had us. In his mind. What did he do
to us in his mind?

TASHA
Sssh...

The shrieking of the bird and Leonard's screams end. From
off, the sound of LAWN SPRINKLERS starting to pump.

PAISLEY
Y-yoy-y-yyyooooou!!!

KATIE-MARIE
You killed him.

BIRD WOMAN
You have to go. Do you understand?

TASHA
Who are you?

BIRD WOMAN
Me? Don't you know?

PAISLEY
We have to get her out of here. She
saved us.

KATIE-MARIE

Where can we take her? We can't drive.

TASHA

Go. Run.

BIRD WOMAN

I don't run. I fly.

TASHA

(narrating)

We make our way through the sugar and blood soaked kitchen, to the back door. And there the woman... changes. The feather cloak becomes part of her body. Or maybe it always was. A dark streak takes off from the back steps and the sky catches it and it's a bird. She was always a bird. And she catches wind until she's a speck, a seed, a dot, a memory.

PAISLEY

Who... who was that?

TASHA

A friend.

Oncoming police sirens arrive, with hub-bub of crime scene, ala opening.

47

EXT. HOUSE ON AZALEA STREET

47

POLICE OFFICER

So you and your friends. You came over here at 7:30 on a Sunday morning, looking for sugar?

TASHA

Yes.

POLICE OFFICER

Uh-huh. And you found the victim. Like that. "Stabbed."

TASHA

That's what I said.

POLICE OFFICER

And you don't know anything about the "secret room."

TASHA
What secret room?

POLICE OFFICER
Never mind. What about the girl?

TASHA
What girl?

POLICE OFFICER
This is really important. If he had
some kind of - uh - prisoner in
there, we need to know about them.
Whoever it is needs help.

TASHA
I don't know anything about that.

POLICE OFFICER
(sighs) Okay. Well. That's all I've
got. I guess.

TASHA'S MOM
(crying) Who would do something
like that?

POLICE OFFICER
If you'd like, I can take you over
to the scene, and show you what
Leonard was up to, that might
explain some things.

TASHA'S MOM
No... I don't... I just... I just
can't believe it.

TASHA'S DAD
There, there...

TASHA
(Sighs) Yeah. Good job watching out
for me.

KIM
So that brings us back here. To the
crime scene. I'm figuring it out.

TASHA
You brought a friend?

CASSIE
Me? Yeah.

CASSIE (CONT'D)
 (narrating) Tasha turns to look at me, and suddenly it's not Tasha anymore. It's the Book.

TASHA
 Don't do that again.

CASSIE
 Why -- wha--?

TASHA
 People get lost here. You know that. It isn't safe.

KIM
 What are you two talking about?

CASSIE
 Nothing. (spins) Right, Tasha?

TASHA
 Huh?

CASSIE
 (narrating) And suddenly she was Tasha, the character in the story, again.

CASSIE (CONT'D)
 I mean. You were telling us how this story ends.

KIM
 The police were here. Did they let you go?

Sirens fade away.

TASHA
 (considers) Oh, yes.

They tried to solve the murder for a couple of weeks, but then I guess they lost track of it, summer was coming, and the softball tournament was approaching, and there was fundraising to do, spaghetti dinners, that sort of thing.

No One ever talked about what Leonard did. About the photographs. They thought it would be bad for property values, I guess.

(MORE)

TASHA (CONT'D)

But before his house sold, I snuck under the crime-scene tape and swiped one of his bird-feeders, and put it in my yard

Suddenly a -TWITTER- with lots of birds.

TASHA (CONT'D)

Birds flocked right to it. I fed them seeds from my trail-mix packs and sometimes bits of sugar-coated breakfast crunch. Sometimes I'd be out on lawn, and the birds would all sit on the fence, chirping at me, like they were trying to talk to me in a language I didn't understand.

I tried to tell them I knew. I tried to say thanks. I spent a lot of my time in the backyard, searching the sky, looking for her.

CASSIE

(narrating) Then suddenly the Tasha that was not Tasha was back.

TASHA

Don't forget what I said.

FX - Portal WHOOSH!

48

INT. BACK IN THE RICH FOLK'S HOUSE.

48

As Cassie and Kim come sprawling back into the house, a FLUTTER of activity as a birds fly through the portal.

KIM

Holy crap! Cassie, what was that?

CASSIE

That was the Dark Tome.

KIM

I didn't realize...

CASSIE

I told you, you wouldn't believe me.

KIM

You didn't give me drugs, did you?

CASSIE
Do drugs leave bird scat in the
kitchen?

Kim glances at the mess the birds left behind.

KIM
Jesus.

CASSIE
Like I said. Magic.

Kim is about to say something else, but then a darkness comes over her eyes.

KIM
I doubted you. Cassie. I'm sorry.

CASSIE
Hey, it's okay, it's...

KIM
No, no it's not. Friends should be
there for friends. You were in
danger. Horrible people were out to
-- I don't know -- kill you maybe --
and here I was -- doubting --

CASSIE
Kim? Are you okay?

KIM
I... I can't believe I'm about to
do this.

CASSIE
Do what?

KIM
You told me your secret. I need to
tell you mine.

CASSIE
You don't.

KIM
I do. I need someone. I need
someone to hear.

CASSIE
Okay, I'm listening.

KIM
Are you sure?

CASSIE
Yeah, I'm sure.

KIM
I don't want to burden --

CASSIE
You're NOT.

KIM
Okay. (sniffs) There are guys like Leonard in the real world. And in the real world, magic bird angels don't come to save us.

CASSIE
What happened?

Kim takes a moment, then tells a story.

KIM
His name was Gary. Like in the story, he was friends with my parents. Divorced guy. My parents liked him. Liked him so much they didn't pay attention to the way he looked at me. The way he --

Kim stops.

KIM (CONT'D)
The way he looked at me. My parents thought he would be a good babysitter. I was thirteen at the time, I would have been fine by myself, but maybe he convinced them it was a good idea. He took a bath. He... He invited me in with him. Told me it was okay. He wanted me to help wash him. I got as far as the tub before I --

Kim breaks down...

CASSIE
Kim...

KIM
I turned and ran out of there as fast as I could, and he was just like Leonard was, in the story. Running behind me, telling me it was all in my head. Telling me it was okay. It was not okay.
(MORE)

KIM (CONT'D)

But I thought, maybe it's me that's not okay. Maybe it's me that gave Gary ideas.

I was scared of Gary. And ashamed. Scared that my parents might find out, and afraid they wouldn't believe me. Just like I didn't believe you.

CASSIE

No, Kim, that's not the same. At all.

KIM

(sniffs) Thank you for listening.

CASSIE

Thank you for trusting me.

KIM

You trusted me with your secret. I thought it was time someone heard mine.

CASSIE

Hey.

They embrace, and eventually, break apart. Kim becomes her normal self again.

KIM

(sniffs, recovers) Wow. That was a lot. You hungry?

CASSIE

Hungry? You must be kidding.

KIM

Hell no! I feel like I just cut a ball and chain off my leg. Let me run to town, grab a couple pizzas, and you find something to watch on Netflix. Does that sound like a plan?

CASSIE

Now that you mention it, yeah. I can't remember the last time I ate.

KIM

Can't stop the forces of evil on an empty stomach. I'll be back in a bit.

CASSIE

Oh, Dark Tome. Don't you...

TV channel flickers

REPORTER

(voice has turned strange) Let's be honest, we don't really care about those 2.5 Million people, do we? I mean, we feel armchair bad.

ANNOUNCER

(also sounding strange) Feeling bad is good for business.

REPORTER

But it doesn't really change anything, no. Hell, I'm still flying this helicopter!

Reporter and Announcer start laughing.

CASSIE

What the hell is going on...

REPORTER

You see the boat coming up? A new Belgian tour company has been touring the devastation. Let's not let human tragedy get in the way of commerce.

ANNOUNCER

Disaster is the greatest economic resource of the 21st century.

REPORTER

We may not have survivable waters or breathable air, but HOT DAMN do we have some good tours!

CASSIE

No no no ... This is... I don't want to do this, Dark tome...
Noooo!

FX - The normal Dark Tome "Thoom" is replaced with a crackling, distorted ripple as the Television seems to shred apart as it becomes a portal.

52

EXT. TOUR BOAT - CARIBBEAN

52

We're now with Cassie ON the tour boat, with Four Tourists, 2 Male, 2 Female.

CASSIE

Ungk! I'm... I'm on the tour boat.
Hey? What's going on here!

TOURIST 2

Where's your helmet?

CASSIE

Helmet?

TOURIST 3

The air out here is very dangerous.

TOURIST 2

Full of contaminants. From the
spill.

TOURIST 3

Here, I've got a spare.

Tourist hands Cassie a helmet as the tour boat comes into dock.

TOURIST 1

I'm so excited for this tour. Did
you see the rating on Travel-
Magick? Five out of five stars.

Zombie Tour Guide is waiting for them.

ZOMBIE

Everybody -- off the boat! Come up
to the bus, now! Thank you please.

Tourists start shuffling off, murmuring pleasantries about the island.

TOURIST 1

Oh look at this...

ZOMBIE

Sir, beg you, don't try to pick the
trumpet flowers. You might cause
damage.

TOURIST 1

I beg your pardon, I paid --

ZOMBIE

Yes, sir; Me know say you paid for an all-inclusive tropical vacation here on the little nipple of mountain top that is all left of my country, but trust me. Some things you don't want all-included. Not since the sea uprise and change everything. Things like trumpet flower bushes.

TOURIST 1

Why I never...

ZOMBIE

(raising voice) How many of you coming on the wondrous, watery tour! Gather in, everybody, so I can count heads. You in for a treat this morning, mek I tell you. Submerged cities, underwater skyscrapers, and an audience with the Wise Old Fish of the Mountaintop. If you ask him nice maybe 'im will let us come back down from the peak. But be polite, you hear me? The tour last week had some from foreign ladies who feel say they were too tourist to mind them manners when tendering the requisite offering to the Wise Old Fish of the Mountain.

Tourists react, chuckling, "Old Fish," etc.

TOURIST 1

I'm taking one of these home, whatever the stupid guide says ---

With a snap, suddenly Tourist 1 starts screaming.

ZOMBIE

Sir, what you carrying on like that for? Didn't I tell you not to pick the trumpet flowers?

TOURIST 1

It burns! It burns!

ZOMBIE

Stop with all the screaming, please! I warned you you might cause damage. Is all right, though. The trumpet flower is fair-minded.

(MORE)

ZOMBIE (CONT'D)

Even though you kill two of her future possible generations, she only take from you the same number of orchids you take from her.

TOURIST 1

My... It burned... My...

ZOMBIE

What, you didn't realize that "orchid" is Latin for "testicles" ? Chuh. Just give thanks is only two flowers you pick. I don't what woulda happen if you had pick three, or four.

The other tourists nervously laugh.

TOURIST 1

I need to lie... Lie down...

ZOMBIE

Try and lie still, sir. Our friendly resort staff soon come and fix you up good-good. Just remember, gratuities not included in your bill. Our workers rely on your extra generosity as a reward for their good service, according to how seeing to your needs is the only industry ya-so nowadays. Here; you can use my scarf to stanch the bleeding. You don't want the smell of blood to bring the mongooses out from their holes.

Tourists in background are gossiping in BG.

ZOMBIE (CONT'D)

Eh! The rest of oonuh not on the bus yet! Get on, get on! Can't keep the Perspicacious Mister Fish waiting!

The tourists start shuffling

TOURIST 2

So rude...

TOURIST 3

We were in Africa last year. They never treated us like this in Africa...

53

INT. BUS TOUR - CARIBBEAN

53

Reverb changes. We're now on a bus. Tourists continue chattering around various places they've been, what they hope to see, etc.

ZOMBIE

Yes, find yourselves a seat. We provide every luxury on dis-ya bus. We oxygenate and filter the air for your comfort. No extra charge. You can even take off your helmets! No air-borne irritants in here!

The tourists sigh in relief, start removing helmets.

CASSIE

You all get used to walking around in helmets?

TOURIST 2

It's better than it used to be, they have great designer ones. If you have enough money.

TOURIST 3

This one has an organic microfiber lining.

ZOMBIE

Everyone! In your seat pockets, you will find your inflatables. You each get seven hundred. Don't fret; they indexed to the American dollar. In case of suddenly tropical depression, you will find they remain relatively stable. Can't promise the same about Mister Fish, though!

FX - Sh-thunk! The bus lurches to a go.

CASSIE

Anyone else worried about this Mr. Fish guy?

TOURIST 3

Oh my goodness! Look! It's just like they said! Category Seven hurricane damage.

TOURIST 4

Such poor, poor people.

TOURIST 3

At least they can make money on the tours now. It feels good to spend my money to a good cause.

ZOMBIE

Now, before we can set out on today's marvellous and malleable tour of our once prosperous nation, oonuh haffee tell me if the password change.

TOURIST 3

Password? You have wifi here?

TOURIST 4

Is this a game?

ZOMBIE

No, lady, is not game me playing.

TOURIST 3

How can we know the password?

ZOMBIE

Is you people from foreign who come up with the new passwords! You know, a code phrase you always want us to say to you at irregular intervals? Time was, it was "Yahman." No? Is the same one? Yahman, then. Yahman

The tourists all chuckle.

TOURIST 4

'Yahman' - That is so authentic.

TOURIST 3

I love the local flavor!

ZOMBIE

All right, driver. We ready.

Bus lurches off to a start. Tourists all GROAN as the bus starts moving.

ZOMBIE (CONT'D)

Guests of this beautiful resort, don't mind the lurching of the bus. This is one of the ones that wake up one morning with legs instead of wheels.

(MORE)

ZOMBIE (CONT'D)

Even the bus-them and all had to come to them senses and swim for dear life when that last duppy tide come through! Never mind, though. Here in the islands - or the mountains - we could do worse than to have sentient buses. Biggest problem is when them take it into them head to hold our pickney-them to ransom in order to get more fuel.

TOURIST 4

Um, Pickey? What's a pickney?

ZOMBIE

Pickney? That mean child.

TOURIST 3

Are you saying the bus is going to steal my child?

ZOMBIE

No, ma'ma. It will be educational for her, yahman.

Tourists chuckle, respond to "Yahman"

ZOMBIE (CONT'D)

By the way, if anybody see a pig deh-bout while we following the camino, him name Malky. If you see him, call for me, do. Thank you please.

Okay now. Over on your left, you can see the trembling waters of the island's former nuclear plant. You want they say, "If my swamp a-rock, you best don't knock."

Tourists again chuckle.

TOURIST 2

What does that mean exactly?

ZOMBIE

Mister, I mean don't get it into your head to go for no sea bath over there. You might come out again as pretty as me.

TOURIST 2

You look, uh, fine.

ZOMBIE

You think I didn't notice you starting at me? (clucks tongue) If you tell me your room number, you and me could spend a little sweetness later. Ten percent surcharge, of course, and you haffe provide certification you had three clean blood tests in the past six months.

Women Tourists Laugh.

ZOMBIE (CONT'D)

The extra eyes give me 360 degree vision, and at least me never have to worry about combing my hair any more. To tell the truth I think I was happy to lose it all and get more vision instead. Papa Fish tell me I must count my blessings.

Tourist side banter.

TOURIST 3

She's joking, right? She must be joking.

TOURIST 4

I did wonder about the extra eyes.

ZOMBIE

If you cast your gaze just beyond the shivering bay... see that scrim on the other side of it? Forming what look like an edging between the mountain and the sea?

TOURIST 2

Like a frill!

ZOMBIE

Yes, sir, like a frill. Well, that frill stretch all the way around the foot of the whole mountain, except for the places where the cruise ships dock at the resorts. You can guess what that frill is?

TOURIST 3

Some sort of rare bird?

TOURIST 4

Grab the binoculars!

ZOMBIE

Any of you ever read a book name
The Goats Look Up? No, my mistake;
'Stand on Zanzibar.' Ask not for
whom the bell tolleth. That's all
me a-say.

TOURIST 3

Whatever is she talking about...

CASSIE

I think they're people.

TOURIST 3

What?

CASSIE

People are packed there, with
nowhere else to go...

ZOMBIE

The bridge we crossing on right now
is taking us over some famous ruins
of former industry. This new body
of water, we call it Sugar Lake.

TOURIST 4

Oh, let me get my camera!

ZOMBIE

No, you can't get out the bus to
take pictures. I know it smell
nice, like boiled sugar sweeties.
Funny thing about that duppy tide;
time was, the biggest you would get
is a king tide, and that was plenty
big. All that melted ice from way
up and down yonder.

GIRL

Are you talking about the ice caps?

ZOMBIE

Ahh, pickney, you could tell me
some of the effects of rising seas?
Of swollen oceans pushing an island
like this one down the sea? You
look like a smart girl who pay mind
to her lessons.

GIRL

Floods!

ZOMBIE

Yes, floods. What else?

GIRL

Dead polar bears?

The tourists all laugh.

ZOMBIE

Rivers running backwards, sewage rushing up into the water table, crops deadening because the soil gets salinated. Very good!

GIRL

I only said polar --

ZOMBIE

You forget one, though. For a long time, we didn't have beaches no more. People like you and your mummy stopped visiting us. Things did bad them there days. Not enough jobs, food crops doing poorly.

GIRL

(breaking down, crying)

ZOMBIE

But is all right! Oonuh coming back again, both the tourists and the things that drowned.

CASSIE

Um. How are things coming back that drowned?

ZOMBIE

Oh you look like a smart pickney, too. Nowadays, is like nothing that get drowned is really gone.

TOURIST 4

What do you mean... Duppy?

ZOMBIE

How you mean, what it mean? Oonuh been worrying out my soul case from the beginning, asking me what words mean.

TOURIST 4

You were our guide, the website said an all-expenses, guided --

ZOMBIE

And you were supposed to drink your phrase book this morning. You have to take a dose every day, for your protection. The water here no safe for oonuh to drink. You don't have resistance built up.

TOURIST 3

I'm putting this in the SnapTrip review --

ZOMBIE

I was saying! When the long time ago sugar plantations get submerge, is like that event leave a residue. A big sugar plantation duppy. It just sit down there below and a-brood. It make of every plantation the island ever had. All of them. All those boiling houses where people who look like me - but with fewer eyes - were forced to feed long poles of sugar cane they had cut from the fields into the grinders, to squeeze out the sweet juice. Then they had to pour the juice into some rahtid big cauldrons to render it down to molasses, and then to sugar. Every so often, one of the people who looked like me, they nod off from fatigue and a get a hand caught in a grinder. Snap!

Tourists all react - they've been gripped by the story

ZOMBIE (CONT'D)

All those duppy hands, they sitting down below, too.

A moment of silence, then the Girl starts CRYING HARD. Bus starts moving again.

TOURIST 3

Y- you...

ZOMBIE

Beg pardon, ma'am. I don't mean to upset your little girl. And she so clever. But I have this tour guide script to follow, you see?

(MORE)

ZOMBIE (CONT'D)

Koo here, see how the script get tattooed on the inside of my bottom lip, in peeny little letters? The whole script fix deh-yah in my mouth, so you understand I don't have no choice but to speak it. Is Master Fish make it be so, yahman.

I could continue?

TOURIST 3

Yes... Of course. If it's in the script--

ZOMBIE

Thank you please. Oonuh sure you don't spy a pig out there in the muck? I hope he not lost. He's such a little guy, only standing as high as my shoulder. I prefer to have him with us on these rides. He help to keep the mongooses away.

TOURIST 4

But mongooses are small things, right? They can't hurt us?

ZOMBIE

Chuh. Long and short of it is, that swamp below make of molten sugar. True we call it sugar lake, but is more like Syrup Swamp. Now we have to move along. If the bus stop here too long, the heat of the bridge will burn her poor feet. The pain give her belling runnings, and we inside that self-same belly at the moment.

