

FIGMENT

written by

Teddy McCormick

[teddyhwmccormick@gmail.com](mailto:teddyhwmccormick@gmail.com)  
(478) 238-3339

BLACK SCREEN

A young woman's voice.

VOICE

Of course there were rumors, but...  
I never asked her about them. I  
didn't really care enough to. I had  
her, and she had me, and for me,  
that was enough.

Beat.

VOICE (CONT'D)

Until it wasn't.

INT. FUNERAL - NIGHT

It's not a small church, but it's packed full.

At the front is a coffin with a woman in it, about 40.

Standing alone in front of the coffin is IONA, 12. She stares  
at her mother's body, deep breaths, fighting back tears.

At the back of the room, a dark figure enters.

His steps are light, but purposeful.

Each row of pews that he passes erupt into whispers.

"That isn't..." "What is he doing here?" "I can't believe he  
would ever..."

A thick black cloak trails behind him. He carries a small  
ebony cane, too short to be a walking stick.

As he nears the front, PETER, 45, and HEIDI, 52, both sitting  
in the front, notice him.

Peter is a bear of a man, with the hair to prove it. Heidi's  
eyes are a pure sapphire blue, and her breaths frost the air  
in front of her.

Peter gasps and snarls when he sees the newcomer. Instinct  
draws him to his feet, but Heidi pulls him back down.

HEIDI

This is not the place.

PETER  
(a little too loud)  
This is not his place.

The man ignores them, if he even hears them.  
He stands next to Iona, who doesn't notice him.  
Her breathing is faster now; the tears are coming.  
The man kneels next to her. We see his face: he is ISAAC, 42. His hair is neat, his face clean-shaven. His eyes are gentle now, but there's something dangerous hiding in them.

ISAAC  
You can cry.

That was all she needed. Iona bursts into tears.  
Isaac puts his arm around her, and she immediately turns into him, cries into his shoulder.  
Peter snarls again; this time Heidi tenses up, too.  
Isaac looks up at the body. Nods solemnly; "Goodbye."  
He stands, turns to the crowd.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
I'm aware most of you don't want me here. Thank you for allowing me to pay my respects regardless. I won't impose any longer.

Peter cools off, just a bit.

Isaac turns to Iona.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
Come. It's time for us to go.

Peter's eyes flare. Heidi's eyes are suddenly entirely blue. Iona is confused.

PETER  
Like hell!

Peter barrels towards Isaac, hairier than he was a moment ago, larger, more muscular. A cold wind blows around Heidi.

Iona is startled, afraid of them.

Shouts from the crowd - some afraid, some coming to join Peter.

Isaac pulls his cloak over himself and Iona, and it falls flat to the floor - they've both disappeared.

Peter yells, throws the cloak aside as if he expects to find Isaac and Iona flat as paper beneath it. He looks around, sniffs the air. Barrels out a side exit, several others on his heels.

SUPER: FIGMENT

Heidi closes her eyes, meditates for a beat. Then she follows after Peter, her feet never touching the ground.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - NIGHT

Isaac and Iona stand in the middle of an alley. Iona is confused, more than a little afraid.

Isaac kneels next to her. She doesn't pull away from him, but she doesn't accept his comfort like she did inside the church.

ISAAC

I'm sorry about all of this, but  
they wouldn't have understood.

IONA

I don't understand.

Isaac chuckles.

ISAAC

I know. I was a friend of your  
mother's, a long time ago, but I  
was not a friend of her friends.

Iona furrows her brow.

IONA

Are you kidnapping me?

ISAAC

If I have to.

Iona takes a step back.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

I made your mother a promise. This  
will be much easier if you trust  
me. At least for a little while.

Iona makes a face somewhere between "WTF" and "Hell no."

IONA  
No! I don't know who you are, and-

Isaac waves his hand, and though Iona's mouth keeps moving, no sound comes out. She stops, surprised.

Isaac holds up a finger, looks around.

He glances back at her.

ISAAC  
I can tell you who killed her.

Iona hesitates, tests her voice. It works.

IONA  
H... Heidi said it was you.

ISAAC  
You don't believe her, though.

Iona stares at Isaac.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Peter, looking as much beast as man, leads a small crowd charging down the street. Heidi flies just above them, arms outstretched; a rippling shroud surrounds them.

They run past a few people strolling down the sidewalk; the people don't react at all, apparently unable to see them.

Peter stops, sniffs the air. He turns, charges into an alleyway.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - CONTINUOUS

The same alleyway Isaac and Iona were in, but they're nowhere to be found.

Peter sniffs around.

Heidi floats by his side. The others start to follow them, but Peter holds up a hand, and they wait.

He sniffs the air again. He's got something.

ISAAC (O.S.)  
Getting warmer.

Peter and Heidi wheel around. The alleyway behind them now stretches on forever; there's no sign of the others. Isaac stands about where the alley exit used to be.

PETER  
Where is she?!

ISAAC  
She's safe. I'll take good care of her, you have my word.

Light streams from Heidi's mouth as she speaks.

HEIDI  
You overestimate our patience.

ISAAC  
I made Penny a promise, and I-

PETER  
You have no right to even speak her name! The things you've done... the suffering you've caused!

Isaac darkens. His voice is icy.

ISAAC  
You know nothing of suffering.

HEIDI  
Enough.

She waves her hand, and half a dozen razor-sharp icicles shoot towards Isaac.

They pass through him, and he flickers and disappears, along with the endless alleyway.

The alley exit shimmers into view, revealing Heidi just speared several members of her own group.

HEIDI (CONT'D)  
No...

Peter roars, swings his claws wildly at what appears to be thin air.

Isaac appears, barely dodging Peter's attack.

Peter presses the attack, with Isaac only staying a hair's breadth ahead of him.

PETER  
Where... is... she?!

Issac ducks under one of Peter's attacks, lays a hand on his chest. Peter collapses to the ground, paralyzed.

HEIDI  
Peter!

Heidi waves her arms in an intricate pattern, and a wave of force slams down over most of the alleyway.

The impact crushes dumpsters and collapses a fire escape, only leaving Peter untouched.

Isaac, though, sinks into the ground, disappears, apparently avoiding the attack.

Heidi flies to Peter, but he's already back on his feet.

HEIDI (CONT'D)  
Where did he go?

Peter sniffs the air desperately.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Isaac and Iona stand across the street, looking at them. A shimmering barrier, like the one Heidi made around the crowd, surrounds them.

A bestial ROAR comes from the alley. Iona shudders.

IONA  
Are they okay?

ISAAC  
I think Heidi killed one of them.  
The others will recover.

Iona's eyes widen.

IONA  
Heidi wouldn't-

ISAAC  
It wasn't on purpose. Come.

They walk away.

INT. FAMILY RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Isaac and Iona sit across from each other, a plate of nachos between them.

Iona chows down, but Isaac just stares at her.

Beat.

ISAAC  
You look just like her at your age.

IONA  
That's what everyone says.

Isaac nods.

Beat.

ISAAC  
How much have they told you about  
me?

Iona hesitates. Keeps eating, but slower.

IONA  
You're a bad guy.

ISAAC  
Penny said this?

Iona nods.

IONA  
You used to be a good guy but you  
were corrupted by power.

Isaac sighs.

ISAAC  
I understand how it looked, but...

Beat.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
I am not a bad guy. We wanted the  
same things, your mother and me.

IONA  
I know. She said that too.

Isaac's surprised.

ISAAC  
Did she?

IONA  
She said you did the wrong things  
for the right reasons.

Isaac laughs.

ISAAC

That is... an apt summary. But enough about me. She was teaching you?

Iona stops eating. This is more serious; she's proud.

IONA

Yes.

ISAAC

Conjuration, I assume?

She nods.

IONA

And Heidi was teaching me the Nordzauber.

ISAAC

I see. What about your fundamentals?

IONA

I know the Twelve Words and eight of the Nine Runes.

ISAAC

Your Gebaren?

Iona looks away.

IONA

Heidi says they're sloppy.

ISAAC

How old are you? Twelve?

IONA

I'm thirteen in a month.

ISAAC

That's four years and eleven months too old to be sloppy with your gestures. We'll start there.

Iona groans.

IONA

But the Gebaren aren't even important for conjuration!

ISAAC

They are for Nordzauber. And  
besides, I'm not teaching you  
conjunction.

IONA

But mom-

ISAAC

Penny is dead.

It hangs there for a beat. It's unsettling for both of them.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

If I were half the conjurer she  
was, that's what I'd teach you. But  
I'm an illusionist, so you'll study  
illusion.

Beat.

IONA

Fine.

INT. ISAAC'S APARTMENT - MORNING

The apartment is sparse. A worn sofa faces an empty TV wall mount and a bookcase, crammed with everything from pop fiction to ancient tomes.

The walls have various runes and sigils written all over them in ash. A small bag of charcoal leans against one wall.

Isaac carries a sleeping Iona inside. He lays her down on the sofa.

He yawns, stretches. Grabs a cold old cup of coffee from off the counter, takes a sip.

He carries the coffee with him. Grabs a briquette from the bag of charcoal, starts scribbling on the wall.

EXT. ENCHANTED FOREST - DAY

Iona wakes up on a bed of flowers, with a blanket of rich furs.

ISAAC (O.S.)

...Not like I've lost anything  
while I was gone.

WOMAN'S VOICE

But you have, Isaac. Nature abhors a vacuum. You're talking as if you can just walk back into things as if you'd never left.

ISAAC

And you're talking as if everyone's already forgotten I ever existed.

Iona stands, unsteady on the soft moss beneath her feet.

WOMAN'S VOICE

They may have.

Isaac snorts.

ISAAC

Not after last night.

Iona walks towards the voices. She sees Isaac sitting in front of a small waterfall, facing it.

WOMAN'S VOICE

Speaking of.

As she gets closer, Iona sees FIG, a woman, about 30. Her eyes are covered by a narrow veil, and she has living, writhing snakes instead of hair. She wears torn jeans and a baggy graphic tee.

Isaac turns and sees Iona.

ISAAC

Good morning.

Iona can't take her eyes off Fig.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Iona, this is Fig. She's...

He looks at Fig.

FIG

I'm an old friend of Isaac's. Nice to meet you, Iona.

Fig speaks very casually with Iona; it's a subtle thing, but she talks to Iona as an equal, rather than a child.

IONA

...Where are we?

Isaac laughs.

ISAAC  
We're home. Would you prefer  
something else?

Iona just stares.

IONA  
Am I dreaming?

Isaac waves a hand, and the forest disappears. In its place is the apartment from earlier. Fig and the waterfall disappear.

Iona stumbles back, but otherwise takes it in stride.

Isaac waves his hand again, and the forest - and Fig - comes back.

ISAAC  
In a week or two, you'll be making  
your own decorations.

Fig gives him a disbelieving look. Iona's just overwhelmed.

FIG  
That may be a little optimistic.

ISAAC  
She's got a great teacher.

Iona tears up.

IONA  
Can you turn it off?

ISAAC  
What?

FIG  
Isaac, she's overwhelmed.

ISAAC  
She's just going through a lot  
right now.

FIG  
Exactly!

ISAAC  
She'll be fine.

Iona starts crying.

FIG  
I'm coming.

ISAAC  
Fig, you don't have to-

Fig disappears.

Isaac only now realizes how upset Iona is.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
Damn it.

He waves a hand, the forest disappears, and they're back...

INT. ISAAC'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

...in the middle of the kitchenette.

Iona just stands there, crying.

ISAAC  
I know this is a lot, but the fact  
of the matter is...

He stares at her. He's out of his depth.

Beat.

INT. BATHROOM - EVENING

Iona stares at herself in the mirror.

Her eyes are red from tears, but she's not crying now. She's actually pretty stone-faced now. A little angry.

She takes a breath. Leaves the bathroom.

INT. ISAAC'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Isaac stares out a window. Doesn't react to Iona.

IONA  
Who did it?

ISAAC  
There's time for that later.

IONA  
You said you'd tell me.

ISAAC  
Later.

IONA  
Now!

Isaac turns to look at her. The entire room darkens with his mood.

ISAAC  
That is the last time you will take  
that tone with me.

Iona stumbles backwards as shadows tug at her.

Then, just like that, the room is bright again, and Isaac looks out the window.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
I didn't ask for this either, you  
know.

IONA  
What do you mean?

Isaac sighs.

ISAAC  
I've never taken an apprentice  
before. Had no intention to. It's  
all the worst parts of parenting  
without the companionship.

He looks at her.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
We killed our master, you know.

Beat. Iona nods.

IONA  
Harold of the Blue Sky. He was a  
bad guy.

ISAAC  
I'm not exactly a guardian of  
justice myself. And you're my  
rival's daughter.

He looks back out the window.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
I've been trying to figure out how  
well to teach you.  
(MORE)

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Trying to decide what gaps I can leave in your training that you're the least likely to notice and that are most likely to protect me in thirty years.

IONA

I know how it normally works. Mom told me.

Isaac sighs.

He looks at her again.

ISAAC

Do me a favor. Don't kill me until I've taught you everything.

IONA

...Everything?

Beat.

Isaac gestures at the sofa. Iona sees a suit and jacket in her size draped over the back.

ISAAC

Get dressed. We have to play the game.

INT. FLAMEL'S - NIGHT

An upscale wizard's club. Think jazz club meets Hogwarts. The band is just a bunch of hovering instruments playing themselves, and all the lights are candles. The bartender has scales.

The customers vary wildly. A nine-foot tall horned ogre shares a table with a pair of heavily-muscled dwarves with ornately braided beards.

A woman with the lower half of a snake coils in one corner, talking with a sharply-dressed wizard in a tailored suit. A boy about 17 years old dressed in matching attire stands off to one side.

A turbaned yogi hovers at a table with a pointy-hatted wizard who can't be younger than 150.

And in the far corner, Peter sits with a man and a woman who look as burly and bestial as he does.

Isaac and Iona walk in. Everyone they pass gives them full attention, though attitudes vary between "I can't believe it's really him" and "That son of a bitch."

Peter doesn't notice Isaac yet, but Isaac notices Peter. He nudges Iona, gestures.

ISAAC  
Is he going to be a problem?

Iona sees him. Stiffens.

IONA  
Yes.

ISAAC  
Thought so.

IONA  
We should go.

ISAAC  
Not unless you want a target on our backs.

IONA  
But if we stay-

Isaac drags her onward. They sit at a table in the middle of everything. Isaac sits tall, but Iona looks around, nervous.

ISAAC  
Stop that. You're making everyone think you're weak.

IONA  
I am.

ISAAC  
All the more reason not to let them think it.

She stops looking around, but she still looks nervous.

Isaac looks at her. Swears under his breath.

He stands. Snaps at the "band."

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
(loud)  
Hey. Hey!

The band stops.

Everyone stares at him. Iona is frozen and pale.

Peter notices them for the first time. There's murder in his eyes. He's instantly a little hairier.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Don't you know anything a little more modern? How about... how about some Norah Jones?

