

SHADOWS

written by

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INT. THE ELVEN COURT - DAY

The court is magnificent. Unnaturally beautiful.

The walls are a beautifully crafted silver and gold marble wood, with gemstone leaves that flutter gently in the wind.

The floor is covered in sparkling sand that never sticks to your feet, even after you step in the shallow streams that run all over.

The ceiling is somehow like an open sky, with stars visible even in the brilliant blue of midday.

JULIA, 29, marvels at everything. She keeps her hair cut short, and is dressed in jeans and a t-shirt.

She's been through a lot lately, and it shows, but just being here rejuvenates her.

She jumps as she notices the members of the court.

First is FANDEN, the Elfking. Like all of the elves, he is as disturbingly beautiful as the Court itself.

Next to him sits KAIA, the Elfking's daughter. She wears a burka-like dress and head covering that flows like silk.

On his other side is OIVA, a gorgeous, perfectly androgynous elf [I'll refer to Oiva with the masculine, but who really knows]. Unlike the other members of the court, Oiva has no seat; he floats in the air, legs hanging beneath him.

Along with these three, there are at least three dozen more elves along the walls, hidden in corners, and sitting in the branches that support the ceiling.

Julia, her clothes somehow cleaner than they were a second ago, stumbles into a bow.

Fanden smiles, raises a cup of wine and bobs his head.

Julia clears her throat.

JULIA

Uh, oh, noble, um... Elves. Thank you for- my deepest thanks for accepting me into your home. Court! Into your court.

Kaia smirks. Fanden laughs - a friendly laugh.

FANDEN

Relax. You couldn't possibly understand our etiquette, so there's no expectation for you to follow it.

KAIA

Indeed. Think of yourself like a court jester.

Fanden gives her a look, but says nothing.

JULIA

Um. Okay. Um.

She coughs, gathers herself.

JULIA (CONT'D)

I don't want to waste your time, so I'll cut right to the chase.

OIVA

You can't.

Julia stumbles over her tongue.

JULIA

Um?

OIVA

You can't waste our time.

FANDEN

We're immortal. We have nothing but time.

JULIA

But you must have things to do. I know I interrupted.

KAIA

It is the nature of men to interrupt us. If we didn't allow you to interrupt, you would die before your audience was granted.

OIVA

And you cannot "waste our time." Humans are an endless source of new information. We would gladly keep court past your natural lifespan. There is nothing we have to do that can't wait a hundred years.

Julia chokes.

FANDEN

So please, take your time. Don't cut right to anything. Tell us about your earliest memories.

JULIA

Fuckin'... okay. Oh, shit, is it okay if I curse?

No response.

She coughs.

JULIA (CONT'D)

You might have a hundred years to spare, but I don't. But I guess I can start a little further back.

She takes a breath.

JULIA (CONT'D)

I was... okay, don't laugh or anything, I know you're all, like, archmages. But I was kind of a prodigy.

INT. YUSEF'S TOWER - DAY

Rugs and curtains make thick stone floors and walls somewhat cozy. Bookshelves line one wall - mostly massive tomes, but there are a decent number of smaller books, and even a couple pop fiction titles.

YUSEF towers over a YOUNG JULIA, here only 12. Yusef is the very picture of a crotchety old archmage - flowing robes, pointy hat, beard that's halfway to the floor. He has to be at least 70.

JULIA (V.O.)

Enough of a prodigy that I was chosen by Yusef as his only apprentice.

INT. THE ELVEN COURT - DAY

JULIA

Yusef was this big-deal archmage illusionist.

FANDEN  
We know of Yusef.

JULIA  
Really?

KAIA  
We know more about your archmages  
than you do, dear, I assure you.

FANDEN  
But we would still like to hear  
your perspective, please. What was  
he like as a master?

JULIA  
I was just gonna gloss over this  
part. This is just the prologue.

Fanden sighs. He's disappointed.

FANDEN  
By all means.

INT. YUSEF'S TOWER - DAY

Yusef demonstrates the proper way to grip a mage's staff.

JULIA (V.O.)  
Yusef was a genius at magic, but he  
wasn't always a great teacher.

