

ladies of the

by
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content warnings.

internalized homophobia, internalized misogyny, violence, death, grief, discussions of cannibalism

characters.

FARAH, 16, from atlanta, georgia. obsessed with dnd but doesn't actually play. theme song: *teen idle* by marina.

JO, 17, from amarillo, texas. fuck, marry, kill: pennywise (f), ghostface (m), michael myers (k). manic pixie dream girl energy. theme song: *female of the species* by space.

NIAMH, (she/her), 17, from scottsville, virginia. family lives on a farm but she likes to imagine she's from the city. theme song: *monster* by dodie.

LEVI, 17, dallas native. mains waluigi on mariokart. stoner energy. theme song: *vince the loveable stoner* by the fratellis

MR FREEBURN, 30s, dreams he was in california. theme song: *riptide* by vance joy

HEADMISTRESS, if sue sylvester met sister michael. theme song: *4'33"* by john cage

BEELZEBUB, lord of the flies, satan himself. theme song: *o fortuna* from carmina burana

BEEZY, a gentle-fly-man. fresh prince of en-vy. a man in a fly costume. a demon, i guess? theme song: *istanbul (not constantinople)* by they may be giants

CRONE, a baba yaga type. a hag. a witch. theme song: *tili tili bom*, a russian lullaby

setting.

the haskell school for girls.

hell.

dallas, texas.

a forest.

production notes.

1. farah is iraqi-american, jo is mexican-american, and levi is jewish. ideally they are cast as such, but if that is not possible, farah must be played by a girl of middle eastern descent, jo must be played by a girl/enby of latinx descent, and levi can be of any ethnicity.

2. mr. freeburn is ideally cast as a white man (derogatory). niamh is always flexible.

3. there is a world in which crone and the headmistress are doubled. this is the ideal world.

4. similarly, beelzebub and beezy can easily be doubled.

5. a slash (/) indicates an interruption.

i'm starvin', darlin'
let me put my lips to something
let me wrap my teeth around the world
start carvin', darlin'
i wanna smell the dinner cookin'
i wanna feel the edges start to burn
honey, i wanna race you to the table
if you hesitate, the gettin' is gone
pull up the ladder when the flood comes
throw enough rope until the legs have swung
seven new ways that you can eat your young
– **"eat your young", hozier**

my name is brutus and my name means heavy
so with a heavy heart i'll guide this dagger
into the heart of my enemy
my whole life, you were a teacher and friend to me
please know my actions are not motivated only by envy
i too have a destiny
this death will be art
the people will speak of this day from near and afar
this event will be history
and i'll be great too
i don't want what you have
i wanna be you
– **"brutus," the buttness**

girls love each other like animals. there is something ferocious and unself-conscious about it. we don't guard ourselves like we do with boys. no one trains us to shield our hearts from each other. with girls, it's total vulnerability from the beginning. our skin is bare and soft. we love with claws and teeth and the blood is just proof of how much. it's feral.

and it's relentless.
– **"black iris", leah raeder**

ACT ONE

I.1. ONCE UPON A TIME...

a forest. a sickle moon. a house made of gingerbread. inside, the CRONE grinds a mortar and pestle, as fog spills over a cauldron. she pinches the residue like salt and sprinkles it into her stew.

a clock chimes somewhere offstage. crone jumps, beginning to cackle as she runs to her backyard. out of sight.

cackling continues as we see her silhouette takes off on her broom, soaring across a starless sky.

CRONE

ah hAH ah AH

HAHhahahaAHa haha

(hahahahahaha)

HahaAAAA aaaahha

I.2. ASSEMBLE THE DAISIES

clock chimes again. then again. then again. until finally: enter HEADMISTRESS and MR. FREEBURN with a clipboard, center-stage, spotlights illuminate them as FARAH, JO, and NIAMH follow behind, lingering on the outskirts. all three girls wear variations of the same uniform: a green plaid skirt, a white polo shirt, mid-calf length white socks, a pair of oxford shoes.

they all sing, save for the headmistress, to the tune of "yankee doodle boy", but slowed down, as they move.

ALL

i'm a yankee doodle daisy
 a haskell-daisy through and through
 i wear my uniform with pride and style
 and follow miss liza's every rule
 if you want to be a daisy,
 you have to learn the cornerstones
 courtesy and character, scholarship, athletics,
 that's what makes daisies stand alone!
 h-a-s-k-e-l-l-s, yes!
 that's what makes daisies stand alone!

*headmistress clears her throat and reads
 from a piece of paper*

HEADMISTRESS

okay that's enough of that
 ...
 what a god awful tradition
 who the hell came up with this?
 anyways.
 the planning committee wanted me to remind you all that
 winter formal is next weekend
 for those of you not paying attention,
 this year's winter formal theme will be partying with jay gatsby.
 i'm not sure that's what your english teachers wanted you to take away from that book,
 but frankly i don't have any desire to protest
 far too much effort
 so that's what it will be.
 ...
 in other news, the frozen yogurt machine in the cafeteria has been fixed, so please stop
 eating the cones on their own.
 you all remind me of squirrels when you do that.
 it's quite disturbing actually.
 you just...

*she mimics a squirrel, hands up at her chin,
 teeth accentuated while she chitters*

HEADMISTRESS

and following a very...aggressive petition,
 the chicken parmesan will return to its former recipe.

*the girls whoop at this.
 headmistress rolls her eye.*

HEADMISTRESS

lastly, a reminder that you must be in proper dress uniform monday, and if any of you are caught without your blazer or wearing a polo rather than an oxford, you will receive an infraction. infractions will also still be incurred if your skirt is shorter than five inches above the knee as per usual. i know you all think your teachers don't notice when you frantically unroll the waist when we pass by—
we do.

school bell chimes.

HEADMISTRESS

school day's over, get out of here ... begone... shoo.

BLACKOUT.

I.3. 1980S HORROR FILM

jo, niamh, and farah exit a movie theater, with arms full of barely touched popcorn, candy, and sodas. annoyance clings to each of them.

they are still dressed in the uniform. they live in these clothes. however, since the school day is over, more personal elements are thrown on top. a non-school approved sweatshirt, perhaps.

FARAH

i told you it wouldn't work, i'm a shit liar

NIAMH

since when does amc actually check ids?

FARAH

we should've changed

JO

we should've gone to studio movie grill

NIAMH

nooo they changed the nutella beignet recipe, it's not worth it anymore

jo shovels a handful of buttery popcorn into her mouth. she doesn't bother to finish chewing before speaking.

JO

it's so stupid that r rated movies are actually restricted to seventeen in theaters when you can stream literally anything these days. like what does it actually accomplish?

FARAH

there's still time for you two to go back in if you want, that way you won't have like wasted fifteen bucks because of me. i bet y'all could still catch some previews.

NIAMH

nah, just a few more weeks and then we can all go see something legally, okay?

enter LEVI. he stumbles slightly, his attention fixated on his phone screen. his shoulder accidentally clips jo. popcorn and soda spill down her shirt

JO

what the fuck dude?!

levi staggers back, an apology readied on his lips.

LEVI

i'm so sor / ry, i've lost control of my feet

he is cut off by niamh and farah jabbing each other, staring at him wide-eyed as if they've crossed some endangered species. they exchange what they believe to be whispers.

NIAMH

fay, fay, look it's a boy

meanwhile, jo fishes popcorn from inside her shirt and daps up the drink while levi tries to help, but only succeeds in making it more awkward, fumbling about.

JO

don't rub the grease into my skin! / you'll make me break out

FARAH

have you ever seen one this / close up before?

LEVI

i'm not / trying to!

NIAMH

if we're not counting mr. / freeburn

JO

ugh now i reek of / buttered dr pepper

FARAH

ew no of / course not

LEVI

you know, it's actually not a bad smell. / fuck, it's making me hungry now

NIAMH

/ then no, not in quite a while
...he's cute

*farah takes a loud sip from her soda, while
niamh examines him with the air of scientist,
leaning in. this finally pulls levi's attention
away from jo, and he recoils from them, his
face a mixture of fear and bamboozlement.*

FARAH

i saw one at the food store a couple days ago, but he wasn't so...

farah searches for the right word

LEVI

....so what?

*jo tries to suck soda from the collar of her
shirt while farah startles.*

FARAH

nevermind!!! forget i said anything

LEVI

no this is gonna haunt me for the rest of my life

JO

too bad, you deserve it

LEVI

ouch?

enter mr. freeburn, he minds his own business, distracted by something, his phone, the sky, some passerby. levi spies him

LEVI

oh shit!!

the girls jump at his voice and then swing around for the source of the panic. jo cackles

JO

oh i knew freeburn would be the type of person to wear a hawaiian shirt unironically!!!

LEVI

wait, you guys know him?

NIAMH

yeah he gave us all the flu freshman year

JO

not just us, it was a whole epidemic, freebola hit most of our grade, and then got its grubby little hands on some of the upperclassmen

levi cannot compute.

LEVI

freebola?

FARAH

he's our history teacher, we go to haskell, the all girl's boarding school up the road?

now levi computes

LEVI

ohhhh the uniforms make sense now! gotcha gotcha

NIAMH

how do you know mr. freeburn?

LEVI

he's – shit he's coming over here!

sure enough, mr. freeburn has spotted the girls and is striding over with a grin

LEVI

i will literally explode into a bajillion flames and die an agonizing death if i have to speak to him right now i swear to god please help me

levi hides behind jo, trying to contort his body so that she conceals him entirely.

NIAMH

why?

LEVI

what?

NIAMH

why should we help you?

LEVI

because he's my uncle, and i'm super stoned right now and do not trust myself to talk to him! if he finds out, he's so gonna tell my mom and if that happens, spontaneous combustion will be the least of my worries! help! please!

JO

oh! maybe you can help us solve the mystery of freeburn's special tea–

FARAH

now's not the time, jo, later!

the girls get into a line to create a barricade between this weird boy and their history teacher

MR. FREEBURN

farah, johanna, niamh, i wasn't expecting to see you all here tonight?
(attempting to make a joke)

i sure hope you signed out of the office! wouldn't want to miss curfew

they laugh awkwardly.

MR. FREEBURN

did you see anything good tonight?

they all stare at him blankly, levi falls down into a squat, burying his head between his knees and wrapping his arms over it. mr. freeburn then gestures to their concessions.

FARAH

oh no! sometimes we just ... like getting snacks from movie theaters without actually seeing a movie. nothing beats the popcorn right?

niamh and jo stare at her as if she'd sprouted a second head. mr. freeburn appears afraid to question further

MR. FREEBURN

i see...

JO

well, actually, we need to head back and get some work done on that project you gave us. it was nice to see you out and about in the wild!

jo ushers them all to waddle backwards, still concealing levi behind them, mr. freeburn smiles and waves them goodbye, then turns to go.

just before he does, he pauses, fully processing their odd behavior, and glances over his shoulder, brows furrowing. he attempts to look behind them, but they shift to block his line of sight. exit mr. freeburn.

levi emerges, chest heaving in relief

LEVI

y'all are an actual godsend.

(he sticks out his hand)

thanks for the heroic rescue i'm levi by the way,
johanna, niamh, and farah, i presume?

they all reach for his hand, and then all immediately draw back. giggles erupt between them.

NIAMH

yep that's us

LEVI

hey, any chance i can hang with you guys for a bit?
can't very well go home in this state
and my initial plan for the evening was hijacked.
i have torchys?!

from beneath an oversized sweatshirt, he pulls out a bag with the torchy's logo on it: a red baby devil in a diaper holding a pitchfork. this mediocre tex-mex place has a chokehold on all texas residents, natives or not. the girls exchange glances, interest most certainly piqued. niamh and jo shrug.

FARAH

you cool with demons?

BLACKOUT.

I.4. DAMN GOOD TACOS

inside the dorm room. two twin beds, one side decorated with horror movie and rock band posters while the other has a style clearly dictated by a mother. hints of personal taste creep in: the stack of dungeons and dragons books, one of those pillows that have two sided sequins, one side red, the other side the face of nicholas cage.

levi, farah, jo, and niamh gather on the floor. they all snack on their stash of movie theater popcorn and candy. levi has his own stash, a bacon egg and cheese taco and some chips and queso.

*he digs into them with the fervor of someone
caught deep in the throes of the munchies.*

LEVI

if there ever were to be a gate to hell, it would so be in a torchy's tacos.

NIAMH

torchy's? wouldn't that be a little on the nose?

FARAH

the baby devil mascot and the "damn good" tacos sign don't exactly scream subtlety

LEVI

maybe it's all about hiding in plain sight

JO

maybe it's a front for the devil.
fatten us up like little piglets on texmex so we're too full
to even suspect he's trading souls under the table.