Beat. The instruments turn towards the bartender. She looks at Isaac, then back to the instruments. Nods.

They play some Norah Jones.

Isaac sits down. Looks at Iona's panicked face, leans in.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

The Silver Rule of illusions: when you're weak, project strength.

IONA

You're not weak.

ISAAC

I've got a weak spot the size of a twelve-year-old girl. And you're making it bigger with each panicked glance around the room.

Iona sits up straighter, stares dead ahead.

IONA

You'll protect me, though.

Isaac shrugs.

ISAAC

I won't die for you.

A ghoulish man (sharp teeth, claws) at the next table stands up. Isaac stares at him.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

(not so fast, asshole)

I will kill for you.

Beat. Isaac and the ghoul stare at each other.

The ghoul sits back down.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

But I won't die for you.

Peter slams to his feet, knocking over the table. He and his companions are in full beast-mode.

PETER

He can't take all of us. Not all at once.

A few others around the room shift into more favorable positions. The combat-averse move towards the exits.

IONA

Peter, wait-

Isaac holds up a hand to quiet her.

He props his feet up on the table.

ISAAC

No. I can't kill all of you. I can kill about half of you, though. Give or take.

He glances around the room.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

I'd say flip a coin, but it won't be random. It'll be the first half. So what do you say? Who's willing to die so someone else can kill me?

Peter takes a step forward, but before he can get further, the ghoul leaps, twisting in the air to let all four clawed limbs point towards Isaac.

Iona SCREAMS.

Isaac snaps his fingers, and the ghoul is just gone. No explosion, no puff of smoke, just gone.

Peter growls, but everyone else in the room backs down, goes back to their conversations.

Peter's friends hold him back; he shrugs them off and storms out the exit.

Iona's breathing heavy, but she keeps it together.

Isaac nods at the bartender, who comes over to his table.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Rum, whatever you have that's darkest. She'll have water.

The bartender nods, turns to leave.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Oh, and?

She turns around.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

If I ever see the the he-wolf or  
his buddies in here again, I'll  
burn the place down.

Beat. The bartender's breath catches. Iona's eyes widen.

BARTENDER

Yes, sir.

Beat. She goes back to the bar.

ISAAC

God, I missed this.

EXT. THE STARRY VOID

Something like deep space. Stars and galaxies everywhere.  
It's beautiful and vast.

In the galaxies, a woman's figure.

The sound of a HOWLING WIND grows out of nothing until it's  
deafening.

CUT TO:

INT. ISAAC'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The apartment is quiet. Iona lies on the sofa, eyes open.

She sits up.

EXT. ISAAC'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The apartment building is one of the crummier buildings in  
one of the nicer parts of town.

Iona slides out the front door. She looks around, nervous.

She walks down the street, but quickly switches to running.

She disappears around a corner.

Isaac steps outside. Sits on the front steps.

Iona runs past from the opposite side of the screen. Runs past Isaac without noticing. Disappears again.

Beat.

She reappears from the side she left. Walks up to Isaac. Looks around.

Isaac gets up, walks inside.

Beat.

Iona follows.

INT. ISAAC'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Isaac holds the door for Iona. Iona's scared, but also angry.

IONA  
You can't... I was just...

ISAAC  
I told you I'd kidnap you if I needed to.

Iona's eyes glow blue, and a white glow trails from her hand as she gestures angrily.

IONA  
Heidi was right about you, wasn't she?

Isaac is not amused.

ISAAC  
You're going to get hurt if you keep up like this.

IONA  
What are you going to do? Disappear me like you did that ghoul?

ISAAC  
This ghoul?

The ghoul is standing behind her. She jumps back, hands up in a defensive gesture.

Isaac SNAPS, and the ghoul disappears. SNAPS again, and it reappears. SNAP, disappear. SNAP, reappear.

Iona's too confused to keep her anger going.

She reaches for the ghoul. Her hand goes right through him.  
Isaac is still pissed.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
Individuals can be tough. But  
crowds are easy to manipulate.

IONA  
...He was there before us, though.

ISAAC  
And?

IONA  
But you...

She looks at him in a new light. She realizes how much she  
doesn't know.

IONA (CONT'D)  
And the bartender?

ISAAC  
What about her?

IONA  
She looked really scared when you  
said you'd burn down the bar, but  
that was all-

ISAAC  
I carved a rune in the basement  
about twenty years ago. I checked,  
it's still there.

IONA  
But you wouldn't really-

ISAAC  
You seem to have gotten the wrong  
impression. Everything your mother  
said about me was true.  
Everything... about half of what  
Heidi and Peter said about me was  
true.

He steps closer to her. Towers over her.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
I wouldn't burn the bar down? I've  
done it before. That very one.  
(MORE)

ISAAC (CONT'D)

It was crowded that night, which  
meant the man hunting me wasn't  
able to get out. The man your  
mother sent.

He kneels, gets in her face. Iona's close to tears.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Do you know what he would have done  
if the tables were turned? Nothing.  
He would've let me live if it meant  
killing bystanders. And that's why  
he's dead and I'm not.

He takes a breath. Calms down a little.

Swears under his breath.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Maybe that makes me the bad guy.  
But I'm alive, and I'll do what it  
takes to stay that way.

Iona's face hardens.

IONA

I won't. I'd rather die than do  
something like that.

Beat. They stare at each other.

ISAAC

You might.

Beat.

Isaac walks back to his bedroom.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

You might.

INT. ISAAC'S WORKSHOP - DAY

An old auto body shop that's been mostly cleaned out. One corner still has a handful of tools and parts.

One of the longer walls has been covered, floor to ceiling, in bookshelves. One of those rolling library ladders is mounted to it.

An old schooldesk sits in the middle of empty floorspace, a whiteboard floating a few feet in front of it.

Isaac and Iona stand off to one side of the room, on some padded floor mats. They're both wearing exercise clothes.

Iona performs a complex gesture.

Isaac slaps her arm with a thin baton. Iona winces.

ISAAC  
Sloppy.

Iona continues. Isaac slaps her again. She grits her teeth.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
Elbows up!

Iona takes a breath, tries again. Isaac slaps her again. She's not able to hold back a cry of pain.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
Elbows up!

Iona's eyes are watering, but she tries again.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
Finally! Keep going!

She does. He slaps her again. She grits her teeth and takes it, but tears run down her face.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
Elbows up!

IONA  
I'm trying, okay?!

ISAAC  
Oh! You're trying. That's fine, then. I thought we were just goofing off and wasting time. As long as you're trying, your opponent won't mind if your spell fails, they'll just let you keep trying until you get it right.

Iona gives one of those exaggerated sighs only a kid her age can do properly.

IONA  
You know what I mean!

Isaac slaps her arm again. She cries in pain.

ISAAC

There are a thousand ways you may die one day, but I swear to you, it will not be because I let you get sloppy because "you were trying."

Iona glares at him. Maybe she didn't before, maybe she won't in an hour, but at this moment, she hates him.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Again!

A COUGH.

Fig stands in a far doorway, backpack casually hanging from her shoulder.

Isaac nods at her. Turns back to Iona.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Pushups. Go.

Iona grumbles, gets down into pushup position as slowly as possible.

CUT TO:

Isaac and Fig stand in one corner, watching Iona do the sloppiest, laziest pushups.

FIG

You've got to be harder on her.

ISAAC

Penny raised her soft. I'm easing her into it.

Fig shrugs.

FIG

Harold would've hurt you for pushups like that.

ISAAC

I've still got the scars. Let me worry about my apprentice.

FIG

I'm worried about you. She's gonna get you killed. Just kill her now.

Isaac laughs.

ISAAC  
You're not worried about me.

Fig scowls.

FIG  
Of course I am. I'll be so bored  
when you die.

There's a firmness in her voice; she's not entirely joking.

ISAAC  
I'd hate to bore you.

He walks over to Iona. Fig follows.

Iona pretends she's been trying harder as Isaac approaches, but Isaac snaps to get her attention.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
Enough. Up.

Iona stands.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
This is Fig. You talked to her  
before.

FIG  
Pleased to meet you.

ISAAC  
She's my...

He looks at her.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
Mother?

Iona stares at the teenage-looking Fig. Fig smirks.

FIG  
He's adopted.

Iona's eyes widen.

IONA  
So who were your real parents?

FIG  
Some assholes. Who cares about  
them?

IONA  
Isaac might!

ISAAC  
(teacher voice)  
Hey.

IONA  
Sorry. My master might.

ISAAC  
I don't.

He says that, but there's a something in his eyes that does.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
Put that behind me a long time ago.

FIG  
Don't you have some Gebaren to work  
on?

Iona groans.

ISAAC  
We'll take a break for now. Let's  
get some lunch, and then we've got  
an errand.

Fig snarls, but he ignores her. Iona runs off before he  
changes his mind.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - EVENING

Heidi and Peter stand in front of PENELOPE REMEMBRANCE  
HUGHES' grave, along with UPDIKE, 57.

Updike is a sallow-looking older man you'd be forgiven for  
thinking was sculpted out of wax. His face is tattooed to  
look like a skull.

Peter seethes with grief and anger. Heidi's just sad. Updike  
is emotionless.

UPDIKE  
I thought he died.

HEIDI  
Twice.

PETER  
Third time's the charm.

Updike looks at them.

UPDIKE  
No, I really thought he died.

Peter grimaces.

PETER  
You think it's necromancy?

Updike shrugs. Heidi scoffs.

HEIDI  
He's an illusionist. Faking things  
is what he does. There are days I  
doubt Harold himself is actually  
dead.

UPDIKE  
Regardless, each day that passes is  
another he can spend indoctrinating  
her.

PETER  
She's strong. She won't bend so  
easily.

Heidi snarls.

HEIDI  
She went with him willingly enough.

PETER  
He hardly gave her a choice.

UPDIKE  
I just hope he truly intends to  
take back his place. If he goes to  
ground again, she may be truly  
lost.

Peter shakes his head.

PETER  
He faked his death because he knew  
we'd find him if we kept looking.  
It's not a question of if we find  
them, it's when.

ISAAC (O.S.)  
I'm afraid you have the wrong  
impression.

Heidi and Updike start. Peter looks at them, confused.

Isaac walks over from a nearby copse of trees. Peter doesn't react at all.

PETER

What? What's going on?

Heidi glares at Isaac.

HEIDI

What did you do to Peter?

PETER

Who? It's him?! Where?

ISAAC

I didn't do anything to him. I'm just standing in his blind spot.

UPDIKE

Why let us see you? You think we won't kill you?

Peter gets into a fighting stance, facing generally towards Isaac, but he still can't see Isaac, and that spooks him.

ISAAC

Because you're reasonable. You wouldn't try to kill me just for trying to make peace.

Icy claws form over Heidi's fingers.

HEIDI

Want to bet?

ISAAC

I have no intention of hiding.

HEIDI

Except from Peter.

Isaac gives her an annoyed look.

ISAAC

I made certain promises when I was young. Promises I intend to fulfill. That doesn't mean we have to be enemies.

UPDIKE

I'm afraid it does, son.

ISAAC  
Think about what's best for Iona.  
She'd like to be able to see you.

HEIDI  
You wouldn't let us near her.

ISAAC  
No?

He whistles. Iona and Fig step out of the copse, but don't come nearer.

PETER  
Iona!

She waves, but Fig steps in front of her.

Heidi gives Isaac a disbelieving look.

HEIDI  
You're either braver than I thought, or far stupider.

She waves her hand, and a gigantic icicle spears through Isaac's chest... right through, as though he were a ghost.

Or an illusion.

ISAAC  
So which is it? Brave, or stupid?

Heidi swears in some Germanic language.

UPDIKE  
Son of a bitch.

PETER  
What happened?

The camera PANS around to view the scene from the opposite direction, revealing Isaac - the real Isaac - barely ducked out of the way of the icicle. He leans against it, sweating.

Iona and Fig watch from the copse, though Iona looks confused.

HEIDI  
It was all an illusion. He was never here.

Isaac and his illusion speak simultaneously. His voice isn't the least bit stressed.

ISAAC  
I didn't kill Penny.

HEIDI  
Then who did?

PETER  
He has to be close, doesn't he? You  
can't spin an illusion from across  
the city!

Updike scoffs.

UPDIKE  
If anyone can, it's him.

The real Isaac sighs, stands up straight. Dusts himself off.

ISAAC  
I'll be in touch.

His illusion disappears.

HEIDI  
Fan out. Shoot a flare if you find  
him.

They nod, and each one runs in a different direction.

Updike runs right past Iona and Fig. Fig covers Iona's mouth as he does.

Isaac shakes his head. Morons.

He walks over to Iona and Fig. They watch as Heidi, Peter, and Updike disappear in their different directions.

ISAAC  
What did you learn here?

IONA  
I don't...

She thinks.

IONA (CONT'D)  
I feel like you want me to say  
"Don't trust them," but-

Isaac laughs.

ISAAC  
That's not a bad lesson, but it's  
not what I was going for.

Fig pats Iona's head, ruffles her hair.

FIG

Show people what they expect to see, and they won't ask questions.

ISAAC

Despite what Heidi may have believed, I came with honest intentions. But when it was clear all they wanted to do was fight, I let them think they'd been right all along.

IONA

And it almost got you killed.

ISAAC

"Almost" is a bit much. But yes, trusting others is always a risk, especially for an illusionist.

IONA

I trust Heidi. And Peter.

FIG

Then you're a fool.

Isaac holds up a hand; "Cool it."

ISAAC

I'm sure they earned that trust. But Penny's death will have ramifications beyond your understanding, and you need to prepare yourself for what may come.

EXT. ROOFTOP - DAY

HAZY, appears 35, looks out over the city. He wears a sharply tailored suit, and has a smokeless blue flame where his left hand should be.

He looks at his "hand." Colors ripple through it.

A COUGH behind him.

Hazy turns, sees Isaac and Iona standing nearby. Isaac smiles.

Hazy sighs. His hand goes back to blue as he turns back to the city.

HAZY  
Did you have to bring her?

Isaac considers.

ISAAC  
Do I have to bring her anywhere?  
She's my apprentice, I choose to  
bring her.

Hazy rolls his eyes. Isaac and Iona move up next to him.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
Ohhh. It's been a part of you so  
long, I'd forgotten. Apologies.

He turns to Iona.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
Your mother took his hand.

HAZY  
Made a candle out of it.

IONA  
(what the fuck)  
That was a real hand?

Hazy grunts. Isaac laughs.

HAZY  
I assume you have a reason for  
coming here?

ISAAC  
Iona's been having trouble with her  
Gebaren.

HAZY  
Oh, fuck you.

ISAAC  
(to Iona)  
Hazy studied alongside Heidi. A  
couple years her senior, if I  
recall.

IONA  
Did you all... know each other?

Isaac and Hazy laugh - Hazy's is a little bitter.