TOURIST 2

Oh, ah, that reminds me... Does this bus have, um, facilities?

ZOMBIE

Absolutely, sir. The water reclamation unit is at the back of the bus. Any other bodily fluids you care to donate while you in there are gratefully appreciated. Or any bodily solids. You don't even have to remove any bones first.

TOURIST 2

Bones?

ZOMBIE

Don't fret if what you see coming out of you don't look exactly like what you expect. If your pee turn into hundreds of little frogs and hop away to hide in dark corners. Is how you folks say it? Change is good. Right? Yahman.

Everyone chuckles.

TOURIST 2

Nevermind. I'm good.

Bus stomps along a bit.

ZOMBIE

Next stop is the Twinkling City. See all the rainbow colors as the light catch the oil slick?

GIRL

But it looks like the light is coming from underwater...

ZOMBIE

Pickney-child, you too smart for me. You right. The actual city is below the surface.

Everyone "Oohs" and "Ahs" at this.

TOURIST 4

Can I?

As Zombie talks, Tourist is in BG trying to get out of the bus.

ZOMBIE

Oonuh want to see. All right, I will open up one window. You gwine haffe peer out one at a time. Don't worry, I will stand by and make sure the murk don't reach long fingers in and pull you out for the

--

Tourist is pulled out of OPEN WINDOW

TOURIST 4

(screams)

ZOMBIE

Oh! She gone!

All the other tourists scream.

ZOMBIE (CONT'D)

Why she open the window before I was ready? Never mind, I ready now. Who else want to look?

TOURIST 3

Uh..uh... I want to.

ZOMBIE

Okay lady. Lean out, I will grab your waist. If you screw up your eye-them and gaze hard, you might see thousands and thousands of lights flickering down beneath.

This part segues into trippy, ethereal sound design, with dreamlike city sound effects.

ZOMBIE (CONT'D)

We nah know where the electricity coming from to power the city, but there underneath the oil, it still going. Traffic lights still clicking from red to green and back again. Factories still a-run. I bet you anything the university still full up of scholars, experimenting on the wonders they find in the uprising sea, and studying the results, and making discoveries, and arguing, and publishing.

Mystic sound design breaks.

ZOMBIE (CONT'D)

Now, as I was saying; the oil slack have a circumstance of approximately 325 square miles, and is about 29 feet deep. I say "oil slick" because is what it was at the beginning of the duppy tide, but like everything here, it change up. It have a way nowadays to rise up all of a sudden and grab sea gulls from out the air. At night, it will sometimes whisper to us in our dreams.

Whispering starts...

ZOMBIE (CONT'D)

Those who can't hear it have a way to die screaming before they wake up. Perhaps you already beginning to hear it when you sleeping? Show of hands?

Tourists murmur; show hands.

ZOMBIE (CONT'D)

All of oonuh hearing it except that man in the noisy shirt? Maybe the shirt drowning out the sound of things you need to hear. Sir, when we get back to the resort, they will have a ticket waiting for you.

TOURIST 2

Why?

ZOMBIE

For a flight home. You will have to leave right away, before night come. Your choice. Only, try don't doze off between now and when we get back.

TOURIST 3

Nancy, can you reach my telephoto lens?

ZOMBIE

Come back in now, lady. My arms don't get tired, exactly, but put a tender life in my hands like this, and after a while, I start to get certain impulses.

Tourist struggles in.

ZOMBIE (CONT'D)

(scared) Quick, close the window!

Tourist obeys, slams window show.

GIRL

Were you here during the - uh - "Duppy tide?"

ZOMBIE

Of course I was here when the duppy tide make landfall. Is the reason I still here.

(MORE)

ZOMBIE (CONT'D)

On our TV, we had meteorologists telling us for days to get out, get out. Local weather website have a live feed. I watch it on my phone during breaks at work, on my computer when I was home in the evenings.

TOURIST 3

You have computers here?

ZOMBIE

You think "tropics" mean "backwards"? Chuh.

The feed didn't look so bad, though. Long shots of dark sea and a dark sky. Screech of wind whistling past camera. Nothing we never see before.

Sound design of the epic sea landfall creaks in...

Until I look at it good and realize camera image not split into the usual equal horizontal bars of slate gray on top of the midnight sea. Up at the top of the image, a shallow bar of lighter gray. That was all the camera could see of the sky. The lower bar, taking more than seven-eighths of the computer screen? That was the duppy tide rising.

Sea drone grows louder, and louder... Distorted, in the distance we hear Zombie shrieking "Malky! Malky!"

I wait too long to leave. Most people did evacuate long since, but I couldn't find Malky. You sure you don't see him out there in the dark? Sometimes I think I spot him, but I can't really tell in the murk.

I couldn't leave him all alone.

Sea CRASHES!!! And with a thrum of force, the water sounds dissolve.

ZOMBIE (CONT'D)

We have to speed up. Time getting short.

(MORE)

ZOMBIE (CONT'D)

Over here in this boiling bay, all the fights were ever fight, for freedom, for independence, revolts against hunger, protests for wages.

There is sudden ROAR of a crashing waterfall.

TOURIST 3

(in horror) What is that?

GIRL

That looks like...

ZOMBIE

Zombis! This land had stewards before us. Rush driver, rush past all of them.

TOURIST 3

The tour didn't say anything about zombies...

ZOMBIE

You didn't know this part of the world is where zombies come from? Well, know you do.

A sudden, roaring swell of water.

ZOMBIE (CONT'D)

Last stop! I will let you out the bus just now, but don't get too close to the whirlpool. You haffe koo 'pon it from a distance. This island have a bedrock of ancient limestone, so we get sinkholes. Some terrible things get push down into sinkholes over the centuries, lost... and then forgotten. But that thing outside? That is all the sinkholes, with all their cargo. That is sinkhole papa. And yet, all the ocean it swallow, the levels only rising, not going down.

FX - Eeeerrrrrk! The door to the bus opens up.

54

EXT. NEAR THE SINKHOLE - CARIBBEAN

54

Tourists are all squabbling.

TOURIST 3

Wow, it's huge!

GIRL

My friends will never believe I saw it.

CASSIE

Are you all sure you're --

The ground starts shaking.

CASSIE (CONT'D)

Okay... ?

TOURIST 3

What's that?

ZOMBIE

You feel him now? Massa Fish? That vibration rumbling up through you, so deep it make your insides shiver? My generous guests, what you looking at is the open maw of Massa Fish. He shouting. He been shouting since the duppy tide beach him up here on the mountain. And me think say him finally getting an answer.

Check the skyline. Dark. Seventy-eighths' black, with a little grey line of sky on top. Duppy tide a-come down again, even vaster! Massa Fish a-call out for him mama! I so excited to see what changes she will bring this time, I could turn myself inside out! Any last questions, fish food?

TOURIST 3

How do we get out of here?

ZOMBIE

How do you escape the tide? Me sorry, friends, me don't have the answer. I never did escape. Yahman.

Wave rumbles up, louder. Tourists screaming.

CASSIE

Um, Dark Tome... this would be a good time...

MASSA FISH

(low, monstrous groaning from the depths of the earth)

CASSIE

Dark Tome!

Sparkling magic from the tome.

ZOMBIE

Where you going, pickney girl?
You're fish food, too.

CASSIE

No no no no... It wasn't me... I'm
not supposed to be here. The
book...

ZOMBIE

Don't you see Malky now? I think I
heard his cry.

The roar has hit a PEAK!!!

CASSIE

DARK TOME!!!

Just when we're sure Cassie it's getting rolled by the epic
wave, we have a sonic WHOOSH! And she is thrust back into her
world.

55

INT. RICH FOLK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

55

A crackle of ENERGY surges through the house. Pop pop pop!
Windows are exploding everywhere.

Home security alarm starts sounding. Whoop whoop whoop whoop
whoop!

MARY

Danny! Danny! What just happened!

DANNY

It felt like an earth quake!

MARY

Call 9-11!

In the new reality, the family is not out of town, they are
in the house.

CASSIE

(panting) Oh no. I thought they
were out of town!

MARY

(shrieks)

DANNY
What is it?

MARY
L -- look.

DANNY
Hey - you! Who the hell are you!

MARY
She's a t-t--terrorist - she
attacked our house!

CASSIE
I -- no - no no no - It's not what
it looks like. I know Kim!

DANNY
Who's Kim?

Overheard from phone:

911
(speakerphone)
This is 911 what is your emergency?

MARY
32 Wabanaki Grove. A black girl in
a hoodie just tried to blow up our
house. We need police. Now!

CASSIE
I didn't!!

MARY
Oh my god do you think she has a
gun?!

DANNY
Hey, you! Stay right there!

CASSIE
I didn't mean to -- I'm just
going!!

MARY
Stop her, Danny, please!

911
(speakerphone)
Officers en route.

MARY
She's running away!

We hear Cassie jump through a shattered sliding door,
transition into:

56 EXT. RICH FOLK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

56

Cassie dashes out of the house, towards the woods.

CASSIE
Where the hell do I go? This
neighborhood didn't even exist
before!

KAL
(whispered) Run, run, run...

CASSIE
Hello?

A barking DOG leaps against a chain-link fence

CASSIE (CONT'D)
(shrieks) eep!

NEIGHBOR
(off)
Hey, who are you?!

DANNY
(shouted)
She just attacked us! She's
dangerous!

CASSIE
Guess I'll try the woods!

57 EXT. WOODS

57

CASSIE
(running)

Cassie charges forward, dog FEROCIOUSLY BARKING as she runs,
she TRIPS on branch, rolls, THUMP THUMP THUMP!

CASSIE (CONT'D)
(cries in pain) Damn root!

GHOST WHISPER CHORUS as a magical presence comes near.

KAL
Root root root root...

CASSIE
(whispered) Hello? Who's there?

KAL
Mmm? Have you come to visit me?
It's been a long time since I've
had a visitor.

CASSIE
Who? What?

Cassie shuffles.

CASSIE (CONT'D)
Ow! My ankle!

KAL
(sniffs) I smell the blood of a
young sorcerer.

CASSIE
Who's talking?

KAL
Can't you see me?

CASSIE
No... it's dark...

KAL
Look in your mind's eye.

CASSIE
My...? Oh.

CASSIE (CONT'D)
(narrating) I focus inward,
harnessing the feeling I get when
the Dark Tome rips me between
worlds. A gateway appears, and
through it, I see --

KAL -- the shadow Loa of Haitian mythos, reveals himself to
her as a demonlike creature.

CASSIE (CONT'D)
Ahhh!!!

KAL
Frightened?

CASSIE
You're a demon.

KAL

(hisses) A cruel word, that one. I prefer "Petro." People fear me because I am angry. But there is good reason to be angry.

CASSIE

Don't come closer...

KAL

Or what? (chuckles) Let me see you, girl. The world has been too thin on magic lately. (regards) Mmmm, the Book bonded with you. The bond runs deep.

CASSIE

What are you talking about?

KAL

You have the power to manipulate worlds yet no control. *Tres dangereuse*. To yourself. To others. To everybody.

CASSIE

Then help me!

KAL

(laughing) Help you? Don't you know who I am?

CASSIE

No!

KAL

You may call me Kal. And I do not help. I watch. I laugh. (sniffs) And I smell *them*.

CASSIE

Them? Them who?

KAL

Ahhh... You do not know their true name. Good. This is a gift I have for you then. They are called the Parabellum. They swim through worlds like Sharks swim through the sea. And like sharks, they sniff out their prey. Only it is reckless magic they smell, not blood.

Now, the impending sound of SIRENS.

CASSIE

What do I do? I can't control the book!

KAL

(chuckles) Of course not. The Book is merely a key. The door is always there. In your mind.

Sirens pull in close. Officers start getting out.

KAL (CONT'D)

Now, I think you run. Goodbye.

OFFICER

She's in the woods!

DANNY

I think she was using explosives.

MARY

(sobbing) So, so scared... In my own house.

CASSIE

Tome... Tome... if you could do something right now, it would be really helpful if ---

FX - Phone vibrates. Whummp! Whummp whummp!

CASSIE (CONT'D)

Kim!!

KIM

(phone) Pull up your maps app and follow it to the school, I'll meet you there.

CASSIE

What's happening, those people came to the house, it's like you weren't ever there --

KIM

(phone) Move it, Cassie, every police officer in town is headed your way!

Phone OUT.

CASSIE

Okay. No Tome. At least I have a friend who'll look out for me.

POLICE OFFICER
Let's do a sweep!

CASSIE
Here goes.

Cassie sneaks off through the woods just as the police officers, dogs, etc. come charging down

CASSIE (CONT'D)
When magical books fail you, try
GPS.

CASSIE (CONT'D)
(narrating) I follow a red pushpin
through dark, strange woods for a
while, until things get familiar.

58 EXT. NEAR CASSIE'S HIGH SCHOOL

58

FX - Cassie runs up against a chainlink fence

CASSIE
It's my high school. Heck of a
homecoming.

(narrating) The days of me showing
up wondering if girls were going to
call me hateful names feel long
ago. I would swap everything right
now to have my old life back, and I
would let Cathy Skillings call me
whatever she wanted if it meant I
didn't have to deal with any more
demons or sideways dimensions.

FX - Cassie leaps up on a chainlink fence, drops to the other
side. Brushes herself off.

CASSIE (CONT'D)
Kim? Kim?! (beat) Where the hell
are you? (beat) Text her...

Cassie sends Kim a text message. It is immediately REJECTED

CASSIE (CONT'D)
Rejected? What the hell? Kim...
Don't make me worry about you. I've
got enough on my mind.

A voice from above.

GEORGE

Cassie? Is that Cassie Pinkham?

CASSIE

Mr. Carter? What the hell are you doing here?

GEORGE

I'm in my office. YOU are the one who's been missing for months.

CASSIE

I need a better answer than that.

GEORGE

Then come on up! It's high time we talked.

CASSIE

Great! (to self) More answers. Or more questions. Time to figure out which.

MUSIC - Transition.

59	END EPISODE 4	59
60	EPISODE 5, FEAT: <u>MR. CARTER'S STORY</u> BY FRED GREENHALGH	60
61	INT. HIGH SCHOOL - A FEW MINUTES LATER	61

Cassie approaches Mr. Carter in his office.

GEORGE

Cassie, it's so nice to see you.

CASSIE

Don't smile at me like that. You called the cops on me! (under breath) Just like everyone else...

GEORGE

I covered for you as long as I could, but it was hard, Cassie. You disappeared. Everyone was worried.

CASSIE

None more than my dear old guidance counselor.

GEORGE
I knew something like this would
happen to you.

CASSIE
Something like what?

GEORGE
Don't you know?

CASSIE
No! I don't! And I would love
anyone to tell me what is going
on in my life right now!

GEORGE
Take a seat. (Beat) Oh come on,
Cassie. I'm not going to hurt you.

Cassie crashes down.

CASSIE
Hmpf.

GEORGE
I tried to warn you about that
Book.

CASSIE
You warned me about Mr. Gussy.

GEORGE
It's the same thing. Here. Listen
to this.

George plays something off his computer -a clip from the
bonus episode, "In Search of the Dark Tome"

PODCASTER
(speaker) In the intervening years
since Ricci's death rumors have
surfaced that the Dark Tome still
exists.

That it was found at an estate
sale. That it was discovered by a
teenage witch, or is in the hands
of a powerful cabal, or housed
safely in the secret archives of
the Vatican.

(MORE)

PODCASTER (CONT'D)

But like its enigmatic origins,
there may be no truth that can we
can ever know about the curious
history of The Dark Tome, and the
evil that it foretold.

Player OFF.

CASSIE

What is that?

GEORGE

A podcast.

CASSIE

How does a podcast know about the
Dark Tome?

GEORGE

Does it matter? Word's out. Which
makes things very dangerous for
you.

CASSIE

Why?

GEORGE

You know why. They've made it to
our town.

CASSIE

They. You mean the Parabellum.

GEORGE

(raises eyebrow) You know who they
are?

CASSIE

So?

GEORGE

That puts you in great danger.

CASSIE

I've been in great danger for a
while. Come on, Mr. Carter.

GEORGE

Mr. Gussy never said a word to you
about any of this? What kind of
friend was he?

CASSIE

Not a perfect one, but he hid me out when people came after me, which is more than I can say for my mom.

GEORGE

So. What? You want me to tell my story?

CASSIE

Yeah.

GEORGE

Alright.

Music - Up.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

What do you know about my dad?

CASSIE

He was Billy, right?

GEORGE

Billy, yeah. Billy. Only thing he liked better than getting on a good drunk, was magic books. You know all that already.

CASSIE

Mr. Gussy told me. He went to college with your dad. They hunted magic books together. Your dad got obsessed.

GEORGE

That's one way to put it. (sighs)
Look I n ever really knew my dad.
He died when I was seven.

CASSIE

Bummer.

GEORGE

Not really. He deserved everything he got. Everything that happened that night...

CASSIE

Which night?

GEORGE

The night my mom left him. October
Nineteenth, Nineteen-Eighty-Four.

62

FLASHBACK - INT. GEORGE'S CHILDHOOD HOME - NIGHT

62

Door creaks open.

BRENDA

George, we gotta go honey.

YOUNG GEORGE

(yawns) Mommy?

BRENDA

Come on, honey, we don't have much
time.

YOUNG GEORGE

Why are we going in the middle of
the night?

BRENDA

It doesn't matter. Come on. I
already packed your bag.

YOUNG GEORGE

Do you have Teddy?

BRENDA

Yeah, I got Teddy right here. Come
on.

They tiptoe out of the room. Creak down the stairs.
Suspenseful.

YOUNG GEORGE

(whispered) Mommy I'm scared.

BRENDA

Ssh, George.

YOUNG GEORGE

Can I hold Teddy?

BRENDA

Once we get to the car.

YOUNG GEORGE

Please, mommy.

BRENDA

George.

YOUNG GEORGE
Pleeeeeasssssee--

BRENDA
Okay, here he -- whoop!

Brenda and George fumble George's Teddy Ruxpin doll in the exchange. He falls down the stairs CLONK CLONK CLONK. And to Brenda's horror, Teddy starts to talk.

TEDDY
Hi, my name is Teddy Ruxpin. Can you and I be friends?

Door at the top of the stairs SLAMS OPEN

BILLY
What the hell is going on out there?

BRENDA
George, run!

Billy starts charging forward.

BILLY
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING WOMAN?!

BRENDA
We're leaving you, Billy!

BILLY
Like hell you are! George, you get back here right now!

GEORGE
(burbles) No, Daddy!

BILLY
What have you done to my boy?!

BRENDA
George, GO!

BILLY
NO ONE'S GOING ANYWHERE!

GEORGE
Daddy, no!

Billy -- insanely -- has a shotgun in hand, he cocks it.

BILLY

My and my granddaddy's gun says no one is leaving this house tonight. Do you understand me, Brenda?

BRENDA

Let George go, Billy. He's just a kid.

BILLY

(chuckles) Just a... What kind of kid looks at me with that evil in his eyes? Don't you see it?

BRENDA

You're drunk, Billy. Go to sleep.

BILLY

I may be drunk but I see clearer than you do, Brenda, clearer than you ever will. I've seen worlds you would never believe... UNTIL THAT ASSHOLE BROKE MY HEAD!

BRENDA

No one did anything to your head but you, Billy!

YOUNG GEORGE

Daddy, you're scaring me --

BILLY

SHUT UP YOU LITTLE TWERP! I know you were in my things, Brenda, the lighter's missing. I know you stole it!

BRENDA

Billy, it's a lighter...

BILLY

Not just any lighter, baby, a lighter that ruined my life! Ruined my whole. Goddamn. Life. And now it's gonna ruin yours.

BRENDA

Please, just let us go, Billy, we'll get you help.

BILLY

I don't want any help! I want the Dark Tome! I want magic!

YOUNG GEORGE
Daddy, please...