LEVI

yeah! satan the mafia boss, i totally see it!

JO

gives a whole new meaning to that saying,
bringing home the bacon...
we are the bacon!
our souls are bacon!

*levi gasps, it's almost a scream, and he looks
down at his taco.*

LEVI

DOES THAT MEAN I'M EATING YOUR SOUL?!?

*niamh and farah share a look that reads
what the actual fuck as jo speaks*

JO

mine's still sewn into the seams of my skin, thanks very much, but
you're definitely devouring some poor champ's poblano-ranch-bathed bacon-bitten spirit.

FARAH

no no no no nononono no you guys have got it all wrong,
if this were a gate to hell, it should be crawling with demogorgons / or hellhounds or
zombies at the very least.

LEVI

/ no way! you play dnd? what class do you play?
i usually go for the bard / but i'm currently killing it as a rogue.

FARAH

/ oh i don't—

NIAMH

farah's never actually played. she just reads all the manuals and knows all the ~lore~
and—

FARAH

uh, yeah, i mean i've never been in a campaign before,
but i've watched like a ton of critical role
and i've got twenty pages of world building for a storyline i've been cooking up! i just
don't have a party to dm.

LEVI

hey, you should totally come to one of my friend group's sessions

excitement bubbles through farah

FARAH

yeah?

niamh, changing gears:

NIAMH

so are we going to work on this project or not?

LEVI

what's the project even about?

NIAMH

something for your uncle's class. it's about supernatural rituals — demons, séances, the
like — and their grounding in sociological history. like, what drove people to invent these
stories, and if they even realized it.

FARAH

invent? nu-uh

niamh ignores her and turns to levi

NIAMH

i just think that the lengths that the human brain will go to make sense of something is so bonkers like how it's entirely possible that the wendigo in native american culture was actually a person who for some reason or another was forced to eat human flesh and then that drove them so crazy with guilt that they convinced themselves they were actually driven mad by a monster and would just continue killing and eating the people in their community because it was easier to believe something supernatural had overtaken them than to admit to themselves they'd done something so unthinkable

LEVI

i'm gonna need you to run that back, but slower this time

JO

what she means to say is that she's a boring cynic who doesn't think there's anything exciting happening in the world. it's all gotta be explainable with science.

farah gives a thumbs down and blows raspberries

LEVI

booooooooooooooooooooo science

NIAMH

yeah yeah yeah okay i get it!! i'm waiting for you all to prove me wrong, what have you got for us, jo?

jo flings herself halfway over one of the beds, the one by the movie and band posters. she rifles on the other side, underneath it, until she procures a crumpled and stained stack of documents. they're at least stapled.

JO

success!

jo hands the packet to farah, who flips through it. initially, she's just disgusted by the state of it but her disgust morphs into one of confusion and horror.

FARAH
(reading)

"over your views grow, a familiar or after that battle of spells and demon summoning rituals and justice ... haven't received tax refund"?

LEVI

what the shit

FARAH

yeah what the fuck is this jo?

niamh and levi lean in to read

JO

an article on demon spells and summoning rituals
it says it right there, see?

she points at the top of the first page

NIAMH

i'm with farah and levi on this one
i don't think a single one of these sentences is grammatically correct.

LEVI

oh cool i thought i just couldn't read for a minute there

JO

do you really expect a legit demon to be able to read and write english fluently?
what if it was originally written in latin and they had to, like, put it through google translate so that it could reach a larger audience?

FARAH

are you saying demons know how to use google?

JO

well i think they could certainly get one of their little minions to use google for them.

LEVI

my rabbi thinks that demons invented google

NIAMH

okay, for the sake of the argument, if demons are in fact real, they would've been alive since the dawn of time and totally would've had plenty of time to learn the english language and how to operate the internet.
this? this is just ridiculous nonsense.
like really, jo? how is this going to help us?

FARAH

i'm not even sure we should be reading that out loud anymore

NIAMH

why not?

FARAH

i don't know,
jo was right,
it gives me the heebie-jeebies
it's like this miasmic energy,
i don't know
it's hellish. it tickles my spine.

NIAMH

dammit fay, jo says you were the one who watched supernatural in middle school
just reading this out loud isn't gonna summon a demon

*niamh stands and rifles through a cabinet
then procures a container of salt*

FARAH

niamh, what are you doing?

NIAMH

you'd at least need a salt pentagram

*niamh twists off the top to a salt shaker and
makes it*

JO

that's actually a pentacle, not a pentagram
i thought living with me would've taught you better than that

NIAMH

i mostly drowned out your horror nonsense back then, but sure, fine, a pentacle

FARAH

i don't care what it's actually called,
i don't fuck with spirits, y'all
just leave it alone

NIAMH

do you still have those candles, jo?

JO

in the cabinet next to the salt

LEVI

why do y'all have séance ingredients at the ready?

jo shrugs, throwing popcorn into the air and trying to catch it as niamh grabs a couple bed bath and beyond candles, setting them around the pentacle as they converse

NIAMH

the cafeteria never adds enough seasoning, and candles are contraband so we have to keep them hidden apparently the headmistress doesn't trust that we wouldn't burn down the school

farah and niamh look to jo, noticing the attention, levi turns his head a beat after

FARAH

a completely fair assessment

JO

(to niamh)

just don't put the eucalyptus one next to the pumpkin pie
the sickly sweet and the strong florals will literally make me so nauseous

NIAMH

i know i know!
do you have your lighter?

jo rifles through her pockets, searching each one until at last she produces it. she ignites it, grinning wickedly at the flames. levi's eyes never leave her.

JO

obviously. never go anywhere without it

FARAH

please, this is like poking a hornets nest
or sitting in an ant-pile
expecting to not be stung
to not have your butt-cheeks pimped with
nine circles worth of infernal welts

LEVI

hmmmm i don't know about you guys,
but i don't particularly want fire ants crawling up into my asshole

*niamh lights the candles while farah gnaws
on her thumbnail. levi crunches on tortilla
chips. reaching over jo, niamh grabs the
printed pdf and rifles through the pages.*

NIAMH

okay lets try this

FARAH

no, what if it works and
we unleash this horrible wretched monster
and it's like freaking armageddon and it's all our fault

JO

what if it works and the devil wears a cowboy hat and plays the fiddle
what if it works and the demon is actually a raccoon riding a scooter
what if it works and the devil is like a teletubby or barney or like the wiggles / or

NIAMH

/ it's not going to work

FARAH

but you don't know that!

LEVI

....what if the true devil was with us all along
inside us

JO

you're so high man, i love it, i feel like our wavelengths are aligning

niamh ignores them, but levi beams.

NIAMH

it's not going to work. it can't work. there's no life after death, there's no heaven, there's
no hell. the world is too fucked up for that, we live in shades of gray, not black and white.
to insist that the devil exists is to insist that humans are polarized beings. no one is
entirely good, no one is entirely evil. and to believe such a thing is so reductionist of the
entire human experience. we're gonna confront your fears, okay fay? show you there's
nothing to be worried about

FARAH

...fine okay

*niamh aggressively flips through the pages,
then outstretches her arms and begins
reciting with a dramatic flair*

NIAMH

"there are summoning spells
to summon elemental spell
that summoned demon summoners
must invoke satan"

"my demon rituals with demons is.
there are summoning rituals
with demon summoners must
summon demon senses her"

"and summoned mammon,
one is no slipshod piece of sources
in the summoner comes up?"

it takes a harmonic stillness to conjure animals
king solomon was the spell and blink.
kfc super saver offer"!!!!

*the candles extinguish. the lights flicker then
zap into nonexistence.*

screams pierce into the silence.

*a rumbling starts. it sends tremors through
the room, through the girls. tectonic plates
rouse themselves from a deep hibernation.
they grind, they shake, they pull apart.*

*the earth unhinges its jaw, a fire emanating
from its bowels, painting the world in
crimson and smoke*

something crawls out from the depths of hell

levi, niamh, farah, and jo cower on the beds

*enter beelzebub from the smoke. he is
 dragonesque, with large leathery wings, a
 skeletal face, scales that seem more affixed
 to him, stitched into his being rather than
 anything natural. as if one hyperextension
 and blood would well in the cracks. his
 movements are cronegard, paroxysmal. he
 snarls, but then it morphs, distorting into
 eerie clicks of the tongue. he has to force the
 words from an incoherent mouth.*

BEELZEBUB

t-t-t-t-ticktickticktick
 rickety-t-t-t-tickety-tin
 tethered tied un-tethered un-tied
 transfixed transfiguration
 ticktockticktick
 sing a rickety-tickety-tin
 treacherous- a-teeny-tiny
 treachery turned not so teeny
 so....so.....sophorous sonorous sound
 stench sit on seesaw saw saw
 boilbloodbleedbones
 stench sing rickety-tickety-tin
 drip drop drip drop drip drop

inhumane fingers claw at his cheeks

BEELZEBUB

tug and tear tether untied
 freed form from fellmongering
 arsenic acid assassination
 arsed arsehole assholes
 ticktickticktick
 rickety-t-t-tickety-tin
 bone weave bone stitch bone cleave
 prancing proud around pyre
 burn burn burn burn
 burning hair hunger hungry
 starved bloodlettingbonegiving

*he sniffs the air, head swiveling towards the
 ground*

BEELZEBUB

hungry hungering hunger

he reaches down and plucks the torchy's queso from the ground

he dips a finger in, scooping up a glob and bringing it to his tongue.

he tastes it, then dips his entire hand in again and again and tries to devour it whole. it does not satiate the hunger.

he bellows

he sniffs again and turns to where the girls and levi shudder with fear, tears spilling across their cheeks.

a hideous grin peels across his features. he lunges at the girls, roaring. the lights flicker, red black red black red black, and they scream again.

FARAH

NO!

farah jumps in front of her friends. the action around her freezes and time shatters into shards of ice, melting away the flames.

I.5. THE DRAGON AND THE FLY

farah steps forward. a spotlight on her. she is blood-splattered. levi, jo, and niamh lay sprawled out on the beds. beelzebub hovers above them, as if ready to dip his queso-covered fingers in their innards.

FARAH

when we were kids, my jiddo used to tell me and my brother,
these bedtime stories
we'd all pile into my bed

it was the only time i ever let my brother step foot in my room
without screaming and throwing a book at him.

because see, when jiddo came to town,

we had an unspoken amnesty

peace settled between us with one glint of that foil wrapper

a lindt chocolate he'd stashed in his trouser pockets,

he brought them every time

one for each of us,

tucked into our palms, traded with a vow of silence.

a finger to the lips; a gushing of air against teeth and flesh,

he said:

it's our little secret.

he made it sound like espionage

in truth, my grandfather was far too scared of mama

to dare give us sugar without her knowledge

so she likely had given him permission

but he had a funny way of doing that —

of fusing a story into his words, melding it to his silhouette

so that coming from his mouth,

even if you knew he couldn't have possibly done it,

if you stopped thinking so hard;

if you softened the edges of your brain you could believe it.

he was the type of storyteller who could convince you

that he'd ventured out into the depths of the ocean and had

a near brush with death harpooning a massive white whale.

later, of course, you'd learned he was a con-artist,

pillaging, plundering, pilfering tales from *moby dick*,

scheherazade and her a thousand and one nights of material for grandfathers

desperate to get their grandkids to fall asleep

or — maybe one or two were actually authentically jiddo.

if we put him on the spot,

or if he hadn't refilled his arsenal of intellectual property theft,

he had this one story,

aptly called *the dragon and the fly*.

it was like a typical fairytale:

a maiden locked away in the tower,

a dragon standing guard,

and a prince cursed to be a fly.

obviously, because he's a fly,

nobody believes the prince has any chance of saving the princess

but against all odds, he braves it all,

for love, he braves it all.

and the prince flies up the dragon's nose,

and the dragon sneezes,
 and here's where my memory gets hazy.
 either the sneeze magically fixed their problems by having the dragon fly into a brick
 wall behind him, thus not only incapacitating him, but also coating the prince in magical
 snot, so that as he is shot from the dragon's snout,
 he is transformed back into human.
 or, the prince sacrifices himself, allowing him and the beast to go up in dragon-fire so
 that the maiden has a chance at freedom.
 wait, are dragons flame resistant?
 i don't know but somehow the flames back-fire,
 maybe ignited by the acid at the pit of his stomach.
 it's mutually assured destruction. a fly's suicide mission.
 i doubt that was the version my grandfather ended with,
 far too morbid for him to tell us in good conscience.
 but i remember thinking, believing that something so small
 so seemingly inconsequential like a fly
 could take on something of near-divine status,

*she sniffs, and wipes at her nose, eyes
 watering again.*

FARAH

fucking crazy, isn't it? i'm here saying that my
 jiddo could trick me into believing that a fly could ever beat a dragon.

