

CHANGELINGS

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For whatsoever from one place doth fall,
Is with the tide unto another brought:
For there is nothing lost, that may be found, if sought.

-The Fairy Queen, Edmond Spenser

Forget about the baby.

-Labyrinth, David Bowie

PROLOGUE

A park somewhere, on the first nice day of the year. People are laughing, it's sunny. A mother drinks coffee and coos at her baby. A young man sits with a guitar. He picks at the strings, but can't seem to make any kind of tune. His name is Luther, and he'll be important.

Someone starts to hum, a simple children's tune. This seems to terrify and enrage Luther, but he can't move. Elizabeth enters, smiles at Luther, and puts her fingers to her lips before approaching the baby.

ELIZABETH

Hi baby! Hi! You have such beautiful eyes.

MOTHER

His name is Joshua.

ELIZABETH

He's your firstborn, right?

MOTHER

That obvious? He likes you!

ELIZABETH

I like him too. Do you want to come home with me, baby?

MOTHER

Well, we are looking for a new babysitter- careful-

Elizabeth starts to pick up the baby-

MOTHER (CONT'D)

He usually cries if a stranger picks him-

The mother puts her coffee down to stop her then-

She looks up. The girl has vanished. So has the child

MOTHER (CONT'D)

Where -

She tries to run but she doesn't know which way. Bystanders move around her. No-one sees. No-one helps.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

Joshua.

(screaming)

Joshua!

Music is coming from everywhere now, wild and thrilling and lovely, and the baby is gone, gone, gone. Exeunt.

ACT 1 SCENE 1

Tuxedo store. Sappy music. Timothy, an eager if not particularly dashing groom, is changing behind a curtain.

TIMOTHY

Hey Megs! Sweetie? Megan?

Enter Megan Powers, Luther's other, younger sister. She's about twenty-four and knows she is pretty.

TIMOTHY (CONT'D)

You wanna come take a look at this one?

MEGAN

Baby, it's bad luck...

Tim enters. Megan puts her hands over her eyes.

TIM

That's only for brides.

MEGAN

Baby, you know I'm superstitious. You gotta respect people's, you know...

TIM

Religions?

MEGAN

Superstitions.

TIM

I think the cut adds about 3 inches to my height. Take your hands away.
Your eyes are still closed.

MEGAN

What are you going to do about it?

He kisses her.

TIM

Hey listen, they're playing our song.

MEGAN

Our song is a saxophone cover of "Such Great Heights"?

TIMOTHY

THEY WILL SEE US COMING FROM SUCH GREAT HEIGHTS...

MEGAN

Shut up shut up shut up!

She kisses him.

TIM

Damn. Public places.

MEGAN

There's a changing room right over there.

TIM

That is definitely bad luck. Besides, I don't have any... you know...

MEGAN

So what? We're getting married tomorrow.

TIM

Megs, please-

MEGAN

You don't want to?

TIM

I want to. Oh, sweet god in heaven, I want to very badly, but... these things have to be
planned.
Are you crying?

MEGAN

No. I'm just covering my eyes so I don't look at you.

TIM

Wait here. I'll try on the other jacket, so you can not look at that one too.

He exits. A bell rings. Megan looks around. Luther comes into the shop.

LUTHER

Megan?

MEGAN

Luther? What the hell are you doing here? Are you following me?

LUTHER

Where have you been? I need to talk to you.

MEGAN

You can't follow me, you can't stalk me, don't touch me-

LUTHER

It happened again.

MEGAN

Yeah. So?

Pause.

LUTHER

What are you doing in a tuxedo store?

Pause. Timothy enters, cheerfully pulling at his cuffs.

TIMOTHY

So, this one is double-breasted. It's a little gimmicky, but also sort of dapper and anachronistic... but am I pulling it off, or is it wearing me.....

He registers Luther.

TIMOTHY (CONT'D)

Hey sweetie. Who's this?

MEGAN

Tim. This is Luther, my brother.
Luther. This is Timothy. My fiance.

LUTHER

Your fiance?

MEGAN

Yes. My fiance. We're getting married tomorrow.

TIMOTHY

So this is Luther. I'm sorry, I didn't think I'd get to meet you yet. I thought you were overseas.

LUTHER

Megan, I need to talk to you.

TIMOTHY

That's a great idea! Let's all go get coffee- we can talk, get to know each other-

LUTHER

Now, Megan.

TIMOTHY

Or a drink- maybe we could all go get a drink-

MEGAN

There's no time for that.

TIMOTHY

I mean, things are a little hectic but we definitely want you to be involved-

MEGAN

Let me handle this

TIMOTHY

I mean, I'm marrying your sister tomorrow

LUTHER

NO.

You are not getting married tomorrow

You are not getting married.

You can't.

Pause.

TIM

Ok. I'm going to let you two have some family time. Because, obviously that's been missing, at some point. But Megan, I will be right outside, waiting for you. The second you need me, call. I will never go away.

He exits.

He comes back on.

TIM (CONT'D)

I can't leave the store wearing this. Excuse me.

He goes into the dressing room.

LUTHER

That is your FIANCE?

MEGAN

Keep your voice down.

LUTHER

At half-past two today, a year-old child named Joshua Black vanished from his stroller, right under the nose of his mother, and at least twenty witnesses.

MEGAN

He was a relative, I assume?

LUTHER

Nephew of a second cousin. She did it right in front of me.

MEGAN

She always liked you.

LUTHER

You know what you're risking. Do you want to end up like Mom and Dad?

MEGAN

We use protection.

LUTHER

You've been having sex with him?

MEGAN

It's 2015, Luther. Get hip to the pill. Condoms too, if you must know. He's almost as paranoid as you.

LUTHER

There is no 100% guarantee except-

MEGAN

Virginity. I know. Not everyone has your discipline.

LUTHER

What are you going to do if you get pregnant?

MEGAN

Take care of it.

LUTHER

I don't know what that means.

MEGAN

Luther, trust me. I have this under control. What happened to Eileen is not going to happen to my baby.

LUTHER

What do you mean, your baby?
Does he know?

MEGAN

Of course he doesn't know.

LUTHER

I'm going to tell him.

MEGAN

Go ahead. "Hi, I'm some big crazy dude you've never met. You can't marry my sister because she has a strong inherited genetic tendency to have her children stolen by a fairy.

LUTHER

I'll find some other way.

MEGAN

You can't stop us, Luther. He loves me.

LUTHER

Do you love him?

*There is an awful silence. A new, terrible song begins.
Megan runs out of the shop, slamming the door.*

TIM

Meggy?

Timothy comes in from the changing room, adjusting his sweater.

LUTHER

I wouldn't go after her, if I were you.

TIM

Is she ok?

LUTHER

She said that you and I could talk.

TIM

Oh. Good. Because I have something to say. Luther, I know you don't trust me, and I can't really blame you. Because it looks like I'm the guy who snuck up out of nowhere and swept your sister off her feet. But believe me, I'm not that guy. I could never be that guy, people would laugh at me. If anything, I'm the one who's upside down, and totally irrational because I really, and I truly, I love Megan Powers. She just destroys me. I would never do anything to hurt her. Every bone in my body wants to protect her. I feel like there isn't enough in this world to protect her from, I'm just going to want to prove too much and keep on talking like an idiot about it. Which I'm doing. Look, the upshot is, I don't care if you don't like me. I just want you to know that this is real.

LUTHER

I like you.

TIMOTHY

What?

LUTHER

I like you. I like you very much.

TIMOTHY

You don't seem very happy about it.

LUTHER

People tell me I'm hard to read.

(Pause).

How did she meet you?

TIMOTHY

It was like fate. I was in a bookstore back east and- have you ever felt that you were walking along, living your boring life, and then the literal hand of god dropped down, picked you up, and took you to the better place you were supposed to live in all along?

LUTHER

...and everything changes from grey to gold, and you find yourself in the gleaming reality of which this present world was just a darkened mirror?

Luther looks around, panicked.

LUTHER (CONT'D)

Oh no.

TIMOTHY

What's wrong?

LUTHER

I hear music.

Everything has changed from grey to gold, and we are suddenly in the gleaming reality of which the previous world was just a darkened mirror. Elizabeth is there, quite suddenly.

ELIZABETH

(singing)

WHEN THE LIGHT IS ON THE RIVER
WHEN THE MOON IS ALL A-SLIVER

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

AND YOUR MARROW'S ALL A-SHIVER..
YOU'RE NOT ALONE
BABY... IT'S NOT TOO LATE
TO SHAKE THIS MORTAL COIL
ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS
TAKE MY HAND
Luther. Aren't you glad to see me?

She is wearing vaguely bridal nightclothes.

LUTHER

What did you do with the baby?

ELIZABETH

What baby?

LUTHER

Joshua of the beautiful eyes. From earlier this afternoon.

ELIZABETH

You really don't get it, do you, Luther? It doesn't matter when I took him, because he turned out to be a little squawling disappointment. I'm sure he's lying around somewhere. It's possible that I turned him into a high quality English toasting fork, because I remember needing an object of that kind.. In which case he's hanging around somewhere, probably over a fireplace. Why do you always ask me about babies?

LUTHER

Because their families miss them very much.

ELIZABETH

I like talking to you, Luther. I am sure if you had consented to come away with me, you would not have been a disappointment. You would not have been the sort of kid I'd want to impale on a toasting fork.

LUTHER

I wouldn't have been any different than the rest of them.

ELIZABETH

I'd still take you, even though you are very old and liable to come all over dry rot at any second. And you know you can find me. Any time. You know what my roses look like.

And suddenly, there is one in her hand. A rose. She holds it out to him.

LUTHER

I'll stay as I am. Thank you.

CHILD

You wouldn't die.

LUTHER

Dying isn't so terrible.

CHILD

I've never heard that. Who told you that? Everyone I ever talk to says it's the worst.

Sound of a bell. Megan enters.

CHILD (CONT'D)

Oh, Megan. I forgot how pretty you still are. Like a roman temple just about to fall apart.

MEGAN

Luther? Luther. What happened?

CHILD (CONT'D)

You're going to make me the most beautiful baby.

TIM

I don't know- we were talking and then you came in and all of a sudden he was-

MEGAN

Luther, come back, Luther, big brother, come on, come back-

Luther suddenly comes to life, and grabs both of Megan's hands.

LUTHER

Megan. Look at me. Look into my eyes.

Long pause.

LUTHER (CONT'D)

Congratulations.

He exits, without another word.

TIM

I don't know. I think we made some progress.

MEGAN

Oh for fuck's sake....

TIM

No, really. I think it's fine. We talked some. He said he liked me. I think he just needs some time to adjust. We should have written him or something. I know you wanted to do it in person, but imagine... you get back from over there, and suddenly your whole family is different?

MEGAN

He didn't just get back from over there. They sent him back a long time ago.

TIM

What do you mean?

MEGAN

Luther hasn't been in the navy since he was 20. He works in a convenience store. He lives in Austin. I just didn't want him to meet you.

TIMOTHY

Why?

MEGAN

He's not right.

TIM

Do you mean he's dangerous?

MEGAN

No. He's just.... doesn't relate well. I mean, you saw him.

TIM

He was wearing his shirt inside out. But maybe that's genetic. Like you and your bras.

MEGAN

Very funny.

TIM

He can't be any worse than my folks.

MEGAN

Your dad is an asshole.. Luther's just.. broken. It's not his fault, but I'd rather remember him like he was before.

TIMOTHY

When you were kids?

MEGAN

He used to play piano. Oh, and guitar, and the clarinet- anything he could get his hands on he would pick up like that. We had a band together, He played every instrument, and he never told me I couldn't sing.

TIMOTHY

Did something happen to him overseas?

MEGAN

That's what everyone thinks. Nobody knows.

TIMOTHY

Maybe he'd like to play something during the ceremony.

MEGAN

That would be the worst possible thing to ask.

TIMOTHY

It could be really healing-

MEGAN

I don't want him at the wedding, Tim. He's going to get weird.

TIM

But he's the only family you've got.

MEGAN

You're my family now. You and me. Forever. Starting tomorrow. Or did something change?

TIMOTHY

Nothing's changed.

MEGAN

Good. I want to give you something.

She takes a box out of her pocket.

It's an engagement ring.

TIM

You didn't have to do that-

MEGAN

Just open it.