ISAAC  
It's a bit of a tangled web. Show  
him your Salutation.

Iona steps back and moves her arms and hands in a complicated series of gestures. Hazy watches side-eyed.

HAZY  
If you're not going to try, I'm  
just going to leave.

Iona freezes, looks at Isaac. He glares daggers: "Don't embarrass me."

Iona takes a deep breath, straightens her back. Begins again.

Hazy keeps watching as he talks. Iona does her best to keep up with his commands as he gives them.

HAZY (CONT'D)  
Stop. Do it mirrored. Backwards  
from there. No, still mirrored.  
Yes... Now back to normal. Stand on  
one foot, I'm not joking. Okay.  
Both feet, eyes closed.

Iona finishes. Looks to Hazy, then Isaac. Isaac looks at Hazy.

Hazy considers.

HAZY (CONT'D)  
How long have you been teaching  
her?

ISAAC  
Six months, now. But she studied  
under Heidi for...

IONA  
About three years.

HAZY  
Three years with Heidi and you look  
like that? Mist.

IONA  
Is "mist" good or bad?

Hazy sighs. Looks at Isaac. Nods away.

Iona rolls her eyes, looks out at the city, as Isaac and Hazy step away to talk privately.

As they depart, Iona mutters an incantation. Her ears flash for a beat, which she hides with a carefree hair toss.

She hears them as clearly as if she was standing next to them.

HAZY  
I'm a busy man.

ISAAC  
I don't begrudge you taking care of things in my absence. But now that I'm back, I think you'll find you have more free time.

HAZY  
You arrogant son of a bitch. I'm not some little peon you get to-

A brilliant FLASH, and Hazy hurtles over the edge of the building.

Iona gasps.

Isaac reaches out a hand, and Hazy freezes in midair, then rockets back to land at Isaac's feet.

He hits the ground hard, coughs and gasps. His clothes are singed, his eyes bloodshot.

Isaac kneels, leans in close, whispers; Iona still hears.

ISAAC  
You think my time away has dulled me.

HAZY  
Not at all-

ISAAC  
If you didn't need a hand to teach her, I'd take your other one right now. You know that.

HAZY  
I do, I do, I'm sorry-

Isaac stands.

ISAAC  
Will you teach her, or not?

HAZY

I will. I swear it. She'll be  
better than Heidi. Better than you,  
if you want it.

ISAAC

I want it.

HAZY

It's done. It's done.

Isaac nods. Looks at Iona, and they both head for the stairs.  
Iona's eyes linger on Hazy as she departs: "Sorry."

INT. STAIRS - CONTINUOUS

Iona walks behind Isaac. Silence for a beat.

IONA

Why is it so important that I  
master the Gebaren?

ISAAC

I told you, I'm not teaching you  
conjuring.

IONA

But they're not important for  
illusions either. Like, more  
important than conjuring, sure, but  
it seems like you really want me to  
master them-

Isaac stops. So does Iona.

He doesn't turn around.

IONA (CONT'D)

I get it. You're my master and I  
shouldn't question you. Fine.

He looks at her.

ISAAC

What did your mother teach you  
about the Deep Magic?

IONA

It's... I mean, it's bad, duh. It's  
old and weird and uses up your soul  
or something.

ISAAC  
I figured.

He keeps walking.

IONA  
Wait, why?

A beat. She runs behind him.

IONA (CONT'D)  
Isaa... sir! Why do you ask?

INT. ISAAC'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Isaac and Fig stand in front of a bookshelf, arguing quietly. Iona sits nearby, eating peanut butter from the jar, listening intently.

ISAAC  
She's not ready.

FIG  
When is she going to be?

Isaac snorts.

FIG (CONT'D)  
So why not now?

ISAAC  
The longer we can put it off-

FIG  
The more risk.

She looks at Iona.

FIG (CONT'D)  
She's probably seen it already.

ISAAC  
She hasn't seen anything.

Iona coughs politely.

IONA  
Seen what?

Isaac doesn't bother looking at her.

ISAAC  
You'd know.

FIG  
(confident)  
Death. Hades. The Other Place.

IONA  
Um...

Fig scoffs. Looks back to Isaac.

FIG  
Even if she had, she wouldn't know  
how to process it. It took you  
forever the first time. Look:

She reaches a hand towards Iona. Iona lurches forward and up, hovers in the air. Her limbs go slack and her eyes roll into her head.

ISAAC  
Don't do that.

But Fig's in the zone now. She moves her fingers gently, like she's trying to take apart a spiderweb without breaking it.

As she does, the whites of Iona's eyes change color. Black, red, green, black again. Then they fade from pitch black to a vast black speckled with light, like a sky full of stars.

Isaac inhales. Fuck.

FIG  
She's got it bad.

ISAAC  
She doesn't "got it bad." She's  
just "got it." There's time.

FIG  
Not a lot.

ISAAC  
Nothing's a lot of time to you.  
You're immortal.

Fig shrugs. Shakes out her hands, and Iona drifts back to her seat.

Iona shakes her head, looks around confused.

IONA  
Did someone just, like... what?

Isaac looks at her. Looks at Fig.

Looks back at Iona.

IONA (CONT'D)  
I'm getting really tired of all the  
secrets and shit.

Isaac glares.

IONA (CONT'D)  
...Sir.

Beat.

ISAAC  
Harold taught us everything we  
knew. If we wanted to beat him, we  
needed something he wasn't prepared  
for. I found it. And you'll learn  
it. You'll learn all about it.

He looks at Fig.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
But not yet.

He goes to his room.

Fig watches him go, then sits next to Iona.

FIG  
Do you trust him?

IONA  
He's my master.

FIG  
Meaning...?

IONA  
I don't know.

Fig picks Iona's peanut butter up off the floor. Sticks her finger in the jar and eats some.

FIG  
(mouth full)  
You can trust him or you can not  
trust him. But "I don't know" will  
get you killed.

IONA  
So will trusting him. Or not  
trusting him.

Fig smiles.

IONA (CONT'D)  
Can I ask you a question?

FIG  
Would you believe my answer?

IONA  
Did he kill my mother?

FIG  
No.

Iona stares at her.

Fig shrugs. Walks away.

Iona fights off tears.

INT. ISAAC'S WORKSHOP - DAY

Iona shoots a jet of fire from her hands as Isaac watches.

She stops. Laughs.

IONA  
That was pretty good! Wasn't it?

Isaac nods.

ISAAC  
You should make it feel hotter.

IONA  
Yeah, but it'd still make someone  
duck.

ISAAC  
Probably.

Iona considers.

IONA  
But like so, if you're an  
illusionist. Wouldn't everyone just  
assume it's an illusion? How do you  
trick someone who knows you're  
lying?

ISAAC

The gold rule of illusions: If you can't convince someone a lie is the truth, convince them the truth is a lie.

IONA

Meaning?

Isaac flicks a finger towards Iona, and a small stream of fire streaks towards her. She doesn't dodge... until it hits her shoulder, and she shrieks in pain.

She drops to the ground, clutches her shoulder. She looks at him, betrayal in her eyes.

IONA (CONT'D)

I didn't think you'd...

ISAAC

Exactly.

She's in tears.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Let me see it.

Iona moves her hand. It's not a huge burn, but it's already blistering.

Isaac lays his hand over it. Iona cringes, then relaxes.

When he pulls his hand back, there's a nasty scar. Iona doesn't notice, she's just so glad the pain is gone.

IONA

You know healing magic?

ISAAC

I know a little bit of everything.  
I need to, if I want to fake it  
convincingly. Also, that was time  
magic.

IONA

What?

She looks at the scar. Oh, gross.

IONA (CONT'D)

Is that forever?

ISAAC

You're a wizard. Nothing needs to be forever. But as long as you're my apprentice, you'll keep it as a reminder.

IONA

Reminder of how my master is sadistic?

ISAAC

A reminder to duck. Get up and do it again, but this time make the fire green.

She gets to her feet. Takes a breath.

She shoots green flame at the wall. As she does, the wall EXPLODES.

Before the dust clears, there's sparks and flames and shards flying through where the wall used to be.

Just as it dies down, one more EXPLOSION, this one big enough that half the building collapses.

Silence.

VOICE (O.S.)

Did we get him?

HAZY (O.S.)

Shut the fuck up!

Beat.

The dust clears. Hazy and three more wizards step through the rubble.

HAZY (CONT'D)

Let's get the fuck out of here.

The LACKY WIZARD who spoke before looks at him.

LACKY WIZARD

Shouldn't we make sure he's dead?

HAZY

If he survived that, we're toast anyway. Come on.

LACKY WIZARD

...That's not very comforting.

ISAAC (O.S.)  
Why assume I'd kill you?

Hazy freezes, gags. Oh, fuck.

His lackeys jump, raise their hands, ready for action.

HAZY  
No. No! I will not die here!

He sticks his flame-hand up in the air.

HAZY (CONT'D)  
Do you hear me? I will not!

His hand grows, grows, engulfing him, incinerating his lackeys who all scream in pain, and soon all you can see is fire.

Then a single dark spot appears in the fire. The spot grows, sucking the fire down like water draining from a bathtub.

As the fire disappears, it reveals Isaac and Iona standing behind the "drain." Isaac moves his arms rhythmically. His eyes are black pits full of stars.

Hazy appears from the flame, terrified. Isaac finishes draining the fire, stops moving. His eyes return to normal. He's furious, but it's a contained rage. Focused.

ISAAC  
Believe it or not, that was dumber  
than your first attack.

HAZY  
H-how... that was...

Isaac keeps his eyes locked on Hazy. Iona looks around, confused and terrified and intrigued.

ISAAC  
Iona. Leave.

IONA  
Where?

ISAAC  
Now.

She hesitates. Then she picks a direction and sprints.

Hazy doesn't bother running. He'd accepted this possibility before he even arrived.

He is curious, though.

HAZY  
You're no illusionist.

ISAAC  
I'm a very good illusionist.

His eyes turn black again.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
But I'm not just a very good  
illusionist.

INT. ISAAC'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Iona paces back and forth. Fig reads a magazine.

The front door opens. Isaac steps inside.

Fig doesn't look up.

FIG  
You okay?

ISAAC  
I'm alive.

FIG  
That's not what I was asking.

ISAAC  
I'm alive.

Fig looks up, a little grave.

Iona cocks her head.

IONA  
What?

ISAAC  
This complicates things and  
accelerates the schedule besides.  
Heidi is our only option now.

Fig shakes her head.

FIG  
Is she even an option at all?

Isaac and Fig looks at Iona.

IONA  
For teaching me? Seriously?

ISAAC  
What if she thinks I'm out of the picture?

FIG  
She wouldn't think you were out of the picture if she killed you herself.

Isaac swears under his breath.

IONA  
I can convince her.

FIG  
No one can convince her.

IONA  
I can.

ISAAC  
You're sure?

Beat. Iona nods.

Isaac takes a breath.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
Do it.

He goes to his room.

INT. HEIDI'S BEDROOM - DAY

Thick furs are the main decorating motif, along with scrimshaw. Lots of tall bookshelves.

Heidi sits at a desk, stares at a flickering candle.

She takes a deep breath. Lets it out slowly.

The door opens. Peter walks in, knocks on the door as he does.

PETER  
Knock knock. I've been calling-

He sees the candle. His arms get a little hairier.

PETER (CONT'D)  
Who is it? Updike?

Heidi shakes her head.

HEIDI  
It's Penelope's code.

PETER  
Iona?

HEIDI  
It has to be.

Beat.

HEIDI (CONT'D)  
Do we trust her?

PETER  
Don't be stupid.

HEIDI  
I could take that two different  
ways.

Beat.

Heidi stands.

HEIDI (CONT'D)  
Fine. Get Updike.

INT. SMALL CHURCH - NIGHT

The sanctuary could maybe sit fifty people. The whole place is run down, but still functional.

Iona sits in one of the pews. She twitches her fingers.

Heidi walks in. Sits next to her.

HEIDI  
Hel-

IONA  
Don't freak out. Please don't freak  
out.

Heidi's alert. She examines the room.

HEIDI  
What did you do?

IONA  
I swear it's okay.

HEIDI  
This is a trap.

She stands. Holds her arms out, ready for trouble.

IONA  
No! No no no, it's not.

Heidi's eyes flick around the room, land on Iona. They linger there.

HEIDI  
Is he here?

Iona nods.

HEIDI (CONT'D)  
Show me where.

Beat.

IONA  
Are you going to attack him?

HEIDI  
Iona, he-

IONA  
You can't. You have to swear that  
you'll at least talk to him first.

Beat.

Heidi nods.

Iona nods back. She nods towards the pulpit.

Heidi looks. Sees Isaac standing at the pulpit.

Long claws of ice form around her fingers, but she doesn't attack yet.

ISAAC  
Tell Peter and Updike they can come in, too. They'll want a say.

HEIDI  
I came alo-

ISAAC  
Don't.

Beat.

Updike walks in. Peter emerges from the shadows behind Isaac; if Isaac is surprised, he doesn't show it.

Peter stands next to Isaac. Isaac looks at him, perturbed, but doesn't say anything. Updike sits next to Iona. Nods politely.

UPDIKE

Miss Iona.

IONA

Mister Updike.

HEIDI

Can we get to the point?

ISAAC

I won't lie to you and tell you I harbor no ill will. I am, however, willing to lay down the hatchet. End hostilities, permanently.

Updike is shocked; Peter just laughs, and Heidi rolls her eyes.

HEIDI

Even if we could believe you-

ISAAC

No progress without risk.

HEIDI

And what are you risking, exactly?

Isaac walks over to Peter. Looks him in the eyes.

Slaps him across the face.

Peter grabs Isaac by the throat, but doesn't crush him.

PETER

What the hell was that?

ISAAC

Proof.

Beat. Realization hits Heidi.

HEIDI

He's really here.

Peter looks at her. Back to Isaac. Snarls. He lifts Isaac up; Isaac gags.

Heidi raises her arms, readies a spell.

Iona jumps over Updike to stand in front of her. Updike clammers to hold her back.

IONA

No! You promised!

Heidi doesn't look at her, but she stops her spell.

Peter breathes faster. His teeth are too big to fit in his mouth. But he lowers Isaac.

Isaac coughs, clears his throat, then stands up like nothing happened.

HEIDI

Playing at bravery doesn't mean you're not a coward.

UPDIKE

I think you should tell us what you're after.

Isaac licks his teeth. Takes a breath.

ISAAC

I need you to continue training Iona. You can teach her whatever you want as long as her Gebaren are the focus.

Beat. Nobody's sure how to react. Peter's teeth shrink.

PETER

You took all this risk to get us to teach Iona?

ISAAC

I need you to actually teach her, though. None of the sloppy shit she got away with before.

HEIDI

You can't teach her Gebaren?

ISAAC

You think I'd do a better job?

HEIDI

Not better than me, no, but...

PETER  
What's the catch?