...

he also had this theory that the brain cannot tell the difference between a fictional
 character and an actual person. he says that while we may rationally know someone isn't
 real, if the story has earned our devotion, the loss of them within the pages of that book
 would trigger the same emotional, visceral, reaction that we might have were we losing
 someone in our actual reality. he sounded so smart saying it all, i just remember sitting
 there wondering if he was hiding the key to the secrets of the universe inside his favorite
 jacket.

i was barely literate at this point, partly by choice, i hated reading then, but the way he
 described it—i had wanted nothing more than to live a life far more thrilling than the one
 i was. to explore worlds i'd never seen before, to make friends with creatures that did not
 walk through our realm. he said it was all possible, it was hidden inside leather-bound
 pages. it was waiting for me.

he made me love stories.

and when i started reading more, ravenously devouring every morsel of ink, i started to
 believe maybe jiddo was right.

why else would it have felt like the world was avalanching in on me when the rope swing
 broke in *bridge to terabithia*?
 once again when the *rains of castamere* started to play?
 i thought i knew what loss felt like.
 it sounds stupid, but i think there is some truth to it,
 a fragment of me mourns, but it is easier to cope with,
 its vacancy does not swallow everything into its gullet.
 but losing jiddo?

well, i suppose i should disclaimer this by saying
 he's not dead yet

*farah chuckles, a private joke to herself, and
 then, in a mocking tone, she imitates monty
 python and the holy grail:*

FARAH

i'm not dead yet!!

...

monty python, anyone?

*if nobody gets the reference, she chuckles
 awkwardly. if people do, her amusement
 immediately drops as she remembers the
 somberness of her subject matter.*

FARAH

but i don't know, i do this thing sometimes
 where my brain just veers off its track and i start
 thinking about how my grandfather's getting older,
 i think he's part robot now with the amount of joint replacements he's gotten
 knees, elbows, shoulders,
 all he'd need is head and toes at this point and he'd be a full set
 and it scares me, you know? to think that sooner rather than later
 i am going to exist, for the first time, in a world that does not inhabit
 jiddo.
 and then he becomes baba, and baba becomes mama, and then
 it's not an avalanche anymore but a fucking blackhole and the unstable
 physics matter or whatever gravitational pull shit inside is just
 ripping me apart, it's disemboweling me, dismembering me, dissecting me
 i am drawn and quartered in its thrall.
 and that's just the thought of it.

then i'm back in my room.
 bathroom actually.
 sitting on the shower floor
 as the water falls in torrents down my spine.
 i think i'm crying.
 i think maybe he wasn't entirely correct.
 i'm starting to translate the fictions in his voice.
 no longer not wrong but not right.
 what else isn't right?
 this. can't be right.

her voice cracks.

FARAH

i was so busy worrying for them that i never
 really considered i might beat them to it.
 i shouldn't have beat them to it.
 how is it fair that they have to mourn me?
 my own minuscule sorrow
 imagining a life without them
 will be nothing compared to
 the shattering agony of losing a child

*clock chimes, unfreezing jo. she climbs off
 the bed, and wipes blood from her forehead.
 she stares at her fingertips before her
 attention jumps to farah*

JO

farah?

*a realization; a worst fear settling into her
 bones.*

FARAH

we're dead aren't we

it's not a question, but god she wishes it was

JO

yes

farah staggers back; jo follows her.

FARAH

i told niamh, i told her not to—
oh god, levi—
if he had just—
he wouldn't—
and our parents—

JO

i know

*farah crumples to the ground, sobbing. jo
rushes to catch her and cradles her in a
tender embrace. farah clings to jo.*

FARAH

what do i do with all my love
when death is a wall keeping it from reaching anyone?
where will all this grief go? when we go?
do we carry it beyond?
does it dissipate like smoke?
like petals floating down a stream?

JO

i think our families will take it from us, unburden us of our load

FARAH

burden me! burden me! burden me!
it is supposed to be mine
it belongs to me, they can't take it from me
i don't want to be unburdened by it
i don't want it to go anywhere
i don't want to go
isn't there anything we can do?

*jo kisses the crown of her head, pushing her
hair back from her face, and wiping her
tears. she pulls farah tight against her.*

JO

let me take it from here

FARAH

this can't be our end

JO

it won't be, okay? we can change it.
i'll make it better, i'll make it all better

farah nods, and buries her head in jo's shirt

JO

(weighted)

i'll change it for you, fay, i promise

*what does it sound like when realities shift?
when someone alters the course of time?
when timelines collide, knot, and overlap? is
it a resonant sound? a melodic one? or is it
the silence of waiting for a clock to chime?*

BLACKOUT.

END OF ACT ONE.

ACT TWO

II.1 JUST DANCE 4

in darkness, the clock chimes six times. once silence takes over, and the clock no longer echos, we hear niamh's voice, but we don't see anything.

NIAMH

it takes a harmonic stillness to conjure animals
king solomon was the spell and blink.
kfc super saver offer"!!!

the rumbling starts again, but this time less sinister. not so hellish, but instead with a more disco, rave-like atmosphere.

an instrumental melody starts up, then: istanbul (not constatinople) by they might be giants.

lights up on beezy. he is very much a man in a fly costume. he stands in the center of the pentacle, with shadows of niamh, levi, jo, and farah in a circle around the salt.

a flourish of his hands and he becomes the teenagers' puppeteer. he tugs at their strings, and they lurch into a standing position. a dance sequence starts. specifically, the just dance 4 choreography for this song (with niamh as parrot, levi as the shark, farah as the zebra, and jo as the mouse, of course)

FARAH

what is happening?

NIAMH

what the hell what the hell what the hell

LEVI

guys, who the fuck is moving my limbs right now, i swear to god i'm not touching them, how the fuck are they doing that?

JO

hey, isn't this from just dance?

beezy shrieks

BEEZY

silence! just dance!

as they dance, beezy subtly tries to step out of the pentacle. he tests its boundaries, pushes against the invisible wall between him and the earth. his every attempt at escape, however, is thwarted. if the girls look towards him at all, he acts as if he was doing no such thing.

at last it comes to an end and beezy cuts their strings. they all collapse into a heap on the ground. delighted, beezy claps

BEEZY

bravo! brava!
 you guys were fantastic!!!
 oooooohhhhhhhh yeah you guys rocked
 like ... really really rocked
 oh wow, the sheer level of talent i have
 right here in front of my eyes
 oh man, this is crazy!!!
 wait 'til mephisto hears about this
 he is so gonna flip his shit!
 what do you guys call yourselves?
 i'm beezy, short for beelzebub
 it's a pleasure to meet you
 a real pleasure

beezy starts aggressively shaking the hands he is capable of reaching, they all stare in vacant shock

BEEZY

i'm sure you've heard of me,
 prince of hell
 b-e-e-z-y

lord of the flies not of bees
 don't get it twisted
 fuck bees
 never liked honey
 no way, no how

*faster than one could suck in a breath,
 beezy turns upon niamh*

BEEZY

hey kid, what did you say your name was, again?

NIAMH

i didn't actually...

*beezy blinks at her, inscrutable, and niamh
 glances warily at her friends, silently
 begging for their aid. but something is lost
 in each translation, and the slight
 discrepancies of their understanding create
 an inconclusive set of reactions. niamh does
 not know what to take from it, and must
 make up her own mind*

NIAMH

it's, um, it's niamh

BEEZY

...

NIAMH

...

*waiting...waiting...waiting...farah, levi, and
 jo wonder if they should interject*

BEEZY

knock knock

NIAMH

...who's there?

neve
BEEZY

...
NIAMH

...
BEEZY

...niamh who
NIAMH

BEEZY
how should i fucking know? you didn't give me your full name

LEVI
jeez, do you need her signature to make her lady supreme of beetles, duchess of the sixth circle or something? trying to trick her into selling / her soul?

there is a glint of appreciation, as if he'd just come to her heroic rescue, in the way niamh eyes him. beezy interrupts a bit too hastily.

BEEZY
/ no it's a matter of principle and propriety.
won't you give me your full name, kid?

NIAMH
(as if the words are being wrenched from the very pit of her stomach)
niamh morris

a wicked grin peels back beezy's lips and he relishes in the name, savoring each syllable, running them over his teeth, his tongue, and then hoarding it inside his mouth. an anchor.

BEEZY
n i a m h m o r r i s
thank you, niamh morris

he sighs contentedly, and an unsettling feeling slinks up niamh's spine, and she scratches at the back of her neck.

*beezy claps his hands together, startling
them all out of whatever stupor they'd fallen
into*

BEEZY

alright kids, now i'm no genie,
i'm not here to grant you your wishes three,
but tell me what it is you desire,
and i'm sure i can draw up a contract
we will all be satisfied with.

*levi, jo, farah, and niamh all look to each
other, waiting for someone to take the lead*

FARAH

well...you see mr. beelzebub, sir

BEEZY

beezy

FARAH

uh, sure...beezy
this is actually really embarrassing but
we didn't mean to summon you
you see, we have this project...

BEEZY

do you need me to get some people on that?
the greenbottle flies can have that shit finished lickety split, you'll get the best grade in
your entire life
without having to exert a single one of your braincells
or, if you prefer, the bluebottle flies can get you a good enough grade that your teacher
won't be suspicious
and your parents won't bat an eyelash,
and they'll throw in some snacks to sweeten the deal.
lower grade but free food.

LEVI

ooooo what kind of snacks are we talking?

JO

levi, we have snacks already, eat your damn taco

*delightfully recalling the once forgotten
torchys, levi goes to dig into his meal*

FARAH

no no no, it's okay we don't need you to summon your little fly minions
our project is in pretty good shape, to be honest
we just, uh, weren't planning on having any demonic company tonight

beezy narrows his eyes

BEEZY

oh?

*finding his queso basically empty, a look of
devastation flashes across levi's face.*

LEVI

did y'all finish the queso off?

NIAMH

i didn't touch it

JO

wasn't me either

LEVI

huh...these edibles are stronger than i thought

FARAH

yeah this whole séance thing?
it was just a big mistake
i'm really sorry to waste your time
but we don't actually want to make a deal or anything

BEEZY

ohohohohoho i see, okay, no biggie
i'll just head on back to the old homestead then.

*a breath of relief sucked back in before it
could fully escape. apprehension latches
onto farah, she wants to believe, but it's too
easy. too simple.*

FARAH

i feel terrible

BEEZY

it's fine, i totally get it
this salt just magically poured itself into a pentacle.
these candles just magically lit themselves.
the ritual words just magically spoke themselves.
you guys literally did nothing to make this happen.
it's cool.

NIAMH

...really?

BEEZY

NO NOT REALLY
what did you expect was going to happen?

NIAMH

honestly?
nothing

BEEZY

ugh another atheist

NIAMH

i'd say agnostic now, i'm having some doubts

FARAH

only some? hello? you're looking at a demon, what other proof do you need?

NIAMH

yeah, and if he could just...crawl on back into hell so that i can go back to my room, get some sleep, and pretend this was all a dream, that would be really great

LEVI

oh shit what time is it

jo reaches for her phone

JO

motherfucker!

(jabbing a finger at bezy)

what did you do? flatten out the space-time continuum to breach the earth's surface?!

*she turns around the screen for everyone
else to see*

JO

it's almost midnight, guys

FARAH

what???? how????

NIAMH

i swear it was 8pm like two minutes ago

LEVI

oh my mom's so gonna kill me

FARAH

if the headmistress doesn't get to us first

BEEZY

whats the big deal? carriage gonna turn back into a pumpkin or something?

NIAMH

something like that

*jo beckons for farah, niamh, and levi to
come closer to her*

JO

guys guys guys okay team huddle
here's the plan, room-checks are in less than fifteen minutes
levi, it's unlikely we'll get you out of here in time to make your curfew
but we'll still try to get you out alive
niamh, can you sneak him out to graduation terrace / on your way back to your room?

NIAMH

/ yeah sounds good

JO

from there, you take the long route, okay?
up towards the gym, / past the playground, then to the soccer fields

FARAH

/ wait, penson or the lower school gym?
wouldn't it be faster to go to hoak / portico?

JO

/ that's the main entrance, fay, / most of security is concentrated in that area

LEVI

/ i don't know where any of these places are

JO

it doesn't matter, just follow niamh,
 she'll take you outside, then go down the right-most sidewalk you'll be sandwiched in-
 between the two gyms
 once you get down to the soccer fields
 the gate is easier to hop
 then you're home free
 fay and i will deal with beezy here
 everyone got it?

FARAH/NIAMH

got it!

LEVI

aye aye cap'n!