TIMOTHY

It's.. platinum?

MEGAN

Iron. I don't like precious metals on men. Put it on.

TIMOTHY

I'm not sure it's really me.

MEGAN

But, Tim. It's me.

He puts it on, with some reluctance.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

I want you to wear it always. Even in bed. Even in the shower.

TIMOTHY

Won't it rust?

MEGAN

Worse things could happen. Promise me?

TIMOTHY

I promise.

Megan leans forward and kisses him.

TIMOTHY (CONT'D)

I bet you want to get out of here, right?

MEGAN

What about your tux?

TIMOTHY

It's ok. I know the one that I want.

As they exit the shop, a largish, tatterish street person appears and blocks their way with an armful of flowers.

MAMA BIRD

Roses for the pretty lady?

TIMOTHY

Sorry.

MEGAN

Wait. Here.

She rummages in her purse, then gives the person a coin.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

For luck.

MAMA BIRD

You'll need it. You can't keep his head stuffed between your tits forever.

Mama Bird bursts into laughter, then into a coughing fit. Megan backs away. Timothy takes her arm.

TIMOTHY

You're too soft-hearted.

Mama Bird finds this even funnier. She rolls around laughing as Megan and Timothy exit. Then she stands up, picks up her sack and begins to go off, dragging an entirely inappropriate amount of the stage with her.

ACT 1 SCENE 2

As she goes, she discards ten roses, one by one, and the world turns inside out and becomes something else and all the while she sings.

MAMA BIRD

THE CAIRN, TEN MILE IN HEIGHT, AND NINE IN BREADTH
 EIGHT HORSES, VERY CLOSE TO DEATH
 SEVEN BLACKBIRDS WINKING BRIGHT OF EYE
 SIX WORDS TO SWEAR SHE'S TRUE AND LIE
 BEFORE FIVE GRAVES IN FALLOW GROUND
 FOUR BELLS THAT RING AND NEVER SOUND
 THREE IN THE DARK, TWO IN THE SUN
 A HERO WITH ONE HAND
 A GIRL WITH NONE

After Mama Bird has crossed the stage and completed the transformation, there is a thrumming sound. Mama Bird looks up sharply, and sees a dim figure that seems encased in ice. Something begins to wail, heart-rending, inarticulate. Enter a bawling creature, pearly white and something like a pterodactyl.

THE WHITELING

Mama! Mama!

The fire goes out, and the figure turns away. A tough-looking little girl sprints on stage and tackles the creature. She pins it, and holds its beak closed with both hands.

BANTAM BETH

Mama ain't coming. But if you want to howl like that, something else will.

An angelically beautiful person, all green and gold, pads on stage.

LUCK ANGEL

It just wants some attention. Let it up, Bantam.

Beth gets up, looking battle ready. The Whiteling squirms away from her, and makes a sad noise.

LUCK ANGEL (CONT'D)

Do you have a name, little Whiteling?

Another sad noise.

LUCK ANGEL (CONT'D)

Can you talk?

THE WHITELING

I.... I don't know.

LUCK ANGEL

You must be very young. But you won't stay that way. Come now, get up.

The Whiteling vomits on the floor. The Luck Angel looks away, then leads the Whiteling away from the mess. As they talk, a large slug, with the face of a bitter old man, enters and mops up the vomit. He drags a small lemon tree on a cart behind him. When he's done, he picks a lemon and squeezes it over the spot.

LUCK ANGEL (CONT'D)

Please, let me welcome you to your new home.

THE WHITELING

Not my home.

LUCK ANGEL

We are all prisoners here, some more than others, but my first piece of advice is to view it with grace. It's not so bad, it is a palace, and you may go where you like within its walls. My second piece of advice is to stay away from...

Everyone looks up at the trapped figure for a moment, then suddenly away. There is a tacit agreement to never acknowledge the figure that makes it extremely conspicuous.

THE WHITELING

Who is that in there?

LUCK ANGEL

No-one who can help you. Just... do as you're told, look pleasant, and never, ever cry. Over there is Luwis. He keeps things tidy on the palace grounds. (Luwis grunts.) he's pleased to meet you. This is Bantam Beth.

Bantam Beth nods, then remembers herself and sticks out her hand. The Whiteling sniffs it gently, then nibbles in a friendly way.

BANTAM BETH

I'm her personal bodyguard.

THE WHITELING

Whose?

BANTAM BETH

Hers. I have to fight and defend her from all manner of ghosts and ghouls and torch-bearing armies. I generally knock them over and jump on them until their skulls cave in. I'm really good at it.

THE WHITELING

But... you look like a nice little girl.

BANTAM BETH

Do I? Then that's probably what I am.

THE WHITELING

You don't know?

BANTAM BETH

Who does? Maybe today I'm a little girl, maybe yesterday I was a purple polar bear, maybe tomorrow I'm going to be an intelligent storm cloud. I have about as much choice in the matter as a lump of gold, which I also might be tomorrow, or the next day.

THE WHITELING

You look like a little girl.

BANTAM BETH

Well, maybe I really am a little girl. I mean, first.

THE WHITELING

First?

BANTAM BETH

Sure! Everybody was something first. I was a little girl, she was a kind thought, you were probably a baby. Most things around here were.

THE WHITELINGS

Babies?

BANTAM BETH

Oh yeah. See that lemon tree? A baby. That lantern? A baby. Those five pretty little cats over by the wall? Babies, babies, babies. Puck-in-a-puddle, the floor you're sitting on is probably made out of babies.

The Whiteling scrunches up, horrified.

BANTAM BETH (CONT'D)

After all, what is a baby if not something to be turned into something else? No, seriously. What is a baby? I forget what they look like.

The Whiteling starts to cry.

LUCK ANGEL

The floor is not made out of babies. Bantam, please.

Out of the air, music.

LUCK ANGEL (CONT'D)

She's coming.

BANTAM

You gotta do something quick. She's not going to like it if he's all blotchy and streaky.

Bells ring. Suddenly, there is a door, which Luwis opens. Elizabeth floats in. Luwis bows. The Luck Angel curtsies deep. Bantam Beth falls over flat onto her face and stays with her nose pressed to the floor. The Whiteling tries to hide.

ELIZABETH

Loyal subjects... livestock.....and Luwis, whatever you are. I am in a grand mood. Bantam, can't you put on something more suitable?

BANTAM BETH

Suitable. Right.

She exits.

ELIZABETH

Chair.

Luwis produces a throne from his cart. Elizabeth sits.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Robes. Crown. Scepter. No, I want the ruby one. Mirror.
HMMMM.

(She snaps her fingers.)

New thing, come here.

*The Whiteling tumbles helplessly forward and arranges
itself at her feet.*

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Perf! Look at what I made, dear Angel. It's a thirteenth-century French gargoyle,
crafted entirely in mother-of-pearl. Isn't it chic?

LUCK ANGEL

A bit overdone.

ELIZABETH

The trouble with you is that you have no comprehension of style.

*Bantam reenters. She has changed herself into a rather
burly man, heavily armed. His hair is still in pigtails.*

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Much better, Bantam. Kneel.

She snaps her fingers. Elizabeth admires the effect.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

I think I can concentrate on some governance now. Angel, is there anything terribly wrong
around here?

LUCK ANGEL

The intelligent dormice you installed in the north wing floorboards have developed an
intricate caste system, and have been ritually slaughtering each-other while carrying on a
campaign of attrition against the house swallows. Also, Luwis is out of floor wax.

*Luwis grunts. Elizabeth points at his cart, and a bell
chimes.*

ELIZABETH

Done, and done! Do the dormice have tiny little swords?

LUCK ANGEL

Tiny little scimitars, actually.

ELIZABETH

I approve. New business! Adoring subjects, Megan Powers is getting married. This cannot go unwatched. Perhaps you, little mooncalf? You have strong wings, and big beautiful eyes.

LUCK ANGEL

A thirteenth century French gargoyle made entirely of mother-of-pearl might attract too much attention out in Christendom.

ELIZABETH

Of course not. I'll send him as an exhalation. Wait, no- I mean an exaltation. Or a charm. Or a murder.

The Whiteling edges away from her.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

No, I have it. A pitying.

She stands. The figure in the ice stumbles forward as if pulled, and then begins to mirror her every action.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Grey and watchful, be my eyes
Like that which all unnoticed flies
Deadening light, and stealing food
Prey to the world, a multitude.

*She exhales, and the Whiteling, turns into a flock of birds.
They flutter off. The figure in the glass room collapses.
Elizabeth stumbles back into her chair, breathing hard.*

LUCK ANGEL

Pigeons.

ELIZABETH

I wanted doves. I am nearly dead of tired.

LUCK ANGEL

Would you like a song?

ELIZABETH

Oh yes, make clamorous lullabies. Snakes and shepherds be not seen, come not near... all that stuff. You and you and...

Luwis packs the chair, with Elizabeth still in it, into his cart. As the cart turns, Elizabeth catches sight of Mama Bird

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

You. Who are you?

MAMA BIRD

Nobody.

ELIZABETH

See you don't forget it. Now, Angel...

The Luck Angel sits next to Elizabeth, who snuggles up to her trustingly.

LUCK ANGEL

HUSH LITTLE BABY, NEVER MAKE A PEEP
WRAPPED SAFE AND WARM IN MY BREAST SOFT AND DEEP
IF I HAD HALF A CHANCE, I WOULD KILL YOU IN YOUR SLEEP
AND NOW.... AND NOW.
SEE YOUR FACE! IF I COULD, I WOULD KISS EVERY FEATURE
TOUCH EVERY KISS WITH SOME VENOMOUS CREATURE
WATCH BLOOD EXHALE FROM EACH NEWLY MADE BREACH, HERE
AND HERE

The Child falls asleep, and the servants carry her off. The figure raises its head and intones:

PANDORA

You're playing a dangerous game, old woman.

MAMA BIRD

Who asked you, snow-globe?

ACT 1 SCENE 3

Mama Bird straightens up, strides to the middle of the stage, tosses off her rags and becomes an impressive man in professional clothes. (Magus Kemp.) The figure, and all the rest of the palace, vanish. We are now in a lecture hall at the University of Texas.

MAGUS KEMP

Magic.

The words appear, powerpoint style, behind him. Words continue to pop up as he speaks.

MAGUS KEMP (CONT'D)

Practical magic. Applied magic. Real magic. If you are sitting in this classroom, you are in a select cadre of mildly talented and exorbitantly obsessed people who know, deep in their hearts, that such a thing exists. Freaks.

I am Magus Kemp, ThD. Magus, not Professor, thank you. I am a board certified Walker to the seventh level, capable of at-will travel between eleven separate dimensions, and the only such person extant in the United States. If you remain in any doubt as to my credentials, if you are thinking, "This man is a crank, and unstable," you are correct. I am mildly insane.

The powerpoint now reads:

Magus Kemp, Th D

**Doctor of Thaumaturgy*

**Certified to the seventh level in eleven dimensions.*

**mildly insane*

MAGUS KEMP (CONT'D)

If any of you have ever dabbled in drugs, and I can state with ninety percent accuracy that you all have, it's as if I'm on a quarter tab of mescaline at all times.

The powerpoint adds

**Make no sudden movements around Magus Kemp.*

And wipes.

MAGUS KEMP (CONT'D)

Welcome!

First axiom. Magic is almost, but not entirely, completely gone from this world. Second axiom. Austin is the only remaining center of magical studies on all continents. Not Europe, not Africa, here. There are two reasons why you have come, from all across the globe, from older and more mysterious places than the United States, to study magic. The first is the fine thaumaturgical library maintained by the University of Texas, founded with the acquisition of the Sorbonne's entire stock on the subject after a series of unpleasant incidents at the 1893 World's Fair. A century long program of aggressive purchase and theft... mostly theft... has left us with a collection generally agreed to be the best in the world.

By now, the powerpoint reads

Academic Magic

**Centered on UT Library*

**Known as the Pale Collection, Ransom Center*

**Circa 1893 World's Fair*

**The French can be so touchy when outfaced.*

MAGUS KEMP (CONT'D)

This is referred to as academic magic, and it is bunk.

The power point adds:

**Complete and utter horseshit.*

And wipes

MAGUS KEMP (CONT'D)

Third axiom. This is the real reason you're here.

The powerpoint throws up a picture of Luther, and one of Megan.