BILLY
Would someone make that twerp JUST
SHUT UP!!!

GEORGE
(narrating)
He spun on me with the double-
barreled shotgun, and that's when
my mother made her move. One of
daddy's vodka bottles was in her
hand, and it came from behind her,
swinging.

BRENDA
(shrieks an aggressive cry)

Bottle SHATTERS into shards across Billy.

GEORGE
(narrating)
As the glass exploded, I saw my
mother's other hand flick across
the surface of a gold lighter. And
suddenly my daddy's face roared up
into flames.

FLOOOOMFFFFFF!!! Flames roar up.

BILLY
(starts howling)
auuuuuuugggghhhh!!!

GEORGE
I froze to the spot, watching the
flames climb up him as his knees
buckled, the shotgun falling to the
stairs. I would've stayed there all
night, even as the place burned to
the ground, except my mom grabbed
me.

BRENDA
Come on, George!

GEORGE
And I was thrown into the backseat
of a station wagon and out of the
only home I'd ever known.

Fire truck sirens start howling. Chatter of CBs, etc.

GEORGE

It took eight towns to put out the fire my mom started that night. It was a fire so fierce, word in town was a demon started it. The old timers joked it fed off of Billy's rage. Burned on all the dark pent up emotions that haunted that apartment building. One flick of a lighter and everything that was my dad lit up like fireworks on the fourth of July. One flick of this lighter.

George throws a lighter onto the table. PLINK!

CASSIE

That lighter?

GEORGE

It's a classic Zippo. Collectible, but not magic.

CASSIE

There's writing on it. "W.G."

GEORGE

W.G. Wilbur Gussy.

CASSIE

Mr. Gussy's lighter... ?

GEORGE

That's the question, isn't it? How did my dad end up with Gussy's lighter? I s'pose you figured it out by now.

CASSIE

No...

GEORGE

It is a little bit of a mystery, isn't it? It took me until I was in high school - right about your age - before I got any answers.

CASSIE

Why was that?

GEORGE

Because that's when I had the guts
to talk to Mr. Gussy about any of
it.

MUSIC - Transition

64

INT. GUSSY'S BOOKSHOP - LATE 1990S

64

FX - door opens with a jingle. We're in Mr. Gussy's bookshop,
and we hear a sound that reminds us distinctly of the era

FX - Modem connecting to the world wide web.

GUSSY

(muttering under breath) Stupid
sunnuva-geese that ain't even from
Canada...

TEEN GEORGE

Uh, hello?

GUSSY

Oh! Hey! Didn't see ya come in. You
know anything about this 'world
wide web' thing?

TEEN GEORGE

Like AOL?

GUSSY

Yeah, that's it. They sent me one
of these CD-ROM things. Finally
decided I'd get myself a computer.

TEEN GEORGE

For what? Playing games?

GUSSY

For the bookstore. Look at you -
you're the only person who's
stepped into this shop all week. A
used store like mine just can't
keep up with that shiny new Borders
out by the mall. So I got to
thinking, maybe I can go about
things a different way. Someone
told these things called forums,
right, where people go "on line"
and get to talking with each other
about all sorts of stuff....
including old books.

(MORE)

GUSSY (CONT'D)

So I say to myself - maybe I could get to talking there, too, let people know about some of the books I've stumbled across over the years. And if someone wants to buy a book, they could mail me a check, and I could send them the book by mail. Wouldn't even have to come into my store. You think it'll work?

TEEN GEORGE

Sure, why not.

GUSSY

(chuckles) Or maybe I just blew two-thousand dollars I can't afford to spend. We'll see. How can I help you then? I take it you didn't come in here to help me figure out this modem.

TEEN GEORGE

No. I wanted to talk about this.

Teen George shows the engraved lighter to Mr. Gussy.

GUSSY

It looks like a lighter to me.

TEEN GEORGE

W.G. What does that stand for?

GUSSY

Whale Guts? Wasted Gold? Worthy Goose?

TEEN GEORGE

Wilbur Gussy.

GUSSY

Wilbur Gussy? Who's ever heard of a Wilbur Gussy?

TEEN GEORGE

The registry of deeds, on the title of this book shop.

GUSSY

You're a better student than I took you for.

(MORE)

GUSSY (CONT'D)

So you have a lighter that -
coincidentally - has letters
engraved on it that some very far
fetched person might suggest are my
initials. What of it?

TEEN GEORGE

How come I have your lighter?

GUSSY

I think that's the million dollar
question, son.

TEEN GEORGE

I stole this out of my mom's
jewelry box. And she got it from my
dad.

GUSSY

Is that right?

TEEN GEORGE

Billy. You remember Billy, don't
you?

GUSSY

Billy... Billy... You know, that
name right ring a bell...

TEEN GEORGE

HOW DID BILLY GET YOUR LIGHTER?

Gussy leans back, reconsiders.

GUSSY

You got a temper, don't you? Just
like your old man. You'll want to
watch out for that.

TEEN GEORGE

Please. My mother won't tell me
anything. I wake up at night still
remembering the way he looked, when
we ran away that night, him going
down the stairs, waving that
shotgun around. He looked like he
was possessed. Something was inside
of him.

GUSSY

That there was. I seen that thing
myself. That's why I tried to save
your dad. I'm sorry I couldn't.
Real sorry.

TEEN GEORGE

My mom always talked about how you and he would go out looking for 'magic books.' That's some sort of code, right? For drinking?

GUSSY

What kind of answer are you looking for?

TEEN GEORGE

The truth.

GUSSY

The truth might be hard to swallow.

TEEN GEORGE

I don't care. It's my right.

GUSSY

It is. But it's also what drove your dad to destruction. I don't want that for you.

TEEN GEORGE

That's my decision, not yours.

GUSSY

Then take a seat. This might have to be a 'show don't tell' exercise. Because if all I did was tell you, you wouldn't believe me. Oh. Before we get started, lock the door. Don't want no intruders when we go on our little adventure.

TEEN GEORGE

Adventure, what kind of adventure?

GUSSY

I'm going to introduce you to a little book called the Dark Tome.

MUSIC - transition, mysterious

65

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - MODERN DAY

65

CASSIE

He took you into the world of the Dark Tome?

GEORGE

He did. I'd just as soon forget the story he took me through...

I understood it, at last, what drove my Father mad. When you're inside the stories you feel alive. You have power. You can reshape your mind, you can reshape the world. (beat) But it doesn't come for free, does it, Cassie?

CASSIE

No.

GEORGE

I can see it in your face. It's starting to cost you something. But you have no idea what it cost me. I forgot about it myself, blocked it all out. Sometimes magic is kind, like that. Allows you to forget the things you've done. But then sometimes, years later, some random event hits you like a lightning bolt, and some door you kept long hidden blasts open like you packed two-thousand pounds of dynamite behind it. The Prom.

CASSIE

The Prom? What about it?

GEORGE

That's when you went missing. And that's when I screwed up my life, all those years ago.

CASSIE

How so?

GEORGE

There's so much expectation built up around Prom, you know? Especially in my time, for boys. We were expected to be masters of a universe we didn't understand. A universe I never really got to orbit until I got to college.

CASSIE

You mean sex?

GEORGE
(chuckles) Yes, sex.

CASSIE
Okay. What does this have to do
with the Dark Tome?

GEORGE
I wasn't a master of any sexual
universe, but I knew something of
the Dark Tome, so I decided to take
my date, Grace, to the bookshop. I
thought I'd show her a good time.
Something like she'd never seen
before.

66 INT. GUSSY'S BOOKSHOP - NIGHT

66

Door creaks open. Two drunk teenagers stumble in - Teen
George and George's girlfriend, Grace.

TEEN GEORGE
(chuckling) You've got to check
this out...

GRACE
You got me drunk and took me out to
a BOOKSTORE, George?

TEEN GEORGE
This isn't any regular book, Grace,
believe me... It's magic!

GRACE
(sarcastic) It's magic!

TEEN GEORGE
If you could go anywhere you could
ever want, where would you go?

GRACE
Not a bookstore.

TEEN GEORGE
Books are the gateway to
imagination, Grace.

GRACE
(bursts out laughing) Janine said
you were a weird guy, but this --

TEEN GEORGE

Come on! How about Greece. Did you ever want to go to Greece?

GRACE

Greece? What's in Greece?

TEEN GEORGE

Let's find out. He keeps it in the basement.

GRACE

The basement?

TEEN GEORGE

Under this trapdoor. Come on.

GRACE

You've got to be kidding.

TEEN GEORGE

I'm not.

GRACE

George...

TEEN GEORGE

Trust me on this.

FX - Trapdoor opens. They head under.

GRACE

This is a little weird, George...

TEEN GEORGE

There, see it?

GRACE

It's a book. This place is full of books.

TEEN GEORGE

There's only one like this one.

George approaches the dark tome.

GRACE

George, can we go back upstairs, please? I thought you were taking me to the Ledge...

TEEN GEORGE

Look what happens. It's just a book, right?

(MORE)

TEEN GEORGE (CONT'D)

But look what happens when I talk to it. "Hey Dark Tome, wake up."

GRACE

I don't know what horror movie made you think this was a good idea, but ...

Grace quietens as she hears the Dark Tome humming.

GRACE (CONT'D)

(terrified) It's humming.

TEEN GEORGE

I told you.

DARK WHISPERS start emanating, weird phrases in Latin, etc.

GRACE

Stop that, George.

TEEN GEORGE

It just does that. It's for effect. Now, Book, take us somewhere cool.

BILLY

(ghostly)
Cool, my boy? It's only hot down here.

George stops cold.

TEEN GEORGE

Who the hell are you?

BILLY

You know who I am, sonny boy.

TEEN GEORGE

Dad?

GRACE

George... ? What the hell?

BILLY

I remember the look on your face, when your bitch mama lit me on fire, with my own vodka no less. I think you smiled. Didn't you smile, George?

GEORGE

Dad... No... Dad... You can't be here... You can't be in the book.

GRACE

Let's get out of here George. NOW!

BILLY

I wouldn't do that...

GRACE

(screams) Something touched me!

BILLY

I'll do more than that, sweet cheeks.

TEEN GEORGE

Dad! DAD! DAD GET OFF OF HER!!

BILLY

(chuckles) You wanted a story little boy! I've got a story for you! A story that will rock your socks off!

TEEN GEORGE

Stop stop stop---

Dark energy is pouring out of the Dark Tome, reaches peak.

BILLY

Can't stand the heat, don't play with fire. Isn't that what they say? Come on, daddy misses his boy.

The humming of evil dark energy gets much stronger.

GRACE

It's pulling me in!

TEEN GEORGE

No!!

GEORGE

I stood adrift, halfway between the real world, and another world... A world where my father lived -- or at least, where a thing who spoke with my father's voice lived. My mom and I... A few years after we escaped my Dad, we landed in this podunk town with a tiny little church, run by a righteous fire and brimstone Baptist preacher straight out of the south, wound up here in Maine somehow.

(MORE)

GEORGE (CONT'D)

He used to scare the crap out of us kids, tell us what hell would be like.

PREACHER

Don't doubt me that Hell is REAL! The Devil, he will tempt you down, with stories of how great it feels, but how great will feel burned INTO FIRE ETERNALLY, CHILDREN!

CHILDREN

(shriek)

GEORGE

When I was a kid, I thought he was full of it. But now, nearly a man, I stared into this gateway and knew hell, knew it for the place where my father was banished, and would forever dwell.

Sound design of HELL - screams of the damned, raging fires, etc.

BILLY

(cackling with great delight) We're all together again!

GRACE

George! George where are you?!

GEORGE

It was hell, and I thought I was lost to it. But then...

GUSSY

Stay in hell by your lonesome, Billy!

Thunderclap of energy, the book slams shut. Hell abruptly ends.

TEEN GEORGE

(panting) Back... Back in the bookshop...

GUSSY

You trying to yourself killed along with the whole world damn world while you're at it?

TEEN GEORGE

It was my dad... He was...

GUSSY

You don't know all the worlds that Book touches. Out there, there are creatures that want to sneak through, who wait until some knucklehead teenager half drunk on cheap beer opens up the doorway. Creatures who'd suck you dry like a spider eats a fly.

TEEN GEORGE

You made it stop?

GUSSY

Let's get you upstairs to bed.

TEEN GEORGE

Where's Grace?

GUSSY

Like I said. Upstairs. Bed.

MUSIC - Transition

67

INT. HIGH SCHOOL, CONTINUOUS

67

GEORGE

We never talked again about what happened that night in the basement of the bookshop. And what really happened, well, what I hold in my mind and what the world thinks happened are two different things.

CASSIE

What do you mean?

GEORGE

Grace. You see... (hesitates) I have an old newspaper clipping.

George digs something out of his desk.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Read it.

CASSIE

(reading) Teenager dead in Prom night tragedy. May Fourth, Nineteen-ninety nine.

(MORE)

CASSIE (CONT'D)

Horror struck last night when High School Senior Grace Winston lost control of her vehicle on the Blacks Woods Road while driving home from the prom. Grace, 18, was pronounced dead at the scene... (reacting) Oh my god, there are pictures...

GEORGE

I never had to confess to anything, because according to the world, it never happened.

CASSIE

And you and Mr. Gussy never talked about it?

GEORGE

What was there to talk about? What happened, happened, and no one was going to believe us if we tried to come clean. So what I did, is I tried to forget about it. I took up drinking just like my parents. I found harder stuff. I found a way to blank out what happened. And it worked. It worked so well I lived the next six years in a near total blackout, up until the morning I woke up in the hospital. They put me in rehab, made me sober up. But that was OK. By then, I'd blocked off every memory of Grace, buried her in a box in my head that my sober me could pretend was the product of a cocaine delusion. I believed what they said about succumbing to a higher power. That higher power told me I needed to help people. I followed that voice, and it brought me back to Simpson Falls. (beat) Cassie. I'm pretty sure it brought me back so I could help you.

CASSIE

Sheesh, you really are a guidance counselor.

GEORGE

Please, Cassie. I wouldn't listen to advice when I was your age but maybe you will. Let's burn that book. Right now.

CASSIE

You want to burn it?

GEORGE

You know it's the only way.

CASSIE

I know you screwed up and got some girl killed. And now I'm supposed to hand the book over to you? No thank you. I'm out of here.

GEORGE

Cassie, stop! The Parabellum will stop at nothing until they get you.

CASSIE

What aren't you telling me, Mr. Carter? What if something actually made it through the gate that night? What if that something got into you?

GEORGE

I didn't want it to go like this.

G-THUNK! The lights go off in the school.

CASSIE

What's happening? Who turned off the lights.

GEORGE

Take the lighter. Do it fast. Before they get here!

CASSIE

"They" ? -- did you rat me out, Mr. Carter?

GEORGE

Just DO IT Cassie!

A voice yells from out in the Hallway.

AGENT 1

Cassssie! Oh, Cassie! You're easier to find than a salmon coming home to spawn.

AGENT 2

And even more delicious to eat.

GEORGE

You can't fight them. But you can at least destroy what they want.

CASSIE

(narrating) I flipped open the cap of the lighter, flicked the wheel, and a small red flame spit out. I stared at the dancing flame, thinking of all the things that unfolded in my life since I encountered the Dark Tome. The anger began to ripple out of me, prickling the hair on my skin, like the moment right before lightning breaks a thunderstorm... And just like a bolt of lightning, I was ready to crack --

SUDHA

Is this the choice you really wish to make?

CASSIE

Uh, wh-- who?

SUDHA

Come with me, and I'll tell you my story first.

Sound design ripples, magical energy is alive in the air.

GEORGE

Cassie? CASSIE! Come back!

AGENT 1

Stop her!

GEORGE

No! Careful! She's going into the Book. You can't stop her now.

AGENT 2

I don't remember this rule.

SUDHA

A weapon. An assassin. A poison maiden whose very touch is toxic. I never had a choice. I have never known anything except the cold beauty of the harem's stone walls. Until one day, Urvashi, the harm leader, came to me.

URVASHI

Sudha, your first mission has come. You will end the life of a great man. A conqueror.

SUDHA

Me?

URVASHI

I wear red today in honor of your virgin kill.

SUDHA

Do you have to call it that?

URVASHI

You should be proud. There are so many girls with bad fortune who never had this choice.

SUDHA

Did we ever have a choice? An honest one? A real one.

URVASHI

Sudha, our horoscopes were the same - widowed early, no children, no prospects. Would anyone choose that? Don't be flippant. The kind of Choice you're talking about belongs only to kings.

SUDHA

(to Cassie) Kings, she says. Maybe my husband would have been a kind man with a warm touch. Maybe he would have fed me salty corn and rose lassi instead of poisoned bread and toxic treacle.

CASSIE

Poison?

SUDHA

Yes, this is what it means to be a Vishakanya - we are fed so much poison that our touch is deadly. And it was ordained my fate to use that deadly touch. They started by dressing me in a red silk sari, a garment that seemed to come alive as it touched my body.

With a python-like smooooooooooooosh the Sari wraps itself around Sudha.

SARI

Ahhhhh yes...

SUDHA

(gulping) It's so tight.

URVASHI

Mm... You are beautiful.

SUDHA

Beautiful? I look like a demon.

URVASHI

When you get there, the sari will guide you to the assignment. And when you've finished, the sari will guide you back to us.

SUDHA

(still uncomfortable) How do you know they won't kill me on the spot for showing up?

URVASHI

Do you think I'd send you to your death? Come now. You are a peace offering in disguise. They are expecting you. Other conquered countries have also sent their courtesans as tributes. It has all been arranged.

SUDHA

Yes, Urvashi. Mmm, this silk. It's as if it's alive.

URVASHI

Perhaps it would like to get on to the assignment.

SUDHA

Perhaps.

URVASHI

Into the courtyard.

They start walking.

71

EXT. COURTYARD - ANCIENT INDIA

71

URVASHI

(quietly) You remember the riddle?

SUDHA

It was when you first fed me the
poison. You could do nothing to
cure the pain or the cold sweats...
save feed me a riddle.

URVASHI

Kings won't see it, but perhaps it
is there. The heavens will never
know it, for no one goes there.
What is it?

SUDHA

Their equals.

URVASHI

It's a good one. You remember the
Rule.

SUDHA

Always.

URVASHI

Not what it means. When you felt
it.

SUDHA

Of course, it was with the kitten.

CASSIE

Kitten?

SUDHA

(to Cassie) You see, I had been
here for maybe a year back then. I
had spent the day sitting by a
fountain when a stray kitten
appeared beside me. It looked so
lonely.

(MORE)

SUDHA (CONT'D)

It should have been a harmless caress. All I wanted to do was to feel the silky underside of its tummy, but the moment I touched it, it was dead.

When I screamed, I found myself surrounded by my sisters.

RUPA

Don't waste the poison.

TARA

If you want to kiss something, kiss us.

VEENA

If you want to hold something, hold us.

ASHINI

But never touch a living thing!

URVASHI

Not until your time has come.

SUDHA

Are we not living things?

URVASHI

We're weapons. We can't afford to live.

SUDHA

(to Cassie) That was the first and last day I forgot the rule. It was the last day of my life as a girl and the first day of my consummate life as a weapon. Like any weapon, our deployment depended on the kingdom. The Kalinga kingdom hoarded their weapons, letting them rust and rest. The Odra kingdom hid their weapons beneath the floors, letting them listen and lurk. But the Hastinapur kingdom cultivated their armaments with silk and song.

Every day the sisters fed me poison. The only thing that changed was the riddles. Even when I became accustomed to the taste, even when I did not need the distraction, I played with the riddles.

(MORE)

SUDHA (CONT'D)

To me, they were like mirrors
 tilted to refract the light and
 seek out hidden corners. A
 different way of seeing. Sometimes
 when I looked in the mirror, I saw
 a girl on the cusp of a murderess.
 But perhaps if I tilted my head,
 flipping the image in my mind like
 the words of a riddle, I could
 transform too.