JO

let's rock and roll, baby

*they all leap into action, farah helps levi and
 niamh quickly gather their things while jo
 stands contemplatively in front of beezy*

JO

how does one go about banishing a demon?

BEEZY

banish? bit harsh, wouldn't you say?

JO

well, i don't know, can you just...disappear for a bit, i need to put the candles away

BEEZY

if you let me out i could help you
 the hexapodic crocodiles from the blood river
 are surprisingly great with a broom,
 but moonlight is ruthless on their milky scales
 and your sun's not nearly strong enough to keep them toasty, so they'll only come when a
 higher caliber demon calls.
 this place could be spotless in a matter of seconds.
 you'll be the talk of the ... hall

special good behavior privileges guaranteed
all you gotta do is release me

jo's hands go to her hips.

JO

not a chance buddy

BEEZY

and here i thought we were becoming friends, johanna

*jo frowns as farah peeks out the door,
looking both ways*

JO

did i—

FARAH

(accidentally interrupting)
—the coast is clear, you guys be careful,
okay?

*niamh and levi nod and exit, while farah
joins jo in scrutinizing the demon*

FARAH

how do we get him to go?

JO

i'm not sure...

BEEZY

still standing right here

JO

shoo...begone...i banish thee back to the depths of hell from whence you came

BEEZY

are you serious?

JO

...yes?

FARAH

do we still have that sage?

JO

no, we used the last of it when my parents came up from amarillo a couple weeks ago, remember? you thought the nick cage pillow was haunted and didn't want my mom sensing the negative spirits

a moment of unease

BEEZY

your mother's a medium?

JO

no, she's catholic, just going through a bit of a spiritual phase at the moment

the moment passes

FARAH

okay so if not sage, then what, bang together pots and pans?

JO

we don't have pots and pans

the headmistress' voice wafts in like a foul stench. the girls screw up their noses, panic alight in their eyes

HEADMISTRESS (OFF STAGE)

room check!

BEEZY

clock's-a-ticking ladies, what's it gonna be?

JO

fuck what do we do

FARAH

i don't know! maybe try praying?

JO

should i get on my knees or something?

HEADMISTRESS (OFF STAGE)

room check, girls!

FARAH

i don't know, sure! just do it!

JO

fine! alright alright alright

jo gets down on her knees and clasps her hands together. meanwhile farah frantically cleans up anything else that she can, if nothing is left to clean beyond the salt and candles, she gnaws anxiously at her thumb, what else can she do?

JO

el señor es mi pastor, nada me falta;
 en verdes pastos me hace descansar.
 junto a tranquilas aguas me conduce;
 me infunde nuevas fuerzas.
 me guía por sendas de justicia
 por amor a su nombre.

headmistress much louder now. jo falters, seeing that beezy still stands there, playing with whatever amounts to his cuticles in the fly costume.

HEADMISTRESS (OFF STAGE)

room check!

farah motions for jo to continue

JO

aun si voy por valles tenebrosos
 no temo peligro alungo—this isn't working

BEEZY

gotten it out of your system, yet?

before jo can response, someone knocks at the door. jo jumps to her feet.

HEADMISTRESS (OFF STAGE)

room check!

farah and jo stare at each other. after a beat, the headmistress knocks again.

HEADMISTRESS

room check!

BOTH

be right there!

while jo and farah shout in whispers, distracted, beezy lifts his foot and carefully toes over the salt line. it gives way. he steps over it

JO

what do we do?!

FARAH

ohhhh we're so fucked

JO

this is it, we're done for.

d-e-a-d dead.

beezy rolls his eyes, then tip-toe-runs off-stage without them noticing

FARAH

it was an honor to be your roommate

JO

see you in the next life. i love you.

FARAH

i love you too.

HEADMISTRESS (OFF STAGE)

do i smell candles?

jo winces and goes to open the door while farah turns around, finally noticing that the demon is nowhere to be seen.

FARAH

jo... jo wait, he's gone

JO

what?

FARAH

he's gone!

it's too late. jo swings the door open and the headmistress stares into the room, her attention immediately going to the candles and the pentacle in the center of the room. jo stares as well, baffled. the headmistress' shoulders slump as annoyance passes over her features. jo and farah smile guiltily.

HEADMISTRESS

why couldn't it have just been candles?
johanna, do i need to make another phone call home?

JO

no ma'am, it won't happen again

HEADMISTRESS

that's what you said the last time
i thought i made myself perfectly clear
no satanic rituals, witchcraft,
or anything involving fire on campus

she extends a hand, palm up

HEADMISTRESS

the lighter, please

jo sighs and fishes it from her pocket, plunking it into her hand. the headmistress smiles, it is not a warm expression, and then turns to farah

HEADMISTRESS

you, i had expected more from, miss al abadi
(briefly back to jo)
did you really have to get her involved?

FARAH

it was for history class, ma'am. would we really be doing the proper research if we didn't test our hypothesis?

HEADMISTRESS

and what hypothesis would that be?

FARAH

whether or not demons are real, and if they're not, why did we invent them?

HEADMISTRESS

...

and what was the result?

before farah can respond, jo butts in

JO

inconclusive

*headmistress glances again to the pentacle,
to the flames, and back to the girls, weighing
her options*

HEADMISTRESS

saturday morning detention for the both of you

*jo opens her mouth to protest, but the
headmistress silences her*

HEADMISTRESS

i won't call home since it was, as you say, purely for educational purposes, but, as you both know, we have a strict no open flame policy that has clearly been violated here.

FARAH

yes, ma'am, we understand

HEADMISTRESS

now i will also be confiscating those candles

*she waits for a minute before jo and farah
catch on. the two of them blow out the
candles and gather them up on their arms
passing them over to her.*

HEADMISTRESS

good night, ladies.

BOTH

good night, headmistress.

BLACKOUT.

II.2. DEMONS WATCH LOVE ISLAND TOO

*levi and niamh stand before a set of doors
leading out onto a terrace*

NIAMH

...and then down to the soccer fields

LEVI

got it, thanks niamh, i really appreciate the help

niamh blushes

NIAMH

it's not much. sorry we're leaving you on your own now

LEVI

nah, it's all good. less risky if i go on my own
i've played assassins creed, i get it
besides, i didn't mean just getting me out
i meant for everything today,
really, you guys are cool
i wouldn't have blamed you for turning me away
back by the movie theater
stranger, danger and all
but thank you, you know
for not
turning me away

NIAMH

i think we posed more of a danger to you than you did us

LEVI

i think the demon you summoned would agree

...

holy *fuck*, we summoned a demon!
what are y'all gonna do about beezy?

NIAMH

jo and farah are on it
i think i'm still in shock, honestly

it's like there are worms writhing beneath my skin
 keeping me from settling with the weight of what's happened
 did you see the way he looked at me?
 the way he spoke to me?
 did you hear how my name sounded on his tongue?
 like sacrilege
 like a different kind of holy

*niamh falls into a sort of trance, staring
 ahead, with an untethered focus*

LEVI

yeah that was some creepy shit, man

NIAMH

i feel...tainted
 in some unseen
 inextricable way
 dirty, almost

HEADMISTRESS (OFF STAGE)

room check!

LEVI

dammit, you need to get back to your room

*after a moment passes, concerned, he settles
 a hand on her shoulder, yanking her from
 whatever depths she fell into*

LEVI

give me your phone

NIAMH

what?

LEVI

your phone, quickly

*niamh does as he asks, and he types
 something in. then sends a message.*

*he passes the phone back to niamh and she
 stares at the screen, a soft smile starts
 forming on her lips*

LEVI

there, now you have my number and i have yours
 text me with updates, please?
 i feel like i'm going to wake up tomorrow and think
 whatever happened tonight was all just a dream
 and i might just about lose my mind
 if that's the case
 i won't be able to stop wondering about this
 at least now, i have something to tell me
 it actually happened
 god, i can't stop thinking about it
 ...
 plus, i liked you guys' company
 it would kinda suck if it was a one-time-thing
 though, maybe séances aren't the best pastime
 ...
 say you'll text me?

niamh grins.

NIAMH

yeah okay
 i'll text you

*levi pushes open the door, with his back,
 leaning against it*

LEVI

see you later, then?

NIAMH

see you

*he smiles and waves goodbye, then
 disappears into the night. niamh opens her
 phone again and stares at that singular text*

enter beezy.

BEEZY

oof, kiddo, you've got it bad, haven't you?

*niamh startles, covering her mouth to stifle a
 scream. maybe her phone falls, maybe she's
 got a good enough grip on it.*

beezy ignores the indicator of shock and fear, gesturing a finger between her and levi's disappearing silhouette

BEEZY

you two known each other for a while?

NIAMH

n-n-no
just today, actually

BEEZY

well isn't that just fascinating!
i never would've guessed

NIAMH

how...how did you get out?

BEEZY

it was hard to miss those glances you shot his way
so pining, so lovesick, gah! young love
makes this rotten old heart almost miss the ache of beating
the intrigue...the drama...the pain...oooh don't i love it!

NIAMH

did farah and jo make a deal with you or something?

BEEZY

alas, it was harder still to miss the way he didn't look at you the same

niamh is trying to stay focused, but she can't help the part of her that that stings.

NIAMH

what do you mean?

BEEZY

yeaaaahhhh i think i might've seen his eye wandering to your friend johanna
they get on quite nicely, don't you think?
but johanna...now she's just that type of person, isn't she?
the type that people gravitate to,
who they elevate in their minds
they think she's weird, bat-shit crazy, an oddball

so fiercely herself that even if it makes you want
 to retract back into your being, even if you can't stand
 to be around her, something about it just makes you so jealous.
 doesn't it?
 it's effortless,
 her being.
 and it drives you crazy
 makes you want to—

NIAMH

stop it! just shut up
 i must be crazy. i must be absolutely unraveling
 if i'm even entertaining the idea of you.
 you have no idea what you're talking about

BEEZY

oh right, sorry, i forgot that the seventeen year old girl
 clearly knows more about life than the primordial being

NIAMH

i don't like levi

BEEZY

sure, whatever you say

NIAMH

i don't! i've just met him!

BEEZY

don't meet many boys, do you?

NIAMH

actually, i don't

BEEZY

he's a novelty, then?

NIAMH

no! it's not like that
 it's...like is too strong of a word

BEEZY
(in a british accent)

it's early days, babes
don't put all your eggs in one basket

NIAMH

what am i even doing
stop trying to distract me!
how the hell are you even here?

BEEZY

here as in here like this hallway
or here as in like
this ~world~
because you were the one who summoned me so...

NIAMH

all of it!!! how are you re/al?

BEEZY

how am i real? / oh shit guys, she's getting metaphysical

NIAMH

/ yes! how are you real and here
and why do you look like that?

BEEZY

hey! i am quite / dashing

NIAMH

/ but yes, specifically, how did you get out of the pentacle and into this hallway?
what did jo and farah promise you?

BEEZY

oh them?
didn't need them to promise anything
got out all on my lonesome

NIAMH

how?

BEEZY

you don't think i wouldn't have failsafes?
people don't summon demons like they used to
you'd think it would be different
but nah, you're lucky if some poor sap calls upon you

luckier still if they're actually equipped to wield you
 in the past century, it's only happened to me once
 one time, niamh morris.
 in a hundred years
 only one purposeful summoning
 all others were kids like you
 wanting to challenge their reality
 and yes, there are a vast slew of demons to choose from
 but after that much disappointment
 trapped within a ring of salt and fire
 you learn what gives you anchorage
 and you exploit the hell of it to escape
 that damned star.
 that's what you do,
 niamh morris.

NIAMH

why do you keep saying my name like that

BEEZY

i can be a parasite
 or i can be a sword
 which do you think you have made me?

NIAMH

just answer my fucking question!

BEEZY

here's a lesson for you kiddo,
 names have power, remember that
 be careful who you give them to.
 they are your tether to the ego

NIAMH

...you're linked to me?

he grabs onto her arm

BEEZY

ah! she's starting to get it!
 now, come along, i'm late for an appointment

BLACKOUT.

II.3. BAKING WITCHES

lights up on the interior of a witch's gingerbread house. a woodsy smell wafts from the stage, one of fir and amber and incense, pine and sage with an undercurrent of ginger and sugar. maybe the smell of a pie. perhaps it originates a strong ass essential oil diffuser billowing steam from a cauldron at the center of the stage. or perhaps the smells are emulated some other way, and inside the cauldron is dry ice or a fog machine.

regardless, the room is decorated further in dried plants and odd specimen jars, old tomes and animal bones mixed with more baking related items. there is a large oven at the center of the room as well, with a stove top and a tea kettle.

it is a saccharine place. a sugar-coated treachery.

hunched over the cauldron is the crone. she moves a large whisk through the cauldron.