Julia tries, but he has to correct her. He's harsh about it,  
but smiles when she gets it right. She extends the staff, and  
nothing happens.

JULIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
Fortunately, I had enough talent to  
make up for that.

Before Yusef can correct her again, she flips the staff to  
hold it in a completely different position, and it flares  
with light.

Yusef shrugs.

INT. JULIA'S STUDY - NIGHT

Young Julia hunches over a massive old book, with two others  
stacked on the desk next to her.

JULIA (V.O.)  
 He'd do this thing where he'd tell  
 me something was impossible, then  
 ask me to do it anyway.

INT. YUSEF'S TOWER - DAY

Julia, now 20, consults with Yusef.

JULIA (V.O.)  
 One of my last tasks was trying to  
 figure out how to break the limits  
 imposed by the Treaty - or rather,  
 how to do that and not get killed  
 by Chernobog.

INT. THE ELVEN COURT - DAY

JULIA  
 Do you guys call him Chernobog?

OIVA  
 Yes. But we call them the Accords,  
 not the Treaty.

KAIA  
 And we consider Chernobog to be one  
 of the Accords.

JULIA  
 But that doesn't make sense. He's  
 not, like, an agreement, he's a  
 monster.

Fanden giggles with delight.

FANDEN  
 Fascinating! That's how you think  
 of it? And it's a "he"?

JULIA  
 Well, no, but, kind of? It's just  
 a... um.

FANDEN  
 No, no, please, sorry. Continue  
 with your story.

INT. YUSEF'S TOWER - DAY

Julia yells at Yusef, and he yells back.

JULIA (V.O.)

It wasn't going well. I'd pretty much decided this was actually impossible, but he wasn't having it.

The argument intensifies. Yusef throws a book at Julia.

JULIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I was in a really stubborn mood about it until Chernobog himself showed up.

The wall EXPLODES, and where daylight should be, darkness pours into the room like a flood.

A hand reaches out of the darkness and CRUSHES Yusef into powder.

A mouth of gnashing teeth extends to Julia, but she dives behind a table and casts a spell.

The mouth smashes through the table, but she's not there anymore.

JULIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I barely made it out alive.

EXT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Julia lies on a bed, reading from an ancient tome.

She bolts out of bed like she just noticed something.

She grabs the book, throws it in a duffel bag, casts a spell, and disappears.

Shadows pour into the room.

JULIA (V.O.)

I didn't know how I pissed Chernobog off - my best guess was he didn't like what I was studying - but once he was on my scent, I couldn't hide. I could only run.

EXT. CITY STREETS - DAY

Julia walks down the street with her duffel bag.

JULIA (V.O.)

Whenever I stayed in one place he'd find me eventually, but I figured out I could stay ahead of him. So I kept moving, and as I did, I kept studying what Yusef had wanted me to study all along - some way to get him off my scent for good.

KAIA (O.S.)

Enough. This is ridiculous.

INT. THE ELVEN COURT - DAY

Kaia rolls her eyes.

KAIA

Chernobog obviously didn't attack her just because she was studying the Accords, and if it had, she wouldn't be alive to tell the story.

FANDEN

This is her story, we'll let her tell it.

He gives Julia a discerning look.

FANDEN (CONT'D)

Though I certainly hope there's an explanation for these stories.

JULIA

There is. I promise you that. Just be patient.

Fanden laughs.

FANDEN

You telling us to be patient.

Everyone else laughs.

Julia laughs too, though more just so she doesn't stand out than because she thinks it was particularly funny.

JULIA

For like, eight years - which I guess doesn't seem like a long time to you, but for humans, it's a long time - everything stayed the same. There was a routine to it.

## INT. JULIA'S APARTMENT - DAY

The apartment has barely been lived in. It has a bed and a sad little bookshelf that is absolutely packed, otherwise it's empty.

## SUPER: SHADOWS

The door has three locks. They snap open, one at a time.

The door opens, and Julia walks in, exhausted. She closes the door, locks all three locks, and collapses on the bed.