ISAAC  
No catch. But she stays with me.  
She's still my apprentice.

PETER  
(to Heidi)  
No. This is ridiculous. There's  
clearly something else going on,  
and if he won't tell us-

ISAAC  
Fine. I tried. Let's go, Iona.

Heidi's ice-claws glow for a beat.

HEIDI  
Hold it.

Beat.

HEIDI (CONT'D)  
Updike, what do you think?

UPDIKE  
(realizing)  
You were the one who killed  
Hazleton.

Heidi looks at Updike.

HEIDI  
Hazy's dead?

Updike just looks at Isaac.

ISAAC  
He attacked me.

UPDIKE  
No doubt. But that means you gave  
him the opportunity. He was  
teaching Iona?

Isaac nods.

UPDIKE (CONT'D)  
You're not brave. You're desperate.

ISAAC  
I'm... motivated.

UPDIKE

This has to do with why you  
kidnapped Iona in the first place?

IONA

He didn't kidnap me. Not really.

ISAAC

As she says.

UPDIKE

But yes.

Beat.

Isaac nods.

UPDIKE (CONT'D)

Interesting.

HEIDI

What is it? Do you know what's  
going on?

UPDIKE

I have a better understanding of  
what I don't know.

PETER

Great. Sounds useful.

UPDIKE

I propose we take the deal.

Iona sighs, relieved.

HEIDI

You're certain?

UPDIKE

How can I be, given who we're  
dealing with? But nonetheless.

Heidi looks back at Isaac. Isaac smiles.

HEIDI

We train her at my lab. Not yours,  
not neutral ground. Mine. And  
you're not welcome.

ISAAC

Fig can bring her.

Heidi scoffs.

HEIDI

You and that viper, like a match  
made in hell. Fine.

ISAAC

I expect results, and quickly.

Heidi lowers her arms. The whole room relaxes.

HEIDI

Is Iona ready for that?  
(to Iona)  
Do you know what he's asking for  
you, girl?

IONA

Can't be worse than him.

Isaac looks at Heidi.

ISAAC

She'll make me look soft.

Heidi nods to him. "Message received."

IONA

Wait, really?

She looks at Isaac, worried.

ISAAC

Let's go.

HEIDI

Tomorrow?

Isaac gives her a confused, almost disgusted look.

HEIDI (CONT'D)

What?

ISAAC

(seriously?)

Tuesday is fine.

Isaac shoves past Peter. Heidi's confused and angry about it.

Iona gets up, follows Isaac out the door.

Heidi looks at Peter, Updike. Peter's too confused to be annoyed; Updike shrugs.

## INT. ISAAC'S APARTMENT - MORNING

The apartment is still recognizable, but has several new illusory decorations. One window looks out on Tibetan mountaintops, the window next to it a tropical beach. The wallpaper shifts slowly with fractal patterns.

Iona sleeps on the sofa. Her eyes shoot open suddenly.

She looks around.

Fig walks over with a frying pan full of burnt scrambled eggs.

FIG

Do you know how to make omelettes?

Iona sits up, hesitates.

IONA

What's happening?

FIG

I want an omelette.

IONA

Where's Isaac? Why didn't he wake me up?

FIG

He's in the shower. Get off your ass, I'm hungry.

IONA

Are we not training today?

Fig throws up her hands, stomps back to the kitchen.

Iona gets up.

## INT. ISAAC'S DINING ROOM - DAY

A small offset from the rest of the apartment, barely deserving to be called a "room." Fig and Iona sit at the table.

Fig eats an omelette, very happy. She feeds some to her hair.

Iona sips a cup of tea. She's convinced she's in danger.

Isaac walks in, sits at the table. He's dressed, but his hair's still wet from the shower.

He picks at his teeth.

Beat.

Iona sips her tea.

Beat.

A thought occurs to Iona.

IONA  
What day is it?

Isaac looks at her. His face is inscrutable.

ISAAC  
May eighth.

IONA  
Oh.

Beat.

IONA (CONT'D)  
Um... are we going to train?

Isaac shakes his head.

ISAAC  
We do have some errands.

Beat.

IONA  
Can we visit her grave?

ISAAC  
Not today. Too predictable. We'll  
go Friday afternoon.

Iona nods.

IONA  
I'm surprised you remember her  
birthday.

FIG  
(mouth full)  
It's his birthday too.

Iona's surprised.

IONA  
Really?

ISAAC  
It's just a day.

Beat.

IONA  
What, uh... what are we going to do  
today?

Beat.

Iona coughs.

IONA (CONT'D)  
Are you... okay?

Isaac looks at her.

ISAAC  
What do people say about me and  
your mother?

IONA  
Um... You're enemies. You were  
enemies. But... Peter says you used  
to be friends. Updike thought you  
might have been, like, boyfriend  
and girlfriend.

Isaac snorts, shakes his head.

ISAAC  
I loved your mother, but not like  
that. Even when we hated each  
other, we...

Beat.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
I'm not without regrets.

IONA  
They said you got along with my  
dad. Before...

ISAAC  
Before Penny murdered him? Yeah.

IONA  
It was in self-defense.

ISAAC  
Self-inflicted self-defense. Penny had her good moments, but she was still a wizard.

Iona's conflicted. She's desperate for more information, but doesn't like the idea that her mother wasn't perfect.

IONA  
She said he attacked first?

ISAAC  
Your mother tried very hard to be a good person. Your father actually was one. He trusted her so much that when he found her... strategy, he couldn't see it as anything but a plan.

IONA  
Her "strategy?"

FIG  
Any good wizard has a plan for every contingency. How to survive another Dragonflight. Or... how to kill everyone you know.

ISAAC  
If you're smart, you've already started thinking about how you'd kill me.

He looks at her. Beat. She nods. He's satisfied.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
Aaron didn't have a proper wizard's paranoia. He couldn't imagine why she'd have a plan other than intending to use it. He was heartbroken and terrified and reacted poorly. She was caught off guard and reacted the only way she knew how.

Beat. Iona isn't sure how to process that.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
I understood her side, but I couldn't forgive her for that. Aaron was too good for the world, and she made him pay for it. That was when I stopped fighting Penny's goals and started fighting her.

FIG

(to Iona)

He tries to think of it as just her  
fault so he doesn't have to blame  
himself.

ISAAC

It's like I said. I'm not without  
regrets.

Beat.

IONA

(quiet)

Mom never told me any of this.

FIG

You'd expect her to?

IONA

No, but...

Beat.

ISAAC

I told you I'd teach you  
everything. There's more to come.

IONA

I don't know if I want to know  
more.

ISAAC

I don't care.

He gets up.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Let's get to those errands.

INT. FANCY SUITE - DAY

Penthouse, glass walls, open floorplan. Very ritzy.

Iona looks around, searching for something.

IONA

This was Hazy's place?

No response.

Iona finds a picture of Hazy. She grabs it.

IONA (CONT'D)  
Found one.

Isaac opens his eyes. She displays it; he nods, closes his eyes again.

ISAAC  
Make him.

Iona takes a deep breath. The picture glows, and projects a perfect facsimile of Hazy in front of her.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
Good.

IONA  
Is this why we're here? I couldn't practice this at home?

ISAAC  
Heidi will be here soon.

IONA  
What?!

Hazy flickers.

ISAAC  
Careful.

Iona concentrates, Hazy returns to normal.

IONA  
I can't-

ISAAC  
Talk to me through him.

Iona's mouth keeps moving, but Hazy speaks instead of her.

HAZY  
I can't do this. Even if I could keep the illusion convincing, Heidi has so many codes and passphrases, she'll know immediately.

ISAAC  
Heidi's codes and passphrases are why the illusion will be convincing. There it is.

He opens his eyes, stands.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
This is an important lesson for you  
to learn. Maybe the most important.  
Your enemies' strengths are their  
weaknesses.

HAZY  
What? How?

Isaac walks over to a bookshelf, drags his finger along the books, looking for one.

ISAAC  
It's like Judo. Your opponent  
attacks, and you use their momentum  
against them.

He grabs a book, flips it open.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
Heidi is paranoid, and uses codes  
and passphrases to protect herself.  
That's fine. But it can be used  
against her; if you know the proper  
codes, she won't bother looking for  
smaller inconsistencies. Her  
strength makes her vulnerable.

HAZY  
You know her code?

ISAAC  
I know Hazy. Here.

He holds the book out to Iona. Scribbled in the margin: "It's warm tonight." "Reminds me of home."

HAZY  
He just wrote it down?

ISAAC  
Don't judge him too harshly. It was  
hidden, more than just physically.  
If he were still alive, we wouldn't  
have been able to find it so  
easily.

He shakes his head, disappointed.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
He didn't care about setting things  
up to last beyond his lifetime.  
That, you can judge him for. She's  
here.

Isaac disappears, followed immediately by Iona.

Heidi walks in.

HAZY  
Heidi.

She glares at him.

HEIDI  
It's warm tonight.

HAZY  
Reminds me of home.

Heidi relaxes.

HEIDI  
Damn it, Hazy. I thought he'd  
killed you.

HAZY  
Who? Isaac?

He laughs.

HAZY (CONT'D)  
Not for lack of trying.

HEIDI  
He's never been as good as he  
thought.

The camera PANS around 180 degrees to reveal Iona and Isaac  
watching, next to the wall.

Heidi walks to a small bar, pours herself a vodka.

HAZY  
Sure, help yourself.

HEIDI  
What's yours has always been mine.

She downs the drink. Thinks about another, decides against  
it.

HAZY  
Are you here for me, or were you  
hoping to loot the place?

Heidi looks at him. She's angry.

HEIDI

You knew he had Iona and you didn't tell me?

Iona looks at Isaac. Gets an idea.

HAZY

What happened to Penelope?

Isaac looks at Iona. "Interesting." He nods.

Heidi raises an eyebrow.

HEIDI

What?

Iona stares at Isaac as her mouth keeps moving along with Hazy's.

HAZY

You were her closest ally. Everyone assumes it was Isaac, but I'm not so sure.

Heidi looks at Hazy. Considers.

HEIDI

I have my own doubts on that front. Penny had her secrets, none of them harmless.

Iona's eagerness comes out in Hazy's tone.

HAZY

So? What happened?

Heidi looks at him.

HEIDI

I came here to make sure you were alive. You are.

She walks to the door.

HAZY

Heidi.

She stops.

HAZY (CONT'D)

You really hate him, don't you?  
Isaac?

HEIDI  
I liked him a lot better when he  
was dead.

She leaves.

INT. ISAAC'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Fig lounges on the sofa, reading an ancient tome bound in leather.

Iona sketches on the wall with her finger, brilliant flowers and vines growing as she "draws."

The room around Iona gets darker. It's almost imperceptible at first, but soon the edge of the room has all but disappeared.

Fig realizes what's happening just as she's engulfed in darkness.

FIG  
Iona! Iona!

Only Iona is visible, but she can't seem to hear Fig.

FIG (CONT'D)  
Isaac!

Iona just keeps drawing until even the wall is gone. It's just her in the black.

She doesn't notice anything until the blackness IGNITES WITH STARS.

EXT. THE STARRY VOID - CONTINUOUS

Iona scrambles to her feet, startled, terrified. She stands in empty space.

A sound like the WIND, quiet, hiding.

IONA  
Fig? Hello?

In the galaxies behind Iona, a shadow, a woman's figure. As Iona turns, the figure fades back to stars.

IONA (CONT'D)  
Isaac?!

A voice like a roaring sun.

THE VOID  
HELLO CHILD

Iona looks around, panicked, in tears.

IONA  
Who's there? What's going on?

No response.

EXT. ISAAC'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Fig and Isaac run into the living room. Iona floats in the middle of the room, her eyes full of stars.

ISAAC  
Shit!

FIG  
What do we do?

Isaac's eyes go black. His voice gets deeper, louder. Bigger.

ISAAC  
GET OUT.

EXT. THE STARRY VOID

The woman's figure, visible only by the stars it blots out behind it, dances behind Iona.

THE VOID  
THERE IS SOMETHING I REQUIRE

IONA  
What?

The figure reaches towards her. Iona feels something, recoils.

THE VOID  
IF WE ARE NOT GIVEN  
I WILL TAKE

Iona takes a deep breath. Stops panicking, gathers herself.

IONA  
You'll have to.

She extends her arms in a defensive posture.

A gentle GIGGLE comes from all around her.

THE VOID  
YOU ARE POWERLESS HERE

Isaac's voice; it's loud and quiet simultaneously, like he's shouting from a vast distance.

ISAAC (O.S.)  
Iona!

IONA  
Isaac! Help!

ISAAC (O.S.)  
I'm co-

THE VOID  
HE CAN NOT HELP YOU  
YOU ARE ALONE

Iona looks around. She's scared, but determined.

IONA  
Fine! I don't need him!

The GIGGLE again. The woman dances around her, caresses her back. Iona spins around, but can't see anything.

The stars wink out, one by one. Darkness encroaches.

Just as it seems like the darkness will win, a hand grabs Iona's shoulder and yanks her backwards.

CUT TO:

INT. ISAAC'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Iona falls from midair, hits the floor hard.

Isaac is on all fours next to her, vomiting.

Iona gasps for breath, the wind knocked out of her.

Isaac stands. Wipes his mouth.

He sits on the sofa. Stares at the wall, deep in thought.

Iona finally gets air back in her lungs. She cries on the floor.

Beat.

ISAAC  
We were young and inexperienced.  
And desperate.

Fig watches from the hallway, stoic, emotionless. Iona still can't stop crying; it's not clear she's even listening.

EXT. THE STARRY VOID

Stars wink out and reappear as if a black sheet drifts among them.

ISAAC (O.S.)  
We were afraid Harold was immortal.  
We'd tried to kill him once by  
then, and we knew we wouldn't get a  
third chance. He had safeguards, a  
plan for everything we could think  
of, everything anyone could think  
of.

Slowly, all the stars wink out until it's just empty blackness.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
So we found something else.  
Something new.

ZOOM OUT to reveal a massive black human shadow bigger than you'd ever thought possible.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
I'm still not sure what it is. I  
think there are rules, but they're  
not like ours. They're... sideways.

The shadow leans over, examining one arm of one galaxy. One star in that galaxy. One planet orbiting that star. One continent on that planet. One city on that continent. One window in that city. It looks in on:

INT. ISAAC'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Inside the apartment, the window darkens just a bit, then goes back to normal.

ISAAC  
There wasn't any existing magic  
that could interact with it, much  
less control it. We built it  
ourselves.

Iona's got herself back under control. She lies on her back, listens.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
It worked better than we could've hoped... unprecedented power. Wars have been fought over what we stumbled into ass-first. We killed Harold and fantasized about using it for more, but... there were risks.

IONA  
What kind of risks?

Isaac looks at her.

ISAAC  
You saw it.

He looks away again.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
There's power out there. Strange power, power beyond time and space. But now you can't use the power without drawing... it.

IONA  
"Now?" It wasn't always there?