They transform me now, see how
 Urvashi dips my toes in henna and
 draws whorls of mango blossoms up
 my calves?

URVASHI

Don't wince.

SIDHA

I didn't.

URVASHI

Your skin did.

ASHINI

You must dance like an apsara.
 Mesmerize him with the rhythm of
 his own blood.

VEENA

Sing as though you're summoning the
 heavens: silver your voice and bare
 your throat.

URVASHI

Speak sparingly. The longer you
 talk, the harder it will be.

RUPA

When you speak, be witting. And
 never arouse his emotion, only his -

-

The women chuckle.

URVASHI

Enough!

SUDHA

(to Cassie) They were done with me. They set me loose, and as Urvashi told me, the sari guided my footsteps, tugging me out of the Hastinapur harem and into the damp jungle.

SARI

This way, you can't be seen.

SUDHA

Stop pulling me, I'm coming!

72

EXT. JUNGLE - ANCIENT INDIA

72

Transition into jungle ambience.

SUDHA

An inky panther slide into the embrace of a banyan tree. Pearlescent moths fluttered past. My chest tightened. I wanted to sink my elbows into the ground. I wanted the rough roots to blur the henna, strip the incense from my skin. I instead I stood still and watched my sisters throw fiery torches into the river, summoning the makara.

The makara lurches above the water, roaring

CASSIE

Makara?

SUDHA

A creature of the water; a monster made of metal, impervious to the vishakanya's touch, and thus, the only transportation we could use without revealing our nature.

MAKARA

Another assignment? Your Emperor is bloodthirsty these days.

URVASHI

Go on, Sudha.

SUDHA

Farewell.

(MORE)

SUDHA (CONT'D)

(to Cassie) I boarded the monster
and it rolled its lantern eyes.

MAKARA

You're trembling, vishakanya.

SUDHA

Don't call me that.

MAKARA

Poison maiden? But that's what you
are. Let's go.

Snarling, sloshing sounds as the makara starts moving. The
monster continues SLURPING and SWALLOWING lots of other fish.

SUDHA

What are you doing?

MAKARA

Eating. (beat) You feel sorry for
the little fish? (chuckles) You
picked a bad trade to have a
conscience.

SUDHA

I don't have a conscience.

MAKARA

Yes, you do. Silly girl. Silly
choice.

SUDHA

I never had one.

MAKARA

(chuckles) Suit yourself.

SUDHA

(to Cassie) The Makara brought me
to where the river met an ivory
port strewn with golden marigolds,
pink carnations and wreaths of
jasmine. Unlike the stony beauty of
the Hastinapur Harem and its cold
gemstones and silks, this city
seemed burgeoning with all living
things.

MAKARA

I hope those slippers are thick. A
trail of withered flowers is rather
obvious. I'll be here when your
deed is done, vishakanya.

SUDHA
My name is Sudha.

MAKARA
Goodbye for now.

SUDHA
(to Cassie) I got off the Makara,
and it slunk back into the river
behind me. I double-checked for
holes in my slippers, then slipped
off into the crowd.

73

EXT. CITY - ANCIENT INDIA

73

Lively crowd BG. A colorful pre-Christian port city.

SUDHA
I went past the port, past the
glittering amber tents sprawled
across the valley. Silver
reflection pools filled with
ambrosia and wine dotted the shores
of the river, while tables piled
high with savory dal, crispy
paratha and creamy kir lay near a
group of musicians. The city was
celebrating the victories of a man
who would soon be dead. Dead by my
hand.

Fade up enchanting lute music

SUDHA (CONT'D)
I caught a glimpse of a tent full
of music. A host of gandharvas
played the lute, the horned asuras
swayed in dance. I wanted to stay,
but already the sari pulled me past
the crowds and into an amber tent.
In the back of my mind, I could
hear Urvashi scolding me.

URVASHI
Before you is a glorious
opportunity to bring honor to the
Hastinapur Kingdom and fully
embrace your sister's legacy.

SUDHA
But I fought the sari, even so. One
moment longer amongst the trees.
One more second of music. Of life.
(MORE)

SUDHA (CONT'D)

The sari had no sympathy.

SARI

Come now.

74

INT. ALEXANDER'S TENT - ANCIENT INDIA

74

SUDHA

(narrating) I barely caught the sign before the amber tent: Tributes to the Emperor Alexander.

CASSIE

Alexander? Like Alexander the Great?

SUDHA

He was an Emperor. Does that mean he was Great? (beat) I suppose that's what I went in to find out... Not that I had much choice in the matter.

When I emerged on the other side, my skin crawled. Alexander was not a handsome man. He was young, but his skin was extremely pale. Only the broken blood vessels along his nose and knuckles broke the expanse of greying skin. He sat on a throne of bleached bones, a conquered soldier's helmet beneath each foot and under each arm. Above him, a thousand ribcages bolstered the tent, dampening the silk and staining it with marrow.

SUDHA (CONT'D)

(whispered) This can't be right.

SARI

It is right.

SUDHA

(narrating) Tributes queued in front of Alexander's throne, forming a bizarre menagerie. There was a man covered head-to-toe in gold, a man with coins along his spine and a man wrapped in thorns.

(MORE)

SUDHA (CONT'D)

There were feathers of metal,
diadems of glass and outfits of
flowers. There were people
impossibly tall, impossibly short,
and impossibly average. And then
there was me.

ALEXANDER

Today, I celebrate the win of yet
another war campaign. And because
nothing staves off boredom like
company, I intend to choose one
from among you.

Alexander gets up, paces the room

ALEXANDER (CONT'D)

I could filter you out by beauty or
age or color, but I don't care for
that. You see, after my wound was
infected, I don't have much time
left anyway. And perhaps it is my
impending mortality or my own
boredom that made me realize that
only the mind can give me pleasure.
All else pales, withers, or rots.

SUDHA

(whispered) See, I can go. He's
going to die anyway.

SARI

No, I will not accept it.

ALEXANDER

You!

MAN 1

Sire?

ALEXANDER

Tell me, what is my worth?

MAN 1

Pardon?

ALEXANDER

What. Is. My. Worth?

MAN 1

All the gold in the world?

ALEXANDER

Boring! (sighs, approaches someone else) You. What's my worth?

MAN 2

You are worth your weight in salt, your majesty.

ALEXANDER

Boring! Boring, boring, boring! You! Man in thorns! What do you think?

MAN 3

You're worth your weight in a man's blood, sire.

ALEXANDER

Am I? Shall I swipe my hand?

A SHOCKED GASP from crowd as Alexander slashes his arm against the thorned man. Alexander SLURPS blood from his opened wound.

ALEXANDER (CONT'D)

Blood... No... I have seen all the blood in a man and it weighs far less than me. (beat) You, then. Woman in silks. What is my worth?

SUDHA

(narrating) I knew the answer to the riddle instantly, but struggled to say something, anything, else - but my Sari would not let me.

SUDHA (CONT'D)

Li - Happ- - Mon--

ALEXANDER

Well? I can't hear you.

SUDHA

(croaked) Legends.

ALEXANDER

Speak up!

SUDHA

Legends. You're worth your weight in legends.

Alexander CLAPS his hands

ALEXANDER

Yes! I shall interview this one personally. Out! Out with the rest of you!

Shuffle as the others are dismissed. Alexander settles back down on his throne.

ALEXANDER (CONT'D)

Interesting.

SUDHA

What is, my Lord?

ALEXANDER

No need to bother with the formalities of title. But what do I call you? Do toxins even have names?

SUDHA

You know what I am?

ALEXANDER

Naturally.

SUDHA

Why, monkshood, hellebore, and oleander all have names. As do I. I am Sudha.

ALEXANDER

Mmm... Very Interesting. (beat) Oh, you are worried someone will step in and kill you, is that why you're looking about? No one will harm you. In fact, I believe your Emperor and I want the same thing.

SUDHA

I don't understand.

ALEXANDER

I'm very tired. But I want more than rest. You see, I am already a legend. Already, they call me Alexander the Great. I lived unlike any man, and I shall die unlike any man. (yawns) I was planning on framing my companion of the evening. Everybody likes a good murder... But this.. This! This is a much better option.

SUDHA

(narrating) I saw then, as ever, I was just a weapon. The only difference is that my task had switched allegiance. And as I gazed at Alexander's tent, what I saw there constricted my heart in envy. All around him were choices - signs of importance, a currency of power. A choice for decisions, a choice for food, a choice for listening. Choices are what made him Great.

ALEXANDER

(wheezing) I will not last through the night.

SUDHA

Then you don't need me. I can wait you out and I do not need to kill.

ALEXANDER

But you make all the difference.

SUDHA

How?

ALEXANDER

When this disease has its way, my bowels will spill out and stain this throne black and red with my own feces. I'll wear a death mask of constipation. Hardly fitting for a legendary conqueror. Dying in a puddle of his own effluence. (chuckles) But if you would only kiss me once, my death would be different. It would have dignity. I would be frozen the way I am now. Alas, still ugly as sin, but at least not covered in it. So, poison-girl, you shall make me into myth and fuse me into legend.

SUDHA

(narrating) I considered. If I did nothing, the Emperor of Hastinapur could celebrate his enemy's humiliating end. If I did something, Alexander could celebrate a death with dignity. And as for me?

(MORE)

SUDHA (CONT'D)

No matter what *I* did, I had no option but to return to the Hastinapur Harem, my poison intact, my sari unbroken and my deadliness tested.

But what about a Choice? A real one, not the kind watered down to a word. But a glittering Choice, the kind you could hold in your hand, the kind you could taste, the kind that could free you? The kind that lined the walls of Alexander's grand tent.

SUDHA (CONT'D)

What will you give me in return?

ALEXANDER

(chuckles) A murderess that makes bargains? I didn't count on that.

SUDHA

My name is Sudha.

ALEXANDER

(stops laughing) Vishakanya's don't have names.

SUDHA

I do.

ALEXANDER

Then what do you want... Sudha? Shall I make you my wife with my dying breath? Bequeath you an empire? Give you your weight in gold?

SUDHA

No. I do not want to belong to you, or to govern an empire. I want a choice.

ALEXANDER

My mother was like that too. Full of bite. She always wanted things out of her reach.

SUDHA

Why shouldn't she? You have so many choices, you could spare some.

When he speaks of choices, Alexander gestures like they are glowing objects a person can handle.

ALEXANDER

I did not deny you. (beat)
 Perhaps choices... Cannot be bought. Perhaps Choices spring up when history makes way for them. Perhaps they will grow, like legends upon dead conquerors. (laughs) I have many, so many choices, but this one is the most precious. It is from my -- well -- from a friend. He... well... We had a thousand Choices between us. But not the one we wanted.

SUDHA

And I may have it?

ALEXANDER

It is yours in return for your services.

Alexander rises, trundles down great bone steps of his throne. He kneels before her. The Choice is GLOWING.

ALEXANDER (CONT'D)

(whispers) Dear Sudha, will you make me into myth? Will you fuse me into legend?

SUDHA

Yes.

Sudha leans forward and KISSES Alexander.

ALEXANDER

(gasps, happily, dies)

Sudha cups the CHOICE, glowing around her in a warm ball of energy, she cups it, then stuffs it into her pocket.

SUDHA

The Choice is now mine. Goodnight, Alexander.

Sudha kisses Alexander Goodnight.

Sudha backtracks down the hill to the river, we hear the passing BG of the previous walkthrough - music, revelry, etc.

The MAKARA is basking. When she catches its attention, it groans and ROLLS over.

MAKARA

Time to go back already? That was fast.

SUDHA

I'm not going back.

MAKARA

(Laughs - a truly terrifying sound)
Silly girl, you don't have a choice.

SUDHA

I do now.

MAKARA

Is that... A choice? A real one?
What are you going to do with it?

SUDHA

Accept it.

SUDHA (CONT'D)

(narrating) I took off my slippers and toed the grass. The ground around me became a black and acrid halo.

FX - Fwoompf!

I took one look at the charred ground before popping the Choice into my mouth. It lolled flatly on my tongue before I swallowed - honeysuckle, pomegranate and pear.

A magical crescendo.

SARI

No no no no nooooo -- (howls in death)

SUDHA

The red Sari squealed in a paroxysm of confusion. It extinguished against me, lifted weight off my skin, plumping my cheeks, softening the unsettling black of my hair.

(MORE)

SUDHA (CONT'D)

When I touched the sari now, it felt dull and intimate beneath my fingers. It was just an ordinary skein of silk.

MAKARA

Now what?

SUDHA

If I step out of this ring of dead grass, what next? I'm too old to be a girl. Too independent to be a weapon. What will I be next? What will I *be* next? I can lift my arms and try to scrape a star off the sky. I can luxuriate in stillness and silence and silk. I can eat things other than poison. I could taste what's been denied. The monsoon rain, the soft violet of evening air, or even... A kiss.

MAKARA

So what will you do?

SUDHA

All that matters is that it does not matter. Whatever I do. It's my choice.

(narrating) I held my breath, and stepped out of the circle.

FX - SWOOSH!!

76

INT. HIGH SCHOOL, CARTER'S OFFICE

76

CASSIE

Huh? Sudha?

SUDHA

Remember, Cassie, you always have a choice.

CASSIE

Right. Choice. Either to burn the book, or get caught by this crazy cult that's after me. Great list of options.

SUDHA

Better than what I had.

FX - Fwoosh! Sudha vanishes.

CARTER
She's back!

CASSIE
(narrating) I stare at the flame,
licking just beneath the spine of
the Dark Tome, then flick the
lighter closed.

CASSIE (CONT'D)
No, not yet.

AGENT 2
Got her!

Agent 2 throws a hood over Cassie's head.

CASSIE
Nyyuuugffff!

GEORGE
Why didn't you do it?

CASSIE
I've lost too much over this stupid
Book to give up on it now.

GEORGE
Don't hurt her, please.

AGENT 2
Where's the fun in that?

Agent 2 cinches the hood, tight.

CASSIE
Nyyyunnnnffff!!!

AGENT 1
We aren't going to hurt her. We're
just going to feast on her soul.

CASSIE
(struggling) You won't.

AGENT 2
Oh, but we will, dear Cassie.
Goodnight.

FX - Smack! They knock Cassie out.

GUSSY (CONT'D)

(blinking) Wh -where am I? Where's Olivia?

SAMMY

You read this Book before, mister?

"The creature resembled a dragon built for the sea. It let loose a thunderous, ghastly noise as it turned and gave our ship notice. And then disappeared below the surface of the water, into the dark, cold depths from which it came."

That's the missionary Carl Gottfried Albrecht, August 26, 1840.

GUSSY

No, first I ever heard of it.

SAMMY

Ah, shame. I like monster stories.

GUSSY

Where are we?

SAMMY

St John's, Newfoundland. A place with a certain magic that gets in a man. You can see the world from the top of Signal Hill, spot a ship a hundred miles out, and watch the Atlantic roll up on the Grand Banks with a ferociousness unchecked since Ireland. Nothing can sneak up on you in St. John's. That's the way I like it.

GUSSY

(groans, rolls over) What am I doing here?

SAMMY

You hungover again, Gus?

GUSSY

I'm Gussy, not Gus --

SAMMY

Drinking will do that to you, old friend.

(MORE)

SAMMY (CONT'D)

(regarding) By judge of the light,
it's 10am already. Gus, he'll
probably sleep till dark. You know
what he told me once?

Time cuts to the character "Gus" from the story, who is not
our Mr. Gussy.

GUSSY

This old body. Ain't got nothing
left for daytimes no more.

SAMMY

So I get up. Put on my shoes. Oh
yeah, that's the pair. Holes in
both heels and duct-tape from front
to back. I put on my coat and walk
to the hallway. Check my pocket for
smokes. Nothing there. Gus, always
stealing my smokes.

GUSSY

I don't understand, I just got
here, I ain't part of the story.

SAMMY

Oh you been part of the story a
long time, friend.

Door creaks open.

SAMMY (CONT'D)

Christ, it's only September and I
can see my breath already.

Sammy starts to walk along the hallway.

SAMMY (CONT'D)

Every doorway in this hall leads to
a sad story. Men like Gus and I.
One step away from homelessness.
Drunks. Drug addicts. People
willing to steal the last thing
you've got left, no matter how
small.

Sammy descends a flight of stairs, pushes open a door.

SAMMY (CONT'D)

Sundays always come down hard. The
Employment Insurance Money never
makes it to Sunday. Not with
Saturday parked neatly in the way.

(MORE)

SAMMY (CONT'D)

Three more months on the government's dime, then I'm back on the street again.

FRANKY

Sammy, looking like an old sack of bones, as usual.

SAMMY

Morning, Franky.

FRANKY

You hear the sirens last night?

SAMMY

Sirens? No. (beat) Cops?

FRANKY

Fish and wildlife. Something going on. Never seen those boys in a rush to get anywhere.

SAMMY

(sad laugh) Fish police. Now there's a job.

FRANKY

(laughs) You going out to look for work today?

SAMMY

Something like that.

SAMMY (CONT'D)

(narrating) Last week I got a few hours on the Brandice, a boat out of Halifax. But I got so drunk at Francine's Bar that afternoon, I forgot to show up the next morning. Gus gave me hell for that one.

GUSSY

Even I woulda showed.

SAMMY

Yeah, look at you. The picture of responsibility.

GUSSY

Just saying. Fishing ain't what she was around here.

SAMMY

Not since the Fairty, right?

GUSSY
Yes, that's right.

SAMMY
A man like you, Gus, you were
something back then. What happened?

GUSSY
A little bump, then another... And
soon... Well, you end up here.

80

EXT. FLASHBACK - NEWFOUNDLAND

80

SAMMY
(narrating) Here. Yep. Meandering
in the darkness. The drink helps
you get here. I still remember my
first. I was ten, out with my dad
on a cod boat full of grown men
with leather for skin and salt
water for spit.

DAD
(to buddies) Gotta teach the kid
something about real work

Fisherman all LAUGH. Slosh of a bottle of hooch being passed
around.

FISHERMAN
Then he should take a drink, make
him a man!

Fisherman laugh.

YOUNG SAMMY
I don't want to.

Fisherman laugh.

FISHERMAN
Don't you want some hair on your
chest?

FISHERMAN 2
Hey, he's just a kid.

DAD
Shut up, Wilson, he'll drink.
(leans in) Ain't that right, Sammy?
Can't have my crew think I've got a
pussy for a son.

YOUNG SAMMY

N-n-no, Dad.

Sammy takes the bottle, slurps. Fisherman all guffaw.

DAD

There you go! Gotta keep the cold
out of your fingers. Now, men!
Let's find us some fish.

SAMMY

(narrating) But we didn't find any
fish that day. Or the day after
that.

DAD

We used to pull cod from the ocean
by dipping a bucket in the water.
You could land them with string
tied to a lead weight.

YOUNG SAMMY

Where'd they all go?

DAD

No one knows.

FISHERMAN

I know.

DAD

Don't you start --

FISHERMAN

I seen me a trawler.

DAD

Don't tell the boy no ghost
stories.

FISHERMAN

I saw it with my own eyes, and Gus
will back me up. Won't ya, Gus?

GUSSY

Ayuh.

FISHERMAN

Back in Fifty-one. We saw a strange
ship flying the British Flag.
Sucker was four times the size of
our rig.

(MORE)

FISHERMAN (CONT'D)

Had cables, winches, gear bigger than anything we'd ever seen back in those days. It vacuumed up fish like Jonah's whale.

GUSSY

The Fairty, she was called.

DAD

You never saw that rig, none of you did.

GUSSY

(dreamily) Remember it like it was yesterday.

FISHERMAN

She fished all that summer, all the next summer too, by the time she was done, she sucked up half the fish in the whole damn ocean. But she got hers, didn't she?

GUSSY

(chuckles) Yes she did.

DAD

I said enough!