CRONE

(sing-song, derisive)

a fly built a castle, a tall and mighty castle

there came to the castle the crawling louse.

“who, who’s in your house?” said the crawling louse.

“i, i the languishing fly. and who art thou?”

“i’m the crawling louse.”

then came to the castle the leaping fly

“who, who’s in your castle?” said the leaping flea

“i, i the languishing fly, and i, the crawling louse, and who art thou?”

“i’m the leaping flea”

enter beezy and niamh. beezy spies the crone and immediately relaxes. he waddles over.

CRONE

i thought the air smelled more putrid than usual

BEEZY

oh boy oh boy am i glad to see you

CRONE

welcome back, prince

she glances to niamh

CRONE

i see you have yet to been able to wriggle free of your leash

niamh frown. he points further into the hut

BEEZY

my things are back where i left them, yeah?

crone nods and beezy immediately goes to rifle through jars and specimen and books.

CRONE

hopefully they're dusty enough for your liking

beezy huffs and pushes all the objects back away from one of the shelves to reveal a wooden panel. crone grins wildly at niamh

CRONE

the thicker the grime, the longer he knows his rubbish has been untouched

beezy pulls aside the panel and reaches inside. he brings out a satanic book,

NIAMH

what did you mean by "his leash"?

an arm diving once again inside the panel, beezy now retrieves a mold-ridden, dirt-covered, mouse-bitten, piece of bread and a few pieces of rotten fruit.

CRONE

how long has it been since you summoned him?

niamh glances out the window to find the warm yellow glow of the sun rising. it is peaceful, just watching that golden light trickle down from the cosmos. she inhales deeply. her tense stance eases.

meanwhile, beezy devours the decomposing food, shoveling it into his mouth as if he were on the brink of starvation. mouthful after mouthful. to him, rot is delicious.

NIAMH

all night i suppose

CRONE

did you make a deal with him?

NIAMH

no

beezy licks his fingers free of juices and crumbs

CRONE

then he is more flea, more louse, more leech than fly

aghast, beezy's head swerves towards them

BEEZY

hey, you know how i hate being compared to that worm!

crone rolls her eyes

CRONE

grow up, beelzebub

beezy opens his mouth to respond, but then it falls shut. he reaches back inside the panel and this time retrieves a moth-holed tweed jacket. he holds it up to his chest, admires it for a moment, then gestures between the crone and niamh, he addresses crone first

BEEZY

keep an eye on her while i go get dressed
and you.....stay

*niamh mimicks being a dog. beezy's head
bounces once, a reaffirmation, and then he
scampers off to get dressed*

CRONE

once he catches a glimpse of his reflection,
he'll be transfixed
will you stir this for me?
i'll start a pot of tea
he'll be a while

*the crone tries to pass the whisk to niamh,
but niamh finally summons the courage to
grab onto one of the large kitchen knives left
on the counter. she holds it with both hands,
as if it were too heavy for her grasp, and she
points it towards the crone. niamh's voice
wavers but she tries to level it*

NIAMH

he said something
like that earlier
a parasite
says we're linked
what exactly does that mean.

*the older woman raises her hands as if
placating a wild beast.*

CRONE

beezy is not a chthonic beast, he is not of the earth
he is from a place
deeper still
he feeds on you, fastens himself to part of your ego
so that he might walk among your world
but he cannot do so freely,
not without a blood-signed bargain
he *needs* you.
it starts with something like a name,
but it's a rot that spreads, caustic

*the crone starts drawing nearer to niamh,
niamh tries to back away, raising her arms*

NIAMH

so since we didn't make a deal with him,
he latched onto me so that he wouldn't have to return to hell?

CRONE

and now he's burning through you,
he'll leave you a husk before the week's out
unless one of you finds a way to separate from the other

NIAMH

like if i made a deal with him? would that fix all this? would it sever him from me?

CRONE

in some ways yes, he will not have to cling to you so closely
he'll be stronger, you'll have given him
everything he wants,
a place in the world, freedom to move as he pleases
and he will not drain you so much
but a part of you will always belong to him
another little girl's soul he can add to his shelf of collectibles
if that is something you are comfortable with,
by all means, make a deal with the devil
but i find it's better to cut out the rot at its root

NIAMH

is that what you did? cut it out at the root?

CRONE

no, i took the other route
but it was something i knew i wanted from the beginning
my dear, let me give you this one warning
do not meddle in the affairs of demons if you are not certain
do not sell your soul unless you believe yourself to have one in the first place
it will only cause you strife.
have i answered your question sufficiently?
beelzebub should be finished dressing shortly

NIAMH

i think so

niamh lowers the knife and then holds it out for the crone to take, but she waves her off

CRONE

keep it, i have plenty
now, can you stir this for me so i can start on that tea?

without thinking much of it, as if it were the most natural decision in the world, niamh slips the knife into her backpack. she then takes the whisk from the crone and stirs

NIAMH

what is this?

CRONE

why cake batter, of course.

niamh dips her finger into it, relishing it on her tongue, as beezy returns, his suit now polished and clean, no where near the rags we saw him leave with

BEEZY

well, jeez, that took some fixing
but not to shabby, eh??
i clean up nicely

he spins in a circle, dramatically showing off his new suit. the crone sets the table with three teacups.

BEEZY

now, now lady, let's talk loopholes. have you figured out any new options for me?

BLACKOUT.

II.4. DETENTION

saturday morning detention. farah and jo, both exhausted, re-shelve books. they are not in their uniform this time. meanwhile, mr. freeburn sits with his feet kicked up on a table and is reading a book about surfing while drinking a cup of tea.

it is silent for a while, just going through the motions. jo pulls a book on the occult off a shelf, and, barely processing what she has in her hands, immediately goes to place it on the shelf. she does a double take and looks again at it.

she rifles through the pages until she finds one in particular.

JO

farah?

farah turns to jo, motioning for her to be quiet

JO

farah look

MR. FREEBURN

shh!

farah winces and jo rolls her eyes, before lifting the open book so farah can see the large header titled "beelzebub"

FARAH

oh shit!

farah's hand immediately goes to her mouth, jo hides the book behind her, and mr. freeburn sighs and puts down his book. his feet fall onto the ground with an audible thunk.

MR. FREEBURN

girls, not only is this a library, and detention, it is also obscenely early on a saturday morning and i have yet to even finish my first cup of tea, please, no talking.

FARAH

sorry, mr. freeburn

JO

yeah, sorry, we'll be as quiet as a fly
bsst bsst bsst

*farah nudges jo, and jo stifles a giggle. mr
freeburn stares at them a moment*

MR. FREEBURN

you're a weird kid, johanna

JO

i'll take that as a compliment

*mr freeburn shrugs and goes back to his
book, periodically sipping his tea. jo rereads
the page, and farah joins her. after a minute
or so, enter levi with a lunchbox.*

LEVI

hey, uncle gary!
the lady at the front office said i would find you here

*farah and jo startle at the sound of his voice,
their attention swings to him, and they try
subtly to get his attention*

MR. FREEBURN

what are you doing here? is everything okay?

LEVI

oh yeah, i just accidentally broke curfew last night
lost track of time
mom was waiting up for me and everything
it was kind of spooky, not gonna lie
and well, she said i could either wake up early and bring you breakfast
or i could sleep in and then later wash the outdoor trashcan
which i'd like to note for the jury was crawling with all sort of creepy critters
so i brought you latkas, bacon, turkey of course, and some kind of omelette

*levi sets the lunch box in front of mr.
freeburn, who smiles warmly at him*

MR. FREEBURN

thanks, levi, and tell your mom i say thanks, too
i'm trusting she cooked all this?

jo ups the ante and is now less subtle about her ways of trying to get levi's attention

LEVI

haha yeah don't worry, it won't kill you,

levi finally notices them, and struggles to keep his attention with his uncle.

LEVI

i...had no hand in the....cooking

...

since i'm here, i'm gonna browse if that's okay?

MR. FREEBURN

of course, the sci-fi and fantasy section is further back

LEVI

thanks!

levi immediately approaches the girls. they speak in hushed whispers. mr freeburn glances up briefly, but then shrugs, puts in headphones, and starts digging into the lunchbox.

LEVI

what are y'all / doing here?

JO

us?! i could ask the / same thing about you

FARAH

we *live* here levi, / we're always here

LEVI

oh you know what i mean

JO

after you and nini left last night, the headmistress caught us before we could clean up the pentacle. she took our candles and my lighter-

FARAH

beezy disappeared last night from the pentacle

LEVI

what the fuck?! how?

JO

we don't know, he just kind of...poofed?

LEVI

how does a giant fly just poof?

JO

i take it you don't have any information on it then, damn

LEVI

sorry, no, i don't have anything
have y'all heard anything from niamh?

FARAH

nope, it's been radio silence

JO

i don't think we need to worry, it's even too early in the morning for niamh to be awake

FARAH

true, i swear my eyelids feel like they're made of concrete

LEVI

i feel like i've been hit by a truck, my body aches all over.

JO

i guess demon summoning really takes it out of you, huh?

FARAH

let's hold off on the jokes until we know we didn't somehow unleash a creature from hell
in our school, i don't want him around the middle school and elementary kids

jo brings out the book

JO

know thy enemy, right?

*levi leans in, perhaps a little closer than he
needs to*

LEVI

“beelzebub, prince of demons, according to the scriptures; foremost in power and crime after satan, according to milton; supreme chief of the infernal empire, according to most demonographers. his name signifies ‘lord of the flies.’ in theological sources, predominantly christian, beelzebub is another name for satan. he is known in demonology as one of the seven deadly demons, or seven princes of hell, beelzebub representing gluttony and envy.”

FARAH

so how does this help us?

jo plunks the book into levi's hands and then marches over to mr freeburn, she waves awkwardly and waits for him to take out his headphones

MR. FREEBURN

yes, jo?

JO

i'm just curious, if someone summoned a demon just for the sake of the argument, let's say, the demon beelzebub how would they go about banishing him? i mean, for our project we're talking about these rituals and i guess i'm just wondering if you have any source recommendations for like...a reversal? just so we have a more complete picture of the entire process for our assignment

mr. freeburn looks between farah and jo and then, even more perplexed, to levi

MR. FREEBURN

ladies...i'm a high school history teacher not a demonologist levi, since i have you here, did your mom still want to do dinner tomorrow night?

LEVI

yes, sir

MR. FREEBURN

perfect, tell her i'll bring a bottle of wine

LEVI

will do!

he checks his watch and then starts packing up his things, then addresses jo and farah

MR. FREEBURN

well, would you look at the time.
your sentence is officially up and the day is yours again

LEVI

wait, uncle gary, are you absolutely sure you don't know anything that might help?

MR. FREEBURN

let me see...wow you're really making me think, here
if i remember correctly, unless the original summoners make a deal with the devil
his connection to this realm should weaken,
but be careful, they're nasty little critters.
beelzebub, you said? he'll try and exploit your weaknesses,
turning up the dial on any grudges and jealousy harbored between friends.
make you so hungry that you'll beg him to sign your name in blood.
don't see how this'll help you with your assignment though.

JO

thanks anyways, mr. freeburn!

he awkwardly salutes

MR. FREEBURN

sure, now at least try and do something non-occult related,
enjoy your saturday, go outside and touch some grass or something

mr freeburn exits, accidentally leaving behind his tea. once he's gone, jo turns to levi. she giggles.

JO

yes, sir, uncle gary, sir?

FARAH

never in my life have i heard someone call mr. freeburn sir

LEVI

...maybe that's a problem then?

JO

so he's your uncle...mom's brother or dads?

LEVI
dad's

FARAH
but your mom...?

LEVI
my dad left when i was really young,
still in diapers, really
uncle gary, he...well he was there for us,
resented his brother for his decision to walk out on his family,
so he really stepped up
i know he's a lot sometimes,
but he's been more father to me than my real one ever was

FARAH
i think i just got a whole lot more respect for him

JO
...i know it's a weird feeling

*before levi can respond, voices echo from off-
stage, they all looked shocked between them*

BEEZY (OFF STAGE)
i'm telling you, they're in the library

NIAMH (OFF STAGE)
how could you possibly know that?

BEEZY (OFF STAGE)
i have a sixth sense about these things

FARAH
is that..?

JO
no fucking way

II.5. SECRETS SECRETS ARE NO FUN

*enter niamh and beezy into the library.
niamh is still wearing her clothes from the
night before. they have come directly from
the crone's hut*

JO

why the hell is the demon with you?

BEEZY

well hello and good morning to you, too, johanna

JO

i wasn't talking to you, i was talking to niamh

*beezy's hands dramatically go to his heart
as if he'd been shot*

FARAH

jeez, niamh, what happened to you?