He shrugs.

ISAAC  
Like I said, time is funny there. Maybe it always was. Maybe it hasn't gotten there yet. There's an intelligence to it, it knows us.

Isaac looks at her.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
It knows you. It's wanted you your entire life. Maybe before.

Isaac looks at Fig. Fig shakes her head. He nods.

Looks at Iona. Beat.

IONA  
My whole life? Why haven't I seen it before now? What changed?

Beat.

IONA (CONT'D)  
Mom died. It's what killed her,  
isn't it?

ISAAC  
Get some sleep. You need to be  
ready for Heidi tomorrow.

IONA  
What if it comes back?

Isaac stands.

ISAAC  
It will.

IONA  
Tonight?

He shakes his head.

IONA (CONT'D)  
How do you know that?

He walks away.

He passes Fig. She looks at him as he does, watches him go.

Beat.

She sits next to Iona.

FIG  
If it was up to me-

ISAAC (O.S.)  
Fig.

Beat. Fig glares at Iona. Iona's not sure what to think.

FIG  
You have no idea the sacrifices  
we've made.

INT. HEIDI'S LAB - MORNING

Iona drips sweat, bends over, gasps for air. You can see her breath, it's so cold.

HEIDI  
I didn't say you could stop.

Iona clenches her eyes shut. Stands up again, sticks her arms out.

The lab is sparse, white. Cold, literally and figuratively.

Heidi stands in front of Iona, arms held in a specific angle. Iona mimics her pose.

INT. HEIDI'S ANTECHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

In contrast to her lab, this room is warm and soft. Fur rugs, thick blankets, massive stone fireplace.

Peter and Fig sit across from each other. Fig examines Peter with innocent curiosity; Peter glares at her with malice.

FIG

You're sure it's not one of the  
deep curses?

PETER

(teeth clenched)

I'm sure.

FIG

Because it still sounds a lot like  
some of the curses I've made. I  
remember one-

PETER

My father was a shapeshifter. His  
father was a shapeshifter. His  
mother was a shapeshifter. It took  
me decades to master.

FIG

But whenever you get mad-

He's getting mad. And hairy.

PETER

I have complete control of my form.

FIG

Just not your temper?

He growls.

A SLAP comes from Heidi's lab. They both look towards the door.

Peter shakes his head.

PETER  
She needs to cool it.

FIG  
Spare the rod, spoil the child.

Peter glares again.

PETER  
This isn't necessary. She feels  
betrayed and she's taking it out on  
Iona.

Fig cocks her head, suspicious, but amused.

FIG  
Why are you telling me this?

PETER  
I... I worry about her.

He softens, his hair recedes. He actually starts balding a bit.

PETER (CONT'D)  
Is Isaac... she's eating enough,  
right? I know training is tough,  
needs to be tough, but is he-

Fig looks away, bored now.

FIG  
He's too soft on her. She's going  
to get hurt.

Peter relaxes, nods.

PETER  
She's still young. She has time.

Fig looks at him. Says nothing.

Another SLAP from the lab. Peter cringes.

INT. HEIDI'S LAB - MORNING

Iona lies on the floor, clutching her face. Her eyes are wet, but she's not crying yet.

Heidi towers over her.

HEIDI  
Is that it? Is that all it takes to  
bring you to tears?

IONA  
(angry)  
I thought you were my friend!

HEIDI  
I was! Now I'm your teacher.

She shoves Iona with her foot.

IONA  
Stop! I'm getting up!

HEIDI  
Don't get up, be up!

Another shove, but Iona blocks this one.

Iona makes a fist, but it's immediately encased in ice and frozen to the ground.

Heidi leans in to her face.

HEIDI (CONT'D)  
You get to hit me one time. One  
time only.

The ice drops off Iona's fist. They stare each other down.

HEIDI (CONT'D)  
Go ahead.

Beat.

Iona stands up. Sticks her arms out.

IONA  
Can we keep going?

Heidi chews on her tongue.

Assumes the same stance.

HEIDI  
Keep up.

EXT. QUIET STREET - DAY

Fig and Iona walk down the street. Fig wears a large hat and dark sunglasses instead of a veil. There are only a handful of people around.

Four people across the street notice Iona and Fig, start paying them a lot of attention. They don't look friendly, but their hoods and high collars make it hard to get a good idea of what they look like.

Fig notices, but says nothing. Looks at Iona.

Beat.

IONA

What?

FIG

You tell me.

Iona looks around. Sees the group. Immediately acts like she didn't notice them.

IONA

What are they? Wizards?

Fig shrugs.

FIG

This way.

The group crosses the street. Fig ushers Iona into an alleyway.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - CONTINUOUS

Iona rounds a corner in the alleyway, sees it's a dead end.

IONA

Wait, this is-

She turns around. Fig is nowhere to be seen.

The group is, though.

FIG (O.S.)

Handle it.

IONA

I'm exhausted! Heidi just-

The group lowers their hoods, revealing decrepit skin and sharp teeth. Ghouls.

One of them speaks. His voice is high-pitched and unpleasant.

GHOUL  
That's her. I'm positive.

He gestures to one of the others.

GHOUL (CONT'D)  
Keep an eye out.

That one nods, disappears around the corner.

Iona takes a deep breath.

IONA  
Listen up, fuckwits.

They chuckle.

IONA (CONT'D)  
You caught me at the right time. I just got out of a few hours of training, so I'm tired enough to let you off with a warning.

They laugh harder.

GHOUL  
You're so generous.

They move closer, claws out.

IONA  
Not so generous I won't make the warning physical. I'm thinking a tooth each.

They hesitate, ever so slightly.

IONA (CONT'D)  
Or maybe I'll take ears. I don't want to think about what you've been putting in your mouths.

GHOUL  
Be more worried about what we will be putting in them.

IONA  
Hopefully some toothpaste. I can smell your breath from here.

GHOUL  
Enough of this. Kill her before her  
master-

ISAAC (O.S.)  
Before I what?

Isaac rounds the corner, dragging the body of the lookout  
behind him. The lookout is missing its feet.

The ghouls jump and hiss. One of them just books it and  
climbs up the wall; Isaac watches and laughs.

GHOUL  
Isaac! We were just-

ISAAC  
I know what you were doing. I don't  
care. Go ahead.

They're confused. They look at each other.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
Iona can take care of herself. I  
just wanted to make sure she  
remembered to let one of you live  
to tell the tale. She gets  
bloodthirsty when she's tired.

GHOUL  
I... she...

ISAAC  
Go ahead, Iona.

IONA  
Should I take their ears like I  
said?

ISAAC  
I missed that part. You told them  
you'd take their ears?

IONA  
As a warning, if they just left me  
alone.

Isaac groans.

ISAAC  
No, you can't... did she really say  
she'd let you go if you gave her  
your ears?

A hesitant nod from the ghouls.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
Damn it, Iona. How many times do I  
have to tell you, warnings make you  
look weak.

IONA  
I was tired! If you want me to kill  
them-

ISAAC  
No! A deal's a deal. Once you've  
offered it, you can't take it back.

He sighs. Looks at the ghouls.

The ghouls look at him. At Iona. At each other.

IONA  
So which is it?

GHOUL  
We'll...

They look at Isaac again.

GHOUL (CONT'D)  
We won't just... Do you...

ISAAC  
Forget it. Just kill them.

GHOUL  
Wait! Wait!

It takes a deep breath. Clenches its eyes.

Uses a claw to slice its own ear off; screams.

The other follows suit. They toss the ears at Iona's feet.

Iona coughs.

IONA  
Both ears.

GHOUL  
You didn't...!

Iona flexes a hand. It starts glowing.

The ghouls cut off their other ears. Throw them.

They don't hesitate, just climb up the walls, run away.  
Iona laughs. Picks up the ears, holds them lightly; gross.  
Fig appears next to her, shakes her head at Isaac.

FIG  
You should've let her-

ISAAC  
Let her what? Get mauled to death?

FIG  
If she can't handle three ghouls-

ISAAC  
She did fine from where I'm  
standing. You're too hard on her.

FIG  
Only once you showed up to help her  
bluff. She would've figured  
something out, I'm sure.

Iona laughs again. Isaac too.

FIG (CONT'D)  
What?

ISAAC  
Take those ears from her, they're  
disgusting.

FIG  
I don't want to-

ISAAC  
Fig.

FIG  
You don't talk to me like-

Isaac's angry.

ISAAC  
Just do it!

Fig snarls. But she walks over to Iona, snatches the ears.

FIG  
What do you want me to do with  
them?

ISAAC  
Hold on to them for a second. Let's go.

Fig sighs. Isaac disappears around the corner. Fig and Iona follow.

EXT. QUIET STREET - CONTINUOUS

As Fig and Iona round the corner, Isaac is gone, and the LOOKOUT is still there, leaning against the wall.

He jumps when he sees them.

IONA  
Your friends will probably want these back whenever you see them next.

She gestures to Fig.

Fig is more confused than the ghoul, but she hands the ears to the ghoul.

IONA (CONT'D)  
And for real, brush your teeth sometimes.

She keeps walking. Fig and the ghoul share a moment of confusion, then Fig follows Iona and the ghoul walks down the alley looking for his companions.

Iona and Fig walk in silence. Fig stares at Iona, sorts things out.

IONA (CONT'D)  
Were ears the right choice? Or should I have done teeth? Or a claw or something?

Fig finally understands. Iona eats it up.

FIG  
I knew... I knew something was weird about him. I knew. I just didn't think...

IONA  
Didn't think I was a freaking boss?

Fig's confusion is replaced with surprised respect.

IONA (CONT'D)  
So are we cool now, or are you  
gonna keep hazing me?

Fig chuckles.

FIG  
I can tone it down.

EXT. ISAAC'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Fig and Iona walk up to the apartment. Isaac stands on the steps, waiting.

He's pissed. At Fig.

ISAAC  
I need to be able to trust you.

IONA  
It's fine! I'm-

ISAAC  
Inside. Now.

Iona goes inside.

INT. ISAAC'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Fig and Isaac's shouts carry, but not quite well enough to make out what they're saying.

Iona walks over to the window. Looks out and sees a field of stars.

She freezes.

A voice like a gentle breeze.

THE VOID  
Be calm. You are safe.

Iona is not calm.

IONA  
Isaac!

She turns to the stairs, but they're lost in darkness; she finds herself trapped in something like a spotlight. She's still in Isaac's apartment, but if she were to walk three feet in any direction, she'd be somewhere else.

THE VOID  
You were very clever, earlier. We  
are proud.

A shadow like a hand reaches from the darkness around her. She steps back, and almost stumbles into the darkness behind her.

A GIGGLE comes from every direction at once.

THE VOID (CONT'D)  
There's so much I can teach you.  
Let me teach you.

IONA  
No. No!

She brings her arms up in a defensive position.

The voice EXPLODES into its full force.

THE VOID  
YOU CAN NOT RESIST US  
IF YOU WILL NOT GIVE  
I WILL TAKE

IONA  
You'll... you'll have to!

Her arms glow as she moves her hands in a series of defensive gestures. A ROAR like a RAGING FIRE grows and grows until-

It's gone. She's back in the apartment, like nothing is wrong.

And Isaac and Fig are looking at her.

Isaac's not smiling. But he's happy. Or maybe proud.

ISAAC  
We're going out.

IONA  
Where? Why?

He leaves. Iona scrambles to follow.

INT. FLAMEL'S - NIGHT

Isaac and Iona walk into the bar. This time, Iona walks with the same confidence as Isaac. The patrons all nod towards them with at least feigned respect. The band is already playing Norah Jones.

The bartender walks towards their table, but Isaac waves him away before he gets there.

IONA  
But I'm hungry.

Isaac looks at her. She shuts up.

Isaac stares at the band, zones out. Iona fidgets.

Iona takes a deep breath. She's alert, worried.

IONA (CONT'D)  
Isaac.

Beat.

IONA (CONT'D)  
Isaac, I feel it again. The star-  
thing. I didn't kill it.

Isaac snorts.

ISAAC  
No. You didn't kill it. But you  
also don't feel it.

All the hairs on Iona's arms stand on end.

IONA  
No, I really do.

ISAAC  
You feel him.

She looks at Isaac, but he gives no indication who he's talking about.

Then, there's a strange man sitting at their table.

Calling him a "man" is a bit generous. It's certainly man-shaped, but its skin shimmers and shakes, its eyes are a little too small to be real, its mouth twice as big as it should be.

It is HEA-MUKIN-ZIRA, or ZIRA for short.

ZIRA  
Has good instincts.

The music stops; the rest of the bar is frozen, unmoving.

Isaac shrugs.

ISAAC  
She's alright.

IONA  
What is it?

ISAAC  
Hea-Mukin-Zira.

As Isaac speaks, the thing is buffeted back as if by a strong wind.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
But he doesn't like it when you say  
his name.

A sharp eye will notice him shimmer even when a pronoun  
refers to him.

ZIRA  
Should not say the name. No.

IONA  
Hea-Mu-

Zira's mouth grows even bigger, his teeth too large to fit it  
despite its massive size. Iona yelps, recoils; Zira's mouth  
shrinks back to its normal (still too large) size.

He smiles.

ZIRA  
Should listen.

IONA  
What are you?

ISAAC  
A parasite. Nobody important.

ZIRA  
Have been gone a very long time.  
Changed. Grown.

ISAAC  
I remember more than just your face  
name.

Zira glares at him, hesitates.

ZIRA  
Try to speak the deep name. Is very  
difficult. Try.

Beat. They stare at each other.

Isaac leans back in his chair. Zira smiles bigger.

ISAAC

I know what you want. If you-

ZIRA

Want nothing. Need nothing. Am complete. Wrong question.

Isaac cocks his head.

ISAAC

You know what I want. I want what's mine.

ZIRA

Not as much as in the past. Still wrong question. Are blind to the current.

Isaac leans forward. It's a power move.

ISAAC

You're not here to fight. You're here to... what, help? Help me with what?

Zira's skin around his mouth retracts, as a sound something like laughter WHEEZES out of him.

ZIRA

Offer gift: run away. Abandon hope. Survive.

ISAAC

You'll have to forgive me for not being quite so pessimistic.

ZIRA

Is gone. Since beginning of time is gone. Abandon hope.

ISAAC

What's gone?

Zira snarls. This is difficult for him.

ZIRA

The... girl...

Isaac takes a slow breath, considers.

IONA  
The girl? Are you talking about me?

Zira's eyes turn to look at her, followed by the rest of his face.

ZIRA  
Talking about... IONA.

As he says her name, her world shakes, collapses, explodes, and returns to normal.

She vomits.

ZIRA (CONT'D)  
(to himself)  
Should not say the name. No.

Isaac is unconcerned about Iona; he's attentive to Zira.

ISAAC  
What is it? What did you see?

ZIRA  
Enough! Enough. Know enough. Leave.

ISAAC  
I can't do that.