GUSSY

She got hers...

CUT TO:

81 EXT. ON THE DOCKS - NEWFOUNDLAND

81

Lonely dock sounds.

SAMMY

(narrating) I relive conversations with Gus as I make my way to the pier. I think about my dad, how he drowned not in the ocean but in a bottle of whisky, and how I like to sink down too. I get in line behind fifty other men looking for work, and the two nearest me back away.

MAN 1

(under breath) Smells like booze.

MAN 2

(under breath) Sad old geezer.

SAMMY

The sun's out, but it does little
to stop the bitter wind off the
Atlantic.

MANAGER

Hi, Sammy.

SAMMY

Hi there.

MANAGER

We're out of work, sorry.

SAMMY

So soon?

MANAGER

Fishing's not like it used to be.

SAMMY

Take my name?

MANAGER

Write your name on a slip.

SAMMY

Okay.

Sammy scribbles something.

MANAGER

Good luck out there.

SAMMY

Yeah. Of course.

SAMMY (CONT'D)

(narrating) I make my wake to
Rick's Coffee. Beg for change.

Sammy rattles around change in a hat.

SAMMY (CONT'D)

Down on my luck, anything helps.
God bless.

CUSTOMER

(in passing) Monster...

Door to coffee shop opens up.

RICK

Hey, Sammy.

SAMMY

Hey, Rick.

RICK

Got a bagel and coffee for you.

SAMMY

Appreciate it. Down on my luck at the moment, but hey, things are about to turn around.

RICK

That's good to hear.

SAMMY

Get my state check tomorrow, they told me they may have some work for me happening down at the docks..

RICK

That's great --

SAMMY

And if that doesn't work out, Pauline, well, she was telling me she could use someone in the kitchen --

RICK

Sammy?

SAMMY

Yeah?

RICK

Do you mind taking it around the corner?

SAMMY

Oh, you mean. Of course. Yeah, of course. Thanks, Rick. For the bagel.

RICK

You stay warm.

SAMMY

Sure thing.

Sammy walks off. Suddenly, SIRENS BLARE as fish and wildlife vehicles race past.

SAMMY (CONT'D)

Fish and wildlife?

SAMMY (CONT'D)
 (narrating) As the rescue truck
 rushes around the corner, I see a
 family standing nearby, two parents
 holding their child close.

SAMMY (CONT'D)
 Good family.

82 INT. FLASHBACK

82

SAMMY
 (narrating) Good family. Not like
 me. Protective of what matters. You
 see, Susan left me in '95, and she
 took Christine with her. I'd been
 halfway through a bottle of Jim
 Beam that morning.

CHRISTINE
 Daddy!

SAMMY
 (drunk) Mmheaayyyyyy...

SUSAN
 Get away from Daddy, Christine,
 we're going.

SAMMY
 Noooooo... I lervvee yyuuuuuu..

Sammy collapses onto the ground, starts snoring. Footsteps as
 Christine and Susan leave.

CHRISTINE
 Bye, Daddy.

SAMMY
 (grunts)

As Sammy narrates, Susan dictates to Sammy to pick up stuff,
 they leave the house, get in car, engine starts up, exits.

83 INT. GROUP HOME - NEWFOUNDLAND

83

SAMMY
 (narrating) Our first years
 together had been good ones. Back
 when I first met her, I had a good
 job. Regular hours. Benefits. I
 hadn't drunk in months.
 (MORE)

SAMMY (CONT'D)

But the bottle came back like a good friend. And then it was job after job. Building houses, stacking paper, digging graves. Nothing stuck around. Not the jobs, not my family.

SAMMY (CONT'D)

(whispered) Good family. Protective family.

SAMMY (CONT'D)

(narrating) So I get back to Royalton around six that night, check on Gus.

SAMMY (CONT'D)

Gus, Gus buddy.

GUSSY

What kind of hell am I in? What happening to me? What am I doing in... this stranger's body?

It's as if Sammy doesn't hear him.

SAMMY

It's okay. Keep on sleeping, bud. At least you're clean.

Sammy lays down on his bed.

SAMMY (CONT'D)

(narrating) I keep Christine's picture over my bed, a photo taken a week before Susan took her away. She's on my knee and smiling into the camera

Sound design of young girl calling "Daddy, daddy!" And laughing.

SAMMY (CONT'D)

(narrating) I wonder what she looks like now. I wonder if she'd recognize me.

FX - Sirens roar down the road outside.

GUSSY

Fairty...

SAMMY

I close my eyes and sink into the dark.

BEAT. Then:

GUSSY

I didn't realize the Dark Tome could get in you this deep. Make you become another person. A character in a story. But here I am, acting like someone else. Who am I anymore?

84

INT. GROUP HOME IN NEWFOUNDLAND - LATER

84

Door bursts open.

GUSSY

Sammy! Holy hell Sammy look at this!

SAMMY

(groggily) What is it, Gus?

GUSSY

The Nennorluk, Sammy, the beast that took down the Fairty.

SAMMY

That's a story, Gus, doesn't exist.

GUSSY

It's in the paper. Look.

SAMMY

(reading) "Sea Monster Washes Ashore in Newfoundland." (looks up) Sea Monster?

GUSSY

I told you! Keep reading!

SAMMY

"The hair is the biggest puzzle, says the fisherman who found it. What's hair doing on any kind of fish?"

GUSSY

The thing was seven meters long... That's like twenty-two feet!

SAMMY
I know my metric, Gus...

GUSSY
Covered in white hair. You ever
hear tell of anything like that?

SAMMY
No. Sounds like a tall tale.

GUSSY
It's right there in the paper.

SAMMY
Yeah. Sure is. (yawns) What time is
it anyways?

GUSSY
Time for me to get to sleep, is
what. (chuckles) Sea monster... I
told you all...

Gussy is shortly snoring. Sammy goes downstairs.

85

INT. DOWNSTAIRS OF GROUP HOME - NEWFOUNDLAND

85

FRANKY
Sammy! Happy Monday.

SAMMY
You got my check?

FRANKY
Yeah, right here. Oh, and this came
for you.

Sammy takes two envelopes from Franky.

SAMMY
Christina Fraser.

FRANKY
Sammy, you okay? You look like you
seen a ghost. Isn't Christina your
daughter? You should be happy.

SAMMY
I'd rather not talk about it.

FRANKY
Fine with me. Let's go cash that
check, huh?

SAMMY

Yes, let's.

SAMMY (CONT'D)

(narrating) Franky walks me down to the Money Mart to cash the check. It's part of the Monday ritual. Franky takes his part to make sure my rent is covered; keep me off the street. I make up my mind on something.

SAMMY (CONT'D)

I'm gonna do it, Franky.

FRANKY

What's that?

SAMMY

I'm gonna quit drinking.

FRANKY

You said that last week.

SAMMY

This time I mean it. I got reasons.

FRANKY

Do you? Maybe start with changing your pants once in a while.

SAMMY

Franky leaves me standing outside the Money Mart with the money left to get me through the rest of the week. I make it till eleven before I'm at a table at Francine's Bar.

SAMMY (CONT'D)

The usual, Francine.

FRANCINE

You got it.

Drink poured, served to Sammy. He slurps it down.

SCIENTIST 1

The creature defies all established classifications.

SCIENTIST 2

It's not possible, it just must be a mutant or something. Maybe a giant cuttlefish.

SCIENTIST 1
Pretty hairy for a cuttlefish.

The group laughs. Sammy slams his glass down.

SAMMY
Another, Francine.

FRANCINE
You got it.

SCIENTIST 1
You'll keep the tabloids away?

SCIENTIST 2
How are we going to do that?

SCIENTIST 1
Make up a story...

SCIENTIST 2
Too late for that...

FRANCINE
Here you are Sammy.

SAMMY
Thanks.

Sound designed WHOOMP! As Sammy slams down another drink.

86

INT. HALLWAY OF GROUP HOME - NIGHT

86

SAMMY
(narrating) Next thing I know it's dark. I'm on my back behind Franky's place. Franky and Gus haul me up the stairs.

FRANKY
Jesus he's a heavy son of a bitch...

GUSSY
One, two, hyyunnnnnggghhh --

SAMMY
And then I'm dreaming.

87 EXT. ON THE OCEAN, A MONSTER RAGES

87

The Nennorluk, a great sea creature, rages, body half out of the sea while sheets of water pour down from the angry sky.

DAD
Jesus, Boy! Distract it!

YOUNG SAMMY
I can't, Dad!

DAD
It's going to eat me you damn fool!

SAMMY
(narrating) We're on a sinking cod ship, The Nennorluk rages above us, its white fur shining in the sun. My dad holds a harpoon tied to a long rope.

DAD
Faster! Come on boy!

YOUNG SAMMY
I can't!

DAD
Useless!

The MONSTER RAGES, grabs Dad.

DAD (CONT'D)
(Ayyuuukkk!!) Help! Sammy! Help!

SAMMY
DAD!

Monster cries, descends into the water. CUT TO:

88 INT. MORNING - HALFWAY HOUSE

88

SAMMY
Dad! Dad! Dad!!!

Sammy's screams ring out to an empty room.

GUSSY
Sammy, Sammy, buddy. Wake up.

SAMMY
(calming) Gus. It's just you.

GUSSY

Not impressed to see me?

SAMMY

I had a dream. There was the monster... My dad had a harpoon.

GUSSY

You hunting monsters in your dream?
Then you're a perfect fit for this.

Gussy shoves a poster into Sammy's hands.

SAMMY

What's this? (looks it over) Huh. I ain't never seen no one post for deck hands with flyers before.

GUSSY

Get your ass down there and talk to the captain.

SAMMY

Why, you know him?

GUSSY

Three weeks on the water, Sammy. Would be good for you.

SAMMY

You coming with me?

GUSSY

Naw, got me a date with the forgetting pill.

Gussy pops open a capsule, pops something, crashes in his bunk.

GUSSY (CONT'D)

Go, Sammy. Don't end up like me.
(beat, then, drowsing off) Really, you don't want to end up like me, a character in a story and knowing who you are anymore...

Gussy fades away, starts snoring.

SAMMY

Seeya, Gus.

FX - Sammy leaves the hallway, walks out.

CUT TO:

89

EXT. DOCKS - NEWFOUNDLAND

89

Gulls, clanging bells, etc.

CAPTAIN

Experience?

SAMMY

Got fishing in my blood. My father was forty years chasing cod on the Grand Banks. He taught me everything he knew when I was young. I just never put it to good use til now. Before I come on some bad times, I worked hard at a hundred different jobs.

CAPTAIN

Bad times. Looks like it. You believe in this here monster?

SAMMY

No, sir. That thing that wash up on shore this week, probably just something grown too big to be familiar, is all.

CAPTAIN

Well then, you might be just what we're looking for. Don't want no one spotting a monster just 'cause they seen any ol' fish.

SAMMY

No, sir.

CAPTAIN

Wait outside with the others. We'll let you know in a few minutes.

Sammy walks out, FISHERMEN gathered around, gabbing.

YOUNG FISHERMAN

I heard it got tentacles, so long they can wrap around a man and - yoink! --

Men chuckle.

SAMMY

I ain't never seen anything that couldn't be explained one way or the other.

YOUNG FISHERMAN

I'm surprised you can see at all,
old man.

The crowd all guffaws in laughter.

FISHERMAN 2

Reports of these things cropping up
everywhere. Got a brother on a rig
out of Marystown. Says they came
upon one just last week.

YOUNG FISHERMAN

Bullsh--

CAPTAIN

Alright, lads!

Men get into line.

CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

We've been hired to find us a
monster. A live one. I keep my crew
small, so we need men that aren't
afraid of doing whatever job needs
doing. We'll be taking Sammy here,
and Doug, over there. The rest of
you, thank you for your time.

Men groan, start shuffling away.

YOUNG FISHERMAN

Good luck, old man. You're gonna
need it.

CAPTAIN

We're leaving on Sunday, boys. 6AM.
Be on time.

Captain walks off. DOUG approaches Sammy.

DOUG

Doug Stevenson. Buy you a drink?

SAMMY

You ever been to Francine's?

DOUG

Naw. First time in town. I'm from
Deer Lake.

SAMMY

Other side of the rock?

DOUG
You know it. Looking for whatever
work I can find.

SAMMY
Let me show you around.

CUT TO:

90

INT. HALFWAY HOUSE - LATER

90

ALARM CLOCK blaring.

SAMMY
(waking) Hyunh? Hunnhh??

SAMMY (CONT'D)
(narrating) 5AM. Sunday.

SAMMY (CONT'D)
Who set this goddamn --

Sammy SMACKS the alarm, it smashes into bits.

GUSSY
Sun will be up soon, Sammy. Get out
of here.

SAMMY
You gonna be OK?

GUSSY
You worry about you. Men don't get
jobs dropped on 'em often. You keep
your head down, Sammy. Work hard.
Don't look up and maybe you'll make
something of yourself with what
you've got left.

SAMMY
What about you? What you got left?

GUSSY
Not much. Now piss off.

Sammy grabs a duffel bag.

SAMMY
Take care of yourself, friend.

Sammy opens door, walks outside. CUT TO:

CAPTAIN

The name of this boat is Carmanah. Named after my daughter, lost to cystic fibrosis. She's got a six-ton crane and a four-ton pullmaster winch. Deck here is thirty-seven feet long and nearly the same wide. She's seen some action, and with your help, she'll see her biggest haul yet. You'll get three square meals a day and money in the bank. In the aft we got the wheelhouse, bunk, stove, ridge. We got side scan and multibeam sonar. Long trawl nets. I keep this rig afloat by watching fuel and taking what job comes along. Hunting monsters or hauling crab. It's all the same to me.

Now, ever since that thing came ashore last week, boats been spotting monsters in every crest of every wave. You two, don't let your imaginations get the best of you. Do you understand?

SAMMY AND DOUG

Yes, sir.

CAPTAIN

Most important of all, not a drop of drink on this boat. Understood?

SAMMY AND DOUG

Yes, sir.

CAPTAIN

Good. Now. We go hunt ourselves a monster.

With a rumbling WHIR the diesel motor sets off shore.

SAMMY

(narrating) Pretty soon it was three weeks gone, and not a drop of drink. I got my sea legs under me, like I'd never lost them. I took the jobs none of the other guys wanted - fixing holes in nets - polishing railings - just to keep myself busy.

(MORE)

SAMMY (CONT'D)

I even remembered how to pinpoint our location on the water the old way, the way my father taught me.

CAPTAIN

Never seen a man so comfortable at sea so fast.

SAMMY

Surprise me too.

CAPTAIN

So Sammy, can I trust you?

SAMMY

Captain?

CAPTAIN

My first mate, Tommy, he's getting off at the next port -- got a baby coming -- and I'd like you to take his place.

SAMMY

First mate?

CAPTAIN

You up for the job, Sammy?

SAMMY

Yes, Captain. I'm your man.

CAPTAIN

Good, glad to hear it.

DOUG

(claps Sammy's back) First mate!
Well done, Sammy.

SAMMY

Thanks, Doug.

SAMMY (CONT'D)

(narrating) I hold Christine's letter in my hand. I still haven't opened it. Can't bring myself to. But I keep thinking of the words she might have said. Then I get to writing some letters of my own. I write the first one to Gus. I tell him all about the work, how good I'm doing not drinking, urging him to get off the drugs and the night shift himself.

(MORE)

SAMMY (CONT'D)

Make something of his life.

Then I write to Franky, thanking him for everything he's done. Thanking him for saving my life.

"The Captain thinks we have to go deeper," I write, "And deeper we'll go. We're being paid to find a monster, and by god, we'll find us a monster."

We stop in Halifax for three days, long enough for me to put the letters in the post and walk around a little bit, watch the hawkers selling Nennorluk t-shirts and stuffed animals to the tourists. Doug, he keeps me out of the bars.

And then we're off again. Thirty-nine hundred miles off the coast of Newfoundland. Forty-five hundred miles off the coast of Dartmouth. Even the Gulf of St Lawrence. But still, no monster.

Motor is going, late night driving on the boat.

DOUG

You ever going to open that letter, Sammy?

SAMMY

Maybe.

DOUG

(yawns) I'm bored. You got a story?

SAMMY

Naw.

DOUG

Come on, old man like you, gotta have tons of stories. Something you've never told anyone.

SAMMY

You wouldn't believe me.

DOUG

Don't have to believe you, just need you to keep me awake.

SAMMY

It's about the Nennorluk.

DOUG

The monster?

SAMMY

What drunk sailors call the monster. My dad didn't believe in it, and neither did I. But I knew this old fellah growing up, he says he saw it take down a trawler, back in the '50s.

DOUG

The Fairty?

SAMMY

You heard this one?

DOUG

Everyone's heard of the Fairty. But it's not real, is it?

SAMMY

This guy Gus, he saw it with his own eyes.

DOUG

What did he see?

SAMMY

He heard it, before he saw it. He thought it was the crashing of thunderstorms, first. Then he realized it was the creature, roaring. Shaking the air around it with its cries. This boat, the Fairty, it was huge, among the biggest of its time, but according to Gus, the Nennorluk climbed out of the ocean and shredded the boat apart like it was made of twigs.

GUSSY

Best I can explain it, it was a sea dragon.

SAMMY

-- It was what he told me.

DOUG

Sea dragon? We're hunting ourselves a dragon?

SAMMY

Like I said, I don't believe. Ain't nothing I've ever seen that can't be explained some way or another.

DOUG

A dragon, though?

SAMMY

I told you a story, now give me some peace.

92

EXT. GLACE BAY - NEWFOUNDLAND

92

SAMMY

(narrating) Three more weeks gone, and still no monster. We dock in Glace Bay, and I see the scientists I'd seen in Francine's bar over a month ago, hauling expensive-looking equipment into their truck.

SCIENTIST 1

Sonar detected it a thousand miles out...

SCIENTIST 2

Could just be a false positive...

SAMMY

(narrating) I go to the post office and find a letter from Franky.

POST OFFICE LADY

Always nice to get a message from the ones we love.

SAMMY

That it is.

SAMMY (CONT'D)

(narrating) I open up the letter to see what Franky had to say, but I only get through the first line.

FRANKY

Gus is dead.

SAMMY

Dead. Dead. Dead...

SAMMY (CONT'D)

(narrating) I start wandering the streets, the letter clutched in my hand, not sure where I'm going, but, soon realize I'm right where I want to be.

MISTY

Hey sailor. What can I get you?

SAMMY

Whisky.

MISTY

Coming up.

Misty makes the drink.

SAMMY

(narrating) I have to get the image out of my head. Gus, laying face down in his bed, forgotten and broken, alone in that horrible room. The other men laying claim to what little he had left.

Drink placed before him.

SAMMY (CONT'D)

(whispered) For you, Gus.

GUSSY

Not for me. Never for me.

SAMMY

For you.

Sammy takes the drink, and suddenly:

CUT TO:

93

EXT. BOARDING THE BOAT

93

THUD! Sammy crashes against a wall.

DOUG

Hey, careful with him, he's my boy.

RICHARDSON

This is the first mate?

Diesel engine rumbles up.

DOUG
 Old Sammy here, I think he got some
 news. Sammy ain't so good with
 news.

RICHARDSON
 So that makes you the first mate?

DOUG
 Looks that way.

SAMMY
 (croaks) Dead...

DOUG
 It's alright, Sammy, we got you to
 your bunk.

CAPTAIN
 (over intercom) Captain here, boys.
 We got a long trip out this time.
 Fix, six hundred miles. I need
 everyone on deck.

RICHARDSON
 We just gonna leave him here?

DOUG
 You heard the captain. On the deck.

The two men walk off.

SAMMY
 Mmm... The engine... It's so
 comforting. Reminds me... Of dad...

FX - Diesel engine motor goes for a while, blends into rich,
 cinematic sound design, then with a CRUNCH things change. A
 WHISSSSSSSS!!!! Of water pouring in.