*niamh, suddenly very self-conscious, glances
down at herself and then to levi*

NIAMH

what are you talking about?
do i look that bad?

JO

did you even make it back to your room late night?

niamh stares at her, expression blank

JO

crumpled uniform on a saturday morning just seems like a cry for help

*realization dawns on niamh, and she looks
to beezy who is decidedly not returning her
stare.*

NIAMH

oh! i must've just passed out the moment i got to my bed
and...when i noticed that this fucker was still with me, i had other priorities

LEVI

fair enough

NIAMH

wait...levi what are you doing here?

LEVI

i'll explain later

*beezy sees the book farah, jo, and levi were
sorting through*

BEEZY

awww doing your research on me?

i'm touched

but you do know you could've just asked me...

farah quickly shuts the book

FARAH

as if you would've given us a real answer

BEEZY

secrets are not my trade

*he opens up his fly costume like it were a
trench-coat and inside are a variety of
watches, most of which are broken*

BEEZY

however, i am selling watches

for the ripe price of your eternal soul one of these bad boys could be yours

LEVI

...i'm good...thanks

BEEZY

how 'bout you, farah?

farah shakes her head

BEEZY

jo?

JO

absolutely not

BEEZY

what about you, niamh? you know you want one!

NIAMH

beezy, nobody wants your broken watches

BEEZY

boooooo y'all are so boring, i thought teenagers were supposed to be fun

LEVI

sorry to disappoint

FARAH

if you don't keep secrets, as you say, then where have you been?

BEEZY

well i'm not gonna just tell you for nothin'

*niamh grows a little nervous while
annoyance oozes from jo*

JO

doesn't that literally mean you're trading in secrets

BEEZY

not a secret if i tell you

NIAMH

he's not going to tell the truth, y'all know that

BEEZY

(incredulous)

hey, i'm many things but a liar ain't one of them

LEVI

then prove it

NIAMH

i don't think that's necessary

JO

why not?

NIAMH

i just think don't think it's worth it, it's not like we can trust anything he'd say anyways

JO

but i want to hear what slimy little excuses he'll cough up

NIAMH

this is a waste of time

JO

then how do you propose we spend it?

how might we cash in our hours, budget our minutes?

NIAMH

i don't know / i just—

jo opens her mouth to continue arguing

FARAH

jo, town it down a bit

BEEZY

if you must know, i was visiting an old friend. niamh was kind enough to accompany me.

FARAH

she what?

JO

excuse me?

LEVI

niamh was with you?

FARAH

i'm sorry...niamh there's no way that's true, right?

*niamh stares at her; in a panic, she feels her
friends slipping through her fingers but
doesn't know how to catch them.*

NIAMH

no! who do you think i am?

BEEZY

you can still smell the witchcraft on her
the sweet ginger confectionaries

they lean in and take a whiff. jo's shoulders slump. beezy steps back and metaphorically gets out his popcorn

FARAH

just as he says

JO

were you seriously lying to us?

LEVI

so much for just passing out

FARAH

i can't believe you right now

NIAMH

are you guys fucking kidding me?

he dragged me through the forest against my will,

brought me to this creepy little witch's hut,

it was straight out of a fairytale, or perhaps i have walked into the world grimm

where you are not my friends but harpies dressed up in their skins

bloodhounds and bounty-hunter alike.

LEVI

so why didn't you say anything about it?

are you working with him or something?

FARAH

of course she's not working with him

JO

how do we know that though?

FARAH

she's just said she didn't want to go with him

JO

intention and action are entirely different beasts

one does not just wash away the other

FARAH

true...

NIAMH

i'm not working with him!

FARAH

so why did you lie?

NIAMH

i don't know, okay!? i guess i'm just terrible!
terrible niamh strikes again!
god, i'm so done with this!

*she storms out, and after a certain distance,
like a leash gone taut, beezy jerks out of his
stance and is dragged behind her out into
the hallway.*

*jo, levi, and farah stare after her. the
hallway is still visible on stage, but a door
separates them. niamh crumples to the
ground in front of the lockers, and her head
falls into her hands. beezy starts checking if
any of the lockers have been jammed and
don't need the combination to open.*

LEVI

...so what now

FARAH

jo, i think you should go talk to her

JO

why me?

FARAH

you've known her the longest
you can get through to her better than me or levi

JO

fine, okay, i'll talk to her

jo follows niamh out into the hall.

II.6. KILLER DAISIES VS. DEMON FLIES

a split scene, with alternating focus on levi and farah, and then niamh, beezy, and jo. both are visible on the stage and for now, lights are up on both of them.

as jo enters, she sees niamh on the ground and beezy rifling through someone's locker. meanwhile levi and farah stand awkwardly with each other.

JO

he's latched onto you isn't he?

NIAMH

i can't get him off

JO

he seems fond of invading people's privacy

NIAMH

you have no idea

LEVI

this is the first time we've been left alone together, huh

FARAH

it's not all that weird, you've only been alone with niamh

JO

so explain it to me

LEVI

...right you and jo are inseperable

NIAMH

you're just going to judge me harsher

FARAH

she's my best friend and we live together, so

beezy pulls out a stash of snacks from a locker.

BEEZY

oohhhhhh jackpot!

LEVI

no it makes sense , plus it's literally been less than twenty-four hours
i'm making it out to be way bigger than it is

JO

try me

NIAMH

fine. okay. we went to see a witch—

JO

witches are—

NIAMH

yes witches are real too it's weird i know
please can you just listen
silently, for once
otherwise i'll lose my nerve

JO

(a little hurt)

...

FARAH

i get it, to some degree, i feel i've lived a few lifetimes since we first met

LEVI

i completely agree. can i admit something to you?

NIAMH

so we went to the witch's hut
beezy got his things, apparently he dropped them off
a century ago when the crone summoned him

FARAH

of course

LEVI

i feel like this is something i've waited my entire life for

NIAMH

and when i walked in there something shifted within me
it felt...like a homecoming

FARAH

like cold, hard proof that magic is real?

LEVI

that's not what i'm talking about

JO

what are you talking about

NIAMH

jo please

JO

sorry

FARAH

what do you mean then?

NIAMH

what i mean is that something in my bones sang when i entered that hut
it was a lullaby, lulling me into an ease i haven't felt in a long time
and when the crone spoke to me...

LEVI

i was raised by a single mother,
i never realized how much that affects how i interact with people
but my friends at my school...most of them are guys

NIAMH

it felt like a call of my ancestors
my mother, my grandmother, my great-grandmother
it was my entire lineage baked into a singular soul

LEVI

i play dungeons and dragons with them, i do homework in the library with them
we hang out on weekends and sit in a truck bed
eating mozzarella sticks and sonic blasts in the pet-smart parking lot

NIAMH

maybe i'm homesick, maybe i miss my mom
 maybe i'm desperate to feel belonging like that that
 i'll search for it in every crevice

LEVI

but my mom always told me that girls have cosmic connections
 that friendships between them is the greatest intimacy there is,
 i worried i'd never get to experience it myself

*as beezy stops pilfering through teenager's
 belongings and focuses his attention back on
 jo and niamh, the lights them take on a
 green hue. (or maybe it's red?)*

NIAMH

maybe i am under some spell cast so i might let my guard down
 i don't know, jo, but what i do know is that
 i wanted it. i wanted it for myself. i wanted it to belong to me and me alone.

LEVI

and in just a few hours with jo,
 with niamh, with you, it's like i'm finally privy to
 some deep emotional craving

NIAMH

i have nothing, and so when asked, there was this whisper in my mind that said
 keep this for yourself, you deserve it, it's yours.

FARAH

can't you see, levi? we're a mess

JO

are we nothing, then? farah and i?

FARAH

this whole situation is a mess

NIAMH

we were once best friends, jo
 you were my everything, and i thought i was yours

LEVI

yeah...it is isn't it. funny.

*it's not actually funny, and levi knows this.
beezy sits back and listens. a faint buzzing
sound begins. it slowly gets louder and
louder as the argument progresses.*

JO

people drift apart, it happens

NIAMH

not like this, not like you did. you abandoned me!
when farah came to haskell freshman year,
there was an immediate shift. you started to favor her.
it was as if all those years of friendship didn't matter,
and you didn't even have the courtesy to ease me into it.
all of a sudden it was just "farah this" "farah that"

FARAH

so what is your campaign about?

JO

of course our friendship mattered
if it didn't matter i wouldn't even be here right now!

LEVI

it's like a steampunk drug cartel type of situation

FARAH

ohhh! so cool!

NIAMH

but it still hurt! it was out of my control and all i could do
was watch from inside myself as you boxed me out
we were roommates, jo
we were best friends
and then suddenly one day we weren't
and the worst part is is that i know why,
i'm the liar today but you've been lying your whole life
to your family, to your god, to me, to farah,
to yourself.

JO

what the fuck is that supposed to mean?

LEVI

yeah, so we've been looking for information on this drug that's supposed to make any abilities you have super strong, it doesn't give you powers, it just makes ones you already have like, crazy intense man. so it's super dangerous and super addictive. and we're trying to stop it from becoming widespread.

NIAMH

i know you better than anyone, i do,
i do, whether you like it or not.
you're in love with her! you always have been!

JO

oh my god i am not in love with her!

NIAMH

you are! you are!
but you are so shrouded in catholic guilt,
that you transferred the energy into a weird, obsessive friendship,
and i've been the one to pay the price for your delusions

LEVI

and towards the end of the last session, we were all on this ship that was docked in the harbor searching for clues when the ship fully left the harbor with us on it, and now i'm not sure how we're gonna get out of that situation

FARAH

have you ever read *six of crows*?

JO

it didn't happen overnight, niamh
it wasn't out of your control
and the fact that *you* can't see *that*
makes *you* the delusional one!

LEVI

what? no? why, what's it about?

FARAH

huh, maybe y'all should
it's got the same sort of drug thing going on

*farah types something into her phone then
hands it to levi, he reads*

FARAH

it's called jurda palem, makes the grisha stronger

NIAMH

oh please give me a break

JO

no! if we're opening this can of worms lets really scoop them all out
did you really not notice me drifting away from you already?
in doing so, maybe i did fail you, maybe i should've said something
but i didn't know how to tell you just how intolerable you could be sometimes.
you feel this constant need to put others down so to build yourself up

NIAMH

that's ridiculous

LEVI

that's actually crazy we had no idea
this is totally like the same thing

FARAH

the library has a copy of it if you wanna check it out

LEVI

i think i have to now

FARAH

follow me!

they go searching through the library.

JO

is it ridiculous though? just last night you felt the need to point out that farah's never
played dnd before in front of levi, knowing that it would embarrass her

NIAMH

it's nothing to be embarrassed of

JO

but you know she thinks it is! you know she thinks it's silly to have such a fixation on it,
to read all about it in theory but never try it in practice. and so the fact that you said it...

NIAMH

why didn't you call me out then!

JO

because that would've made it worse! would've drawn attention to it and make her want to retreat into herself

FARAH

here it is!

LEVI

sweet, thanks

NIAMH

this is exactly what i mean, you prioritize her over me every time.

FARAH

let me know what you think?

JO

and you prioritize yourself over everyone else!

LEVI

i'll send you my reactions

NIAMH

somebody has to!

FARAH

perfect!!

buzzing crescendos, during jo's schpiel, it begins to be unbearable

JO

not like that! you shut down conversations when they aren't in your favor, and you cover it up by claiming you felt left out. and you let yourself wallow in that pity, that woe is me jo picked farah over me so that you don't have to take a long look at yourself and realize that maybe i was distancing myself long before fay ever showed up because you can be selfish, and rude, and constantly take advantage of people and—

the buzzing does not cease, jo seems almost unaware of it, but niamh claps her hands over her ears

NIAMH

stop it! stop it! just stop it!

LEVI

do you hear that?

FARAH

what is that buzzing?

JO

you wanted to know the truth! well, there it is!

*niamh starts rifling through her backpack,
growing increasingly agitated*

JO

what are you doing now?

NIAMH

just shut up!

JO

denial is a river in egypt...

*niamh lets out a shriek, she pulls the knife
from her bag, even bezy seems shocked at
this development*

JO

what the fuck niamh!

*niamh's shriek turns into guttural scream,
and she rams the knife into bezy's stomach.*

FARAH

oh my god?!

LEVI

jo?! niamh?!

*bezy gasps, eyes bulging from their sockets.
his hands go to his stomach, while niamh's
come away bloody.*

BEEZY

what-?