Zira's size doubles, but his face stays the same size.

ZIRA  
Can!

ISAAC  
I won't.

ZIRA  
Stubborn! Stupid! Might as well be devoured now!

The bottom of Zira's mouth drops down to his stomach, so that everything from there to the middle of his face is gigantic gaping maw.

ISAAC  
Hea-Mukin-Zira!

Zira's skin blasts back, but reforms around its mouth.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
Hea...

The mouth is upon him and Iona, enveloping everything.

Isaac's eyes glow; he chants a deep, guttural series of syllables.

Isaac and Iona drop out of the world into a deep blackness.

One by one, stars blink into existence around them; slow at first, then faster.

A black shape covers some of the stars. Moves closer to them. They're still falling.

They fall into their seats at the bar with an impact that shakes the entire room; most of the patrons collapse to the ground, shaking.

Even Isaac is covered in sweat, his eyes bloodshot. He clutches the table for dear life.

Iona falls to the floor, seizing for a few seconds before she's still.

A long beat. GROANS of pain.

Isaac's scared for the first time that we've seen.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
Is he... dead?

Iona WHIMPERS.

Isaac gets to his feet.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
We need to leave, now. I'm weak,  
and you're in danger.

IONA  
I can't...

ISAAC  
I will leave you.

Iona gets on her hands and knees.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
Where's Fig when you-

FIG? (O.S.)  
There you are!

ISAAC  
Fig! I thought...

He turns around and sees, not Fig, but Heidi, Peter, and Updike.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Shit.

Peter rushes over to Iona, scoops her up, carries her like a baby as he checks that she's okay.

Heidi's left hand is encased in razor-sharp ice. Updike's head is wreathed in a dark halo. They're ready for a fight.

UPDIKE

What have you done?

ISAAC

I don't have time for this right now.

HEIDI

I was thinking the same thing.

ISAAC

If you want-

A BLAST of ice and snow, and Isaac is completely imprisoned in ice, unable to move an inch.

HEIDI

Let's just kill him.

UPDIKE

I'm inclined to agree.

IONA

No... Isaac... I need his help...

HEIDI

What did she say?

PETER

She says she needs his help.

UPDIKE

With what?

IONA

It's coming... for me.

The three of them share worried glances.

PETER

What is?

But she's unconscious.

Heidi stares at her. Looks back at Isaac.

HEIDI

A bluff?

PETER

I don't know. He seemed desperate before.

HEIDI

Why would he be desperate to save her?

UPDIKE

Even if it's for selfish reasons, can we risk it?

Heidi snarls, walks right up to Isaac. Stares at him.

HEIDI

Can we risk letting him live?

He disappears, solid ice in his place.

HEIDI (CONT'D)

No! NO! I had you!

Updike scans the area, wary.

UPDIKE

He'll run. He can't take all of us in a fair fight.

ISAAC (O.S.)

What's fair about it?

They circle up, back to back. Peter's remarkably un-hairy.

PETER

Let's just leave. We have Iona.

HEIDI

He won't let us. He needs her for something.

Isaac's voice comes from every dark corner in the bar.

ISAAC (O.S.)

I don't need her. She needs me.

UPDIKE  
If we're leaving, we need to do it  
now. If he's not attacking, he's  
gathering his strength.

Heidi gives one last glance to the pillar of ice.

Could it be...?

UPDIKE (CONT'D)  
Heidi!

Heidi waves a hand at him; "Shut up."

ISAAC (O.S.)  
You're in over your heads. You're  
going to get the girl killed.

Heidi walks over to the ice.

A smile spreads over her face.

Peter and Updike watch her, cautious.

ISAAC (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Do what you want. No skin off my  
back.

Heidi pulls her hand back; a massive icy javelin forms.

She hurls it through the ice.

Isaac reappears as the javelin pierces his heart.

The ice he was trapped in SHATTERS; he's slashed by the  
shards, pinned to the ground by the javelin.

Dead.

Nobody moves, especially not Heidi.

PETER  
Is he really...?

Heidi breathes heavily. She's terrified despite herself.

She stops; gets control of herself.

HEIDI  
Or he wants us to think so.

Beat.

She turns around, walks away.

Peter and Updike follow her.

Beat.

INT. HEIDI'S LAB - NIGHT

Iona awakens, chained to the wall.

Peter, Heidi, and Updike stand around her.

UPDIKE

There she is.

PETER

Iona! Are you okay?

IONA

Where's Isaac?

HEIDI

God knows.

Iona's scared.

IONA

I need him! I need him now!

UPDIKE

I don't think you do.

IONA

You don't understand! There's a-

PETER

Iona. Stop.

He walks over to her, puts a hand on her shoulder.

PETER (CONT'D)

Take a breath. Do you trust us?

IONA

I don't know! Yes! But you don't  
know about-

PETER

If you trust us, then trust us.

Relax, just for a minute. Assume we  
know what we're doing.

Iona's skeptical, but she calms down a little.

UPDIKE

We're not novices, dear. Do you think you know more than us?

IONA

No, but-

UPDIKE

But nothing. We've been doing this a long time.

PETER

Just relax. You're safe here.

Iona takes a deep breath.

IONA

...The chains?

HEIDI

You're safe. But you're also a risk.

UPDIKE

You've spent a lot of time with Isaac. There are... dangers.

PETER

Tell us what you think is happening.

IONA

The thing that killed my mother is after me.

UPDIKE

What thing?

IONA

It's... I don't know what it is. It's dark and starry. He didn't say it, but I think it's something from the Outside.

Heidi laughs. Peter and Updike glare at her.

IONA (CONT'D)

I've seen it!

PETER

I know. But... I just, we need you to consider... What if you haven't?

IONA

What?

UPDIKE

Isaac is more cunning than all of us put together. If he had any of us alone for as long as he had you, I don't doubt he could convince us the moon was falling and only he could stop it.

Iona understands what they're getting at.

IONA

Oh, no! No no no, it's not like that, he really-

Peter squeezes her shoulder.

UPDIKE

Iona. What if it is like that?

PETER

We're not saying you're wrong.

HEIDI

I am.

Peter gets a little hairier.

PETER

Heidi!

Heidi's shocked, angry.

UPDIKE

I mean, Peter...

PETER

No!

He turns back to Iona.

PETER (CONT'D)

Maybe you're right. Maybe everything you saw is real, and we'll look into it.

He shoots a glare at the others, then looks back at Iona.

PETER (CONT'D)  
But maybe... maybe the world's  
greatest illusionist, and your  
mother's greatest adversary, was  
lying to you.

The possibility starts to sink in. Iona's overwhelmed but  
keeps it together.

PETER (CONT'D)  
Which is harder to believe? If you  
were in our shoes, what would you  
think?

Beat.

Iona's voice is quiet.

IONA  
But... could he... I don't think...

HEIDI  
It would be a great victory for  
him, to turn you against us. You  
see that?

Iona nods.

HEIDI (CONT'D)  
Nobody in all of history has  
pierced the Outside. It probably  
doesn't even exist.

IONA  
He said he built new magic...

UPDIKE  
Do you know how difficult it is to  
build a new magic? Ancient masters  
have tried and failed.

Iona really starts to understand. She can't keep it together.

IONA  
I'm gonna throw up.

PETER  
I know it's a lot-

She dry heaves, but there's nothing left in her stomach.

Peter looks at Heidi.

PETER (CONT'D)  
Can we please...?

Heidi grimaces. She waves a hand, and Iona's chains disappear; Iona drops, but Peter catches her.

Iona sobs. Peter rubs her back.

PETER (CONT'D)  
It's okay. We've got you. It's  
okay.

INT. HEIDI AND PETER'S HOUSE - SUNRISE

The house is quaint and tidy. Lace is a strong decorative element. A little bowl of grandma candies sits on a coffee table. There's an old tube TV in the corner.

Heidi, Peter, and Updike sit around the coffee table. Peter drinks something hot.

Iona sits at the dining table across the room, eating a bowl of cereal.

HEIDI  
The question needs to be asked,  
even if we don't have an answer.

UPDIKE  
"Is he really dead?"

PETER  
This is the problem with  
illusionists. Everything about how  
things happened makes me want to  
say yes. But the fact that  
everything makes me want to say yes  
makes me want to say no.

HEIDI  
He's faked his death before.

UPDIKE  
That convincingly?

Heidi nodded.

HEIDI  
And more. We buried the corpse.  
Penny could tell somehow, but I  
thought she was being paranoid.

UPDIKE

So there is a way to tell. We need  
to figure out what she could sense.

IONA

Um.

Everyone looks at her.

IONA (CONT'D)

We also need to talk about if  
there's really something coming  
to... kill me.

Heidi sighs.

PETER

You're right. Tell us-

HEIDI

This is not pressing.

PETER

It is if she's right.

UPDIKE

To be fair, is determining Isaac's  
status particularly time-sensitive?  
If he's dead, he's dead, if he's  
not, he's not. And regardless of  
what we think, we're going to  
behave as though he's alive for at  
least the next few years.

Heidi takes a deep breath. Sighs.

HEIDI

Fine. Tell us about your demon.

Iona's a deer in the headlights.

IONA

Um, it's... like... a star-thing. I  
think I dreamed about it a couple  
times. Isaac said he and my mom  
used it to kill Harold, but that it  
came back when I was born.

UPDIKE

What did he tell you about the  
magic they built for it?

IONA

Not a lot. It didn't play by the rules? I think he said it was sideways.

Heidi looks at Peter. "This is ridiculous."

UPDIKE

But it never actually attacked you?

IONA

No, it attacked.

Heidi looks at her, now barely intrigued.

IONA (CONT'D)

I was on the sofa, and suddenly I was, like, in outer space? But there was a shadow thing shouting at me. Isaac dragged me back somehow and I threw up. It was a lot like when that Hea-whatever guy attacked us.

Everyone jumps to their feet.

PETER

Don't say the name! Even that much can be dangerous!

HEIDI

You were attacked?

Iona's scared because they're scared.

IONA

Yeah, but Isaac killed him.

HEIDI

Isaac? Killed... him?

UPDIKE

Or he convinced you he did. Like Hazleton.

Iona's face falls.

IONA

No, he did kill Hazy.

Heidi shakes her head.

HEIDI

I visited him.

IONA  
It was me.

Beat. They stare at her.

HEIDI  
You don't know Hazy's passphrases.

IONA  
It's warm tonight.

Heidi's shocked. She sits down.

IONA (CONT'D)  
He had them written down. Isaac  
found them.

Heidi looks at Iona with malice.

HEIDI  
Why?

IONA  
I don't know. Training?

An awkward beat.

UPDIKE  
Something else I've been chewing  
on. Why try so hard to teach Iona  
her Gebaren?

PETER  
Red herring?

UPDIKE  
He went to a lot of personal risk  
to lie, then.

IONA  
I think Gebaren were important to  
fighting the thing that's after me.

Heidi's done with entertaining that line of thought.

HEIDI  
That's one theory. I think it was  
in his own interest.

PETER  
How do you figure?

HEIDI

Gebaren are the bedrock of defensive magic. If he really intended to keep Iona as an apprentice, he'd know she'd be a target. He needed her to be able to defend herself.

UPDIKE

But why not teach her himself? He knows plenty of defensive magic. And why use Gebaren rather than something he's more familiar with?

HEIDI

That's exactly it. He needed something she couldn't use to see through his illusions. If he wanted her to buy this Outside story, she couldn't be familiar enough with his magic to see his lies.

IONA

I mean...

They all look at her.

IONA (CONT'D)

Either way, you can keep teaching me, right?

Heidi scowls at her.

HEIDI

A master needs to be able to trust her apprentice.

Iona shrinks.

Peter glares at Heidi.

PETER

Okay, Iona, let's get you some sleep.

IONA

But I want to hear-

PETER

I'll tell you everything we discuss.

IONA

And-

PETER  
And I'll make sure Heidi considers  
your side of things.

Heidi looks away.

Iona nods, gets to her feet. Peter leads her to a back room.

Updike looks at Heidi, serious.

UPDIKE  
Between you and me. What do you  
think?

HEIDI  
About the Outsider?

UPDIKE  
All of it. What're the odds she's  
really in danger, and we just  
killed the one person who knew how  
to keep her safe?

HEIDI  
Low.

Updike nods slowly.

UPDIKE  
I agree. Low.

He sighs. Leans back.

UPDIKE (CONT'D)  
But not zero.

Heidi chews on her tongue.

UPDIKE (CONT'D)  
We need to talk to Fig.

INT. HEIDI'S LAB - DAY

Updike and Heidi stand in front of a mirror; instead of a reflection, they see Fig facing them.

FIG  
I am a busy woman. There is more to  
my life than one illusionist. If  
you say you killed him, so be it.

UPDIKE

I don't expect you to confirm anything one way or the other.

Fig hisses softly, annoyed.

FIG

I'm immortal, but that doesn't mean I can't get impatient.

UPDIKE

Iona is convinced she's in danger.

FIG

She is. Imminently. I didn't figure you cared, seeing as all of your actions this far have served to increase it. Or are you asking how to finish the deed?

HEIDI

(to Updike)

This is pointless. We can't trust her. Nothing she says will-

FIG

If that's all, I'm in the middle of something.

UPDIKE

We want to protect her.

FIG

Prove it.

UPDIKE

Look at it this way: if you do want to keep her safe, convincing us of the danger will accomplish just as much as whatever you're working on, won't it?

Fig hisses again. But she considers his words.

She lowers her hand.

FIG

How much do you know?

UPDIKE

Just what Iona claims to know. That Isaac pierced the Outside and something from there wants her.

FIG  
Not something from the Outside.  
Someone who's there presently.

HEIDI  
If you're so impatient, speak  
clearly. What do you mean? It's not  
an Outsider?

FIG  
Maybe she is now. She was always  
willing to pay more than Isaac was.

HEIDI  
Who?

Updike realizes. His face contorts in fury.

A cruel smile crawls across Fig's face.

FIG  
He understands.

UPDIKE  
You lie.

HEIDI  
What? You know...

She looks at Updike.

HEIDI (CONT'D)  
No. That's not possible.

Heidi glares at Fig.

UPDIKE  
You lie!

Fig laughs.

Updike blasts the mirror with a burst of energy; it SHATTERS.

CUT TO:

INT. ISAAC'S WORKSHOP - CONTINUOUS

Fig's laugh dies down to a chuckle. She stands in front of a candle with a rapidly dissipating cloud of smoke.

She waves the smoke away, sighs.

The workshop has a tarp thrown over the hole Hazy blasted.

Fig looks over at the bartender from Flamel's, who's nervous as hell.

FIG

So it's true. He's dead.

BARTENDER

It's so hard to tell with him, ma'am. I was convinced for years that-

FIG

I don't care. You were useful. The bar is yours. Leave.

BARTENDER

...Ma'am?

FIG

What?

BARTENDER

The... the runes?

FIG

If he's really dead, who cares? He was the only one who could trigger them.