MAGUS KEMP (CONT'D)

You are looking at the youngest generation of the Powers family, and no, they are not a myth. You need to know what they look like so that, if you see them coming, you can run away.

(MORE)

MAGUS KEMP (CONT'D)

At this early stage of your training, it is extraordinarily dangerous to be in the vicinity of these people, and the forces they attract...the very forces that enable the practical study of magic.

Like everything else, it comes down to blood. Since the late 1400s, at least one child per generation in the lineage of a man named Angus Powers has vanished. Not dead, not lost. Stolen. By fairies. Don't snicker. I know the word has acquired a veneer that is needlessly cute, but we are discussing deadly natural forces. Would you snicker at a hurricane? Would you imagine that a tsunami ran around wearing a little tutu and waving a wand? The fact that some of them do wear tutus is beside the point. When you're a nearly omnipotent magical being you can wear what you want I have become distracted.

He turns around and inspects the powerpoint, which reads, helpfully.

**Late 1400s*

**Angus Powers*

**From each generation*

**FAIRIES*

MAGUS KEMP (CONT'D)

Powers... 1400s... fairies...tutus... All evidence points to a single culprit. The Wicked Child. Sometimes called Pandora, though like most creatures of her ilk, her true name is unknown. As the centuries wore on, as the fairies left England, and the djinns quit Arabia, and the mermaids swam off the rocky coasts of Italy into the deep oceans and were never seen again, she stayed. When the Powers crossed the Atlantic, she crossed with them, like a member of the family. She kept her hand in reality. She is the only one.

On the powerpoint: a succession of historic woodcuts and engravings of the Wicked Child.

The truth is, without access to the fairy world, the human magician is nothing but a book collector. We feed on this family's ancient tragedy. We are vultures and beasts. Vultures. Beasts. In addition to being both vultures and beasts, all present-day magicians are subdivided into two categories. Those that choose to live near the Powers family are thrill-seekers, fanboys and frequently, dead men. Those who choose to live and work at this University are dry-blooded nerds, stulted academics, and cowards. Since you're in this class instead of in a tree on Seeley Street trying to look at Megan Powers in her underwear, I must assume that you're all on your way to being cowards.

There is, of course, a third path. There is the path of mastery, of wit and courage. There is the path between the worlds on darkened roads, wearing stolen faces, pitting your raw nerves against the whims of creatures that could kill you with a thought. The path of transformations, of ruthless sacrifice. My path.

A bell rings.

MAGUS KEMP (CONT'D)

Next week's class is at the usual time. Sleep well, be well, and if you congregate in groups of more than two, for god's sake don't forget to wear your iron. People die that way.

The hall empties of students. Kemp sits and takes out a cigarette. Megan enters.

MEGAN

Do you have to mention my underwear in every single lecture?

The Magus sticks out his hand. Megan gives him a small paper sack. He opens it.

MAGUS KEMP

Ahh, my monthly installment.

MEGAN

One lock hair, one vial menstrual blood, one blotting paper soaked with tears. Bye.

MAGUS KEMP

Eh-heh-eh, my darling. This time, I asked for a kiss.

MEGAN

Gross.

MAGUS KEMP

Don't just stand there, pet. You have to give it, not get it.

Megan leans in and pecks him on the lips. Kemp takes a small box out of his pocket, spits into it, and replaces it. There's a knock.

TIMOTHY

Professor Kemp?

MEGAN

What the hell, Kemp? What am I paying you for?

KEMP

Have a seat, child, stay quiet, and find out. He shall not see you.

MEGAN

Oh please. I don't trust you to turn a pig pink.

She tries to get up, Kemp forces her back down.

KEMP

If you knew the magics I have worked in the past hour, abhorrent woman, you would fall down and lick the soles of my shoes. I have taken time, and space, and made them bow to me. I have tweaked the noses of the gods of the earth, I have...

TIMOTHY

(who has entered)

Professor Kemp?

KEMP

Yes, what?

TIMOTHY

Are you talking to that chair?

KEMP

Yes. What?

TIMOTHY

Oh. Well. I'm Timothy Stamp. I wanted to talk to you about enrolling in the graduate program here.

KEMP

What graduate program?

TIMOTHY

The- um, the graduate program. The- graduate program.

(desperate pause)

The special one?

KEMP

You are an idiot. Is it medical?

TIMOTHY

No-

KEMP

You should have come and seen me during office hours.

TIMOTHY

I would have, but I couldn't find them on the website anywhere. And I went to Philosophy, and looked all over, and you don't have any office hours posted.

Kemp picks up his plant and begins to exit.

KEMP

I don't have an office!

TIMOTHY

Well, ok. It's been very hard finding you, is my point.

KEMP

That is the nicest thing you've said since you've come in.

TIMOTHY

You are making a mistake, Professor. You're going to want me in your program.

KEMP

What program?

TIMOTHY

I know it exists. If it didn't exist, you wouldn't be trying so hard to hide it. Your name isn't in the course book. On the campus map, this room is listed as a janitor's closet. I only found out about this class by asking a janitor, and I've come three times before and seen nothing. No, don't go... look!

He holds out his hands. Everything shifts, prismatically. The air is full of pigeons and sweet music. A rosevine grows out of nowhere.

KEMP

Yes. What?

TIMOTHY

Don't you... don't you see?

KEMP

I advise you to look into counseling. I suspect that you are mentally disturbed.

Kemp exits. The world becomes ordinary.

TIMOTHY

Roses and pigeons. I wanted doves.

He looks at the plant, touches one of the roses. He takes his phone out and dials. Megan, still invisible on the chair, scrambles to silence hers.

TIMOTHY (CONT'D)

Meg. Hey baby. I don't know if you're getting this, reception really sucks down here but...I miss you, that's all. I just wish you were here.

Luther enters. He sees Megan and Timothy. Megan makes an elaborate series of motions indicating that she is invisible and should not be addressed.

LUTHER

... Timothy. Hello.

TIMOTHY

Oh, hey Luther. You can call me Tim.

LUTHER

Hello, Tim.

TIMOTHY

I'm sorry, I'm just a little... nothing to do with your sister. It's this graduate program I'm supposed to be enrolled in, it's getting complicated and they're kind of screwing me over, so I came down here to sort it out, but the department chair was kind of a dick to me and... What are you doing down here?

LUTHER

I have something to tell you.

Megan shoots her brother a look of contemptuous death.

LUTHER (CONT'D)

It's important.

TIMOTHY

Oh, is it... bad?

LUTHER

You see, on Thursday you're marrying my sister. Who I love very much. But I also know her very well. And you, I don't know, but I do like you, and so... I need to actually show you something.

TIMOTHY

Show me something?

LUTHER

I have to take you somewhere.

TIMOTHY

Luther. Are you throwing me a bachelor party? Did Megan ask you to do this?

LUTHER

Uh-

Megan is beginning to panic. She takes out her phone.

TIMOTHY

God. Ok, That means a lot. I don't have any friends here, because I just moved, and I'm not fantastic at making friends, and please shut me up, I'm talking like a sap again.

LUTHER

Timothy, I-

TIM

I love you too, man.

LUTHER

Where did those... roses... come from?

TIM

You wouldn't believe me if I told you.

There is a message alert sound.

Oh! I've got a text.

LUTHER

Do you have anything made of iron?

TIMOTHY

Just my engagement ring. Hang on. She wants me to go outside and try calling her? My whole network has been messed up since I moved to Austin. Something is in the air here...

He starts to dial. Luther strides over and takes the cell phone away from him.

LUTHER

Not now.

TIM

But I need to tell Megan where we're going.

*Luther takes off his shirt and begins to put it on again,
inside out.*

TIM (CONT'D)

Where are we going?

LUTHER

Pick a rose.

TIMOTHY

What?

MEGAN

No!

TIMOTHY

Do you hear something?

LUTHER

There's no party, I need to show you something, pick a rose.

MEGAN

Don't you dare, Luther.

LUTHER

You better shut up and hold the door.

TIMOTHY

What are you talking about?

LUTHER

Pick a rose now, or you'll always wonder.

TIMOTHY

Wonder what?

LUTHER

Just pick a rose.

TIMOTHY

Why?

LUTHER

For Megan! Pick a rose for Megan.

Timothy picks a rose.

And there is a door.

ACT 1 SCENE 4

It opens a crack.

LUWIS

Nobody's home, go away.

Luther kicks the door in. Luwis yowls. Luther steps through. Timothy doesn't so much step through the door, as allow the door to swallow him. Luwis is cowering on the floor.

LUTHER

We won't stay long. Keep your mouth shut and you'll stay out of trouble.

LUWIS

Help me!

He shuffles offstage as quickly as he can, which is not very quickly at all.

TIMOTHY

Holy crap!

(He looks around. Everything he sees is very surprising.)

Where are we?

Luther takes out of a piece of chalk and draws a circle on the floor, complete with hastily scrawled runes.

LUTHER

Timothy, I need you to focus.

TIMOTHY

Focus? We just stepped through a door in the air, or more accurately, the door stepped around us, and whatever, we've stepped into a different time of day, and we're in what appears to be a maze made out of roses. And they're glowing.
Can I have my cell-phone back?

LUTHER

No. What do you want it for?

TIMOTHY

I don't know! I'm very disoriented and I'd like to know what time it is!

LUTHER

Sit down, Timothy. Sit down, and try not to speak to anyone except me, and don't breathe too deeply, and don't eat or drink anything and don't take your ring off. We're in fairyland.

TIMOTHY

Fairyland.

LUTHER

Well, we're in this land, and it belongs to a fairy. It's very dangerous here, but if we stay inside the circle we should be able to get back home. It's not too late to turn your shirt inside out.

TIMOTHY

What?

LUTHER

It confuses them for some reason. Makes them less likely to notice you.

TIMOTHY

Who's them?

LUTHER

I need to tell you something, and I need you to believe me. Fairies are real. And they're not nice, and pretty, they are horrible. They steal children, and they never give them back. Megan hasn't told you this, but if you get married, and if you have children, she's going to take them away. And they'll be turned into monsters, and your heart will break and you will live every day with a broken heart, and it will not feel okay.

TIMOTHY

What?

LUTHER

The fairy who lives here- up there, in the castle. She takes -children from my family. She took my older sister when I was just a kid, and she's tried to take me and Megan more times than I can count. We're cursed, Timothy. Megan is cursed.

TIMOTHY

Oh.

LUTHER

I didn't want to bring you here, but I couldn't think of another way to make you believe. I know you love her. I'm sorry.

TIMOTHY

This is why it feels like fate. Because it is fate.

LUTHER

What?

TIMOTHY

Luther, I can help. I can end it all. It's fate.

LUTHER

No, it's not.

TIMOTHY

And this place, there's so much power here....

He takes a few steps towards the palace.

LUTHER

Whoah- whoah...Stay in the circle!

TIMOTHY

I'm not staying in the circle. I'm going to the palace. Are you coming with me?

LUTHER

Are you insane?

TIMOTHY

You're right. You'd only slow me down. I've never felt like this. I'm not cut off anymore, I-

He gestures. Thunder rolls.

LUTHER

What are you doing? Don't do things like that. She'll see us.

TIMOTHY

It's ok, I'm a wizard. I'm going to kill her.

Timothy is gone, sprinting off through the maze in a gust of pigeons. Luther starts to follow, but pauses, panicked, on the edge of the circle.

Dammit. He steps over the border, prepared to run.

Bantam steps out in front of him, seriously armed, in his male form.

BANTAM

Eh-eh-eh. Going to the palace, are we? That's not for little boys.

LUTHER

I have to stop him

Luther tries to get past. Bantam thwacks the floor near Luther's feet with his axe.

LUTHER (CONT'D)

That's an awfully big axe.

BANTAM

Do you like it? It's made of babies.

Bantam begins to force Luther backwards.

BANTAM (CONT'D)

Of course, most things are. This sword, these hedges, that funny-shaped fountain. Probably you're made out of babies.

They scuffle. Luther is tougher than he should be, but unarmed and outmatched.

BANTAM (CONT'D)

Of course, not everything in the whole world is made out of babies, whatever they are. People tell me that myself was made out of a little girl once. Whatever that is. And honestly, I wish I knew, because sometimes, I get scared.

Luther, suddenly heedless of danger, grabs Bantam's face and looks into his eyes.