## INT. JULIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Julia stirs. Gets up. Walks into the bathroom.

She walks out, wrapped in a towel. Brushes her teeth.

She walks to the bookshelf, dances on the books with her fingers; lands on one and hefts it onto the bed.

She walks into the kitchen area, walks out dressed and with a sandwich. She sits on the bed and reads.

She takes notes on the margins, and occasionally in a notebook she pulls from her pocket.

She looks at a clock. Puts the book away.

She walks into the kitchen, walks out with a brown paper lunchbag, and leaves the apartment.

## EXT. CITY STREETS - NIGHT

Julia walks down the street with her lunchbag.

She sees a group of shady guys notice her. They walk towards her.

She rolls her eyes, and walks past a lightpole. Like a Bugs Bunny cartoon, she doesn't appear on the other side of it.

The guys look around, confused. They decide they can't have seen what they thought they saw, and leave.

Another lightpole later, Julia appears and keeps on her way.

EXT. DONUT SHOPPE - NIGHT

Julia arrives at a rather run-down donut joint. A sign on the window proclaims 24 HOURS in flickering neon. She walks in.

INT. DONUT SHOPPE - NIGHT

Julia, now wearing a Donut Shoppe apron, lounges behind the register, reading from her notebook.

She highlights something. Gets excited.

JULIA

That's it. That's the key. That's  
the motherfucking-

SARA, 19, enters the shop. She's long ago given up at taming her thick curls, and has settled for keeping them in something like a bun.

She walks to the counter. Julia barely lowers her notebook.

SARA

Give me a dozen glazed.

Julia doesn't look up.

JULIA

Please?

SARA

Please what?

Beat.

SARA (CONT'D)

Seriously?

Beat.

SARA (CONT'D)

Give me a dozen glazed. Please.

Julia nods. Puts her notebook down. Moves to the donuts.

SARA (CONT'D)

Busy night?

JULIA

(sarcastic)  
Crazy.

Julia puts the donuts in a box.

SARA  
Are you the only one here?

JULIA  
Are you gonna rob me?

SARA  
Just curious. Must get bored.

JULIA  
I'm not really a people person.

SARA  
Oh.

Julia hands Sara the donuts. Sara hands her a credit card.

Julia notices something. She's immediately alert. She scans the windows.

Sara looks nervous. She looks around too.

SARA (CONT'D)  
What's going on?

JULIA  
Shh.

Beat.

JULIA (CONT'D)  
Yeah. Yeah.

She swipes Sara's card.

JULIA (CONT'D)  
Are you a member of our rewards club?

EXT. DONUT SHOPPE - MORNING

Julia emerges. Slinks down the street.

INT. JULIA'S APARTMENT - DAY

The door opens, and Julia walks in, exhausted. She closes the door, locks it behind her, and collapses on the bed.

INT. JULIA'S APARTMENT - DAY

A KNOCK at the door.

Julia's eyes shoot open. She's scared.

Another KNOCK. Julia calms down. It's just the door.

She gets up. Shuffles to the door. Looks through the peephole.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - DAY

Sara stands outside the door. She scratches her neck.

INT. JULIA'S APARTMENT - DAY

SARA (O.S.)  
Hello?

JULIA  
(whispering)  
Shit.

Another KNOCK.

Julia looks at her closet, at the duffel bag on the floor.

She looks at her books.

Looks back at the door.

JULIA (CONT'D)  
(whispering)  
Fuck.

She takes a breath.

JULIA (CONT'D)  
Yeah?

SARA (O.S.)  
Can I come in?

JULIA  
No.

SARA (O.S.)  
Please? I'm kind of in a hurry.

JULIA  
Did you follow me home?

SARA (O.S.)  
No, Julia, I didn't.

Julia's eyes widen. FUCK.

JULIA  
 Alright, bitch, I don't know how  
 you know my name, but-

SARA (O.S.)  
 Chernobog is after me. I need your  
 help.

Julia freezes.

SARA (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 And you were wearing a nametag.

Panic mode.

Julia grabs her duffel bag, runs in circles around the  
 apartment stuffing everything in it - it's a magic bag, able  
 to hold far more than it should be able to.