BARTENDER

And if he's not really dead?

Fig grins, lots of teeth. She looks at the bartender.

FIG

You're cautious. I understand. But you should be more cautious about getting on a gorgon's nerves.

The bartender nods. Runs away.

Fig's smile fades.

She sighs.

Beat.

FIG (CONT'D)

Damn it.

INT. HEIDI AND PETER'S HOUSE - GUEST ROOM - DAY

Iona lies on a frilly bed, already asleep. Peter sits in a chair next to the bed, looking through a magazine.

He sits up straight. Sniffs the air.

His muscles bulge, his teeth grow. Danger.

Heidi and Updike storm in, and Peter's on his feet.

HEIDI  
AWAKE.

She raises a hand, and Iona lifts into the air, jolts awake, terrified.

IONA  
No! What!

Now she's terrified and confused.

IONA (CONT'D)  
Peter?! Heidi?

PETER  
Heidi, what's going on?!

HEIDI  
We want the truth, girl!

IONA  
What truth?

HEIDI  
If you won't tell us, we'll rip it out of you!

PETER  
Heidi!

Updike holds Peter back as Heidi extends a hand forward; Iona's head jolts back, and her eyes fade to black.

EXT. THE STARRY VOID

Stars.

The gentle voice.

THE VOID  
Isaac. Be reasonable.

Isaac floats in space, barely conscious.

THE VOID (CONT'D)  
The rules don't apply here.

Isaac stirs.

THE VOID (CONT'D)  
There is no hope. There is no  
despair. No victory. No defeat.  
There is only me. Only us. Only  
you. Alone forever.

Isaac's eyes shoot open. His perspective shifts; he doesn't change position, but now he's standing instead of laying down.

ISAAC  
Death is an illusion.

THE VOID  
You know all about illusions, don't  
you?

ISAAC  
I know more about death.

A GIGGLE.

The voice changes to the MASSIVE ROAR it was before.

THE VOID  
NOT AS MUCH AS ME

Isaac grits his teeth.

ISAAC  
Empty threats.

The voice grows louder, angrier. It presses in on Isaac, tries to crush him with sound.

THE VOID  
I AM POWER  
WE ARE ETERNITY  
THIS IS THE BEGINNING

Beat. Isaac's sad.

ISAAC  
It's too far, Pen. Even for me. I'm  
no altruist, but I might try to  
stop you even if my life didn't  
depend on it.

A giggle.

THE VOID  
HYPOCRISY

ISAAC

Think what you want. You can hold me here as long as you like, but I gave Iona everything she needs to beat you. You're as stuck here as I am.

THE VOID  
A WAY OPENS

He cocks his head, listening to something.

ISAAC  
No. No! Not NOW!

Another giggle.

Isaac panics, shouts to nobody we can see.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
Stop! You don't know what you're doing! STOP!

INT. HEIDI AND PETER'S HOUSE - GUEST ROOM - DAY

Peter's a scrawny little man. Heidi's in tears. Updike is on his knees.

Iona floats in the air in front of them, stars in her eyes.

Iona seems to gain awareness. Her eyes still stars, she floats down, lands on her feet in front of the bed.

She looks at the others. Looks at herself.

She closes her eyes. Wavers. When she opens her eyes, they're normal again.

IONA  
...Mommy?

HEIDI  
How could she...? Penelope would never... I don't...

UPDIKE  
(just realizing)  
That was what Aaron found. Why he  
attacked her.

PETER  
Penelope made compromises, but they  
were always for the greater good.  
Would she really...

Heidi looks at Iona as if seeing her for the first time.

Iona's dazed, in tears. Heidi drops to her knees, embraces  
Iona. They both cry.

INT. ISAAC'S WORKSHOP - DAY

Fig stands in front of a circle of ash; a pillar of smoke  
obscures the inside of the circle.

FIG  
Isaac, this one was bad. I think  
you lost something. I think I lost  
something.

The smoke fades away, revealing PENELOPE.

Penny, big smile, examines herself.

PENELOPE  
Oh, Fig. You've outdone yourself.  
Of course I always suspected he was  
reviving, but thought for sure  
nobody could come back from the  
Void so intact. I shan't  
underestimate you again.

Fig's shocked, terrified, furious. She grabs her veil, rips  
it off, revealing brilliant eyes like gemstones.

She glares at Penelope, and Penelope just stares right back,  
smiling.

PENELOPE (CONT'D)  
Of course, I guess I won't get much  
opportunity to anymore, will I?

She walks past Fig, who's now petrified, made of stone,  
forever glaring.

She shouts over her shoulder, casual; an afterthought.

PENELOPE (CONT'D)  
Honestly, I've had that prepared  
for a long time. I'm a little  
surprised you didn't see it coming.

She walks to the tarp. It disintegrates as she gets close. As soon as she's outside, she shoots into the air like a rocket.

INT. HEIDI'S LAB - DAY

Heidi runs in circles around the lab, preparing defenses. Peter and Updike finish scribing a runic circle around Iona, who's too emotionally exhausted to keep crying.

HEIDI  
This isn't... if those maniacs  
really built this themselves, I  
can't know how my defenses will  
react. Iona might be standing there  
one second, Penny the next.

UPDIKE  
We have to do something.

HEIDI  
Do you see me twiddling my thumbs?

She finishes. Brushes her hair out of her face.

HEIDI (CONT'D)  
That Rotzak! Telling the truth the  
entire time. If he'd just lied a  
little, maybe we would've believed  
him!

UPDIKE  
It was unexpected.

PETER  
Iona, are you okay? Do you... feel  
anything?

Iona shakes her head.

They finish the circle. It flashes, then disappears.

PETER (CONT'D)  
That should give us some warning if  
she tries to get in your head.  
Probably.

IONA

She's not... something's different.  
I didn't know there was anything  
happening before, but it's not  
happening now.

HEIDI

Is that good or bad?

Iona's at a loss.

Peter swears.

UPDIKE

Are we sure Isaac's dead?

They all look at him.

UPDIKE (CONT'D)

If he's not, we could really use  
his help right now.

They all look at Iona.

IONA

I... I don't... I didn't even see  
you kill him.

PETER

But do you have a code? Any secret  
way of communicating?

IONA

No. I don't... yes! Yes! There is  
one thing I can try!

PETER

Then let's do it!

IONA

It's at his workshop.

Peter looks at Heidi. She shakes her head.

HEIDI

I'm not even sure I can keep you  
safe here. If we leave-

UPDIKE

If we can't keep her safe here,  
what's the difference?

HEIDI

There's a huge difference! Just because I can't be sure doesn't mean our odds go down drastically if we step foot out that door!

IONA

But it's my mom! Surely she wouldn't...

She can't say it. Nobody else can, either.

Beat.

PENELOPE (O.S.)

Surely I wouldn't what?

INT. HEIDI'S ANTECHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

Penelope leans against the door to Heidi's lab, nonchalant.

PENELOPE

Kill you all? Of course not, don't be ridiculous. Open the door so we can all hug.

Beat. Penelope smiles.

PENELOPE (CONT'D)

Or don't. I've got nothing but time. Let's just chat.

Beat. Her smile fades. She affects a voice.

PENELOPE (CONT'D)

"Penny, it's so good to see you! We thought you were dead!" Why, thank you, it's good to see you too! I was dead, but it's no big deal. You'll see soon enough.

Beat. She laughs.

PENELOPE (CONT'D)

Oh, sorry, that came off as a threat, didn't it? I just mean, sooner or later, you'll die, right? And in the grand scheme of things, it'll be "sooner." Even if I don't kill you now - and I really might not - you're still going to eventually. It's unavoidable.

(MORE)

PENELOPE (CONT'D)  
For you. And then you'll see. I  
promise that's all I meant.

Beat. She gets annoyed.

PENELOPE (CONT'D)  
Time doesn't work like I thought it  
did. I've only had myself to talk  
to for a long time, and I've gotten  
very good at it.

Beat. She GROANS LOUDLY.

INT. HEIDI'S LAB - CONTINUOUS

Peter, Heidi, and Updike are in battle positions by the door.  
Iona hides behind Peter.

PENELOPE (O.S.)  
That doesn't mean I won't get  
bored! Or angry! I can wait  
forever, but not patiently!

Everyone speaks quietly, almost whispering.

IONA  
It doesn't even sound like her.

Updike gives her a sad look.

UPDIKE  
It does, though. When she was  
young... it does.

HEIDI  
What do we do?

Peter looks around.

PETER  
We can't take the front door.

HEIDI  
There isn't a back door.

UPDIKE  
Blow a hole open?

HEIDI  
She'd sense it. Even if she  
wouldn't sense it, it'd trigger my  
wards and she'd sense that. We need  
something subtle. We...

She thinks. Swears under her breath.

HEIDI (CONT'D)

No. I've trapped us here. We can't harm the wall at all, or she'll know.

Peter steels himself.

PETER

What if the wall changes itself?  
Would that work?

HEIDI

Of course not. Stoneshaping is the first thing you protect against.

PETER

I didn't ask about stoneshaping. I asked about it changing itself.

He walks towards the wall. Heidi's confused, Iona's optimistic, and Updike's worried.

HEIDI

It... would. Yes. But that's not...  
I don't understand. This isn't living stone.

Peter looks at the wall. Looks back at them.

PETER

Don't look, Iona. I love you,  
Heidi.

Heidi gets what he's doing.

HEIDI

No. No no no, that's a one-way journey. You can't...

She breathes quickly. Looks away.

Chants a prayer in a foreign language.

Iona looks at Updike, still confused.

IONA

What's going on? What is he going to do?

Updike steps to her, covers her eyes.

He looks at Peter. Nods. Peter nods back.

Peter looks at the wall. Presses his hands against it.

His hands shift into stone, meld with the wall. He peels a hole in the wall, revealing a city park behind them.

As he pulls the wall apart, the stone crawls up his arms; his entire self changes to stone and slides into the wall as he pulls open a doorway for the others.

When he's done, he's gone; only a hole in the wall remains.

Updike takes his hand off Iona's eyes. Iona looks around for Peter. Doesn't want to understand.

Updike puts a hand on Heidi's shoulder.

She takes a deep breath. Opens her eyes.

A single heave of her shoulders, and she's resolute again.

HEIDI

We don't have long before she notices.

They hurry through the hole.

Heidi slides her fingers along the wall as she passes through. [This is the last show of emotion Heidi displays; for the rest of the story, she is entirely cold and robotic.]

EXT. STRIP MALL - DAY

Iona leads Heidi and Updike down the sidewalk, all of them sprinting. Iona's short of breath, but Heidi and Updike are hale and hearty, chanting under their breath.

Iona stops in front of a sushi place. She bends over, catches her breath.

HEIDI

Here?

Iona nods.

UPDIKE

Is there a key?

Iona nods, coughs.

Beat.

UPDIKE (CONT'D)

...Well?

HEIDI

Isaac hasn't taught you any combat chants?

IONA

He taught... he taught me... but they're so hard!

Updike rolls his eyes.

UPDIKE

There's a limit to how much I can do this.

He puts a hand on Iona's shoulder. She stops breathing heavy; in fact, she stops breathing entirely.

She stands up straight, surprised, happy.

IONA

Oh. What did you do?

UPDIKE

It's an enchantment usually used for going underwater. Lazy apprentices use it to help with endurance.

Iona cringes a little at the reprimand.

She steps to the sushi restaurant. A pair of PATRONS try to walk out, but Iona holds the door shut.

The patrons stare, confused.

PATRON

Hey! Open the door!

Iona draws with her finger on the glass of the door: a complicated series of runes, invisible to all but her.

IONA

Sorry! Almost done!

Then she pulls the door open, but instead of the restaurant and the patrons, there's an alleyway - and it's night there.

Iona and the others hurry through.

The door shuts, revealing the patrons again.

They're confused. A little scared.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - NIGHT

Heidi and Updike look around, taking it in. Iona searches the bricks of the alley wall, looking for one in particular.

UPDIKE

Where are we?

IONA

We're almost there.

UPDIKE

His workshop is in a different city?

IONA

What? No.

HEIDI

A different time?

UPDIKE

That's too complicated a spell to use so casually.

IONA

No. It's just... here we go.

She pulls out one of the bricks. Throws it at the door they came through; the brick SHATTERS, then freezes in midair, blocking the door, and sparkling.

A beat, then it drops.

HEIDI

That's a powerful trap.

IONA

Isaac didn't like to take chances.

Iona sprints out of the alley; Heidi and Updike follow.

As they get closer to the entrance of the alley, night turns back to day.

EXT. BEHIND A STRIP MALL - DAY

A sharp eye will notice them run past the back door of the same sushi restaurant.

IONA

Isaac said anyone who followed  
would have to get through the trap,  
and anyone who didn't would think  
we were on the other side of the  
world.

UPDIKE

Cheeky ass.

Iona goes to another door, pulls it open, and runs inside.

INT. ISAAC'S WORKSHOP - CONTINUOUS

They all enter. Updike can't help looking around, curious.  
Heidi scans the area for threats.

Iona sees the statue that used to be Fig, gets excited.

IONA

Fig! We have to hurry, can you-

As she gets closer, she sees what happened.

IONA (CONT'D)

No...

Heidi sees the circle of ash.

HEIDI

This was how she came back.

She examines the ash, while Updike examines Fig. Iona looks back and forth between them, in over her head.

UPDIKE

Penelope? You think Fig summoned  
her?

IONA

She wouldn't. I don't think.

HEIDI

(ignoring Iona)  
Possible, but unlikely.

She considers.

HEIDI (CONT'D)

If Isaac and Penelope were using  
the same magic to revive...

UPDIKE

I follow. Penelope might have found  
a way to hitchhike.

HEIDI

Or come back instead. Without  
knowing how their magic works, we  
can't be certain.

UPDIKE

So if it was a hitchhike, Isaac  
could be out here somewhere. But if  
it was a swap...

IONA

So Isaac is dead?

HEIDI

He was. How do we figure out what  
happened?

UPDIKE

We could ask Fig. Petrification  
isn't so difficult to reverse.

He puts a hand over Fig's eyes, then starts chanting.

Beat. He furrows his brow. Chants in a different language.

He scowls, steps back.

HEIDI

What's wrong?

UPDIKE

This isn't... Penny didn't use a  
mirror, or the first one should've  
worked. But it's not a curse  
either, or the second should've.

HEIDI

What's the other option?

UPDIKE

There shouldn't be another option.  
Damn it. We have to assume it's  
their blasted new magic, which  
means I don't know how to counter  
it.

He looks at Heidi, grave.

UPDIKE (CONT'D)

Or how to defend against it.

Heidi looks at Iona.

HEIDI  
What do you know about this?

IONA  
N-nothing. At least, I never saw  
him do anything like this.

She considers.

IONA (CONT'D)  
Honestly, I'm not sure I actually  
saw him attack anyone ever. I guess  
Hazy?