LUTHER

Eileen?

Bantam looks as if he might cry. He takes Luther's head in his hands, tenderly, as if he might kiss him.

BANTAM

I like you, mister. I'm gonna put you somewhere safe.

...and gives Luther a vicious headbutt, knocking him out. He tosses Luther over his shoulder and exits.

ACT 1 SCENE 5

Timothy enters.

TIMOTHY

Think. Remember. It was right there on page 34.

He mouths some words, and traces them from right to left in the air in front of him.

TIMOTHY (CONT'D)

Regina magesterium... regina lux?

Nothing happens.

TIMOTHY (CONT'D)

Ok. Ok. It's already light here. That's not a problem.

He takes the rose from the entryway, deliberately pricks his finger on it.

TIMOTHY (CONT'D)

Ow. Ok, Camera Obscura Totalatum Noct.

The stage goes dark.

TIMOTHY (CONT'D)

Ok... that part... worked. Regina magesterium regina lux. Lux. Come on.

Nothing happens for a moment, and then the rose in Timothy's hand lights up.

So does a line of hedge roses, and then there is a path. A pigeon alights near Tim's shoulder.

TIMOTHY (CONT'D)

Nice work, Tim. You're very brave. I'm amazed at what you've managed to work out from inadequate books with no training.

(addressing the pigeon.)

Thank you, Tim. I appreciate the vote of confidence.

PIGEON

Um. Coo.

Tim jumps and bats at the pigeon. Another one alights to his left, and speaks in the same voice.

PIGEON (CONT'D)

Coo. Um, so I think you're confused, Tim.

ANOTHER PIGEON

See, I've been watching you, and you're in bad trouble.

YET ANOTHER

You should go back. Coo.

TIMOTHY

What kind of a place is this? Talking pigeons? And I'm supposed to quail?

(he starts to follow the lights)

Ha, see, I can even make very, very stupid puns. Am I on a quest here, or am I playing Super Princess Peach? Why doesn't she have anything to protect her?

A PIGEON

You should think of the obvious answer to that question!

Timothy goes deeper into the maze. The pigeons follow. The lights lead up to the "snowglobe." It kindles last of all. Timothy follows.

TIMOTHY

Regina maegistrum. Regina lux. Light, show me the queen. Show me the queen of this place.

He reaches the prison, and the figure slowly appears.

TIMOTHY (CONT'D)
Are you the one I came to kill?

The figure shakes its head.

TIMOTHY (CONT'D)
Are you a prisoner?

The figure nods. Timothy reaches for it-

LUCK ANGEL
Get away from her.

Timothy spins and sees the Luck Angel.

TIMOTHY
Stay back, fairy.

LUCK ANGEL
You are in more danger than you know. Come with me and I will save you if I can.

TIMOTHY
I don't negotiate with baby stealers. Bitch.

He traces the words of a spell in the air.

TIMOTHY (CONT'D)
Xenotime, Xontolite, Kornerupine,
Kottigite.....

LUCK ANGEL
Who are you? What are you doing?

The Luck Angel is increasingly immobile.

TIMOTHY (CONT'D)
Mercury, Magnanese, Lazulite, Lazulese, Lithium...

The pigeon brigade arrives, with Bantam (male).

PIGEONS
Don't hurt her!

TIMOTHY
....lead.

He raises his hand, palm facing in. The pigeons freeze in mid air.

He slowly turns his hand so that the palm faces out, and as he does, the pigeons all turn towards the Luck Angel.

TIMOTHY (CONT'D)

Now.

The Luck Angel screams, and the birds attack her. She falls, and then it is just the Whiteling standing over her still form, mouth bloodied, breathing hard.

Timothy amazed, sees that he has won.

TIMOTHY (CONT'D)

Whaaaaat?

One hundred points to Griffyndor!

Bantam screams, like a girl, and rushes to the Luck Angel's side. With no fanfare at all, Elizabeth clomps into the middle of the stage. Her eyes are half closed, and she is clutching a stuffed version of the Whiteling.

ELIZABETH

Who's been doing magic?

Without looking, she points at Timothy.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

You. Come here.

Timothy is pulled down from the window, and towards her, jerkily.

TIMOTHY

Xenotime, Xontolite, Kornerupine....

ELIZABETH

Shhhh. I was sleeping. You woke me.

Timothy stands before her. She pulls him down to her, kisses him on the lips, and spits.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Somebody clean that up.

She clomps offstage. Timothy mutters under his breath, traces signs in the air, looks around wildly. Luwis enters, with his mop. The Whiteling stands. So does Bantam. All three creatures advance on Tim.

TIMOTHY

Xenotime, Xontolite, Kornerupine, Kottigite....oh god... meagisterium Lux, lux, lux, lux... it's all gone...

He looks at the threatening creatures and makes an arcane gesture. Nothing happens.

TIM

Oh, god.

He rummages in his pockets. They get closer. Bantam hefts the ax.

TIM (CONT'D)

Somebody help me.

And there is a door.

And it opens. Megan is there- clutching a book and reaching out.

MEGAN

Timothy!

He grabs her hand. She pulls him through. The door slams.

And everything goes away.

ACT 1 SCENE 6

In the darkness, a sickly, greenish light. Megan and Timothy are crouched on the floor, inside a circle of books.

TIMOTHY

Megan?

MEGAN

Stay inside the circle.

TIMOTHY

Where did all these books come from. Where are we?

MEGAN

I took you to the library. Where's Luther?
Tim, where is my brother?

TIMOTHY

I..... we got separated.

MEGAN

Do you still have the rose?

He opens his hand. Dust falls out.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

You shit. You absolute shit.
He's dead.

TIMOTHY

Megan-

MEGAN

He's dead because of me.
He was almost 30. He could have been safe a long time ago. But he went back because of me.
I wish I'd gone with her when I had the chance. I don't know where I'd be, or who I'd be, but at least I wouldn't be alone.

TIMOTHY

You're not.

MEGAN

I destroyed him. I've been destroying him my entire life.

TIMOTHY

It wasn't your fault, Megan. You're cursed. Luther told me everything.

MEGAN

Did he tell you that I killed our parents, too?

TIM

No.

MEGAN

I was 13. She tricked me. I went with her. He followed. And he saved me. But when we got home... It takes you that way sometimes, fairyland. It plays with time. We'd been gone for almost a week. Enough for them to start to smell. They thought they'd lost us both. And now it's just me. You can walk away free if you leave now. I don't know why you're still here.

TIMOTHY

This is a secret. I know yours, and this is mine. When I was ten, I made a man out of Lincoln logs- a golem. I found some words in a book and I said them. I took the bazooka joe out of my mouth and stuck it to the thing's forehead with my thumb, and it came to life. I can see in the dark. I can create illusions. I can control cats and some insects. Under the right conditions, and if I'm feeling really confident, I can fly.. distances of several feet. Meg, look at me. Our secrets match. Believe in me.

MEGAN

I believe you.

He kisses her.

TIM

What time is it?

MEGAN

It's just midnight.

He kisses her again.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

But I don't have any...

TIM

It's ok. It's our wedding day.

The lights grow dim. The books rise up and turn into paper birds, into paper angels, into paper trees, hiding Tim and Megan from view. There is music, and the suggestion of unimaginable fertility, which, after a time, subsides. Tim and Megan are revealed, sitting among scattered white leaves. There is a book open on Tim's lap.

TIMOTHY

How did he save you?

MEGAN

Luther? Why are you asking me that?
Tim, you can't-

TIMOTHY

I just want to know how he did it

MEGAN

He made a bargain.

TIMOTHY

A bargain.

MEGAN

You always give the thing that you want most. In the whole world.
Music. He hasn't been able to hear music since he was 18.

TIMOTHY

Except for the music she makes?

MEGAN

I think you're starting to understand how fairies work. My brother is gone. I can't save
him. You can't save him.
Promise me you won't go back there, not ever.

TIMOTHY

I'm stronger than you think-

MEGAN

I know you're strong, but I can't lose you too. You're all I have. Promise.

TIM

I promise.
This book is very interesting.

MEGAN

What?

TIM

Sleep.

She closes her eyes, and slumps. Timothy gets up. Under the following dialogue, he takes his shirt off, turns it inside out, and puts it back on.

TIM (CONT'D)

There's something about you, Megan, did you know? Your skin? It's completely flawless. No scars, no blemishes. As if your entire life, nothing has been allowed to touch you.

He kisses her on the cheek.

TIM (CONT'D)

Or ever been allowed to touch your skin.

He exits.

ACT 1 SCENE 7

Lights up on Luther. He is huddled in a corner. He is sewing, and muttering.

LUTHER

Tam Lin, the ballad says, was delivered from bondage by a girl who loved him above all others, who held him close as he changed from animal to ice to fire. What am I supposed to do with that? Love more? Love more?

The Whiteling enters, clutching a slotted metal spoon. It drops the spoon with a clatter.

WHITELING

I brought you what you wanted.
It hurts to hold.

LUTHER

I'm sorry. It's because it has iron in it, and you're enchanted.

WHITELING

I didn't mean to be. Is it enough?

LUTHER

I think so. Do you remember what I wanted it for?

WHITELING

You don't?
I could get in trouble you know. A lot of it. But I want to help you. You tried to help me, so I have to help you back.

LUTHER

Joshie?

But the Whiteling has already scampered away.

But it's Timothy, coming on stage in a roil of smoke and lights. He coughs.

LUTHER (CONT'D)

Timothy? You're alive.

TIM

I told you I was a wizard.

LUTHER

Did you come to save me?

TIM

I came to save all of us. I came to make this stop forever. I'm going to take you home, but before I do, you're going to help me make sure the Wicked Child never hurts your family again.

LUTHER

No. There are no gifts, there is no forgiveness. There was a woman in Germany who defied a fairy for her lover's sake, and she lost both her hands. Her eyes were sewn shut, and her tongue was cloven in half.

TIMOTHY

Is it possible that you've gotten stranger since I first met you?

LUTHER

Yes.

TIMOTHY

How long have you been here?

LUTHER

I don't know. I've been sewing. This places presses on you.

TIMOTHY

I'll take you back right away if you want, but first hear me out. I have a plan.

LUTHER

Death. Death, death, death, death. Toasting fork.

TIMOTHY

You have to ask the obvious question. Why you? Why the Powers? Fairies are like hurricanes or lightning. They're not rational, but they have laws.

So I looked at the records. There have been Powers in every major American war since the 1800s. Before that, in English wars. Every single one of them died in their sleep.

LUTHER

Is that unusual?

TIMOTHY

Luther. Have you ever been to the hospital? Any broken bones? Cuts? Scrapes? Has anything ever left a mark on your skin?

Luther looks at his hands.

TIMOTHY (CONT'D)

Who is Elizabeth Powers?

LUTHER

The first child. The first theft in the records.

TIMOTHY

Late spring of 1480. Before she disappeared, there was a price on her father. Counterfeiting, alchemy and high treason. They had a pike picked out for his head. In 1481, he's still alive, buying property in Oxfordshire. No trial. It's as if they just forgot.

LUTHER

Elizabeth. She was.... eleven.

TIMOTHY

It has all the hallmarks of a bargain. This man sold his daughter to save his life, and your fairy has never forgotten it. She protects you from earthly harm, and in return, she takes the payment she feels entitled to. Fairies do not meddle in human affairs unless they've been summoned, or bound. Luther, we don't have to kill her, we just have to break the contract. I have a very powerful spell, for dissolving obligations. The only problem is distracting her long enough for me to say the words.

LUTHER

How long?

TIMOTHY

About a minute. And I'll need something from you.

LUTHER

What?

TIMOTHY

I need you to break... her half of the contract. A flesh wound should be enough. I brought a knife. Ceramics- for stealth.

Luther picks up the Whiteling's spoon.

TIM

Why are you staring at that spoon?

LUTHER

Because I've remembered what it's for.

He stands, and picks up the strange garment he's been sewing. It makes a clanging noise. Luther and Timothy exit.

ACT 1 SCENE 8

From every part of the stage, we hear children's voices singing a round, and Elizabeth appears on her throne. We are in the palace. The globe of ice is visible, luminous but empty.