SARA (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 (getting desperate)  
 Julia?

Julia shoves all the books into her bag, one shelf at a time.

Once everything but the bed is in her bag, she reaches into  
 the bag and pulls out a wooden baseball bat carved with runes  
 and arcane diagrams.

She slings the bag over her shoulder and undoes the door  
 locks.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - DAY

Sara hears the door unlocking. Relaxes.

The door HURTLES ACROSS THE HALLWAY, knocking Sara over.  
 Julia emerges, bat extended in one hand. Smoke curls off the  
 runes.

JULIA  
 If I ever see you again, I'll kill  
 you.

SARA  
 But I need your help!

JULIA  
 Yeah, and I need you to not lead  
 the fucking devil to my house!

SARA

But-

They both freeze. The sunlight coming from the windows fades.  
Shit.

Julia looks at Sara. Sara is terrified. Decision time.

JULIA

Oh, hell.

She runs to Sara, scoops her to her feet, and all but drags her down the stairs.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY?

It wasn't just the windows; a cloudless sky is somehow as dark as twilight, and getting darker.

Julia leads Sara out the building and down the street.

SARA

Where are we going?

JULIA

I got the apartment here because it was so close to...

She runs to a brick wall. Taps her bat on the wall. Dull thud. Taps another spot. Dull thud. Taps a third spot. It rings like a bell.

JULIA (CONT'D)

This.

She takes a deep breath, prepares herself for something really unpleasant.

She presses her bat into the wall. The runes glow, and the wall *shudders* like it's made of jell-o.

JULIA (CONT'D)

You eat all those donuts yourself?

SARA

What?

JULIA

Nevermind.

She shoves Sara up against the wall. Something... happens to her. It's like the wall eats her.

It doesn't look comfortable, but we can't hear her scream.

Julia looks up at the sun, now almost completely extinguished. Nobody else around seems to notice.

She hugs the wall. Her scream is muffled.

INT. ABANDONED BUILDING - DAY

Sara crouches on the floor, puking her guts out. There's a pile of something nasty on the floor next to her.

Suddenly, Julia's there too. She collapses on the ground, sobbing and coughing up bloody vomit.

It's super gross.

Sara's finally done. She wipes her mouth. Her eyes are bloodshot.

SARA

What... the hell...

Julia's not finished yet, though. She chokes on something, then vomits up what looks like a massive hairball.

JULIA

Ohhh...

Sara dry heaves at the sight of it, but Julia feels so much better now. She collapses back to lean against the wall.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Thanks for that.

SARA

You're blaming me? What was that?

JULIA

You know what a ley line is?

Sara nods.

JULIA (CONT'D)

It's like that, but completely different.

SARA

I know about dark ley lines.

JULIA

It's not dark ley lines.

SARA

Then what?

Julia shrugs.

She climbs to her feet, helps Sara up.

SARA (CONT'D)

Are we... safe?

Julia shakes her head. Beat. She nods.

JULIA

Yes.

SARA

We are?

JULIA

For now. He can't... I don't think he can see them.

SARA

"Them" being...

JULIA

The not-ley lines.

SARA

Right.

JULIA

Oh, god. I'd forgotten the smell.

SARA

Can we...?

JULIA

Let's.

They leave.

EXT. RURAL ROAD - DAY

They walk out of an old brick schoolhouse or something in the middle of some run-down rural town. Looks like it's maybe in Virginia or North Carolina, that general area.

They stumble down the road until they reach some greasy diner. They go in.

INT. DINER - DAY

There's three old men and a WAITRESS, with a combined age of about a thousand. They all turn to look at Julia and Sara as the pair falls into a booth.

The waitress makes her way over.

WAITRESS

Can I get you something to drink?

JULIA

Two coffees and two cokes.

The waitress leaves.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Alright, look. I'm not an asshole, so I didn't leave you behind. But after we eat, if you go south, I go north. You go west, I go east.

SARA

But-

JULIA

No buts.

The waitress appears with their coffees and cokes.

WAITRESS

What y'all hungry for?