*the buzzing stops. a tautness dissipated from
jo. farah and levi run into the hallway.*

what the fuck?
JO

what happened?
LEVI

are y'all okay? oh my god...
FARAH

niamh wipes the blood across her polo shirt, heaving for breath herself. then she unconsciously wipes at her nose, smearing it across her face as well.

beezy gargles on his own blood, he staggers, and stutters, and then crumples to his knees. he starts to suck in cries, and pulls the knife from his chest, letting it clatter to the ground.

like a cockroach whose legs continue to twitch after death, it takes too long. beezy reduces himself to a pitiful, moaning, wailing creature, and the girls have to look away, a harrowing silence between them. finally, beezy stills. enter mr. freeburn.

MR. FREEBURN
what is going on, i came back to fetch my tea and i heard screaming?

seeing the carnage before him, his gaze flickers from niamh to beezy. absolute horror passes over his face.

fuck this
NIAMH

BLACKOUT.

in darkness, a clock chime six times.

END OF ACT TWO.

ACT THREE.**III.1. CARTHAGO DELENDA EST**

lights up on the hallway. farah rifles through her locker while jo stands beside her, text books in hand.

it's monday now, they're in their dress uniform, green blazers, oxford shirts.

JO

...and then dr. s put on a bee documentary so that we could fully grasp the bee imagery vergil was using to describe queen dido's carthage. i think what i was supposed to take away was that the society was as close to a feminist utopia as the romans could've imagined, given that the worker bees are all women and the men are just lazing about and getting all in the way, but what i got from it was that dr. s really, really likes bees.

FARAH

i guess there are worse bugs to be obsessed with

JO

very true, bees are at least somewhat aesthetic

niamh enters

NIAMH

hey y'all! what'd i miss?

FARAH

just jo giving me the play-by-play of her latin class

NIAMH

ew okay so nothing

JO

actually, in your absence the world unraveled and then restitched itself together and its changed the fabric of our being in some unseen but deeply felt way

NIAMH

(sarcastic)

hahaha you're *so* funny

jo tosses her hair

JO

i know

NIAMH

what are we doing for winter formal? it's less than a week away and we still don't have two of three ds: dinner plans or dates.

FARAH

yeah good call dragging us to northpark yesterday for dresses

NIAMH

d one done

JO

i honestly loved when we went to ihop for dinner last year
pancakes and hashbrowns never fail to delight my senses

NIAMH

you know what, fine, ihop it is, we'll just have to call ahead

FARAH

that just leaves dates. jo, you should totally ask levi! i think he'd want to go with you

both jo and niamh cringe

FARAH

maybe he can set us up with boys from his school and we can merge our friend groups
and actually get more experience being friends with guys, i'd like to actually have a date
for one school dance before i graduate

NIAMH

yeah maybe

*enter levi, looking around like a little lost
puppy. when he sees the girls his eyes light
up and he runs over to them*

LEVI

there y'all are!

JO

how the hell do you keep sneaking into campus?

LEVI

i just tell every teacher who tries to stop me that i'm here to help my uncle. once i tell them i'm levi freeburn it stuns them enough that i can run off without further questioning

FARAH

(blurting out)

do you have any friends that would be interested in going with us to winter formal?

jo and niamh stare at farah, uncertain where this sudden boldness originated from, meanwhile levi's eyes drift to jo, jo catches him looking

LEVI

yeah definitely, i can ask

JO

obviously we're inviting you, too, you can come with me if you want

levi blinks, stunned but pleased. farah grins as if she's played perfect matchmaker, and niamh shifts uncomfortably trying to hide her jealousy

LEVI

yeah i'd love to that sounds great

JO

awesome, we're gonna go to ihop for dinner beforehand

LEVI

cool

enter mr. freeburn from a classroom, he spies levi and sighs

MR. FREEBURN

i thought i heard your voice, levi. if you're going to keep showing up here using me as an excuse, at least make an honest man of yourself and come actually help me clean up

LEVI

busted! i'll see y'all later, okay?

NIAMH
have fun washing whiteboards

LEVI
yay so thrilling

MR. FREEBURN
levi...

LEVI
coming uncle gary!

JO
hehe uncle gary

FARAH
hush!

exit levi and mr. freeburn. niamh crosses her arms and turns to look at jo

NIAMH
really great formal ask, jo, very creative

JO
what, fay said he wanted to go with me. besides, i wasn't going to let him think we were just using him for his other, theoretically more attractive male friends.

FARAH
do you think they'll actually be cute?
i hope they're tall and have some semblance of a skin care routine

JO
a big ask from teenage boys

NIAMH
don't you think you could've put in a bit more effort though?

JO
i didn't really have the time to run to the bookstore and get a poster-board and glitter

school bell chimes

FARAH
shit i gotta go

JO

yeah i've got tech-theater

NIAMH

i'll see y'all later

exit farah and jo.

III.2. MOTHER, MAIDEN, CRONE

niamh alone on stage, she goes to her locker, puts her books inside. then she goes on her phone for a minute, just scrolling through until the headmistress enters. except, it is not the headmistress, it is the crone.

niamh glances up briefly, smiles politely, then returns to her phone

NIAMH

good afternoon headmistress

CRONE

...

the uncomfortable silence sends a sliver of unease through niamh. she looks up again, and her eyes widen

NIAMH

you...you're not the headmistress

CRONE

...

NIAMH

i know you, don't i?
you're like a phantom from a dream
something sings in my bones when i see you
you know me too, don't you?

CRONE

...

NIAMH

i see it in your eyes,
you recognize me

CRONE

...

NIAMH

who are you?

CRONE

...

NIAMH

...

this is a sublime moment, standing on the precipice of something new, toeing the edge of the cliff as a rock crumbles beneath her weight.

NIAMH

i think i'd follow you to the end of the earth

the crone steps forward, and reaches out for niamh, niamh takes her hands. the moment their skin comes in contact, there's a transferral of memory. niamh staggers back with the weight of remembering, but the crone holds her hands tighter, keeping her steady. niamh appears horror stricken.

NIAMH

but the séance didn't work
i was there, nothing happened
friday, we tried to go to the movies,
saturday, i slept like all day it was kinda crazy
and sunday, we went to the mall to get dresses

the crone pats her hand, then withdraws. she starts down the hallway

NIAMH

where are you going?
please don't leave

CRONE

you know where to find me

crone exits. niamh takes a few steps after her, then looks over her shoulder and freezes. she examines her hands.

NIAMH

how do i reconcile realities?
how can i continue in this one, knowing
my hands were once coated in blood
knowing the things that were said...
that cannot be unsaid, even when the fabric of the universe shifts.
...
i can't, can i?
there's no escaping this.

she retreats back to her locker, grabs her bag, and then exits the other direction.

BLACKOUT.

III.3. DISCO INFERNO

back in jo and farah's dorm room. it is empty. but then the door swings open without care. jo, farah, and levi tumble in, drunk and giggly and sweaty, wearing their formal clothes. winter formal has come and gone, this is their afterparty. niamh follows behind them, less enthusiastic, her attention fastened to jo. jo grabs her phone and a speaker and starts playing some music, party's not over yet.

jo reaches inside levi's jacket and procures a flask, then takes a deep swig. his arm goes around her and she is too drunk to care. niamh frowns at this. farah flops onto her bed, tearing her shoes off.

FARAH

my feet are killing me!

JO

i'm not surprise, you did not let henry leave the dance floor

FARAH

i know!! it was so liberating! i have never been so breathless!

JO

i don't think i've ever seen you let lose like that

FARAH

i don't know what it was but ever since last weekend i've felt this burning desire to just shed off any anxiety holding me back from living the life i want

she reaches out a hand for the flask

FARAH

can i have a sip?

jo hands it over to her, and farah takes a drink, her face skewing up.

NIAMH

since last weekend?

FARAH

yeah, i just woke up on saturday and decided life was too short to get caught up in worrying so much about what others thought of me.

NIAMH

...weird

LEVI

speaking of, do y'all know where henry and william went?

NIAMH

will said they were picking up uber eats from hoak portico they're going to meet us here after, i told them where to go

LEVI

maybe someone should go with them? help them out?
especially since the headmistress is so strict about having boys in the dorm room

JO

since the buses took us all back here, i think they still have a little grace period to wander campus un-hunted. besides, they better learn how to avoid the headmistress fast.

FARAH

oh shit i totally forgot they don't have access to get back inside the building
levi, i can help you find them?

LEVI

yes, please

farah pulls herself off her bed and slips into more comfortable shoes, then throws a sweatshirt over her dress. levi addresses jo

LEVI

are you gonna be okay alone for a bit?

JO

we're literally in my room, besides, i won't be alone, i've got nini.
go rescue your friends from the scary headmistress

levi smiles. he and farah scamper off. niamh sits in the center of the room, running her fingers over the ground where the pentacle once was

NIAMH

i still can't believe we summoned a demon in this room

JO

tried to, failed to. it was as you said, it didn't work.
i just can't believe the headmistress confiscated my lighter.

jo rifles through her drawers and pulls out another lighter, then goes into another cabinet and pulls out another candle. she brandishes them.

JO

hiding contraband is an art form, you never put them all in one place

NIAMH

i remember, you used to have candy hidden all over our room back when they wouldn't even let us have snacks

JO

oh yeah i remember that, too! that feels so long ago now...

she sinks into the memory of their days as roommates for a moment before

JO

hey, niamh... can i confess something?

NIAMH

...sure?

JO

i've felt so awkward all night

NIAMH

you? awkward?

JO

i'm an incredibly awkward person

NIAMH

yeah but it's like, a cool awkward.
everyone finds it endearing.

JO

no, they don't
or they shouldn't that's ridiculous
but i feel awkward and horrible and i don't know what to do

NIAMH

what about?

JO

levi.
i think he thinks we're here not just as friends,
but as something more

NIAMH

and you don't want something more.

JO

no. i don't think i do.
 but he keeps talking like we're on a date,
 keeps putting his arm around me and
 all i could think about is how i wished his arms were someone else's
 how i wished he was someone else.

NIAMH

who do you wish it was?

*she knows who. she wants to hear jo say it.
 the next song that plays should be istanbul
 not constantinople.*

JO

i think i'm in love with farah, but i know there's no way farah feels the same, like you saw her dancing with henry earlier, she's clearly into him, and then i just feel even shittier because levi doesn't deserve this. he's an amazing guy, so funny, so sweet, and deserves so much more than i have the capacity to give him, and i'm so scared it's going to make things weird between us. i don't want it to be weird, i love being his friend, and i feel like i took advantage of him. there is so much guilt burrowed in my chest and i don't know what to do with it.

NIAMH

why did you ask him to go with you if you knew he'd think of it as a date?

JO

but i didn't know he'd think of it that way, that's the thing.

NIAMH

bullshit. how could you possibly not've known?
 he's liked you since the moment he met you.

jo recoils a bit

NIAMH

how do you do it?
 how do you make everyone like you?
 make them see your faults as cool little quirks?
 you are a dangerous magnetic field, aren't you?
 luring in people only to squish them under the weight of your gravity

JO

...why are you saying these things to me

NIAMH

did you not see how i liked him? you've been stringing him along this whole time, and i've had to watch from the sidelines, knowing that i could give him those things he wants that you lack. but johanna always has to be at the center of attention.

JO

i can't read your mind, niamh, how could i have known?

NIAMH

you should've been able to! i wish you could've seen.
maybe if you had paid a little more attention to someone other than farah, you'd've spared levi and i both some heartache.

JO

you act like i meant to hurt you

NIAMH

i think you're too afraid to hurt me
you'd rather drift away in silence, stomp a chasm between us, an uncrossable void
than tell me outright you didn't want to be friends anymore

JO

how did you...

NIAMH

you know, it hurt more, in the end
the not knowing
you let me think we were thick as thieves
until suddenly, one day, we weren't.

JO

...

NIAMH

why are we still friends?

levi and farah enter again, interrupting the conversation

FARAH

hey guys, we need you in the main office,
the headmistress caught will and henry and demands our presence.

NIAMH

jo's in love with you, farah

everyone freezes. a flicker of hurt passes over levi's features, farah's mouth falls open, and jo stares at niamh incredulous.

JO

she's just saying that because she's jealous and wants levi

niamh whirls on jo

NIAMH

oh my god i hate you!

JO

whose too afraid to hurt you now, huh?

niamh lets out a scream of frustration and storms out, farah and levi stare at jo, and suddenly the weight of everything settles over her

JO

oh...levi i'm so sorry
i was going to tell you

levi is still hurt, but he nods, then looks between her and farah

LEVI

...it's okay, i get it. why don't we talk about it later.
i'll go check on niamh

levi exits leaving farah and jo alone. they stare at each other.

FARAH

...

JO

...