VOICES

WHITE CORAL BELLS
UPON A SLENDER STALK

LILIES OF THE VALLEY GRACE MY GARDEN WALK
OH DON'T YOU WISH
THAT YOU COULD HEAR THEM RING?
THAT WILL ONLY HAPPEN WHEN THE FAIRIES SING

The last voice to enter the round is not a child's. It is the voice of a man. It's Luther's voice. He's wearing a large, bulky coat.

ELIZABETH

Luther?

LUTHER

I'm coming back to you.

ELIZABETH

Oh Luther. I can't tell you how happy that makes me. I feel happiness taking root in my heart, and growing a stem, and flowering on my mouth.

(She draws back.)

Why now?

LUTHER

Because I'm tired.

When I close my eyes, I see your face. When I sleep, I hear you sing. I am tired of wanting you, and I am tired of fearing you. I'm here to bargain.

ELIZABETH

What are your terms?

LUTHER

You get me. Megan gets her baby.

ELIZABETH

That's a poor trade.

LUTHER

Only one. Only her first. The rest you can take.

TIMOTHY

Um....

LUTHER

I know you've tried harder and more for me than for anybody else. This could be your last chance. Wait any longer and I'll be dead.

TIMOTHY

Excuse me-

ELIZABETH

What's he doing here?

LUTHER

We need a witness.

Timothy, get out your book.

Timothy does as he's told, fumbling badly. Luther takes out his knife. She flinches.

LUTHER (CONT'D)

It's not metal. Ceramics. New invention.

Elizabeth approaches, fascinated. Luther draws the blade lightly across his palm, and she holds out her hand to catch the blood. Standing in front of Timothy as they are, they seem to be involved in some parody of a wedding ceremony. Luther offers her the handle of the knife, and she takes it. Then Luther throws off his overcoat and she screams. He is dressed, head to toe, in cold iron. Bolts, buttons, cutlery... every imaginable scrap of metal has been sewn onto every inch of his clothes. He grabs her, instinctively, she thrusts the knife into his stomach before dropping it. The touch of the metal seems to drive her mad with pain.

LUTHER (CONT'D)

Now!

TIMOTHY

Are you hurt?

LUTHER

I'm hurt enough.

Timothy drops to his knees and begins to perform a ritual. Luther drags the Child, kicking and screaming, well away from him.

TIMOTHY

We have paid in blood, we have paid with sweat and with bones ground into dust....

ELIZABETH

Luther! What are you doing? You're hurting me!

TIMOTHY

You have paid in the coin of light, you have paid in the breath of promise...

ELIZABETH

I cannot abide the cold.... I shall die... I shall die... I shall die...

She goes silent, and stiffens. She also goes faintly blue. Timothy breaks off.

TIMOTHY

What's happening? Don't let her go.

LUTHER

I can't... she's.... frozen to me....ffinish.

TIMOTHY

We have paid with our hearts, and we have paid sufficient...you have paid with your fingers and our bargain is come to an end....

There is a cracking sound, and Elizabeth shakes herself all over, then howls. She turns to Luther and scratches him with claws that she has suddenly acquired, bites him with greatly sharpened teeth.

TIMOTHY (CONT'D)

What in the name of green shit is that?

LUTHER

Keep going.

Elizabeth is twisting furiously. Luther fights her, she does not let go. With a monstrous hissing noise, she snakes around and strikes at him, a massive adder.

TIMOTHY

By the blood of my heart, I release you. By the sweat of my arm, I release you. By the wheat that has grown from the mulch of my bones ground to dust... I release you.

Luther screams. He is engulfed in flames.

TIMOTHY (CONT'D)

As the light of the sky is free, you are free. As the songs of the air are free, you are free. As a thought is gone in the fullness of time we are free from each other.

The flames die down, and Elizabeth almost bursts from Luther's arms, beating huge and powerful wings.

TIMOTHY (CONT'D)

As a thought is gone in the fullness of time we are free from each other.

Luther holds on grimly. She rises from the ground. He weighs her down.

TIMOTHY (CONT'D)

As a thought is gone in the fullness of time....

They rise from the ground together, her wings beating, her claws tearing at his face.

TIMOTHY (CONT'D)

We are free from each other.

They collapse to the ground in a heap. Luther is bloodied. Elizabeth is unconscious and very very small. Timothy drops his book and pulls Luther to his feet. A long pause. Luther drops back down and feels her neck.

TIMOTHY (CONT'D)

Is she dead?

LUTHER

She's human.

There is a curious noise, as of a great commotion happening a long way away. A figure appears in the ice, but it is either very distant, or very indistinct. The noise grows louder.

TIMOTHY

We should kill her.

LUTHER

Didn't you hear me? She's human. She's a little girl.

The curious noise reaches a peak, and the Whiteling bursts on stage, followed by Bantam and Luwis, Bantam helping Luwis with his laden cart. The Whiteling has grown incredibly large, almost draconic, and it goes right for Elizabeth with its teeth. Luther picks up the knife, and stops it.

THE WHITELING

Out of the way. She is mine, now.

TIMOTHY

Luther, get out of its way.

THE WHITELING

You were never my enemy, until this hour. Please.

Luther shakes his head. The Whiteling lunges towards Elizabeth. Bantam Beth steps in, grasps the Whiteling by the neck, and tosses him aside.

BANTAM

Not now, little mooncalf. Not tonight.

Luwis, looking fearfully up at the ice, where the figure is getting steadily closer and more solid, is pulling his cart off alone. he's much too weak.

THE WHITELING

She took me away from my mother. She made me hideous.

BANTAM

Then killing her now is a kindness she doesn't deserve. If you want true vengeance, leave her to the other one, and leave here with your skin.

There is a sound like thunder. Luwis abandons his cart and books it. The Whiteling turns to Luther.

Another thunderous sound. Timothy looks up at the ice.

TIMOTHY

We need to leave. I feel very strongly that we need to leave. Look!

The door has reappeared. Luther kneels and scoops up Elizabeth.

TIMOTHY (CONT'D)

Not her! She can stay! She can stay!

The sound comes back, louder than ever. The door shakes. Timothy and Luther, Luther still holding the Child, run after the door and through it and are gone.

The figure is huge now, pitch black and distinct.

PANDORA

Run, little girl? Into the wide world? Into your brother's arms?

I am alive.

I reach out my hand.

I will tear this world apart

For what you did to me.

Blackout. End Act I.

ACT 2 SCENE 1

A little girl enters, so heavily laden with pots and pans that she is hunched over like an old woman. She pushes a broom, and is dressed in an old-fashioned nightgown. Her name, at the moment, is Elizabeth.

Elizabeth turns her broom around, pulls a needle from behind her ear, pricks her finger, and allows a few drops of blood to fall on the bristles. She turns it around again, and uses it to draw a large circle on the floor. She hums, not merrily, but deliberately. She uses the broom to lower herself to her knees, sets it carefully aside, and prays.

ELIZABETH

May god forgive me for the thing I do
And keep me safe, and yet not stay my hand
And bar me not from heaven for a sin
That makes my only clear way out of hell. Amen.

She struggles to her feet, and then pulls a cord, loosening her pack. All of the pots and pans drop to the floor with a terrific noise, and she stands up straight. A very impressive woman enters.

PANDORA

What clamoring is this? My little slave
Hast thou forgot the terms of your life here
That every piece of crockery in my house
Each pot, each cruet, candlestick or glass
Ranks above thee, the least of my possessions?

ELIZABETH

No.

PANDORA

Foul girl of flesh, that pert and pretty tongue
Is asking to be sundered from its mouth.

The woman steps forward, into the ring. She raises her arm. Nothing happens. She leans forward, and raps the air in front of her with her knuckles. It clinks.

PANDORA (CONT'D)

Thou'st been in among the books, my mouse.
This caper of yours, learning wizard tricks
Is not so precious as thou seemst to hope.
I bought thee for a modicum of clever.

ELIZABETH

You bought me for a slave. You bargained ill.

PANDORA

And I will crack this paltry cave of ice
To take thee back.

ELIZABETH

Good mistress, pause.
Tis true this charm is much below your strength
But weakness can be used to many ends.
This fragile shell is bounded to your life,
You crack it, and you crack your heart in twain.

PANDORA

That art is past thy reach. A magus lord
Steeped in his wisdom, owning many books
Could put no bond on such a life as mine.
You are a very child.

ELIZABETH

Child that I am,
I bound you with a rope of your own weaving.
I cast no spell on you. Tis my own blood
That runs through this your new-made prison.
And you have vowed to guard my blood. The laws
That govern power will take your heart, if now
And by your hand you break that wall
To take my father's life.

PANDORA

I feel it in my bones. You speak the truth.
Well, clever girl. Well clever, little girl.
You win the prize and all the ribbons
You lance the dragon and pop off his head

(MORE)

PANDORA (CONT 'D)

And roast it for the peasants at the feast.
Where will you go now, home?

ELIZABETH

With all good speed.

PANDORA

Home! And there thou wilt be welcomed!
Loved! By one who bargained lightly with his child.
Light. Light. Feather-like you were to him
A scrap of down he brushed off from his sleeve.
He came to me, his eyes like eggs, his mouth
All tied up like a purse...

She motions. Elizabeth's father appears, an illusion.

ANGUS

Great fairy, queen,
I come here at much peril and much cost
My treacherous friends, my lords and owners
Have turned me in for silver to the crown.
I am a magus, full, few men would dare
To tread the fairy paths where you hold sway.
But queen, my need is great as is your power
I plead you-

PANDORA

Save your life?

ANGUS

Yes.

PANDORA

Why? We do not meddle in your dull affairs.
This is my realm. My sway is absolute.
Unless, by chance-

ANGUS

I come to bargain.
Name any price. I lay it at your feet.

PANDORA

A child.

ANGUS

My son?

PANDORA

Oh no, it will not do.
If all thou hast are sons, be on your way.
A girl child's what I want. One mild and meek.
Well-used to chores, and still not fully grown.

ANGUS

I have a daughter. I have one. She's yours.

PANDORA

(She turns, and begins speaking to Elizabeth.)

That night,
Not wasting tears, nor two turns of the glass
Your father crept upon you in the dark
Swaddled you up, your bare legs out, and ran.

ELIZABETH

My brother followed us. He cried my name.
Until I woke and cried him back. He would
Have saved me if he could. It is to him
I would return. Not my false father.

PANDORA

Child, think.
At home, you were an inconsidered drone.
Born to give birth, to languish and to die.
My land is strange, and full of magic. Stay,
And I will teach you how to make a thousand brothers.

ELIZABETH

You'll teach me how to die a thousand deaths.
But as you say, this place is fat with magic
And I am loathe to leave.

PANDORA

Then let me out.

ELIZABETH

Not for the stars. I'll stay. And thou stayst too.
Why go back to my brother as a slave,
When I could be a queen and bring him here?

PANDORA

This is a danger for you past all else.
You are a human girl, this empty place
Will hunger for the fairy touch it knows.

ELIZABETH

I am queen here now!

There is a sound, a flash. The world has changed.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

These wasted lands
Will flower for me, and will love me too.

PANDORA

There is yet time. You have but lost one thing
Not small, but not forever. Let me out.

ELIZABETH

I am thy queen, and thou must use that name.

PANDORA

I must, for it is all you have. Turn back!
The name your brother called you, in that night
The name he screamed, what was it?

ELIZABETH

It was mine.

PANDORA

What name?

ELIZABETH

What matter? He can call me queen.
And now I think it, it is only right.
I'll have a country here of children,
Creatures quick and chatterful and winged
Houses of roses, mountains made of light,
With music every minute, every hour.

PANDORA

Do you forget that someone loved you once?
 Can you not feel it, tugging at your breast?
 As you clung to your father, fruitlessly
 Humanity is clinging to your heart.
 Soon it will be a phantom limb, a tooth
 Torn from an infant. It will not hurt at all.

ELIZABETH

Why do you speak? Your voice is not a song.
 I'll have no noise here but music, and
 The breath of birds. You are poor company.

(pause)

Hast thou no more to say?

PANDORA

Not to the air.

ELIZABETH

Then rot in stone, eat ice, and hurt forever.
 I go to find a better friend than you.
 This world will be made pleasant, but I know
 The world beyond holds something that is mine.
 I'll find it, for I will not be alone.

She exits.

PANDORA

Go, wicked child.
 A storm is gathering, it will make a head
 Ten thousand years from now, or more, or less.
 Patience in immortals is as vast
 And terrible as memory, or revenge.