JULIA

Nothing. This is fine.

The waitress is already walking away. Julia pours her coffee into her coke.

Sara gives her a look.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Trust me. It helps with the...

She wiggles her fingers towards her stomach, then eagerly drinks her beverage.

Sara mixes her drinks.

SARA

If I hadn't come to you, I'd already be dead. He was on me.

JULIA

Yeah.

SARA

So if you leave me now, I'm still dead, it just takes a little longer.

Julia stares at her. Nods.

JULIA

Probably.

SARA

So, thanks a lot, I guess.

Sara sips the mixture. Her eyes widen. She chugs it.

JULIA

Look, if I helped everyone I came across-

SARA

Don't, okay? I get it. But you can at least tell me what you do. How you hide.

Julia sighs.

JULIA

It's not... I don't really know. It's instinctual. For one thing, I keep moving. Longest I've stayed anywhere was six months, and that was way too long.

SARA

Okay. And how far do you move when you do?

JULIA

I try to at least go a full state away. I've done Canada. I did Mexico for a little while, but my Spanish is shit.

SARA

Mine's pretty good.

JULIA

Then I'd do that. Maybe further south.

(MORE)

JULIA (CONT'D)

A lot of cheap transportation down there, easier to get around without leaving a record.

SARA

But Chernobog doesn't, like... he's not a private eye.

Julia shrugs.

JULIA

I don't know what to tell you. But the less records I leave, the longer it takes him to find me.

SARA

Okay. Okay.

JULIA

And... that's it. Pretty much.

SARA

That's it. So I'm just living the rest of my life on the run.

JULIA

You wanted to know what I do. That's what I do.

Sara accepts that.

Beat. Julia gets suspicious.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Out of curiosity... how did you find me?

SARA

You're a legend. You escaped Chernobog. You've kept away from him for like ten years. I knew if anyone could help me, you could.

JULIA

But how-

SARA

I am a private eye. Sort of. With the Gift, obviously.

JULIA

So, what, you're telling me you looked at my receipts or something? I've been pretty off the grid.

SARA  
Library records. Only so many  
places had the types of books you  
were stealing. Kept an eye on  
those, got lucky.

JULIA  
Holy shit.

SARA  
I mean, that's not like, the only  
thing I did. But that was what  
finally did it.

JULIA  
I wonder if that's how he's been  
finding me.

SARA  
But really. What's up with the  
books? What are you looking for?

Julia eyes Sara for a beat, decides she can trust her.

She looks around. Leans in.

JULIA  
I think I can hide from him.

SARA  
What? Really?

JULIA  
That's how I pissed him off in the  
first place. I just need...

Beat.

SARA  
What?

Julia thinks.

JULIA  
Actually. I could use your help.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - EVENING

The room looks like the site of a war between mold and bugs -  
and judging by all the dead bugs, mold won.

Julia explains excitedly to Sara.

JULIA

So then I figured, "Wait a second, he was made to enforce the Treaty between men and elves, right? I've been looking at this squarely through the lens of our four elements, but if the elves worked on him too, that means he's got some of theirs, too.

SARA

But the elven elements, like, match ours.

JULIA

Not perfectly. Like, their version water hates flowing through open spaces. But the relevant feature here is light.

SARA

Which is fire.

JULIA

But for the elves, it's...

SARA

Whatever. Earth. But that's... Oh! That would explain... *ohhh*.

JULIA

Yeah! And then everything just snapped into place.

SARA

So what did you do then?

JULIA

I got you a dozen glazed donuts.

SARA

What? That was... you just figured this out.

JULIA

But this would fix everything, right? We just need to get our hands on some elven magic.

SARA

So how exactly can I help you?

JULIA

You're a private eye. Go... private some elves or something. I don't know.

Sara groans. Julia was this close to being a genius.

SARA

Seriously? That's your plan? There can't be more than three elves still in the realms of men.

JULIA

Exactly. And they're gonna be a bitch to find.

SARA

Well, everyone other than Lumi.

JULIA

Lumi?

SARA

She's not an option.