FARAH

is it true?
are you...in love with me?

jo sucks in a deep breath

JO

yes, it's true

farah crosses the room and pulls jo into an embrace. she hugs her so so tightly, and jo doesn't know if its platonic or romantic. she's not sure she cares. this hug is from a place of deeper intimacy than anything else she's ever felt.

she buries her head into farah's shoulder and hugs her back.

BLACKOUT.

III.4. A TALE DARK AND GRIMM

still in blackout, sounds of the night: cicadas, crickets, owls, the wind whistling in the trees.

LEVI (OFF STAGE)

niamh?

LEVI (OFF STAGE)

niamh?! where are you?

lights up on the forest. the exterior of crone's gingerbread house sits stage left. niamh approaches the door, she does not seem to hear levi, or perhaps she's just ignoring him.

levi runs on from stage right just as niamh reaches the door. she knocks on it.

LEVI

niamh!

*she does not react. the crone opens the door,
and levi dodges behind a tree, but not before
the crone spies him. her lips purse, and she
beckons niamh quickly inside then slams the
door shut. a lock clicks.*

*levi watches, aghast, as the crone embraces
niamh and then has her sit at the table,
bringing her some tea. he cannot make out
anything they're saying.*

*enter farah and jo, who don't see him hiding
behind the tree. farah holds a log as if it
were a baseball bat. these woods make her
anxious*

JO
(whisper-shout)

levi?!

farah points to the hut

FARAH

what the hell is that?

jo stares at it

JO

gingerbread?

FARAH

the smell of witchcraft,
sweet ginger confectionaries

JO

we need to find levi
levi!!!!

*they walk past the tree levi's hiding behind,
and he steps out, approaching them from
behind and then covers jo's mouth.*

*a muffled scream and she thrashes in his
grip*

FARAH

jo!

farah immediately goes to whack their supposed attacker over the head with her log, but pauses just shy

FARAH

you let her go– wait levi?

LEVI

sorry sorry! so sorry!

jo eases, hearing his voice, then licks his palm, forcing him to remove it from her face

LEVI

ew did you just lick me?

JO

you can't sneak up on someone like that! farah could've killed you!

LEVI

have you seen her spaghetti arms? she would've given me a concussion at the worst

FARAH

hey! i take offense to that

LEVI

shhh!!

he pulls them behind the cover of the trees

LEVI

we have to be quiet

JO

why?

levi points to the hut, where from the window we can see that the crone has begun dressing niamh in similar witch garb and teaches her magic

FARAH
is that niamh?

LEVI
and a witch

JO
niamh is the last person who would believe in witchcraft

LEVI
do you really know that?
how much do you really know about her?

JO
i knew everything ... once

LEVI
and now?

JO
now, you're right. i don't know her.

FARAH
this is ridiculous, y'all, it's niamh, we have to help her

JO
i don't think she wants our help
she doesn't seem to be in any sort of danger

FARAH
well tough luck buddy, she's getting it whether she wants it or not.

*farah storms up to the cottage, and jo
pinches the bridge of her nose*

LEVI
there's no way we can let her go alone, right

JO
absolutely not

LEVI
brilliant. a stand-off with a witch is definitely not how i pictured winter formal going.

they follow after her.

III.5. HANSEL AND GRETEL

inside the hut now, niamh stirs a large pot just as she did before, but this time, instead of cake batter, it billows with fog. a cauldron used to its fullest potential, a potion. the crone hands her the ingredients as she says them.

CRONE

a drop of crocodile tears
a sprig of dwale

farah starts pounding on the door. the crone falters, niamh glances up. then she swiftly recovers.

CRONE

a pair of frog legs
a dash of ground flies
the peel off of one orange

the pounding does not cease, instead it grows louder, as jo and levi join in

the crone's eye twitches, annoyance potent within her, but she waves a hand and the door unlocks.

farah, jo, and levi nearly topple inside the house. the crone stalks towards them.

CRONE

you are brave, little children, to enter the home of a witch
brave, or foolish,
do you not know the stories?
indeed, do you not fear i'll fatten you up and bake you into a pie?

farah still wields her log

FARAH

i'm tired of being so afraid of everything.
niamh, let's go, quickly, okay?

*the crone tilts her head curiously, and
examines farah, while niamh finally looks up
at her friends*

NIAMH

i'm not going anywhere with you all

LEVI

don't be ridiculous, you can't stay here

NIAMH

why not?

FARAH

what about your family? what about school? what about us?

NIAMH

what about you all? it's not like you ever really wanted me around anyways
maybe this is my family now, this house, this crone, this forest
maybe my homework is meant to be studying witchcraft, not algebra

*farah looks to jo and levi for help, while the
crone stokes a fire in the oven.*

JO

niamh, i'm sorry. i'm sorry i didn't just come to you with my issues.
i'm sorry for what i said earlier,
i'm sorry for everything that's happened.
i'm sorry it happened all this way.
i'm just ... sorry, okay? i'm so sorry.
please, come back with us
i know our friendship is in shambles but
i want to rebuild it. brick by brick if that's what it takes.

niamh pauses her stirring.

NIAMH

really?
after everything?
you still think we're salvageable?

the crone's head snaps in her direction

CRONE

you'll ruin the brew if you stop!
keep stirring!

niamh jerks back into motion, stirring.

JO

it was just one fight.

niamh slumps

NIAMH

i forget you don't remember
it wasn't just one fight

JO

what?

NIAMH

we scooped out all the worms, jo
they've burrowed back down in the ground
there's no getting them back.
there's no unsaying those things.

JO

i don't want them to be unsaid. they needed to be said.
it is kinder that they've returned to the earth.

NIAMH

i remember it all.
it's scorched into my brain.
like a hot iron pressed upon memories.
burned and branded and / burdened again.

CRONE

burdened again and branded and burned

JO

then share the burden, let us help you hold it

NIAMH

i've been holding this inside me for a week now,
 trying to make sense of it, trying not to let it fracture me
 but how could it not?
 it's my fault, my fault, my fault
 the ritual worked; we summoned the demon
 of two different kinds. they cracked the world like an egg
 and left us drowning in the yolk.
 three different worlds warp around each other.
 the monster kills us.
 i kill the monster.
 does that make me the monster / now?

CRONE

now a monster it makes you

NIAMH

will we escape it this time?
 can we tempt reality once more,
 or is this the lifetime we get?
 we must reap the consequences we've / sown

CRONE

sown the seeds of consequence now watch them grow

jo is silent, processing

FARAH

niamh, you're not making any sense

NIAMH

oh how girl goes mad, again!
 man must be so pleased.
 villainize me if you must, it is my fault / after all

CRONE

after all this, villainize me

LEVI

i don't understand...

NIAMH

this world makes me so angry
 i am trapped behind school walls
 i am trapped in my girlhood
 i am trapped in these memories
 i am trapped
 these worlds keeps me trapped,
 it makes me want to scream at the top of my lungs
 it makes me want to claw at my face until it bleeds
 let me howl from the rooftops, let me dance untethered in the woods
 no wonder the world paints female anger as unnatural
 they force us to hold it in until it bursts free from our ribcage,
 splattering our blood over the grass
 why shouldn't we become witches?
 why shouldn't we twist into something horrifying?
 it is they who have pushed us over the edge
 i cannot hold it within me anymore
 this rage, this hurt, this sorrow
 it must go some / where

CRONE

where does the rage, hurt, sorrow go?
 how can we carry it beyond?
 can't it dissipate like smoke?
 like petals floating down a stream?

*the repeated words strike a chord in farah
 and jo, they physically recoil*

JO

please, just tell us what's going on, tell us how to help you

CRONE

there is no helping her now

NIAMH

there is no helping me now.

LEVI

i can't believe that

CRONE

it is the truth!

NIAMH

it is the truth.

FARAH

i'm done listening to this

she raises the log and goes to swing at the crone

CRONE

the fly overtakes the dragon,
the fly returns to prince once more

farah falters

FARAH

my jiddo's story...

CRONE

but where is he a prince of?
a kingdom far, far away?
perhaps one far beneath the earth?
does he rescue the princess, or
does he lock her in a new tower?
does he miss his fly skin?
does he ever dream of crawling back inside it?
does the princess kill the fly prince,
to set herself free?
what becomes of the princess then?
her hands stained red, her spirit in tatters.

farah's arm drops

NIAMH

red hands red hands red hands
my hands are so red

FARAH

stop you're ruining it, that's not how it goes

CRONE

why not? do you even remember how it goes?

the log falls to the ground.

JO

farah, don't listen to her

niamh looks to levi

NIAMH

do you believe in happily ever after?

LEVI

i want to. i want to believe in it.

NIAMH

is there a world where we have one?

LEVI

i would think so

NIAMH

(in a trance)

that would be nice

i'd like that

i'd like a happy ending

JO

you're going to get one, we just need to go right now okay?

the crone stalks forward

FARAH

niamh, she's getting in your head, we have to get you out of here

CRONE

what ever gave you that impression?

*the crone places a possessive hand on
niamh's shoulder. niamh stops stirring.*

JO

you've betrayed her

CRONE

i've done no such thing

JO

you have, you're using her

she trusted you and you're going to hollow her out

CRONE

i have been playing the role of villain for a century, girl,
they told me i was thus again and again and again
and thus i became.

i've starved myself for too long,
my stomach rumbles and consumes its own lining
it is not an act of betrayal, but an act of kindness.

*the crone tightens her grip on niamh's
shoulder.*

CRONE

i will love her better than you ever could

LEVI

your so-called love will break her

CRONE

she is stronger than you think

LEVI

she should not have to be

CRONE

she'll be stronger than you all

LEVI

just look at her!

*niamh stands dazed, as if she were a puppet
waiting for her puppeteer to pull her strings.*

NIAMH

are you going to cannibalize me?
or will you leave me out to rot?
devour me slowly, softly, gently,

...

it'll be nice to be held for once

FARAH

oh niamh...

NIAMH

your love tastes like ash,
it crumples on my tongue
i can smell my hair burning around it

LEVI

ours? or hers?

niamh looks to the crone

NIAMH

yours

CRONE

what? no!

*the crone's eyes widen, genuine hurt stricken
across her features, her hand falls away
from niamh's shoulder*

CRONE

you do not mean it.
do i not soothe the ache within you?

NIAMH

you soothe one but create countless more,
they stole your youth from you and now you are cruel.

CRONE

why do you hurt me so?
oh my chest! how it aches!
it is you who are cruel

*jo, farah, and levi share hopeful glances,
they inch towards niamh as the crone begins
to weep.*

NIAMH

it is not your fault
too often women are molded into monsters

CRONE

if you hate me, then go!
leave me to starve all alone!

farah grabs onto niamh, pulling her back towards them

NIAMH

i do not hate you

CRONE

go!

the crone crumples to the ground sobbing

JO

c'mon let's go

they pull niamh with them, but as they reach the door, the lock clicks. crone sobs morph into cackles, and the girls swing around in horror. this should not be a quick transition.

CRONE

they always fall for that one

she considers them, rubbing her chin, then picks up a large knife.

CRONE

you lot are a little too thin for my tastes,
but no matter, plenty of time to fatten you up, piglets

jo retreats, and as she does so, steps on the log farah dropped earlier. in a panic, she sweeps it up from the ground goes to chuck it at the crone, but she grabs ahold of jo's wrist before she could.

the crone tuts, and squeezes her wrist enough that jo drops the log again.

CRONE

you shouldn't've done that
i am not so gluttonous that i need four

the crone's grip on her knife tightens, a gesture niamh notices.

niamh wrenches herself from farah and jumps in front of jo, just in time for the knife to burrow in her chest.

a cacophony of shouts from her friends.

CRONE

no! stupid girl, there will be no tolling bell to save you this time

niamh collapses onto the ground, and the crone wails. jo goes to her knees beside her, and cradles niamh in her arms. whereas levi and farah grab random items, maybe the crone's broom, and start chasing after her.

JO

why would you do that?

NIAMH

i-i'm sorry

jo brushes back niamh's hair from her face. both of the girls are crying now.

JO

don't apologize, please,
it's okay, you're going to be okay

NIAMH

you're not a liar, jo. don't make yourself into one now.

jo nods and cradles her close to her chest.

farah and levi continue their pursuit of the crone, until she manages to wrench the broom from one of their hands. then, she jumps out the window, and disappears into the sky.

farah and levi stagger back to jo and niamh, crouching down beside her. they hold her hands.

NIAMH

it begins, and it ends with me

...

it feels nice to be held

niamh's body goes limp. she dies.

*we end somewhere we begin. in the
harmonic stillness of a forest, a silence
waiting for the clock to chime.*

the silence persists.

BLACKOUT.

END OF PLAY