ACT 2 SCENE 2

A hotel room. Enter Tim and Luther, carrying Elizabeth.

TIMOTHY

Why didn't you take her to your house?

LUTHER

The wedding is here.

TIMOTHY

And we have to have some ancient, evil flower girl? Kill her.

LUTHER

You keep on saying that. You do it.

Timothy regards Elizabeth. Long pause.

TIMOTHY

You're bleeding.... I know some pretty decent healing (spells)-

LUTHER

No wizard nonsense. We're in enough trouble as it is.

TIMOTHY

What happens when she wakes up?

Enter Megan, in a wedding dress.

TIMOTHY (CONT'D)

Oh, honey- You're- I'm so sorry- did I miss the ceremony?

MEGAN

Did you miss the ceremony? I woke up in a pentagram made of books in the Regenstein Library! I thought you were dead.

She runs to Luther.

LUTHER

We're not dead.

TIMOTHY

We won.

Luther moves, and Megan sees Elizabeth. Megan tries to bolt. Luther pounces on her, and pins her down.

MEGAN

She- she- she- she...

LUTHER

She can't hurt you.

Megan, breathing furiously, looks at Elizabeth and nods. Luther lets her up. At once, Megan lunges towards Elizabeth with murderous intent. Luther pins her again.

LUTHER (CONT'D)

You can't hurt her either.

MEGAN

And why the hell not?

LUTHER

Because she's a little girl.

MEGAN

What has she done to you? Where's your metal?

LUTHER

I'm not glamour'd. I'm covered in iron. It doesn't matter. Here.

He gives her a ring. Megan presses the ring hard into Elizabeth's forehead. When there is no response, she presses harder.

MEGAN

I don't understand. This should be killing her with pain.

LUTHER

She's not a fairy. She's human.

MEGAN

Humans can't do what she did to me.

TIMOTHY

She can't do it anymore. Megan Ann Powers, she will never hurt you again. You're free.

He tries to kiss her. She runs from the room. Timothy tries to follow her. Luther stops him.

LUTHER

First law of magic. Nothing, nothing, nothing without price!

ELIZABETH

Ow.

(Elizabeth sits up, fingering the place on her forehead where Megan pressed the ring.)

I'm dented. Is this death?

Timothy and Luther approach her, warily.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Death is so bland. And... teal.

LUTHER

This is not death.

TIMOTHY

It's a Ramada.

ELIZABETH

Oh dear. I was so hoping it was death.

She lies back down and covers her eyes.

TIMOTHY

Listen, missy. I was all for killing you, and so were a number of other people, or things.

ELIZABETH

Yet here I am, breathing stinking mortal air. Dented.

TIMOTHY

It was him. He protected you. And he carried you out here, so that you could ruin my wedding.

ELIZABETH

It doesn't matter. You freed her, and she'll kill me. I think I shall close my eyes until it happens. I would say- no more than two turns of the glass. Could you hand me a pillow?

LUTHER

No-one is going to kill you.

ELIZABETH

But Luther, I'm already dying. This flesh is rotting even as it grows. It is only a question of how hard, and how long.

She lies back with the pillow over her face.

TIMOTHY

Miss- um... miss-

ELIZABETH

Bess.

TIMOTHY

Is something dangerous going to happen?

ELIZABETH

Oh, definitely.

LUTHER

What did you say?

ELIZABETH

Something very dangerous is definitely going to happen.

LUTHER

Bess.

ELIZABETH

Oh. It's very close now. Very very close. I feel shaky, I feel full of air. Is this fear? It's been a long time, a very long time, since I was last afraid.

(Pause.)

Maybe it's hunger?

LUTHER

Bess. Is that your name?

ELIZABETH

You are killing me, Luther, you are smothering me in mortality.

TIMOTHY

We need to get back to this definitely dangerous thing.

ELIZABETH

She is— awake. She is remaking her house. I hear her calling. She will stand like a stone tower on a stone plain, and she will make me come to her, and that will be most terrible of all.

TIMOTHY

Who?

ELIZABETH

Pandora. She has no name, but my father called her Pandora..

TIMOTHY

Shit. I know what I have to do.

Timothy exits.

ELIZABETH

Don't leave me here! Don't leave me to her!

LUTHER

Bess. Elizabeth.

Elizabeth cries out in pain.

LUTHER (CONT'D)

You're Elizabeth Powers.

ELIZABETH

Don't say that name.

LUTHER

Elizabeth, look at me. I know you didn't mean it. You would change it if you could, you would take it all back, and you can, you can. Just first, please, first- where is she? Where is my sister?

For the first time since she remembered her name, Elizabeth looks directly at Luther. Her eyes widen in recognition.

ELIZABETH

I'm here! I'm here!

She runs into Luther's arms.

ACT 2 SCENE 3

Screaming. Enter the Whiteling, Luwis, and Bantam Beth (as small girl). They have commandeered a shopping cart, and turned it into a sort of battle engine. Luwis pushes it, and Bantam rides like a figurehead, whirling axes.

BANTAM

Yarrrr! Yarrrr! Fear my babies, Christians!

LUWIS

Don't have to shout. They all ran already.

BANTAM

Yar!

LUWIS

Don't like the mooncalf here.

WHITELING

Nobody wants to look at me.

BANTAM

It's cause you're a lovely ferocious beastie, full of screams. Good work! Super work! There must have been 500 mortals here, and you made them all skedaddle. This is a peach of a place. Food, and guns and detergent all at once. What do they call it again?

LUWIS

A Wal-Mart.

BANTAM

Wal-Mart. It will be our fortress. We'll stay here forever, make sandwiches, live like kings.

WHITELING

I don't want to stay here forever. I want to go back to my mom.

BANTAM

You would terrify her. Oh, don't cry. Don't cry! I wish like heck the angel wasn't dead, she'd know what to do. Don't look at me like that. It isn't your fault you killed her.

LUWIS

This is stupid. We don't need to live like kings. We need to find out who we really are, and then live like that.

BANTAM

Mooncalf- didn't someone say you were a baby?

LUWIS

Says there's a baby section here. Aisle eight.

BANTAM

We'll knock up an expedition at once. Pick up several, and interrogate them. Yarrr.

WHITELING

We need to find someone who can change us back, someone who can take us back home.

LUWIS

Do we have homes? What if we're made out of ashes? What if we're made out of old fish?

WHITELING

Somebody loves us, otherwise we wouldn't be here at all.

For the very first time, we hear Luwis laugh.

WHITELING (CONT'D)

I know that someone is crying for me now, right now. I can feel it. It itches.

LUWIS

So does my behind, doesn't mean anyone loves me.

There is a sound. It is terrifying, and it comes up through the floor.

WHITELING

What's that noise?

Pandora appears, magic crackling off her. They cower.

PANDORA

My friends, my fellow prisoners. How surprising to see you, walking the wide world, Stand up. Do you think you can hide amongst this mortal baggage? Did you think I would forget you?

BANTAM

Please, ma'am. We weren't so much hiding as assuming you had more important things to. We don't want any trouble.

PANDORA

And yet here you are, parading yourselves in front of humans. Your punishment should be harsh. But my country is empty now, and I was never accustomed to living without servants. Return to me, and I will forgive this... recklessness. Kneel to me, worship me, and you shall sit at my right hand and join in my revenge.

LUIS

Nah.

Long pause.

PANDORA

“Nah?”

BANTAM BETH

Holy fried mackerels he has gone insane.

LUIS

This is not fairyland. This is Walmart. She can't hurt us. She can't make us do anything.

PANDORA

This defiance will be reckoned, slug!

LUIS

When?

A brief stand off. Pandora loses. Then blows it off.

PANDORA

It's true. In this world I can persuade, and I can tantalize.... I cannot act, not as I do in my own country. But there are hearts to be had, and there are bargains to made. Join me and I will grant your heart's desire.

BANTAM BETH

No thanks! Bye!

She starts to skip away, but...

WHITELING

My heart's desire?

PANDORA

Name your price.

WHITELING

Can you change me back?

PANDORA

No.

WHITELING

I am.... forever?

PANDORA

I cannot reverse what she has done. But it is not forever. You will regain your original form at the moment of your death.

The whiteling cries out.

PANDORA (CONT'D)

Or the moment of hers.
I will let you eat her heart.

WHITELING

I'm yours. I will do anything for you. Help me.

PANDORA

And so it is, my own. Kill them.

The Whiteling backs away, shaking its head.

PANDORA (CONT'D)

If you want my help, you must not question my commands. They are not with us, they are past all hope, kill them.

BANTAM

Steady on, mooncalf, steady.

WHITELING

I'm sorry-

BANTAM

You don't have to be sorry, you don't have to do it!

PANDORA

Is there some hesitation?

WHITELING

They were kind to me, madam.

PANDORA

I have no use for a servant that cannot do the thing that must be done.

WHITELING

No please... don't go.

The Whiteling attacks. They fight. The Whiteling pins Bantam.

BANTAM

Kid, you can't.. you can't do this.

I learned.

WHITELING

The Whiteling draws back for the killing blow. Luwis intervenes. Bantam escapes and Luwis is stabbed.

Bantam dumps Luwis into the cart, and tries to sprint off. The Whiteling wrests the cart away from him.

Bantam is torn between trying to retrieve Luwis and escaping.

LUWIS

I'm done, Bantam, leave it.

BANTAM

You're skewered, old fish, but you aren't cooked.

WHITELING

If you fight, I'll have to kill you both.

The Whiteling gives Bantam a pleading look.

BANTAM

Fine, lady. I'll go with you. I'll take my old job if you want. But I don't make any bargains.

PANDORA

I accept. You see, it is no hardship if you want to defy me. In fact, I prefer it. Finish this one.

BANTAM

Sorry, old pal. I'll make it quick.

Bantam breaks Luwis's neck.

PANDORA

Good, my children. Come. We have business to attend to.

They exit, leaving Luwis. As his dead body is taken offstage, he becomes a baby- the child he once was.

Also, there's a song.

EXIT MUSIC

The yellow eye, the falling skin
 The rotting tooth, the idiot grin
 They are all passengers within
 This perfect child.
 This failing heart was never whole
 It beat once, then began to slow
 A perfect child's a vessel full
 Of springs and falls,
 And funerals.

ACT 2 SCENE 4

Enter Kemp. He carries a suitcase, and seems manic.

KEMP

Greetings, class. Many apologies for my slight, entirely understandable tardiness. I have come here today at great peril. This room is dangerous- this concentration of enchanted minds is like tinder in a lightning storm. I would not be here at all, had I not come down with a sudden fit of qualms. You are a pallid, cloying lot, but as it turns out I would rather you did not all die.

Please remain calm, and digest this litany of facts.

Last night, at 1:46 am, an unexpected thaumic shockwave caused all fireflies and cicadas within a three-mile radius of Hyde Park to spontaneously combust. On Oakley Road, a grapevine broke down a door and strangled someone's dog. And this morning, all area statues depicting female persons or feline animals were found to be in altered positions, their faces fixed in expressions of rage.

Don't you see what this means? Run! Go! Scatter yourselves like rice! There is something loose in the world that must not be spoken of-Forget all you learned here. Forget all you can. Put yourself into a coma if you can afford it. For the love of god, class dismissed!

Kemp watches the last of his students go, then dashes to his desk and begins to cram books into his suitcase. He senses something, and looks up.

KEMP (CONT'D)

(in abject terror)

No, please. Not here.

Megan enters. Kemp gives an absurdly long, horror-movie scream.

MEGAN

Kemp?

KEMP

(suddenly normal)

Dear girl, this is not the time.

MEGAN

I need your help.

KEMP

I'm sure you do. But at the moment I need to go extremely far away from you at a punishing speed.

MEGAN

The Wicked Child is in our world.

KEMP

Yes?

MEGAN

And she's with Luther.

KEMP

Yes.

MEGAN

And she's human.

KEMP

Hmmm.

MEGAN

Please, you're the only one who knows what to do.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

You can have any part of me that you want, just tell me if I should take it.

KEMP

Take what?

Megan holds out a flower. It's not a rose, but something stranger, thornier, and more carnivorous looking.

MEGAN

I've been offered a bargain.

Timothy enters.

TIM

Megan? What are you doing here?