SAMMY (CONT'D)
 Huh? Water? (beat, then, alarmed)
 Water! Captain! Doug?!

The diesel engine is now coughing and spluttering, lights
 flicker, there is a low guttural roar off-stage that Sammy
 approaches as he climbs UP and

SAMMY
Jesus, it's him!

DOUG
Sammy! Get Richardson!

Monster lunges for Richardson.

RICHARDSON
It's got me, it's -- (screams!)

DOUG
Sammy! I'm tangled in the nets.
Help!

SAMMY
I'm coming, Doug!

Monster ROARS and lunges for DOUG

SAMMY (CONT'D)
(narrating) I move in slow motion,
like I'm looking blearily out from
the inside of a dream. The creature
has Doug in its jaws in a second.

DOUG
(Screams)

MONSTER
(ROARS)

CAPTAIN
Die you monster!!

FX - Pop! Pop! Pop! Gunshots ricochet from the wheelhouse.

MONSTER
(ROARS)

SAMMY
(narrating) The Captain's bullets
ring off the monster's skin like
washer sloshing across the deck. Is
eyes light up as lunges toward the
wheelhouse, shredding it apart in
one move.

CAPTAIN
Sammy! Sammy!!

SAMMY

(narrating) The water's up to my knees now, and I have trouble finding my feet in the reeling motion of the broken ship. I bend over, start swimming, push my way to the Captain as the great Nennorluk disappears back into the ocean.

MONSTER

(ROARS)

CAPTAIN

Come on, Sammy, let's take this bastard down!

SAMMY

I let you down.

CAPTAIN

He's coming around again, look. It's like a glowing torpedo. Lighting up the night sky. Come on you son of a bitch. Come on!

MONSTER

(ROARS)

Monster collides with the ship, and it shatters into pieces, and now we're UNDERWATER. Sammy bursts above water.

SAMMY

(gasping for breath) Raft... Raft...

SAMMY (CONT'D)

(narrating) I almost have hold of the life raft, almost have a line in my hand, and then, the wreck of the Carmanah pitches over and takes me down with it.

SAMMY (CONT'D)

Auuuugggkkkk!!!

Blub blub blub. Underwater again.

SAMMY (CONT'D)

(narrating) As I gulp in chunks of seawater, a strange calm takes me. I feel the Nennorluk there, brushing its mighty scales against my body.

MONSTER
(gentle whinny)

SAMMY
(narrating) Cod are everywhere,
swimming in schools a thousand fish
thick. Nennorluk. Their protector.

MONSTER
(another gentle whinny)

SAMMY
(narrating) The monster cruises
past me, and I take in its belly...
white and translucent, skin so
clear I can see the heart, its
enormous ribcage, the veins and
internal organs. My own lungs feel
like they're going to last forever.
I have no desire to breathe. No
desire to fight.

Nennorluk swims with me as I sink
deeper. The cod disappear back
toward the surface. The monster
comes in close again, so close, I
can hear its thoughts.

MONSTER
(comforting whinny)

SAMMY
You want to hear about Christine?

MONSTER
(affirming whinny)

SAMMY
You want to tell me about Franky's
letter. The part I didn't read?
(chuckles) Okay. Go ahead.

MONSTER
(whinnies again)

FRANKY
(VO) In those last days, Sammy, Gus
was clean and awake. Sun on his
skin for the first time in years.
Your good news was like jumper
cables to his heart. Sammy, you
should have seen him.

(MORE)

FRANKY (CONT'D)

How he knew he was on the way out,
and the calmness there, the smile
on his face, Sammy, if only for a
day or two.

MONSTER

(sad whinny)

SAMMY

I was on my way, too. I nearly
turned it all around.

MONSTER

(groans)

SAMMY

(narrating) Nennorluk took me down
deep, gently pulling me to the
bottom... To the dark, comfortable
place I've always known.

FX - Deep underwater FX rises up, overpowers, over. OUT.

95	END EPISODE 7	95
96	BEGIN EPISODE 8, FEAT: <u>SING ME YOUR SCARS</u> , BY DAMIEN ANGELICA WATERS	96
97	INT. PURGATORY	97

GUSSY

(bursts forth, from sleep) Sammy?!
Sammy! Sammy!!!

Gussy looks around, regards his situation.

GUSSY (CONT'D)

Sammy's not real, Gussy. Sammy's
not real. Thank God, I'm back in my
own body. Never died in a story
before. Wonder what that means?

GRACE

Nothing good.

Gussy recoils. It is Grace, the teenage girl Gussy abandoned
in the Dark Tome all those years ago.

GUSSY

Huh, who are you?

GRACE

You would forget me, wouldn't you?
Go ahead and ruin my life, and you
can't be bothered to remember my
name.

GUSSY

Grace?

GRACE

Haven't aged a day, have I? That's
what being trapped in the Dark Tome
will do to you.

GUSSY

I'm sorry about what happened. I
tried to save you, I was only able
to get George.

GRACE

Quiet "Wilbur"

GUSSY

(winces) Auuuukkk...

GRACE

Oh yes, I know your true name, and
to speak it in this place has
power. You will speak when spoken
to. Do you understand, Wilbur?

GUSSY

(croaks) Yes.

GRACE

Good. Or else with another word
I'll annihilate every version of
you that has existed in every
dimension. I'll rub out every
memory of you, every echo of your
existence. (beat) I believe you
last left me alone with this man.

BILLY

(chuckles) Gussy. My good friend
Gussy. Look at you. So old. Dying
young is so much better than
growing old.

GUSSY

Is this hell?

BILLY

(cackles) Hell? Who the hell goes to hell, Gussy?! Do you see a pitchfork in my hand? A pronged tail? No. None of that. Just, us, and all this... Emptiness.

Billy leans back, stretches his arms.

BILLY (CONT'D)

We have some time to hang out here. Reunite! Have a chinwag. Like old friends. You did well, Grace.

GRACE

It was easier that expected.

GUSSY

You? You're the one who called me in?

GRACE

I said don't speak, old man!

Dark energy surges into Gussy, torturing him.

GUSSY

Aahhhkkkk!

GRACE

I was young. I had my life ahead of me. I was a HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT and you sent me here. At least if I died I'd be dead. I'd have sweet, dark silence. Not awake for an infinity with... him!

BILLY

(cackles outlandishly) Oh come on! Can I really be that bad?

GRACE

I had a life, Wilbur, and you took it away from me. I wanted to take something away from you.

GUSSY

(chuckles) Well go ahead and kill me, Grace. My life ain't been worth living for a long time anyways.

GRACE

Oh it's not killing you I have in mind, Wilbur. It's her.

GUSSY

Wha--?

GRACE

Your new little plaything. Cassie.
Is that her name?

GUSSY

Don't. No. This is about me. Cassie
ain't got nothing --

BILLY

Oh I think my old pal Gussy has a
crush.

GUSSY

Shut up, you twisted sicko!

GRACE

I think you forget who's control
here.

Grace psychically attacks Gussy.

GUSSY

(gasps)

GRACE

Do you know what I am, Wilbur? What
we are?

GUSSY

Huh?

Grace's face melts away. Her tone changes from being normal
teenage girl into a demon-thing.

GRACE

We are the things from which power
grows. We slide through worlds like
sharks carve through water. We suck
energy from worlds like marrow from
the bone.

BILLY

We've only wanted one thing, for
all this time, Gussy. I'll give you
a guess what it is.

GUSSY

You're the Parabellum.

GRACE

So you know my true name, too.

GUSSY

What happened to Grace? The real Grace, I mean?

GRACE

She was delicious. She screamed, and screamed, so full of life she was. She called to us from beyond the void, she wanted a way out. So we gave it to her.

BILLY

Don't forget Billy. His rage could fuel our conquest of a thousand worlds.

GRACE

We have hunted you for a long time. You and your Book.

GRACE (CONT'D)

But we could never get quite close enough.

BILLY

Until now.

GRACE

Silly, Wilbur. Now, you will bring us to it. To her.

GUSSY

No... No...

BILLY

You had your chance to burn the book, Gussy. And you didn't. You chose to use it. And so you brought us.

GRACE

The ancient ones used to offer us sacrifices. They knew how to keep us happy. But you, Wilbur, you paid no tribute. Your debt is quite high, and we have come to collect. Bring us to Cassie. Bring us to the Dark Tome.

MUSIC - Crescendo, OUT.

Back to Cassie. Cassie wakes up.

CASSIE

(Gasps) What - Where - where am I?
(beat) Hello?! Hello?! I'm... So
cold...

Victoria speaks. A voice in Cassie's head.

VICTORIA

This is not my body.

CASSIE

Uh-hello? Is someone there?

VICTORIA

Yes, there are the expected parts.
Arms, legs, hips, breasts. Each in
its proper place and of the proper
shape. Is he a monster, a madman, a
misguided fool? I don't know. I
don't want to know. But this is not
my body.

CASSIE

This isn't real. This is the world
of the Dark Tome. How can I be in
the Dark Tome if I'm asleep?

VICTORIA

Rot is everywhere, darling. Once it
gets into your head, everything you
know falls apart. This existence is
not so bad. You'll get used to it.
Now, look.

Victoria gestures to her wrists. Unseen to audience, there is
a ring of rot around where there is a new hand transplant,
which Victoria references in the next passage.

CASSIE

What?

VICTORIA

The rot. See? It begins there,
around the stitches. Poor Lillian.

CASSIE

Lillian?

VICTORIA

These hands? They're not mine.
They're hers. And they're rotting
away.

Lillian is another voice in their head.

LILLIAN

(moans) No... noooo... No...
Please...

VICTORIA

I must show him the rot.

LILLIAN

Not until after the party - you
know what he'll do.

VICTORIA

Silence! The hands may be yours but
the pain is mine and mine alone.
(beat) He'll destroy you, but
you'll still be with us. Don't
fear.

CASSIE

What is happening... I'm not in my
body anymore... I'm in... yours.

VICTORIA

Don't I have a lovely stride? I
learned from Therese, the dancer.
She taught me the carriage of a
lady.

Victoria pushes open a door, walks down a hall.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

My stride protects me from their
whispers...

SERVANTS

(aside) Here she comes

SERVANTS (CONT'D)

(aside) Don't look

CASSIE

Who are they?

VICTORIA

The servants? They pretend I don't
exist. I wonder what fiction he
spins to them.

(MORE)

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

I'm sure they think he is a good doctor. They're not here at night. They don't know everything.

CASSIE

They can't see your face.

VICTORIA

No, of course not. If I am to leave my room I must wear this veil and cover every bit of flesh.

Anna knocks on a door.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Father?

DOCTOR

Yes, Victoria?

VICTORIA

My hands.

Doctor examines.

DOCTOR

(unhappy) I had hoped we were past this. This configuration is as close to perfect as I could have hoped.

VICTORIA

Sorry, Father.

DOCTOR

Never mind. To the operating theater.

They walk to a nearby door, creaks open.

CASSIE

It smells awful in here.

VICTORIA

You get used to it.

DOCTOR

Who are you speaking with, Victoria?

VICTORIA

Myself.

DOCTOR

Ah. Sit. (beat) You're sure you're well? If you're hearing voices...

VICTORIA

Just the hands, father...

She sits.

DOCTOR

(groans, makes an unhappy sound, continues examining under Victoria's passage)

VICTORIA

The rot binds me to him and the stitches bind you to me. A prison, not of bars, but of circumstance. I have entertained thoughts of the scissor and the thread, the undoing to set us free, but I have no wish to die again, and neither do the others. While not perfect, this existence is preferable. And what if we did not die? What if our pieces remained alive and sentient? A crueler fate I cannot imagine.

Doctor uses a tool to scrape off flesh.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

(Screams)

DOCTOR

Quiet, now, I'm cleaning the rot. (sighs) Oh, Victoria...

LILLIAN

(whimpers) Please don't let him... Don't let him...

CASSIE

What's he doing...

DOCTOR

Some anesthetic.

Sizzling hiss of anesthetic poured on wound.

VICTORIA

(hisses in pain)

DOCTOR

Don't distract me. I must work.

Snip snipping of scissors, gauze, etc. With a wet PLOP the hand comes off.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

We'll find another hand. Go now,
and don't let anyone see you. They
wouldn't understand.

VICTORIA

Yes, Father. Thank you, Father.

Victoria walks away.

LILLIAN

I failed him... I failed him...

CASSIE

Sssh ssshh ssshhh

VICTORIA

Yes, listen to her, Lillian, shut
up your relentless cries.

WOMAN 1

At least it was only the one.

LILLAN

You wouldn't understand!

WOMAN 2

What if it spreads?

WOMAN 1

Would serve her right.

LILLIAN

(cries anew)

WOMAN 3

Hush, remember Emily? She had
reason to weep. You do not.

WOMAN 1

(cruel laughter)

VICTORIA

Stop! Please! All of you! I need to
sleep. To heal.

WOMAN 1

Heal? Heal from what?

VICTORIA

To... Remain.

LILLIAN
I'm sorry, Victoria.

Silence. A low wind MOANS against the wall of the room.

VICTORIA
Why I tell them to silence, I don't know. It's not like I can sleep. Not in here. Not like this. Here. Want to see the outdoors?

CASSIE
Will you get in trouble?

VICTORIA
Not if I'm careful. I've done it a hundred times. Watch.

Victoria stands, feet hit the stone floor, pads over to a hidden door.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)
There's a servant's entrance behind this tapestry. You must go carefully through the narrow passage with the spiderwebs, into the main wing of the house, past all the wondrous carpets my feet will never touch and couches I will never recline upon... Past the bedrooms - mine, his, the guest's - and to the east wing, and the servant's entrance. And now. Feel it.

Night in the countryside.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)
The air is so cold as to take my breath away. It's a short walk down to the gate. From here, I can imagine what it would be like if it were unlocked. If I could walk through the gate and down the path to town.

CASSIE
Why don't you?

VICTORIA
What if I ran away and the rot returned? Who would fix me? The rot would not stop until it consumed me whole.

CASSIE

No...

VICTORIA

I tried escaping once, and he left it just so I could see what happened... It crept from my wrist up into the entire arm. That was Rachel's. He removed both arms then so that I could have a matching set. (sniffs, enjoys the night) Look. Down there. You can just see the steeple of the church glimmering in the moonlight. I have heard the servants talk about the market, the church. Beyond the town, there's a road that winds around a bend and disappears from sight. My parents farm is a half day's travel from the town by horse and carriage. It would be a long, difficult walk, but not impossible.

CASSIE

You came from a farm?

VICTORIA

I wonder if my Peter - he's the eldest - has asked for Ginny's hand in marriage yet. Or if I young Tom has stopped growing. I wonder if mother still sings as she churns butter. And father... Well, I wonder if he has learned to smile again, after... After what happened. I wish I could see them all again.

(beat) I should not tarry. Back to bed.

A thrumming of a HEARTBEAT fills the soundscape.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

My sisters are quiet, in the dark. My chest here? That's Molly's. But the heart... That's someone else's. Not us. Someone who does not speak. Sometimes I think I feel her presence, like a ghost... But she never speaks. Perhaps there is not enough of her left to have a voice. Perhaps she simply refuses to speak. I wish I knew her name.

Heart: Thump thump thump OUT! Silence for a moment, then:

99

INT. THEATER

99

Piano playing. Victoria finishes "FOGGY DEW" the traditional English folk tune.

VICTORIA

(singing) Twas in the first part of
the night, That we did sport and
play.

And in the second part of the
night, She in my arms did lie

When morning came, she said to me
Oh sir, I am undone.

Oh hold your row, you silly young
gal

The foggy dew is gone.

Piano finishes.

DOCTOR

Enough. Go to bed.

VICTORIA

Did I offend --

DOCTOR

To bed!!

MUSIC - Transition

100

INT. VICTORIAN HOUSE

100

VICTORIA

Once a week, in the small operating
theatre, he has me strip and he
inspects all the stitches, all the
parts. He checks my heart and
listens to me breathe. I hate the
feel of his eyes upon me; I am more
than naked, I am violated.

Not long after he brought me back,
I tried to stab myself with a
knife.

(MORE)

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

At the last moment, I held back and only opened a small wound above my left breast. Stitches hold it closed now.

DOCTOR

(going through examination) The mind of all things, be they smallest insect to the largest mammal, desires life. You are proof of this.

VICTORIA

(teary) It was Emily.

DOCTOR

Mm... Emily... I remember her...

VICTORIA

Emily. She was with me from the beginning. She was always kind. Always patient. She helped me stay sane. She reassured me when I cried. Told me I was not a monster though I insisted otherwise. She told me everything would be all right. But then, she rotted away.

EMILY

(screaming)

VICTORIA

(screaming)

DOCTOR

Quiet! Quiet abominable woman!

VICTORIA

It hurts!

DOCTOR

Quiet, or it shall hurt more.

Screaming fit rises to a peak. OUT. Beat.

MUSIC - Piano music, off

Time jump. Now, the doctor is very kind.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

I will unlock your door when the party is over.

VICTORIA

Yes.

DOCTOR

You will stay silent?

VICTORIA

Yes.

DOCTOR

I would not even hold this party if not for my father's insufferable tradition. I curse him for beginning it in the first place, and I should have ended it when he died. (beat) Goodnight.

Doctor walks out. Locks room.

We hear sounds of the party. Laughter, music, etc.

VICTORIA

He does not know about my secret passage. How easy it is to creep up to the ball.

101 INT. VICTORIAN HOUSE - NEAR PARTY

101

Party sounds are louder, piano, dancing, etc.

GRACE

I had a gown like that blue one. Oh, how I miss satin and lace.

LILLIAN

Please. Let us go back. I can't bear to see this. It hurts too much.

WOMAN 1

Hush

WOMAN 2

I wish we could join them.

WOMAN 3

Perhaps he will bring us some wine later. And, look at the food.

WOMAN 1

Look at the way they dance. Clumsy, so clumsy.

VICTORIA

I dance, not a dance from Therese,
but a dance from my childhood. I
remember the harvest festival. The
bonfire. The musicians. My father
placed my feet atop his to teach me
the steps, and then he spun me
around and around until we were
both too dizzy to stand.

CASSIE

This is horrible...

VICTORIA

Look.

The music stops. A round of applause from party-goers.

WOMAN 1

Who is she?

WOMAN 2

The next.

WOMAN 3

No!

VICTORIA

He will not.

LILLIAN

He will do whatever he wants.

WOMAN 1

She is not sick.

WOMAN 2

Neither was I. He saw me in the
Hargrove market. He gave me that
look, then I woke up here.

WOMAN 3

But you do not know for certain.
The influenza took so many.

WOMAN 2

I was not sick.

DOCTOR

(off) Play me a song. Play us all a
song.

ANNA

Yes, of course. Here's a special one. This is from my village.

Piano music up, over, out.

VICTORIA

The next day is Sunday. The servants have the day off, he has gone to mass. I creep through the passageway and to the outside. Even at this distance I can hear the songs from the church.

In the distance, HYMNS BEING SUNG.

WOMAN 2

We should leave.

LILLIAN

We should go far, far away.

WOMAN 1

And where would we go?

LILLIAN

Anywhere.

WOMAN 3

And who would fix us if we rot?

WOMAN 2

Better that we rot away to nothing than remain here.

VICTORIA

Please... all of you...

WOMAN 3

What if the rot is only the beginning? What if we never die? What if we can't die?

WOMAN 2

We don't know until we try!

LILLIAN

Please get me away from him, get me away...

WOMAN 1

I remember my mother sometimes, her voice..

WOMAN 3
Better this than nothing.

WOMAN 2
Better nothing than anything.

VICTORIA
ENOUGH! ALL OF YOU! ENOUGH!
(screams)

Scream extinguishes into darkness.

102 INT. VICTORIAN HOUSE - BEDROOM

102

Time passes.