JULIA

Lumi's an elf? Why the hell isn't she an option?

SARA

Uh, because she's like Al Capone and Bonnie Parker and, like, a jaguar all rolled into one.

JULIA

She sounds awesome! Why the fuck have I never heard of her?

SARA

How should I know?

JULIA

So you know of some other elf we should start with?

Beat. Sara sighs.

INT. LUMI'S COURT - NIGHT

If you didn't know what she was copying, Lumi's court would be the pinnacle of beauty and elegance. Crystal chandeliers hang from a live oak tree. There's a fountain filled with wine.

It's basically a sad knock-off of the Elven Courts.

LUMI sits on a silk cushion on a marble throne. Her dark skin helps to highlight her impossibly bright golden hair.

She sips white wine from a crystal chalice. She decides she's done, so she drops the chalice to the floor. It somehow doesn't spill a drop.

KAUKO, a half-elf who looks like he's 14, retrieves the cup and kneels in front of Lumi.

He speaks in the Elven language - an odd mixture of sibilants, guttural coughs, and clicks.

LUMI

Oh, goodness, no, stop. I thought you were half human, not half garbage disposal.

KAUKO

If my pronunciation displeases you, my lady-

LUMI

It does. Just go away. Go.

She talks to no one in particular as he leaves.

LUMI (CONT'D)

This would never be allowed at the Elven Court, I tell you. If I uttered a single syllable that poorly, I would've been...

She looks at Kauko again.

LUMI (CONT'D)

Wait. You.

Kauko turns back.

Beat. She's waiting on him.

KAUKO

...Kauko.

LUMI

Kauko. I'm sorry.

She says something to him in Elven, and when she speaks it, it's beautiful, musical.

Kauko takes a deep breath, starts to respond-

LUMI (CONT'D)  
 Nope, that's enough. Buh-bye.

Kauko bows his head, leaves again.

A human TOADIE approaches, kneels before her.

TOADIE  
 My lady, there are more  
 petitioners.

LUMI  
 Fine. Ugh.

The toadie leaves.

He returns with Julia and Sara in tow.

They both marvel at the beauty of the room.

LUMI (CONT'D)  
 And you are?

Julia startles.

JULIA  
 Yes ma'am! I'm Julia, and this is  
 Sara.

Beat.

JULIA (CONT'D)  
 And... we need a favor.

Everyone in the room laughs.

They aren't pleasant laughs.

SARA  
 Maybe we should go.

LUMI  
 No, no. I want to hear it.

Sara looks at Julia. Julia swallows.

JULIA  
 We need Elven magic.

Lumi's too astonished to laugh.

LUMI  
 What in the human realm could you  
 possibly need Elven magic for?

Julia starts to talk, but Sara quickly interrupts.

SARA

We're researchers studying Elven myths. We're trying to determine how the Elves were able to do so many things that are impossible for humans.

Julia gives Sara a look.

LUMI

And I suppose there's no way that this would come back to harm my people.

JULIA

Not at all, your... majesty.

Lumi smirks.

LUMI

Lumi is acceptable.

JULIA

Lumi. We're only seeking to understand how Elven archmages came to be so much more powerful than human archmages.

LUMI

I can answer that for you right now: It's not their magic, it's their millennia of experience. If that's all...

She gestures, and her toadies move to lead them out.

JULIA

But Lumi-

Sara grabs Julia's hand, shakes her head.

LUMI

No, let her speak. What?

JULIA

This isn't... I know she made it sound like we're trying to figure out your weaknesses.

LUMI

That's exactly what it sounded like.

JULIA

But that's not it at all. We're in something of... Um...

She looks at Sara. Sara shakes her head "no."

Julia backpedals.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Um. Well. That's not what it is. It just sounds like it.

Lumi laughs, hard.

LUMI

Oh, well in that case, here's all of our deepest darkest secrets.

She laughs more, along with the rest of her court.

LUMI (CONT'D)

Leave before I decide you're dangerous have you skinned alive.

The toadie escorts Julia and Sara out.

Kauko follows them.