MEGAN

I came to get help.

TIM

You know him? Oh, of course. He's the local sorcerer.

He reaches out his hand and slams Kemp against the floor.

TIM (CONT'D)

Guess what, asshole. You just got outsourced.

MEGAN

Tim, don't-

TIM

Keep out of this, you don't know how big of a dick he was to me. Stay down.

KEMP

Gods, you're strong.

TIM

You ever made love by fairylight? It does wonders for the empowerment of the male generative force.

Kemp cries out in pain.

MEGAN

Tim, I need him-

TIM

We need what he knows. And why should I ask nicely? I tried that already. I stood in this very room, begging him for just one word, just the bare acknowledgment that magic exists and I can do it... and nothing.

He smacks Kemp around a bit on those last lines. Kemp laughs, and keeps laughing.

KEMP

I'd watch out for your man there, Meglet. He's volatile.

MEGAN

Tim, let's go. I don't feel safe.

TIM

I have him under perfect control. I'm not even breaking a sweat. Was I always more talented than you, Kemp? Is that why you shut me out? Because you were jealous?

KEMP

Of course I was jealous. Balls-deep in Megan Powers on a nightly basis? Oh if she'd have let me do that to her-

TIM

Fuck you.

KEMP

-I could have been truly great- a great magician. But oh no- she'd sell me her sweat, a few stray hairs, her snot and her juices, but nothing was worth the ultimate prize. Not even you.

What do you think of that little revelation? That you were a commodity on par with her bodily waste?

TIM

Megan, what's he talking about?

MEGAN

I'm sorry.

KEMP

Poor Timothy Stamp, did you think this was a coincidence? You were watched for. You were waited for. She'd made up her mind to marry you before she knew your name.

TIMOTHY

We fell in love. Tell him.

KEMP

I don't know about love, but Megan didn't fall into anything. She wanted a watchdog for her baby, someone bound to it by love and by blood. People like you are very rare, Mr. Stamp. She paid me to look for you, she paid me to find you, and she paid me to keep you in the dark.

TIMOTHY

We met in a bookstore. Our hands touched on a copy of “The Idylls of the King.”

KEMP

(overlapping)

“The Idylls of the King.” Such things are not too difficult to arrange.

TIM

Megan. Tell him

She says nothing.

I would have loved you no matter what.

MEGAN

No. You wouldn't have.

Timothy goes very quiet.

KEMP

Stamp? Timothy? I must ask you to relax. The air is crackling with thaumic energy. If you do not keep yourself under control, anything might happen. Please... you are... I know you are a kind and gentle person-

Timothy closes his eyes. The stage goes black. Then the lights come back, and he has changed. He is terrifying.

MEGAN

I should go now.

TIMOTHY

No. I think you should stay. Don't look so worried, baby. Every piece of magic I have worked has been for you, and this most of all.

MEGAN

This isn't you, Timothy.

TIMOTHY

Hell no, it isn't. I'm a kind and gentle person, a tender and stupid and romantic idiot. I nearly forgot. You see, I'm mad now, and a mad magician so often forgets what is real and what isn't. Curse to a mad magician- the word sprouts legs and scuttles away. Swear to a mad magician, and your vow nails your hand to the floor. Lie to a mad magician...

MEGAN

Please don't.

TIMOTHY

Please don't? Please don't what? Megan Powers, I do believe you're afraid of me. You think I'm going to do something I shouldn't. You think I'm going to hurt you. What an interesting thing to think. Perhaps I will.

He advances on her. She takes the strange flower in her hands, and breaks it in half.

MEGAN

I accept.

And vanishes.

Suddenly, and spectacularly, there is Pandora.

PANDORA

Stand back, little wizard.

There is a crack of thunder. Timothy staggers.

TIM

Megan!

PANDORA

Megan Powers is under my protection, and will remain so.

TIM

No.

PANDORA

She made her bargain, and now she is mine. She is safe from you forever. Unless, of course, you make a bargain of your own.

TIM

What do you want?

PANDORA

Bring me the girl.

And she is gone. The lights finally return to normal.

TIM

What have I done?

Kemp grabs him firmly by the shoulders and slaps him in the face.

KEMP

What have you done? Stop worrying about what you've done. Start hoping that you live to regret what you are about to do.

They exit.

ACT 2 SCENE 5

Elizabeth sits on the floor, in front of an open, ancient family bible. She sings. Luther listens.

ELIZABETH

THIS FAILING HEART WAS NEVER WHOLE
IT BEAT ONCE, THEN BEGAN TO SLOW
AND STOPPING WAS ITS ONLY GOAL
POOR PERFECT CHILD
I HAD SO MANY SUNDAYS PLANNED
AS NUMBERLESS AS GRAINS OF SAND
A PERFECT CHILD'S A VESSEL CRAMMED
WITH SPRINGS AND FALLS
AND FUNERALS

LUTHER

Thank you.

ELIZABETH

It's like a miracle. After everything I've done to you, you ask to hear me sing.

LUTHER

You have a beautiful voice.

ELIZABETH

I wish I could take it back. But I'm cut off. I can't remember how.

LUTHER

It's ok.

ELIZABETH

If you killed me, my enchantments would all fade. You would have music back.
I destroyed your life, Luther.

LUTHER

You didn't know what you were doing. You're just a little girl.

ELIZABETH

Four hundred years old is quite of age. I have power to move my own hand. Why did you save me?

LUTHER

Why did you want me?

Long pause. There is a knocking.

TIM

Luther? I brought help.

Bess glances at Luther and goes to the door. She opens it.

TIM (CONT'D)

I'm sorry.

Magus Kemp appears and grabs Elizabeth.

LUTHER

What are you doing?

KEMP

Mr. Powers, Bess is a former sorceror queen. You don't think we can let her traipse about fairyland with full possession of her magical faculties, do you?

LUTHER

Fairyland?

KEMP

This little apparatus should keep her nicely in check. Steel, sharkhide and dried placenta. Cuts off the flow of chi right through the spine. Here. *(tossing Luther a key)*

LUTHER

What is this for?

KEMP

Locking her in.

TIMOTHY

It has to be someone from her family.

ELIZABETH

Get it off me. It hates me.

KEMP

You see, little Elizabeth here has a powerful enemy, an enemy that you and Timothy, by your foolishness, have unleashed on the greater Austin area. Her name is Pandora. Perhaps you've heard of her? Now, I would say your foolishness would go down as one of the great foolishnesses of history, were it not so easily remedied. We merely have to give her the girl.

LUTHER

What will happen to her?

KEMP

Do I sense you becoming sentimental? But perhaps I shouldn't be surprised. She practically raised you. Stockholm syndrome? They ought to call it being born.

LUTHER

There has to be some other way.

KEMP

Of course. We could simply do nothing. Then Pandora, ever searching for revenge, will come again and to this city, weakening the walls between the material world and the realm of madness that she calls her home. Here, she will find the world's largest concentration of idiotic young magicians, dozens of foolish amateurs willing to bargain for power. Within a month, she will have an army of slaves. Within a year, the city will be hers entirely. And that's leaving aside, of course, the personal angle.

LUTHER

Personal?

TIMOTHY

She has Megan.

LUTHER

How?

TIMOTHY

I made a terrible mistake. I can't take it back. But I can save her. We can save her.

(so much bitchface from Luther)

I get that I'm not the hero here. That doesn't mean I can't act like one.

LUTHER

I don't care if you're the hero or not. I want my sister back.

Then turn the key.

TIMOTHY

Luther approaches Bess. They look at each other for a moment.

Don't give me back to her.

ELIZABETH

Then he turns the key in the lock. Tim releases Bess, and she sinks to the floor.

What else do you need me to do?

LUTHER

Kemp hands him a great tangle of chains.

Come with us to fairyland. We need all the help we can get.

KEMP

But you don't have a flower, or any kind of talisman. How are you going to open a door?

LUTHER

That's where you're wrong, Luther. We have the only talisman we need.

TIM

Music starts. The three men attach three thick chains to the girl's collar. They each take a hold of the chain and pull her to her feet.

And there is a door. And it opens.

Bess screams. The three men drag her through.

The door shuts.

ACT 2 SCENE 6

I'm home.

ELIZABETH

This is where we went before?

TIMOTHY

ELIZABETH

My mistress and I have different tastes.

TIMOTHY

She's less with the roses and the fireflies...more with the half-buried bones, and the fleshy white...

ELIZABETH

Those are flowers. Dead man's fingers, we call them.

TIMOTHY

Very literal.

Kemp, who has been ignoring this, steps forward and shouts.

KEMP

Pandora! We have your prize.

There is a silence. Nothing but the howling of wind, and the clanking of heavy bones as something flies into the space: The Whiteling, beating powerful wings. It has never looked larger or more horrifying.

WHITELING

Please. I'm to take her to the palace.

KEMP

Excuse me, but who are you?

WHITELING

I'm her servant.

KEMP

I came here to truck with the lady herself. I will not be put off by her livestock. I insist on speaking with Pandora directly, or I leave with the girl.

WHITELING

I'm to take her to the palace.

KEMP

That was not the arrangement.

LUTHER

The arrangement was that she gives me back my sister. Where is she?

Yes, where's Megan?

TIM

Follow me.

WHITELING

They get behind it. Then they stop, appreciating an insane fantasy vista.

Wow. What is that?

TIMOTHY

The place before the Stone Plain.

ELIZABETH

How do we cross?

LUTHER

We fly.

WHITELING

Everyone except Timothy climbs on top of the Whiteling.

Are you kidding? Everyone's just like "let's jump on the back of Falkor from hell?" Oh my god.

TIMOTHY

He gets on. The Whiteling takes off across the chasm. It is awesome.

Once we cross this place, we will be at the stone plain. And once we are on the stone plain, we will very quickly be at the stone tower. And once we are at the stone tower, she will have me.

ELIZABETH

I'm sorry.

TIM

You're sending me back there to die like an animal. You're not even giving me a chance.

ELIZABETH

And what else do you propose we do?

KEMP

ELIZABETH

Set me free. Take this collar off me. At least then I'll be able to fight.

KEMP

You'll also be able to run.

TIM

You'll also be able to kill all three of us, and then run.

ELIZABETH

Luther?

She looks at him. He is silent.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Very well then. Let us go into the dark.

The Whiteling backs up and they land. It's rough.

Bantam enters, guiding a blindfolded Megan. For the first time in Luther's presence, she's a little girl.

BANTAM

Steady on, dear, steady as she goes. Don't you fret, Christian, I'll have you safe and sound back to big brother. Big brother.... why are you looking at me like that?

LUTHER

Eileen?

BANTAM

I'm what?

MEGAN

Luther?

LUTHER

Eileen!

He runs toward her. The Whiteling blocks him.

WHITELING

Not yet.

MEGAN

Luther!

She runs forward blindly. The Whiteling attacks Luther. Bantam rushes to intervene, and the beast's claws sink into her heart. Bantam's eyes widen in recognition, and her voice changes completely.

BANTAM

Luther?

Megan takes off her blindfold.

MEGAN

Eileen? Is that you?

BANTAM

Meg? Little Meggy? Oh, wow.

BANTAM (CONT'D)

Have I been dreaming? I feel so funny. I feel like I missed something. Oh look at you. You're all grown up. How did that happen?

Her eyes close.

MEGAN

Oh god, Eileen. It's really you. She looks just the same.

LUTHER

She's gone.

KEMP

Pandora. Pandora I call upon thee!

TIMOTHY

Kemp-

KEMP

I was promised an audience with the highest of fairies and I will receive it.

TIM

We have Megan. Shouldn't we just give it the girl and go?

KEMP

She's our only bargaining chip, Tim. If we let her go so lightly, we'll never leave this place alive. Trust me. I know exactly what I'm doing.
Pandora! Show yourself, or we leave here with your prize.

Pandora appears.

PANDORA

Prodigal princess, oh my errant star.
My daughter and my jailer, in one flesh.
My price, whose own price still waits to be paid
You are expected, come. Your place is laid.

She stares at Kemp.

PANDORA (CONT'D)

Who are you?

KEMP

Look, I've brought the brat. Trussed up like a pig in steel and runes. Helpless.

PANDORA

A great favor, little wizard. Just what do you expect to gain by it?

KEMP

One thing. One simple little thing and you can have her. Take me as well.