DOCTOR
(drunk) Wake up.

VICTORIA
(groggy). Now?

DOCTOR
Yes, hurry.

WOMAN 1
Why?

WOMAN 2
Where is he taking us?

WOMAN 3
Where are you taking us?

LILLIAN
(aghast) The operating theater!

WOMAN 1
No no no no no no

VICTORIA
There is nothing wrong!

LILLIAN
Don't let him do this to me!

VICTORIA
Don't!

DOCTOR
(hisses) Don't you dare touch me!

SLAP! Doctor backhands Victoria.

WOMEN
(Shrieking in a chorus)

Victoria fights him.

DOCTOR
If you will not comply, you will
sleep!

Victoria fights him viciously, the screaming hits a
crescendo, then OUT.

Beat.

VICTORIA
(groggy) Lillian? Lillian?

WOMAN 1
She's gone.

WOMAN 2
Crier.

WOMAN 3
She was dangerous.

ANNA
(sniffles)

WOMAN 1
We've got another.

VICTORIA
Who's that?

ANNA
What... What happened to me?
Where's my body?

WOMAN 2
Welcome to madness.

Several women laugh.

VICTORIA
What's your name?

ANNA
Anna.

WOMAN 1
I told you. We should have run
away.

ANNA

Where I am? Who is that? Please. I want to go home.

WOMAN 2

That's not happening, sweetie.

VICTORIA

He... did something, Anna. Something very bad. And now... Now we're all you have.

ANNA

I... I... No... no... no... what's happening?! WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME?! (screams, then vanishes)

WOMAN 1

Not everyone can handle it.

VICTORIA

Anna? Anna?

WOMAN 2

She's gone down. Deep down.

VICTORIA

It's okay, Anna, it'll be okay...

WOMAN 2

Easy for you to say. You're the one with the new fingers.

WOMAN 1

They're beautiful fingers.

WOMAN 3

Anna's fingers.

WOMAN 2

Better to play the piano with.

VICTORIA

He took away the last part of Lillian.

WOMAN 2

Good riddance.

Door opens.

DOCTOR

You, come to the Library.

VICTORIA
Yes, Father.

103 INT. VICTORIAN HOUSE - BALLROOM

103

They walk down the hall.

DOCTOR
Tell her to play.

VICTORIA
Father?

DOCTOR
Tell Anna to play.

VICTORIA
I... I cannot make her.

WOMAN 2
Trouble, I knew it.

WOMAN 1
Come on, Anna!

Ragged playing on the piano. Weird and horrible.

VICTORIA
I... can't... (beat) Shall I sing
instead?

DOCTOR
Do you truly believe I don't know?
I've heard you speak to them. I
know they are in there with you.
You tell her to play. Or else.

ANNA
Never!

VICTORIA
She says... Never.

DOCTOR
Bitch!

Doctor cracks Victoria, she stumbles back, collapses on the
floor.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
You will play! You. Will. PLAY!

Doctor storms off.

104 INT. VICTORIAN HOUSE - BEDROOM

104

VICTORIA

Please, you must teach me.

ANNA

I will not.

VICTORIA

If you don't, he will kill you.

ANNA

What does it matter? I'm already dead.

VICTORIA

But he may kill us all. We don't want to die.

WOMEN

No! No we don't! (etc)

ANNA

I do not care. I will give him nothing. He killed me. Don't you understand. HE KILLED ME!

WOMAN 2

We understand. We all do. But this is what we have now.

ANNA

I do not want this. It is monstrous, and you, all of you, you're as dead as I am.

VICTORIA

Please. Teach me something. Anything that will make him happy. I'm begging you Anna, please.

CASSIE

I'm trapped in here with you. This is screwed up, Dark Tome, it's never been like this before, please, this story... This story has to end...

WOMEN

Rot, rot, rot... Rot has gotten into your head...

VICTORIA

Three more trips to the music room. Every time, Anna denies him, and he leaves me with bruises around the arms, breasts and belly, red marks on my cheeks. The others scream when he hits us, but not Anna. Anna doesn't give in. And on the fourth...

DOCTOR

You horrid little wench! I will make you play! You will play!

WHACK! Victoria is struck down by the Doctor.

VICTORIA

I decide to run.

WOMAN 2

Too late.

WOMAN 1

What took you so long...

WOMAN 3

It's not safe.

VICTORIA

I creep my way from the passageway to the kitchen. I gather cheese, bread, a few apples. I take an old cloak from a hook near the servants' entrance. I pull up the hood as I venture into the night. The air out here, so crisp. I find a good, large rock, and lift it, ready to crack the lock on the gate.

DOCTOR

You fool.

Doctor throws a cloth over Victoria's face.

VICTORIA

(muffled cries)

DOCTOR

I had such high hopes for you! Perhaps I will have better luck with the next one. (chuckles) Where were you going to go? Back to your family?

(MORE)

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

Do you know what they would do to you? Even your own ma and pa would tear you limb from limb and toss you into the fire. If I didn't need the rest of them, I'd let you go just so you could find out.

VICTORIA

(more crying)

DOCTOR

Goodnight, Victoria.

Screech - OUT.

105

INT. VICTORIAN HOUSE - OPERATING ROOM

105

Cloth pulled aside.

CASSIE

Oh no, it's the operating room.

DOCTOR

Last chance. Will you play.

ANNA

No.

WOMEN

Please, please!

ANNA

I will not!

VICTORIA

She will not play.

DOCTOR

I thought not.

Doctor walks to the door, rolls in a gurney.

VICTORIA

What's that?

DOCTOR

You can see what it is. Perhaps the next one will do what Anna refuses.

VICTORIA

You cannot do this! Please!

DOCTOR
I made you. And I can unmake you.

CASSIE
Victoria's eyes lock on the
Doctor's in horror, and as a smile
creases his lips I see her hands --
Anna's hands -- grab the shining
blade of a scalpel.

DOCTOR
Goodnight.

FX - Thuck!!! Victoria stabs the Doctor in the neck.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
Nrrrk!! Nrrrk!!!

WOMAN 2
What did you do!

WOMEN
(squabble and shriek)

ANNA
(laughs)

DOCTOR
(blubbering) I----I---
Srrrrrrrryyyyy--

VICTORIA
I'm sorry, too.

Starts cutting.

DOCTOR
(screams more)

CASSIE
She begins to work at him, and
soon, it's clear it's just one part
of the Doctor she wants: His hands.
When she has them, she cuts Anna's
hands free, stitch by stitch. Just
as she's about to cut the last
stitch...

ANNA
Thank you.

CASSIE
And then Anna is gone.

DOCTOR

Uhnnn --- wh--- wahhh---

VICTORIA

These hands are large, awkward, but sturdy enough for now. I'll learn to improve them soon.

DOCTOR

Never. I will never tell you.

WOMEN

(cackle madly)

VICTORIA

You will. You won't be able to resist. We're your creation. Will you really let us rot away?

DOCTOR

You horrible, horrible monster!

VICTORIA

A monster you made... Father.

WOMAN 2

Let's see how pretty this place is when it burns.

CASSIE

She sets the drapes alight, and the flames quickly spread to the ceiling and across the floor. Assured, she walks away.

WOMAN 1

Where shall we go?

VICTORIA

I don't know.

WOMAN 2

We can go anywhere we wish.

Flames are now RAGING behind them.

DOCTOR

My house! My theater! My secrets!

WOMAN 3

It smells so, so sweet.

They exit, start walking down gravel path. Unlock a reel of keys, open padlock. Gate swings open.

VICTORIA
There's the path to town.

DOCTOR
You'll never make it. They'll rip
you apart.

VICTORIA
You have no power over us any more.

DOCTOR
Errrrrkkk

WOMEN
Nah nah anh anh an annaha nah
anahh!!

Women overpower the Doctor's voice. He's shoved down deep
within.

WOMAN 2
Where will we go?

VICTORIA
Anywhere we wish.

Gate creaks open. Steps walk, step, step, step, step...

Glowing hum, then. FWOOMPF!

106

INT. HOSPITAL

106

Cassie awakens in a hospital bed.

CASSIE
Wh- what the... They... Victoria...
Anna... (beat) Oh thank God, My
head is just... mine. Again, Except
I'm in a hospital. And I...

Um (struggles to move her wrists).
Can't move. Hello? Hey, Hello...
Someone! Hey can someone let me go!
I'm tied up in here!

Voices from outside Cassie's room. In rushes a NURSE - who is
a transformation of AGENT 2 -- followed by Cassie's MOTHER.

MOM
What's wrong with her? You promised
me you'd help her --

NURSE

She's just going through withdrawal. Sometimes they exhibit... Outlandish behavior.

CASSIE

It's you! You're one of the people who tried to kill me! Except. You look different now.

NURSE

Calm down, dear.

CASSIE

Take off these restraints and I'll calm down!

NURSE

They're for your own good. You're a danger to yourself and others. We're trying to keep you safe until Doctor Aurelius can perform the procedure.

CASSIE

Procedure? Mom? What's she talking about?!

MOM

It's for the best.

CASSIE

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO TO ME?!

NURSE

Okay, let's up the medication --

CASSIE

No, no, no. (calming) I'm okay. Okay? I just had a bad dream. Can I have a moment alone with my mom?

Nurse considers.

NURSE

I'll check in with the Doctor. It shouldn't be much longer.

Nurse leaves.

MOM

Cassie... I know how this must look.

CASSIE

Must *look*? I got grabbed by these creeps and now one of them is pretending to be a nurse, and they're taking me into surgery. IT LOOKS BAD, MOM!

MOM

Don't make this harder for yourself, Cassie.

CASSIE

This can't be real. This can't be happening. Oh, Dark Tome...

MOM

Is that the name of the drug?

CASSIE

It's the name of my book...

MOM

They told me it was that girl Kim, probably. The get impressionable young girls hooked on these designer drugs, give them out at parties... It was prom night, wasn't it?

CASSIE

No!

MOM

It was right after the prom that it happened. The thing with Mark.

CASSIE

Mark attacked me!

MOM

What you did... Cassie... I can't explain what you did to our apartment. All I knew, was that something was wrong. Then you went missing.

CASSIE

No, this is all wrong.

MOM

I'm not the perfect mother. I know that. But I love you, you have to believe me.

CASSIE

No! Mothers who love their children
DON'T put them in for random
"procedures!"

MOM

Cassie, I was like you once. Young,
curious. Invincible. I thought I
could do whatever I wanted, with
whomever I wanted. It started out
innocent, at first, but then --

CASSIE

This isn't like that, Mom! Have you
listened to a word I've said? Could
you ever, just once, get out of
your own head, and listen to me?

MOM

I prayed, if God would only bring
my daughter back, I would prevent
what happened to me from happening
to you. I needed help. So I called
the only person I could think of,
your guidance counselor.

Mr. Carter approaches.

GEORGE

Hi, Cassie.

CASSIE

GET OUT OF HERE!

GEORGE

Please, keep your voice down or --

CASSIE

Or what? You'll lobotomize me?
ALREADY PART OF THE PLAN!

GEORGE

Cassie, stay calm. (lowers voice,
confides) I'm trying to help you.

CASSIE

Get out of here you snake. You set
this all up.

GEORGE

You won't understand.

CASSIE

What's there to understand?! You turned me over to these monsters!

GEORGE

(returns to 'teacherly tone') You see, Missus Pinkham, how she talks, she's still altered.

MOM

(mourning) I know...

CASSIE

Ask him, Mom! Ask him about the magic book!

GEORGE

Cassie, I've already told them all about it. About your 'unseen' worlds. You're talking about drug-induced hallucinations.

DOCTOR

(entering) The problem is these designer drugs you've been playing with, they affect the brain's chemistry.

CASSIE

YOU!

Doctor - AGENT 1 - continues as if nothing has happened

DOCTOR

We used to think it was permanent. Lucky for you, they've recently discovered that these changes are reversible. We flew a machine in from Switzerland this morning, state of the art. It works with your brain to undo --

CASSIE

No! No! Get me out of here! I don't want to be undone!

MOM

(sobbing) I can't stay here anymore.

GEORGE

I'll walk you to the lobby. (beat) Cassie. You should have burned the book.

Mother and George leave.

CASSIE

Yeah! That's right! Leave me, mom!
Make me fend for myself! Just like
you did with Mark! Just like Tom
before him! And Greg! Hey, remember
him! He was a hell of a charmer! Do
you know what he did to me while
you were --

NURSE

Upping the nitrous.

CASSIE

(dreamy) Out...

With Mom/Carter safely out of view, the inner demons of the
AGENTS start to resurface.

DOCTOR

Let's get her in, they're getting
impatient.

NURSE

Must not keep our guests waiting!

They start wheeling Cassie through the hospital.

NURSE (CONT'D)

Oooh! Oooh! She's blurring!

DOCTOR

Look, you can see the tendrils of
the book on her, little magic
contrails.

NURSE

Ma always said, even nitrous can't
keep a good sorcerer down.

DOCTOR

I thought you killed your mother?

NURSE

Ate her heart. It was a figure of
speech.

Creak! As the door to operating room opens.

NURSE (CONT'D)

I can't wait to see what's inside
this one. Doctor, can I Get a
scalpel?

Off-stage bear SFX. OLIVER, Joanna's brother, plays a video game, and absently asks questions, undeterred by the bear.

OLIVER
Do bears like potato chips?

DADDY
Shush!

JOANNA
That's Oliver. My kid brother.

OLIVER
I'd like potato chips if I were a bear.

DADDY
Joanna have you seen my phone?

JOANNA
No.

OLIVER
I'd like barbecue the best.

Daddy starts raging through the bedroom.

DADDY
Who loses the phone when there's an emergency! Like a BEAR IN OUR DAMN HOUSE!

JOANNA
Sorry, Daddy.

DADDY
Can't call the police, can't call the firefighters, can't call the bear catchers, can't call anyone!

JOANNA
He's been drinking Daddy Juice since he came home from work. He left the patio door open. That's how the bear got in. That's why we ran and hid upstairs.

DADDY
Dammit!

Daddy KICKS nightstand, knocks the phone loose from nightstand which hits floor with a SMACK!

DADDY (CONT'D)
 (nursing stubbed foot) Ow ow ow...
 Ha ha... Phone... There's my
 phone... Now to call... Who the
 hell am I going to call?

Daddy slumps down, grabs a bottle. Takes a heavy slog.

DADDY (CONT'D)
 All she'll do is laugh at me. Cops
 will just make things worse. It's
 okay. It'll just sniff around. In
 the morning, it'll be gone. Right,
 Joanna?

JOANNA
 Yes, Daddy.

DADDY
 We don't have to call her. She
 doesn't have to know. You... You go
 to sleep. We'll be okay in the
 morning. Don't call your mother.

JOANNA
 But it's not all okay in the
 morning.

FX - Cathode-ray TV Comes on. Pop, hisssss!

The bear grunts, sits on the couch, flicks through channels.
 Stumbles across a clip of Yogi Bear. "Smarter than the
 average bear" -- the bear laughs.

JOANNA (CONT'D)
 The bear's still here. Daddy and
 Oliver are both asleep. Daddy's
 bottle of Daddy Juice is empty.
 Oliver fell asleep holding his
 video game. The batteries are dead.

DADDY
 (snoring)

JOANNA
 I really have to use the bathroom
 and I don't want to wet the bed.
 Daddy hates it when I wet the bed
 on the weekends we're here. He
 always says

DADDY
 Not my sheet, don't you dare do it
 on my sheets, little lady.

JOANNA

So I crawl out from under the covers and go to do the door. It's dark. And almost quiet...

TV flickers to static.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

I sneak to the upstairs bathroom. I wash my hands twice. Daddy always says

DADDY

Kids have nothing but germs on their grubby mitts

JOANNA

So I wash a third time, just to be safe. Then a fourth. Then I creep back.

The Bear YAWNS.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

But I pause at the top of the stairs.

Joanna tentatively steps on one step, then another.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

Hello?

JOANNA (CONT'D)

(narrating) Sometimes I have bad ideas but do them anyway. Daddy's friends say it's because "No, You're a Bad Parent, Steve" but I don't care. If the bear won't leave, someone will have to make it leave.

Tension builds... She creeps down the steps, onto wooden floor of house.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

There it is. A mass of brown fur sitting in Daddy's chair.

BEAR

Hello.

JOANNA

I don't hear her say anything out loud, but I know that's when she means.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

(to bear) Hi.

BEAR

Who are you?

JOANNA

Joanna. What's your name?

BEAR

My name is -

The bear's name is rendered as sound, the "Snapping of twigs and rushing of deep water"

BEAR (CONT'D)

That's bear language for Susan.

JOANNA

Oh. Hello, Susan.

BEAR

Joanna, you're quite good at bear language for a human.

JOANNA

Thanks.

BEAR

I like your house.

JOANNA

Susan?

BEAR

Yes, dear?

JOANNA

I have to go upstairs. To my daddy.

BEAR

That's fine. I'll be here if you need me.

JOANNA

I blink, and I'm back in the bedroom. I don't know how I ran that fast, but I did.

(MORE)

JOANNA (CONT'D)

Daddy says not to run, but Susan is a bear, so I ran. I won't tell him I ran.

Phone on floor vibrates.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

It's Daddy's phone. Mom's calling.

MOM

(voicemail) Hey, everything all right? Didn't hear from you or the kids last night.

JOANNA

I don't use Daddy's phone. Last time I did he yelled until his forehead was red. So I crawl back into bed and pretend to sleep.

MUSIC - Interlude.

110

INT. TRAPPED IN A HOUSE - LATER

110

DADDY

I think the bear is still here.

JOANNA

I don't think she's going anywhere.

DADDY

No. I don't think it is.

JOANNA

She.

DADDY

Fine. She.

OLIVER

I'm bored, Dad.

DADDY

Then jump off a goddamn cliff, Oliver. I'm not in the mood for your crap.

JOANNA

Daddy says I'm not supposed to hear these words, so I don't. I make myself not hear them. But this time I kind of hear them. I never hear them. So why do I hear them now?

OLIVER
Big surprise.

DADDY
What's that?

OLIVER
Nothing, Daddy.

DADDY
That's what I thought.

Daddy cracks a bottle, takes a slug.

DADDY (CONT'D)
Leave your Daddy alone. Let him
think up a way out of this.

JOANNA
He found a secret bottle of Daddy
Juice, stashed in the closet behind
the Christmas Lights.

Daddy takes another slug.

DADDY
We'll try tomorrow. The bear won't
stay until tomorrow. (chuckles,
starts singing)

Hums, poorly, to tune of Shirelles "Will You Love me
Tomorrow"

Tonight you're mine completely
You give your love so sweetly
Tonight the light of love is in
your eyes

JOANNA
When Daddy sings, he wants us to
know it will be okay. And I believe
him. Even when it's him who made it
not okay.

DADDY
But will you love me tomorrow?

MUSIC - BRIDGE

111 INT. TRAPPED IN A HOUSE - CONTINUED

111

FX - Phone buzzes. Buzz, buzz.

DADDY

(groggy) What do you want?! (Beat)
I know I didn't -- What am I your
slave -- don't you talk to me like
that!

JOANNA

It must be Mom.

OLIVER

(interrupts) Can I go back to
playing my game?

DADDY

Huh? Yeah - of course. Go for it,
champ. (beat) No I'm just talking
to your son --

Daddy continues argument in background...

DADDY (CONT'D)

Well who made you go to Arizona? Is
it my fault she has cancer? Don't
give me crap then! (beat) Oh,
please, I dare you to come here.
This wasn't even supposed to be my
weekend, Kate.

... While video game sounds play in foreground.

JOANNA

Hey, Oliver. (beat) Oliver? OLIVER!

OLIVER

(snaps) What?

JOANNA

Do you want to hear about her?

OLIVER

Quiet, I'm almost at the next
level.

JOANNA

Her name is Susan.