EXT. LUMI'S COURT - NIGHT

Lumi's court is held in an old warehouse in the middle of Baltimore. From the outside, there's little to indicate it's anything else.

Julia and Sara are escorted out by the toadie, who tries to slam the door in their face, but is stopped by Kauko leaving.

The toadie glares at Kauko, then slams the door even though Julia and Sara have already left.

Kauko hurries to catch up.

KAUKO

Hey! Wait!

They stop.

KAUKO (CONT'D)

Why are you really looking for Elven magic?

Julia and Sara look at each other.

JULIA  
Personal reasons.

KAUKO  
Perfect. Same reason as me.

SARA  
Look, kid, not to be rude-

KAUKO  
Don't call me kid.

SARA  
What should I call you, then?

KAUKO  
Kauko.

SARA  
Okay, Kauko. Not to be rude, but-

JULIA  
Wait. Sara.  
(to Kauko)  
You're an elf, aren't you?

Holy shit, he is. Sara looks at Kauko in a new light.

KAUKO  
Too much for the realms of men, not  
enough for the realms of elves.

SARA  
Half-elf?

KAUKO  
Half-human, too.

SARA  
So how old are you?

KAUKO  
Old enough. Look, I was raised by  
an elf, and she didn't think I was  
worthy of any elven magic.

Sara looks at Julia. "Shit."

KAUKO (CONT'D)  
Nobody's going to give you  
anything, no matter how nice you  
ask. You're going to have to take  
it.

Julia sighs.

JULIA

And how do you recommend we do that?

Kauko smiles.

KAUKO

That's the right question.

EXT. KAUKO'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Kauko lives in what could generously be called a shithole.

KAUKO (O.S.)

I've been working on this plan since I was a kid.

SARA (O.S.)

And how long ago was that?

INT. KAUKO'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The inside isn't much nicer, but is far more spacious than the outside. Definitely magic.

Kauko has a huge map sprawled out over the kitchen table. Julia and Sara examine it, Sara in particular.

KAUKO

Besides Lumi, There aren't any elves left in the realms of men anymore, so-

JULIA

None? As in, zero?

KAUKO

As in, one. Lumi.

SARA

But I've met several-

KAUKO

Halfies. Some of them put up a pretty convincing front, but no, all the real elves are gone. Lumi's their... ambassador, so to speak.

JULIA  
They sure picked a pleasant one for  
that task.

KAUKO  
She's not as bad as you think. Just  
a shit job, that's all.

He points at the map.

KAUKO (CONT'D)  
But just because there aren't any  
more elves, doesn't mean there  
isn't any more elven magic.

Sara understands what he's getting at.

SARA  
Shhhhit. No.

KAUKO  
Shit yes. The Tower.

Julia's eyes widen, and she looks at the map with new  
clarity.

SARA  
That's, like... it'd be harder to-

JULIA  
The Tower?

SARA  
You know what the Tower is.

KAUKO  
It's the bridge between the realms  
of men and-

JULIA  
I know what the tower is. But it  
was built by men.

KAUKO  
The parts of it that are over here,  
yeah. And the parts that are over  
there will be too hard to get to.  
But right at the border, there's a  
beautiful little low-security area  
that both sides worked on together.

SARA  
Low-er security, maybe, but  
definitely not "low" security.  
(MORE)

SARA (CONT'D)

There's still enough firepower to launch us into orbit.

KAUKO

You don't have to help me. But I've been working on this my entire life. There's no other way.

JULIA

Then that's that.

SARA

Julia, come on. This is the definition of insane.

JULIA

Then leave.

Julia stares at Sara. Sara stares back. She knows she can't

SARA

This is ridiculous.

She goes back to studying the map.

JULIA

So how do we do we get in?

KAUKO

Getting in is the easy part. It's getting out that'll be rough. That's where I'm hoping you'll be able to help. See-

SARA

I can get us out.

KAUKO

Just like that?

SARA

If you can actually and truly get us in? Then yes. Just like that.

KAUKO

After all the time I've put into this, you can just think for five seconds and finish it, easy-peasy?

SARA

I didn't say it'd be easy.