Heidi looks at Updike.

HEIDI  
It looks like Fig was using a  
variant of Paul's Calling. I could  
try it, see if we can bring Isaac  
back.

UPDIKE  
But in doing so, open us up to  
attacks from god-knows-what.  
Forbidden beasts.

IONA  
Wait, aren't those bad? Like, B-A-D  
bad?

HEIDI  
Yes.

Beat.

UPDIKE  
Do it. Iona, we need to keep an eye  
out. Activate any defenses he has  
left. I'll see what I can do about  
this hole in the wall.

Iona hesitates; Updike hurries to the hole.

Heidi kneels next to the circle of ash, starts performing a  
complicated series of gestures.

Iona notices. Stares.

IONA  
What are you doing?

HEIDI  
(leave me alone)  
Concentrating.

Iona kneels next to her.

IONA  
No no no, those gestures. Gebaren.  
I know those ones.

Heidi looks at her.

HEIDI  
I didn't teach them to you.

IONA  
No. Isaac used something like them  
when Hazy attacked. Sucked all the  
fire out of the room.

Heidi considers.

HEIDI  
Show me.

IONA  
I don't think I can remember them  
myself, but seeing you-

HEIDI  
Whether or not you remember what he  
did could be the difference between  
summoning Isaac back from Sheol,  
and summoning an ancient spirit of  
the tombs.

Iona's eyes widen, then she steels herself. Nods.

IONA  
Okay.

EXT. THE STARRY VOID

Isaac drifts, legs crossed, meditating.

Something tugs at him. His eyes open.

Beat.

It tugs again. He turns his head to look.

ISAAC  
I'll be a son of Zeus.

INT. HEIDI'S ANTECHAMBER - DAY

Penelope slams her fists against the door with supernatural force, rattling the walls behind her, but not the door she's hitting.

She pauses only to hurl bolts of lightning and plumes of acrid smoke at the door, still to no avail.

PENELOPE

This. Would. Go. So. Much. Faster.  
If. You'd. Just. Open. The...

She stops. Looks behind her.

PENELOPE (CONT'D)

Sneaky motherfuckers. Won't be that easy!

She looks back at the door. Throws one last bolt of lightning, just to spite it, then the FLIES out a window behind her at mach speed.

INT. ISAAC'S WORKSHOP - DAY

Heidi and Iona stand in front of the circle of ash, which is filled with smoke, just like before.

IONA

When do we know if we summoned a monster?

ISAAC (O.S.)

I've been called worse.

The smoke fades, revealing Isaac. He smiles, and Iona runs to hug him.

Isaac's not sure how to respond. He looks at Heidi.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

You used Paul's Calling?

HEIDI

A variant. Iona helped me with some of the particulars of your new magic.

Iona lets go, takes a step back.

Isaac shakes his head.

ISAAC

I hadn't taught her any of that yet, just the defensive ones.

IONA

I watched you when you fought Hazy. You opened a pit or something, sucked all the fire in.

Isaac grins, impressed.

ISAAC

That I did. You know, I only started teaching you to stop Penelope from using you, but I think I might've taken you as an apprentice anyway.

Iona's saddened by that.

IONA

Wait, really?

HEIDI

Can you stop Penelope?

Isaac sighs.

ISAAC

You did better than anyone could've expected, but there's only so much you knew about.

HEIDI

It didn't work?

ISAAC

It did. But there are costs. I lose a little bit every time I come back.

HEIDI

Every time?

UPDIKE

I knew it.

ISAAC

Fig spent years practicing for the first time, and I still lost slivers. You half-assed it based on some similar magic you could recall, and what Iona saw one time.

HEIDI  
What's the cost?

ISAAC  
I'm dry as a bone. Not a lick of  
magic left.

Iona's shocked. Updike shakes his head. Heidi spits.

HEIDI  
So this was for nothing?

ISAAC  
I'm more than my magic. But we  
don't have much time. We need to  
leave.

HEIDI  
She sensed the Call?

Isaac nods. He sees Fig, shakes his head.

ISAAC  
Oh, Fig. You couldn't have known.  
I'm sorry.

IONA  
Can you fix her?

UPDIKE  
Should we take her with us?

ISAAC  
No. Just leave it, I'll use it as a  
lawn ornament or something.

UPDIKE  
Heartless.

ISAAC  
Not heartless. Just practical and a  
fan of gothic aesthetics.

He jogs towards the exit.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
Shall we?

As he reaches the door, the entire wall DISAPPEARS. The  
ceiling, now lacking support, collapses on top of all of  
them.

Updike throws a shield above himself and Iona, while Heidi blasts beams of force at the rubble that would hit her, disintegrating it.

Isaac barely dives outside.

EXT. RUBBLE - CONTINUOUS

Penelope stands on the other side of where the wall used to be, grinning like a fox at Isaac.

PENELOPE

Isaac! Or whatever's left, it looks like. Out of juice?

ISAAC

Oh, Penny. I tried to spare you all this trouble.

Heidi floats above the debris, ready for battle, but nervous, content to let Penelope and Isaac talk.

PENELOPE

You know me. Have to do things the hard way.

ISAAC

Even when the easy way would spare you so much grief.

She glares. He struck a nerve.

PENELOPE

You're talking about Aaron?

ISAAC

I'm talking about your daughter.

Penelope sighs. She looks at Iona and Updike as they emerge from the debris.

PENELOPE

You don't understand eternity like I do. If you did, you'd know there's no cost that isn't worth paying.

ISAAC

An eternity of grief and guilt. I'll pass. But I guess if you didn't mind killing the man who loved you...

She snarls.

Iona looks up, like she can see something nobody else can.

PENELOPE

If I didn't mind killing him, just  
think what I'm willing to do to  
you.

ISAAC

Promises, promises.

She moves towards Iona. Isaac is in the way.

Iona looks at Isaac. Takes a deep breath.

Heidi prepares to attack Penelope, but-

Penelope bumps into Isaac. She's surprised.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

You just need to learn the same  
lesson over and over again, don't  
you?

She swipes a hand, telekinetically hurls a nearby steel bar  
at him; the bar sweeps right through him.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

You are nothing next to me.

Unnoticed by Penelope, Updike leads Iona away.

Penelope holds up her hands. Her eyes glow and her hair  
lifts, buoyed by unseen force. All of her focus is on Isaac,  
who just stands there, smiling, unaffected by whatever she's  
trying.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Spend the next ten thousand years  
practicing, I could beat you with a  
word.

Penelope stops, catches her breath.

Heidi drifts to the ground, drawing Penelope's gaze just a  
little further away from Iona.

Penelope looks back at Isaac.

PENELOPE

You're powerless.

She's furious, frustrated.

ISAAC  
I know. So confusing!

Iona and Updike get around a corner; they're out of sight now.

HEIDI  
Enough toying with her. Let's fight.

ISAAC  
Oh, that's a terrible idea. One on one? She'll cut right through you. You're only still alive because she knows she hasn't cared enough to kill you.

Now Penelope and Heidi are both confused.

HEIDI  
But you...

ISAAC  
Oh, please. I'm powerless. Not a drop of magic left. I can't do anything to help.

He considers.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
Although... I guess I'm still imposing enough a figure to make an adequate distraction.

Penelope doesn't just glow, she IGNITES with fury and power.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
Especially with an apprentice who's so good at illusions.

Penelope shoves her hands forward, and a WAVE OF DARKNESS pulses out, DETONATING all of the debris.

Heidi is blown back. Isaac just laughs and disappears.

Heidi stops herself in midair. She's scared, but she readies an icy spear.

Penelope glares death at her.

PENELOPE  
He wasn't wrong. Don't be worth the effort and you might live.

Heidi hesitates.

Penelope shoots straight up into the air at a hundred miles an hour.

EXT. CITY PARK - DAY

Iona and Updike run off the street and into the park. Isaac runs next to them.

ISAAC

That was perfect. Couldn't have done it better myself.

IONA

Why is she so different?

ISAAC

This is her first time back. My first time wrecked me. Couple that with how much she'd grown to rely on the Void in our last fight, I'm not surprised it's taking its toll.

UPDIKE

So you did kill her?

ISAAC

Oh yeah.

Iona's betrayed.

IONA

You told me the Thing killed her!

ISAAC

Iona, she is the Thing. I needed you to trust me enough to let me teach you how to kill her for good.

IONA

Kill her?

Updike grunts approvingly.

UPDIKE

Glad there's a plan.

ISAAC

There was a plan. It relied on about a year more of practice.

IONA

What? So what are we gonna do?

ISAAC

Probably all die. But goddamn am I  
gonna make it frustrating as hell  
for her.

Updike stops running. Iona and Isaac stop, turn to face him.

UPDIKE

I won't give up hope so easily.

ISAAC

That's fine. I really don't care.  
In fact, if it means you'll try  
harder, I'm all for it.

UPDIKE

I've been around a long time.  
Penelope has power and talent, but  
she was never as technically  
skilled as me.

ISAAC

Okay. Let's go, Iona, I guess he's  
got this.

Isaac jogs forward. Iona hesitates, watching Updike.

UPDIKE

You are the most frustrating...

Beat.

He starts running again. Iona runs alongside him.

UPDIKE (CONT'D)

Where are we even going?

Something like a METEOR slams into the ground in front of  
them.

The dust clears; Penelope is here, and she's PISSED.

PENELOPE

It's time to end this.

ISAAC

Iona! She's stronger than you!

IONA

(no shit)

I know!

Penelope's voice reverberates; it's like the universe itself is speaking.

PENELOPE  
ENOUGH

She puts a hand up, and Isaac flies backwards, his the ground hard.

Updike holds his arms out; the skin on his arms blackens and chars and falls off, leaving vicious, spiky, bladed bones, claws the size of butcher knives.

Penelope STOMPS, and the ground around Updike reaches up to entomb him. He's sucked into the earth.

Penelope turns to Iona. Iona puts her arms up in defensive gesture.

Penelope advances. Iona throws a fireball at her, but Penelope doesn't even duck, and it dissipates harmlessly against her.

PENELOPE (CONT'D)  
I know your tricks. You're  
powerless.

A BONY CLAW bursts from the ground, grabs Penelope's ankle.

She snarls at it. Then it DRAGS HER INTO THE GROUND.

Iona looks around, terrified.

She picks a direction and starts running.

The ground beneath her feet EXPLODES. Penelope soars out of it, bloody and shredded.

Updike leaps out behind her, his face sunken and bloodless.

UPDIKE  
You think death is your domain? I  
spoke the language of the grave  
before you were born!

PENELOPE  
THE UNIVERSE IS MINE  
I HAVE NO MORE NEED FOR DEATH

Her wounds FALL OFF. It's like they were all costume makeup. Even the tears in her clothing fall, leaving her whole and unharmed.

As she recovers, Iona's eyes darken, then go back to normal. She shakes her head; she knows something just happened, but doesn't know what.

Nearby, Isaac stirs.

Updike takes a step back, surprised. He steels himself.

Penelope throws a GLOWING ORB OF STARLIGHT at Updike. It moves faster than the eye can see, hurls him away.

Heidi swoops in, catches him, lands next to Iona.

IONA

Why are you doing this?! Why me?  
I'm your daughter!

PENELOPE

ESSENCE OF MY ESSENCE  
IN YOU, I CREATED MYSELF  
IN MYSELF, ETERNITY

IONA

I don't understand!

PENELOPE

YOU DO NOT NEED TO

Updike understands.

UPDIKE

She's going to eat you.

IONA

WHAT?!

Isaac gets to his feet. He's behind Penelope; he starts stumbling over to them.

HEIDI

Not if we can stop her.

PENELOPE

YOU CANNOT

Iona sees Isaac, a quick flash in her eyes. She looks back at Penelope.

IONA

No. We can't.

Penelope laughs. Heidi and Updike look at Iona; Heidi's still in combat mode, Updike is horrified.

UPDIKE  
We can't give up.

IONA  
There's nothing we can do. She can  
only be stopped by her weird magic.  
Right?

PENELOPE  
DON'T THINK THE PITIFUL AMOUNT  
ISAAC TAUGHT YOU IS ENOUGH TO  
DEFEND YOURSELF

IONA  
No, probably not. At the very  
least, I'd have to catch you off-  
guard. Which I couldn't do with you  
staring at me.

Penelope stops laughing. Iona is up to something.

PENELOPE  
WHAT ARE YOU-

IONA  
Of course, if Isaac did still have  
any magic left, and he managed to  
get right behind you...

Penelope SHRIEKS, wheels around to see Isaac right behind  
her, arms crossed.

She reaches out, and shadows shoot from her hand, entwine  
Isaac, lift him up in front of her.

PENELOPE  
YOU ARE POWERLESS

ISAAC  
I am.

Penelope hesitates, confused.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
It was a good idea. It makes  
perfect sense that I'd lie about  
being out of magic. Solid gamble on  
Iona's part. But unfortunately, no,  
I really am dry.

Beat.

Penelope laughs riotously.

She turns around, and Iona is right in front of her.

IONA

Hey mom.

She puts a hand on Penelope's chest.

Penelope HOWLS like a banshee, it's unearthly.

All of the power radiating off of her drains into Iona's hand.

Once the power is gone, Penelope herself is absorbed into Iona.

Iona's eyes FLARE. Light shines out of every pore in her body.

As the light fades, she hovers in mid-air, eyes still glowing.

Updike and Heidi don't know what just happened, or what to do.

Isaac pats Iona on the shoulder.

Iona looks at him like he's an ant, but does nothing.

UPDIKE

(horrified)

What did you do?

ISAAC

She used her enemy's strength against her. The connection Penny wanted to take advantage of went both ways.

HEIDI

You knew it would work like that?

ISAAC

I wondered. I hoped it wouldn't come to that. I'd prefer nobody had this level of cosmic power.

He looks at Iona.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Well. Nobody other than myself.

Iona closes her eyes. When she opens them, her eyes are starry voids. Once more, and they're back to normal.

She drifts back to the ground.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
That's my cue.

He turns to leave.

Iona's voice echoes.

IONA  
No.

She doesn't need to do anything. Isaac lifts an inch into the air, drifts over to her.

IONA (CONT'D)  
You used me.

ISAAC  
I handed you deific power.

IONA  
To save your own skin.

ISAAC  
This didn't go like you think it did.

Iona cocks her head. She's not glowing anymore, but it's clear she's perfectly aware of how powerful she is.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
I vetted you. I knew it could come to this. If you were going to become a god, I wanted to make sure you were benevolent.

IONA  
If I hadn't, she would have.

ISAAC  
I could've just killed you. Stopped both of you.

Iona hesitates. Her concentration lapses, and Isaac drops to the ground.

IONA  
No you couldn't have. That would've sent me right to her.

ISAAC  
Yeah, no, you're right. I just needed you to let go for a second.

Iona looks at him as he disappears.

She laughs.

Heidi and Updike are terrified.

FADE OUT

THE END