OLIVER

Jo --

JOANNA

Listen to me, Oliver, I can speak
with her!

Video game plays sad "LOSE" music.

OLIVER
Look what you did.

Daddy, who had walked off stage, suddenly walks back in.

DADDY
Screw you too!

He throws the phone against the wall and with a SMACK the phone breaks apart. The kids stare dumbfounded.

DADDY (CONT'D)
I'll get a new phone. I didn't like that one anyway. You got something to say, Mister?

OLIVER
No.

DADDY
Didn't think so.

MUSIC - Tense.

JOANNA
Daddy is almost out of his second bottle of Daddy Juice and it's making him itchy. He watches the liquid like he's looking at an ant farm.

DADDY
Almost done...

JOANNA
The bruise around Oliver's eye is turning purple. He tried taking the Daddy Juice away.

DADDY
(meek) Sorry, champ.

JOANNA
But sorry doesn't make the bruise stop hurting.

OLIVER
It's okay, Daddy.

JOANNA
I go down to see Susan at night, when Daddy's asleep.

SUSAN

You want to learn more bear language?

JOANNA

Yes.

SUSAN

Let's start with hello. There are many different ways.

Nature-inspired sound design punctuates each description of a greeting.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

There is saying hello to an old friend. There is meeting a stranger you are excited to meet. There is meeting a stranger you are scared to meet. There is greeting a friend who is no longer a friend.

JOANNA

You're warm.

SUSAN

Mm. In my language that is

FX - Bear language.

JOANNA

Mmm... Softer than my bed, even.

SUSAN

You can stay with me, if you like. I know how to survive the winter.

JOANNA

Oh, winter... It's coming, isn't it...

SUSAN

Is your Daddy ready for winter? A Daddy should know how to take care of his cubs.

JOANNA

The only cold I know about is the cold when he drinks back another bottle of Daddy Juice --

112 INT. TRAPPED IN A HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

112

Cuts to an unfolding scene with Daddy.

DADDY
 Sonauvagoddamn-muther-stupied-me-
 crap--

Daddy throws empty bottle against the wall, explodes into fractures of glass.

Proceeds to cut back and forth between scenes.

JOANNA
 I used to not understand the words
 he was saying, Susan.

SUSAN
 Bear language opens your mind. You
 hear what really is, because this
 language is rooted in truth.

Back to Daddy. He stumbles across the room to pick up the glass.

DADDY
 Stupid bottle exploding like... A
 gotta pick up ah - ouch!

Daddy poorly tries to pick up the glass, cuts himself.

JOANNA
 Daddy, you're hurting yourself.

DADDY
 It'll be gone soon. It'll be gone
 so soon and then we can go
 downstairs and it'll be okay.

OLIVER
 I have to go to the bathroom.

Oliver walks out. Starts running a faucet, then starts CRYING off-stage.

DADDY
 Give me a hug, sweetie. Give me a
 hug. Daddy really needs one.

JOANNA
 No, Daddy.

DADDY
 I SAID GIVE ME A DAMN HUG, JOANNA.

JOANNA

Daddy...

FX - Below, the bear ROARS

SUSAN

Is everything okay?!

JOANNA

No...

DADDY

Get over here, Joanna. Now.

JOANNA

I don't want you to hurt me, Daddy.

DADDY

I didn't say I wanted to hurt you.
I wanted to hug you, Joanna. I
wanted to hug you... But... (rages)
THAT DAMN BEAR IS RUINING
EVERYTHING!!

Daddy stomps out of the room.

JOANNA

Daddy! Daddy! Where are you going?!

Daddy is already fleeing. Joanna runs to the bathroom. Flings open door.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

Oliver, come on!

OLIVER

No.

JOANNA

I need to get us to her.

OLIVER

Her? Her who?

JOANNA

Susan!

OLIVER

The bear!

JOANNA

She's not like Daddy!

OLIVER
Okay... Let's go.

Oliver and Joanna start rushing down the stairs. Daddy is in front of them already.

SUSAN
What's going on?

JOANNA
Susan, help! It's a monster!

DADDY
I've had enough of this, I want you out of my house you --

Suddenly Susan stands tall. And a ROAR reverberates throughout the house, shaking the rafters and floor.

DADDY (CONT'D)
Oh... Oh crap...

JOANNA
Daddy scrambles backward, his pants wet and not from the faucet upstairs. He grabs a bottle of Daddy Juice and disappears up the staircase. Now it's just Oliver, me, and Susan.

JOANNA (CONT'D)
Thank you.

Nature-inspired FX to go with Joanna's thanks.

SUSAN
You're safe now.

MUSIC - Time passing.

JOANNA
Things are different. Susan brings her cubs over.

SUSAN
These are (SFX) and (SFX). Bear language for Cece and Cubby.

CUBBY
Where is their Momma?

SUSAN

Their Momma is taking care of her own Momma. So I am their Momma until she comes back.

CECE

Do they have a Papa?

Daddy is upstairs, roaring, kicks over a table

DADDY

Goddamn sunnva --

SUSAN

Not right now.

JOANNA

We go outside. We play. It feels so good to be outside again. We try not to look to the upstairs window. To see if the Monster that took over Daddy is looking down at us.

CUBBY

Can you speak Bear Language?

OLIVER

No.

JOANNA

I'll teach him. Do you want to learn?

OLIVER

It's okay. It doesn't bother me. Hey, let me show you my favorite spot in the woods.

CECE

Okay!

Oliver and the bear cubs run off.

DADDY

God-DAMN!

JOANNA

Oliver's bruise is nearly gone now. But every time we hear the Monster, he touches it, as if to remind himself. He will not forget.

SUSAN

What troubles you, Joanna?

JOANNA

I'm worried about my Daddy. I think we need to help him. He's sick.

SUSAN

He's lucky to have such a caring cub. But I don't think there's much we can do for him. A beast as him is better left to be.

JOANNA

I don't like it.

MUSIC - Interlude.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

I have to help Daddy. Susan can't. Oliver won't. So I put together a plate for him.

FX of rummaging through refrigerator.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

Half a banana. Some canned pineapple. Cold chicken that smells weird but tastes OK. A chocolate cookie. Half a water bottle. I go to him after dark, hoping he's asleep.

FX - Door creaks open.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

But he's not asleep.

DADDY

Go away. I don't want your help.

JOANNA

I don't care. You need it.

DADDY

You sound just like your mother.

JOANNA

Daddy, you need to come downstairs. Susan says she'll help you. And when Mommy gets home --

DADDY

Your mother isn't coming home. All that crap about her mother in Arizona? It's lies, every last bit.

(MORE)

DADDY (CONT'D)

It's just her excuse to get away from me. Finally get away from all of us.

JOANNA

You're lying! You're just a big liar!

DADDY

Sure I am. I'm just a big ol' liar. (standing) She doesn't want us. She doesn't want anything to do with us, especially you and your whining and your stupid brother who doesn't do as he's told. She's gone. And she's not coming back.

Daddy steps forward.

DADDY (CONT'D)

So that's the truth. What're you gonna do about it?

Daddy steps forward again.

DADDY (CONT'D)

You gonna cry?

JOANNA

(roars)

Joanna's roar is spectacularly sound designed, unbottling all of her mixed emotions - rage, sadness, and confusion, settling into mournful crying.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

(Crying)

DADDY

(sobering up) Oh... That's... That's what I've done... Oh crap... crap crap crap...

Daddy collapses in a mournful, blubbering heap. Joanna rushes out of the room.

JOANNA

(weeping)

Down the stairs... Into the living room.

SUSAN

Come to me, cub.

Joanna crashes into Susan, and cries it out.

SUSAN (CONT'D)
 Bears and beasts, even monsters,
 they all speak in truth. Your
 Daddy, he finally heard you. Your
 bear language is getting very good.

MUSIC - Transition.

113

INT. TRAPPED IN A HOUSE - FOLLOWING DAY

113

Everyone is upbeat.

JOANNA
 The next day, we make preparations.

SUSAN
 Food, plenty of food.

JOANNA
 We need to go out and get more.

OLIVER
 Daddy has nearly two hundred
 dollars here. That'll last us,
 right?

JOANNA
 If we're smart. No candy.

A taxi pulls into the house's driveway.

OLIVER
 Hey, that's our Lyft.

JOANNA
 We have to go, Susan.

SUSAN
 I'll see you soon. Come back with
 lots of groceries.

JOANNA
 We'll call Mommy once we get a new
 cell phone. We'll tell her the
 truth. Maybe she'll know how to
 help Daddy.

SUSAN
 Maybe.

Taxi HONKS HORN.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Go.

JOANNA

Come on, Oliver.

They open the front door, push open, rush to the Taxi.

DADDY

(in a hysterical rage, sounding
animal-like)

Joanna and Oliver open doors to the taxi, get in.

HUNTER

Hey. You got some kind of animal
living with you?

OLIVER

Something like that.

DADDY

(cry of rage)

JOANNA

I get once last look at Daddy.
Somehow I know he'll be gone
tonight, his footsteps vanishing
into the forest. I know he'll come
back under the light of the moon,
with sharp nails and a black beard
and wild howling, trying to come
back for his cubs who he loved but
didn't know how to love. I know
he'll live as beasts live and it
hurts my heart to know that.

HUNTER

Is everything okay?

JOANNA

It's not OK. But we'll survive the
winter somehow.

FX - Warbling WHOOSH

114 END EPISODE 9

114

115 BEGIN EPISODE 10: OTHER WORLDS THAN THESE, BY FRED GREENHALGH

116

INT. SUMMONING ROOM

116

FX - Warbling WHOOSH back to Cassie's world. We're in a hospital - equipment, etc.

NURSE

She's waking up! Game time!

DOCTOR

Put down the scalpel.

NURSE

Puuuhhh--lleeeeeeeeeezzzz --

CASSIE

(waking) You two... I'm still with... YOU TWO! OH MY GOD!

DOCTOR

You'll want to be quiet, Cassie, or I'll take back what I told her about the scalpel.

CASSIE

Let me out of here. I don't want any part of your procedure--

NURSE

Procedure's not the right word, hun.

DOCTOR

It's more of a ... Summoning.

NURSE

Followed by a blood sacrifice. But let's not get ahead of ourselves.

CASSIE

No...

DOCTOR

(to Nurse) The mother is gone, right?

NURSE

Mr. Carter escorted her to the lobby.

DOCTOR

Mr. Carter. (chuckles) You know how we got him to betray you, Cassie? It was too easy. We told him we could help him forget.

(MORE)

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

We told him, when the Dark Tome is gone, all his memories will go with it.

NURSE

More likely, we'll garotte him. Just for the fun of it.

CASSIE

If you have the Dark Tome already, why don't you let me go?

DOCTOR

You know the answer to that. We need you as a... sort of bridge.

NURSE

Your brain is like a tree that set up root in the Dark tome. We have some friends we'd like to bring over from another plane, and they're going to need to follow those roots on their way over.

CASSIE

I won't.

DOCTOR

Who said we needed your permission? Do you think any sacrifice wanted their throat slit?

CASSIE

I'll hurt you.

NURSE

Hurt us? Hurt us how? Try, I beg you.

CASSIE

(narrating) I close my eyes, seek my inner voice.

FX - A painful electrical screech

CASSIE (CONT'D)

(screams) Auuukkk!

NURSE

(laughs maniacally)

DOCTOR

Finding it hard to concentrate?

CASSIE
What did you do?

DOCTOR
Those roots that tie you and the
tome together... I put a knot in
them.

CASSIE
(wincing) I'll... I'll...

DOCTOR
You'll be grateful that you serve
as an appetizer for the return of
the greatest creatures the
multiverse has ever known. Your sad
little human essence will feed the
vast and great aeons. Far more
meaningful than living out your
days as a sad little human. Now.
Let's get started. Nurse?

NURSE
Yes, Doctor?

DOCTOR
Bring me the book.

FX - Sound design warbles.

CASSIE
(narrating) I can feel my
connection with the tome, despite
my state. The tome doesn't want to
be here. It wants to be...
sideways.

DOCTOR
I can sense him. The old man, he
went straight to our masters. Now,
to pull those tree roots together!

(starts chanting in Latin) veniunt
daemones visitemus ratio magni
domini festum in carne et magia
dedimus ad vos, ego utor in
tenebris tome ad vocare te ad meum
mundo, veni in hoc mundo magnis a
dominis (under...)

CASSIE
Come on... Come on, Tome...

FX - Magical intensity rises up.

CUT TO:

117

INT. PURGATORY

117

FX - Mind-bending FX -- portal ripples in and out of existence.

GRACE

Mmm... I'm feeling something, how about you, Honey?

BILLY

Oh yeah, I'm feeling it, it feels REAL Good.

GRACE

Think it'll get big enough? Big enough for us to just... pop on through?

BILLY

I sure hope so. How about you, my old friend? Ready to watch me gobble up your apprentice?

GRACE

I get to taste her first. It's only fitting.

GUSSY

Please, don't.

BILLY

Wait... Did you hear that?

GRACE

It sounded like...

BILLY

Let's see if he'll said it again. What'd you say, Gussy?

GUSSY

Please...

BILLY

Please, please what? What are you going to beg for?

GUSSY

Please, take me. Take me, not her.
She's just a girl.

GRACE/BILLY

(burst into laughter)

BILLY

You! You, Gussy?! You're nothing
but an old bird, I'll break my
teeth on you. You don't go for the
old goat when there's a yearling in
your sight.

GRACE

Haven't been that hungry in a long
time.

FX - Fwoooooooooooooosshhhhhh as portal rips open

BILLY

Well then. Looks like it's game
time!

GRACE

That is a doorway that is WIDE OPEN

BILLY

Just the way I like 'em!

FX - Whoop whoop whoop! Billy, Grace, Gussy all come over
through the portal.

CUT TO:

118

INT. SUMMONING ROOM

118

DOCTOR

devorandum eam, magni domini!

NURSE

It worked!

BILLY

(cackles) Home sweet terrestrial
plane!

CASSIE

Mr. Gussy!

GUSSY

Cassie! I'm sorry! I couldn't stop
them!

BILLY
You sure couldn't, you old goat!

DOCTOR
Great Masters, you have finally
come. Now, we can conquer the
world!

NURSE
We have traveled this earth for
centuries in search of the book. We
have had to kill so many --

DOCTOR
So, so many. You remember the
Spanish Flu? That was us.

NURSE
As well as the Crusades, the Great
Dying, Ebola. All. Us.

GRACE
And?

NURSE
And now we can devour all of
creation, with our combined power!

BILLY
Combined?

GRACE
As in... With us?

NURSE
(meekly) Yes.

DOCTOR
We have worked so, so hard, gr eat
masters.

Grace / Billy burst into laughter

GRACE / BILLY
(laughing madly)

DOCTOR
Great Parabellum...

NURSE
Our Lords...

DOCTOR
We beessech thee...

Next line FX'ed to sound super creepy/powerful.

GRACE/BILLY

You know nothing of our nature!
DEVOUR!

"Devour" is stretched out such that it turns into a sound effect of Grace and Billy sucking the life force from Nurse / Doctor.

DOCTOR / NURSE

(AAauuuuuggggghhh!!!)

BILLY

(burps) That was a hell of an appetizer!

GRACE

Now on to the main entree!

CASSIE

You won't take me. The Book won't let you!

GRACE

What do you know about the Book?!
Do you know who gave it to humans?
WE DID. In exchange for TRIBUTE.
And Now it's time for us to get our due!

CASSIE

I won't!

BILLY

It's not up to you. The Book is a parasite. All it's ever wanted was to bring us to you.

CASSIE

That's not true. I can feel it, even now, the Book is telling me to get it away from you!

GRACE

You're like every teenage girl. You think you know so much.

Door bursts open.

KIM

Cassie!

CASSIE

Kim!

BILLY

Oh hohoho! More for the meal!

GRACE

Work her up, little friend, get those emotions PUMPING!

CASSIE

Go, Kim!

KIM

No. I'm here to help! I stole something from Mr. Carter --

CASSIE

Please, Run!!!

KIM

Not when my girl is in trouble.

GRACE

So romantic, teenage love!

BILLY

So full of delicious folly.

KIM

Mr. Gussy?

GUSSY

Ayuh?

KIM

Catch!

CASSIE

(narrating) Time stands still. Then, a glint of light as something flies from Kim's fingers into Gussy's hands.

GUSSY

(narrating) My lighter. It was time for me to do something I should've done years ago.

BILLY

Gussy, what are you doing?

GUSSY

Got me some unfinished business.

BILLY

You'll never see Olivia again!

GUSSY

I should've learned long before.
What's gone. Is GONE!

FX - Fwoooosh! With a flick, the lighter shoots up, immolates the book. The demons start screaming.

GRACE / BILLY

(arrrggghhhh!!!)

BILLY

You're going to die, too! You kill the book, and it takes its hosts with it!

GUSSY

I'm an old codger, plenty time for me to be gone.

GRACE

Then say goodbye to your little apprentice.

CASSIE

(Winces) Aaaggggkkkkkk!!

GRACE

Die, bitch, die!

GUSSY

Go, Cassie, now! Use your powers!

CASSIE

What powers?!

GUSSY

In your mind, Cassie, for crying out loud! TELL US A STORY!!!

CASSIE

(narrating) I close my eyes and the world goes dark. Rather than pain, I see, in the darkness, the Dark Tome laying there, the cover closed. I reach out with my mind. The doctor's knot unravels in my hands. My invisible fingers touch the cover. Flip it open. And the world flips over, into itself.

FX - Flames SURROUND US, incredible ROAR, followed by incredibly dramatic and epic Portal FWOOSH!!!

119

EXT. ANCIENT EARTH

119

Long tail out as fwoosh terminates. CASSIE and KIM have been flung to a distant corner of the multiverse.

Off, a horrific HOWLING and SNARLING of monsters.

KIM

What's that?

CASSIE

Monsters.

KIM

What happened to... to everyone?

CASSIE

They're far away. Across time, space... I don't know how many dimensions.

KIM

You did that. With your magic book?

CASSIE

With my mind.

KIM

Really. How?

A remembered voice.

CASSIE

The Book is merely a key. The door is always there.

KIM

Whoa, deep. So. How do we get back?

CASSIE

Um. I don't know.

KIM

So we... We're...

CASSIE

We're together, Kim.

KIM

Yeah, I guess we are. That's pretty sweet. All things considered.

It seems like they might just kiss, but then - MONSTERS howl from the Stygian Darkness.

KIM (CONT'D)

Got a magic spell for those guys?

CASSIE

Actually, I sort of do.

KIM

Yeah?

CASSIE

I've always wanted to fly on a giant dragonfly. Have you?

KIM

Why not? It sure beats my Honda Civic.

CASSIE

(incantation) Huc Magnum Anisoptera.

Magic spell finishes, shoots off a ray.

KIM

That's magic, or the best drugs the world has ever known.

CASSIE

Just magic.

KIM

Cassie.

CASSIE

Yeah.

KIM

Your magic book. The Dark Tome?

CASSIE

Yeah.

KIM

It's missing.

CASSIE

Yeah. Burned, more likely.

Monsters ROAR, off.

KIM

So what next? Can you bring us back
to our world?

CASSIE

Maybe. When things clear up. We got
some exploring to do around here
first.

The GIANT DRAGONFLY arrives, FLAP FLAP FLAP and FRIENDLY
MONSTER SOUNDS. Cassie climbs on top.

CASSIE (CONT'D)

Care to join me?

KIM

Do I ever.

Kim climbs on board, and soaring FWOOPF FWOOPF FWOOPF!! As
the dragonfly starts to rise. Kim and Cassie struggle to hear
each other over the wind.

KIM (CONT'D)

Where to, Cassie?

CASSIE

What?

KIM

I said. WHERE ARE WE GOING?

CASSIE

Anywhere we wish!

FWOOPH!!! The dragonfly soars on, over, out.