TIM

What?

KEMP

Take me. I will be your catspaw, your talisman, your lover, anything. Only make me great, and I will serve you willingly, as no man or dog or fairy has served you before, to the death, and beyond.

TIM

Kemp, what the hell?

PANDORA

Your companions seem to disagree with your course of action.

KEMP

They count for nothing. They have no will.

TIM

Kemp. She's evil.

KEMP

She is not evil. She is magic. Magic incarnate. The distilled force that powers the wheels of creation. Do you know why there's no magic in this world? Because of men like you. The fairies didn't leave us, we drove them out, with your quests, and crusades and all your moralistic bleating about evil. There is no such thing. There is only power, and the price we will pay to have it.

PANDORA

You are a man who understands me. Come to me, Magus Kemp. And you will be my own forever.

KEMP

Yes. Yes oh yes.

He drops the chain, and runs to her. She reaches her hand out.

And then she very calmly eats him alive.

Bess whirls on Luther and drops to her knees.

ELIZABETH

Set me free.

TIM

Oh my god-

ELIZABETH

Now, while she's distracted.
I can fight her, Luther. Give me my chance.

TIM

If she runs that thing will eat us all. We'll have nothing to give her and we'll all be dead.

ELIZABETH

Please. Let me help you as you help me.

Luther pulls Bess towards him with the chain.

He takes the key out.

And he sets her free.

The air fills with music, and light, and rose petals.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

This place remembers me. I have power here. It's all so easy now.

TIM

Oh god-

ELIZABETH

Mistress.

*She sends a blinding crack of light towards Pandora.
Pandora turns, her mouth dripping.*

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

I can fight you now.

PANDORA

Do you challenge me, starling? You know you cannot win.

ELIZABETH

I can try.

PANDORA

(to whiteling)

Little moth. I promised you her heart. And now she wants to fight. Indulge her.

*The Whiteling attacks Elizabeth.
Elizabeth transforms the Whiteling into a flock of pigeons.
Pandora makes a motion.
The pigeons drop to the floor and turn into spiders,
scuttling towards her.
Elizabeth melts the spiders into rain, into water.
Pandora hisses.
A storm comes. The water thunders towards Elizabeth
and she is drowning in a whirlpool.
She parts the water and escapes. The whiteling regroups,
reforms into its monstrous self.
Elizabeth stumbles. Luther slides her Eileen's discarded
sword. A knight grows up around the sword and fights
the monster.
The monster eats the knight.
Then half of the monster turns into knights.
The knights and monsters kill each other.*

*Only the Whitelings is left.
It comes for Eliazabeth
She kisses it on the forehead.
It stills. It shrinks. It sheds itself as it walks off dreamily.
It might be turning into something, something small and
sweet and defenseless.*

*As Elizabeth watches it go, she lets herself smile.
And then-*

PANDORA (CONT'D)

Did you think this was over? Did you think you had won? I gave you your fight, my rabbit. And now...

Pandora's magic hoists her effortlessly into the air.

I shall have your heart all to myself.

Luther dashes in between Pandora and Elizabeth.

LUTHER

No!

MEGAN

(trying to stop him)

Luther!

LUTHER

Not her too.

MEGAN

Get the fuck back here right now.
Make him come back.

TIMOTHY

Shhhhh.
Trust me, you don't want to draw her
attention.

PANDORA

What is this?

LUTHER

I can't let you hurt her.

PANDORA

Little boy, you can't stop me. You know that.

LUTHER

I know it.

PANDORA

And yet you put yourself before my hand. And this girl, this creature... she has persecuted you. She has stolen music from you, and love, and everything except sunlight.

MEGAN

Eileen is dead because of her. Our parents are dead.

PANDORA

And yet you'd give your life for her, without a second thought.

LUTHER

Well, I'm having one now, but...

PANDORA

And still you are not moving.

PANDORA (CONT'D)

Most extraordinary. In my four-score thousand years I have never seen the like.

ELIZABETH

This is none of my doing.

PANDORA

And yet it is. There is something in you, and something in him. And then there is you both. Well, let it be. As it was your wish to save her, Luther Powers, she shall live.

LUTHER

Live?

Pandora smiles and nods. Megan reaches for Timothy's hand. But Elizabeth screams.

ELIZABETH

No!

Pandora reaches out her hand, and draws her finger along Luther's throat. He dies in an instant, then falls to his knees, then to the floor. Pandora starts to exit.

MEGAN

Bring him back.

Pandora pauses.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

Bring him back. I'll give you anything.

TIMOTHY

Megan, stop talking.

PANDORA

Sleep.

Timothy slumps to the ground.

MEGAN

I will pay any price. Take me. Take me instead.

PANDORA

Not *you*.

She walks to Megan. Touches her chin. Looks into her eyes. Smiles. Then touches her belly.

PANDORA (CONT'D)

You will have a daughter.

Elizabeth runs to Megan.

ELIZABETH

Megan, you must not.

MEGAN

Don't look at me and tell me what I must not do. He gave me everything.

ELIZABETH

He gave you freedom. We are free, in this moment. We have not been free for four hundred years.

MEGAN

Who the fuck wants freedom? I want my brother back.
She's nothing now. She's a speck. She's an idea. She's the thing I want most in the world.

ELIZABETH

She's not a thing.

MEGAN

Look at you. You really are a little girl. That's all you've ever been.

ELIZABETH

Not anymore.

MEGAN

I'm sorry, Luther.

You can't have her. You can't have any of us. Your dealings with the Powers are over!

Pandora advances. Megan cowers. Elizabeth joins her.

ELIZABETH

Let her be, our debts are paid. You will close your doors, and you will take your kingdom far from this world. *(to Megan)* Say it with me. We have paid in blood, we have paid with sweat and with bones ground into dust.... Say it with me...

Megan finally joins in, echoing Elizabeth as she speaks- and it starts to work. Pandora is driven back.

ELIZABETH/MEGAN

(off-sync)

You have paid in the coin of light, you have paid in the breath of promise... We have paid with our hearts, and we have paid sufficient... you have paid with your fingers and our bargain is come to an end....

PANDORA

(overlapping)

Think what you are doing. If you continue, if you force me to close my doors, you will strand yourself here, you and these two Christians.

ELIZABETH/MEGAN

By the blood of my heart, I release you. By the sweat of my arm, I release you. By the wheat that has grown from the mulch of my bones ground to dust... I release you.

PANDORA

You will all die here.

Pandora snarls, and begins to recede. As she does, several doors are heard slamming shut. She begins to change, to lose her human shape.

ELIZABETH/MEGAN

As the light of the sky is free, you are free. As the songs of the air are free, you are free. As a thought is gone in the fullness of time we are free from each other.

Pandora has lost the power of speech. She howls like an animal, like the sea.

ELIZABETH/MEGAN (CONT'D)

(by the end they should be fully synced up.)

As a thought is gone in the fullness of time we are free from each other. As a thought is gone in the fullness of time we are free from each other.

*She is gone. A breath.
The world turns dangerously dark and cold.
Timothy is awake.*

TIMOTHY

Megan?

MEGAN

It's over.

ELIZABETH

You must go, you must go now. I can keep it open for a little while longer, but you must run. You must not stop.

MEGAN

Come with us.

TIMOTHY

The door is closing-

ELIZABETH

There are other ways for those that know how to use them. Longer, and much less certain. You must trust me. I have done nothing good in four centuries- I must see you home alive. Now go!

Megan grabs Timothy's hand, and they run. There is a sound of running water, of breaking ice, of bird song. Elizabeth, the Whiteling, Eileen and Luther are gone.

And there is a door.

And it opens.

Megan and Timothy go through.

ACT 2 SCENE 7

The little park. Timothy is sitting on a bench. The weather is warm again. Megan enters. She sits next to him. He gets up to retrieve something out of his pocket. It's his ring.

TIMOTHY

I brought this for you. Here.

She takes the ring. Long pause.

TIMOTHY (CONT'D)

Do you have mine?

MEGAN

Oh. Yes, sorry. Definitely. Totally.

She twists her engagement ring off her finger, and drops it in Timothy's hand.

TIMOTHY

You must be very happy now.

MEGAN

Happy?

TIMOTHY

You can marry somebody you don't hate. Anyone you liked. You could marry... that guy. Or that guy. Or the counter guy in the café, he's pretty cute.

MEGAN

He's got good hair.

TIMOTHY

The soul patch, not so much.

MEGAN

No.

TIMOTHY

You could even marry somebody you loved. And you could have as many babies as you like, and you could keep them all. So. That's nice.

Silence.

MEGAN

I didn't-

TIMOTHY

I came here to say- Um. Sorry. Go ahead.

MEGAN

I didn't hate you, Timothy. I just- didn't know what I was I doing.

TIMOTHY

No?

MEGAN

No, ok, I did. But I didn't hate you... I hated something. I kind of thought it was you, but it wasn't.

TIMOTHY

You, um, you usually hid it well. But sometimes you'd look at me and there'd be this... disgust... in your eyes. I thought I was being paranoid.

MEGAN

It's all my fault. I wanted a baby, I felt-

TIMOTHY

Entitled?

MEGAN

You hate the people you lie to. It isn't because they aren't ok people. Or great people. Great people.

TIMOTHY

Well, you were a whore, and I was your trick. As I understand it, that's how these things go.

MEGAN

Is that what you came here to say?

TIMOTHY

No. No, not at all. I came her to say I'm sorry. See, I'm not an ok person. I'm the opposite. I'm vile, and violent, and made out of hate.

MEGAN

Well, no more than most. The circumstances were extreme.

TIMOTHY

So were yours.

MEGAN

Neither of us behaved- well.

TIMOTHY

Tomato, tomahto.

MEGAN

The whole thing is off.

Silence.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

Have you heard anything?

TIMOTHY

I expect it will take her a long time. If she makes it at all.

Silence.

MEGAN

Are you staying in town?

TIMOTHY

No. I'm going to go back east. There's nothing for me here.

MEGAN

But- the university-

TIMOTHY

Austin isn't the center of magic anymore. There is no center of magic anymore. Hardly any of my spells work, and soon, none. I'm going to have to get interested in something else. Philosophy. Or finance.

MEGAN

It sounds like a nightmare.

TIMOTHY

It is. It's a nightmare I had recurringly when I was fifteen.

MEGAN

So, you haven't bought any plane tickets yet, or anything?

TIMOTHY

Not yet.

MEGAN

Maybe you'll come to the funeral? It's Sunday.

TIMOTHY

You're having a funeral?

MEGAN

We bought two big, shiny oak caskets, and we're going to burn them. Like Vikings.

*Elizabeth is heard singing. It is funeral music.
She is there, in another space.*

MEGAN (CONT'D)

You don't have to come, but Luther would have wanted me to ask you.

TIMOTHY

Two?

MEGAN

For Eileen.

It is getting dark. Timothy stands.

TIMOTHY

Well.

*He sticks out his hand. Megan takes it, and then gets up.
They hold hands for entirely too long.*

MEGAN

Will I see you there?

TIMOTHY

No.

He takes his hand away.

MEGAN

No?

TIMOTHY

I can't. This is the last time I can see you. I'm sorry.

He turns to go.

MEGAN

Then I'd better tell you now.

Timothy turns back. Pause. She changes her mind.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

I'm... sorry too.
I wish you luck. Luck always.

TIMOTHY

Thanks, Megan Powers. May you get your every wish, without me.

Timothy exits. Megan stands in the gathering dark, and unconsciously puts her hand to her belly.

Elizabeth is seen kneeling between the bodies of Luther and Eileen. The corpses are holding little boats, and the boats are holding little candles.

ELIZABETH

LET US BE KINDER THAN OUR WORDS
LET US FORGET WHAT WE DESERVE
IF IT'S AS THE EARTH HAS SAID IT IS
THEN LET US KEEP NO MORE PROMISES

She blows out both the candles, and kneels there for a moment in the little light. Somewhere, a baby is crying. Elizabeth's head jerks up, and she listens keenly. She stands, and begins to search. In a little while, she finds the source of the noise, and picks it up.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Hush, Master Joshie. Hush, hush. Dry, dry your beautiful eyes.

She bounces him up and down, then snaps her fingers. All at once, there is a light, bright and strong, for her to follow.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Come on. Let's get you home to your mother.

THE END