EXT. CITY STREETS - DAY

HARRY, 28, walks out into the middle of busy traffic, completely carefree.

Just as he does, a nearby powerline snaps, and drops across the road, stopping all the traffic around him.

HARRY

There we go! A perfect success!

All around him is chaos and traffic.

Nearby...

INT./EXT. TAXI - CONTINUOUS

Julia, Sara, and Kauko are stuck in the mess of traffic caused by Harry.

Kauko leans his head out the window and shouts.

KAUKO

Let's go already!

Beat.

KAUKO (CONT'D)

Yeah? Same to you, asshole!

Beat.

KAUKO (CONT'D)

Oh, that's it.

Kauko climbs out of the car.

JULIA

Wait, Kauko-

But he's already gone. Sara rolls her eyes.

JULIA (CONT'D)

This is who we're working with.

SARA

If you've got a better idea, I'm all ears.

Julia groans.

SARA (CONT'D)

No, seriously. If you come up with something, tell me immediately. I know we've got, like, certain death chasing us and all, but this kid is driving me crazy.

Julia laughs.

JULIA

How long has... you-know-who been a problem for you?

SARA

What? Like... a couple weeks?

Julia laughs harder.

JULIA

I've been doing this for eight years. I know how to make life on the move work, but that doesn't mean I'm not sick of it. If there was another way, I'd have taken it by now. Stop complaining.

SARA

I'm not-

Sara bites her tongue.

SARA (CONT'D)

Fine. We'll do it your way. For now.

Kauko reappears in the window.

KAUKO

Guess who I found!

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Harry shakes hands with Julia and Sara. Kauko sits at a nearby table.

HARRY

Hey. Harry.

JULIA

Julia.

SARA

Sara.

The BARISTA sets a cup of coffee on the counter.

BARISTA

Jeff?

Harry grabs the coffee, takes a sip. Mmm, perfect.

Julia and Sara give him a look, but don't say anything.

They sit with Kauko.

KAUKO

So what we're thinking is-

HARRY

Sure. Yeah. Let's do it.

Julia and Sara exchange glances.

JULIA

...You don't need to know what we're doing first?

Harry shrugs.

HARRY

You don't get far in my line of work without trusting what luck brings you. What's the worst that could happen?

JULIA

You really might want to-

HARRY

Don't worry about it.

JULIA

Oh...kay then. Shouldn't we explain-

HARRY

No, look, you don't get it. Just bring me along wherever you're going and whatever. I'm sure I brought everything we'll need.

SARA

We're robbing the Tower of Babel.

Harry chokes on his coffee.

HARRY  
 Hey, look, Kauko, nice seeing you  
 again, but-

KAUKO  
 What? What about all that "trusting  
 luck" crap?

Harry laughs.

HARRY  
 Yeah, uh, that was before I knew we  
 were robbing the Elves. You know  
 who holds a grudge better than the  
 Elves? Fuckin' nobody.

He stands.

HARRY (CONT'D)  
 Thanks anyway, guys. Take it easy.

JULIA  
 You didn't ask what we're taking.

HARRY  
 Because it doesn't matter. You  
 could be stealing a pencil and I  
 still don't want a part of it.

JULIA  
 We're not stealing a pencil.

HARRY  
 I couldn't have guessed.

JULIA  
 We're stealing magic. Elven magic.

That gives Harry pause.

HARRY  
 How long has it been since a human  
 had access to Elven magic?

KAUKO  
 At least a hundred years.

SARA  
 Baal Shem of London. Died in the  
 late 18th century.

HARRY  
 It's not like it matters. We  
 couldn't...

Beat.

He sits down

HARRY (CONT'D)  
I'll listen to your plan before I  
dismiss it out of hand.

Kauko smiles. Pulls out one of his diagrams.

EXT. THE TOWER OF BABEL - DAY

An innocuous, if elegant, skyscraper in the middle of the city, the Tower of Babel fits right in with the surrounding skyline.

KAUKO (O.S.)  
The Tower has three legs - one  
here, one in Russia, and one that I  
think is below the sea? Right?

SARA (O.S.)  
Somewhere in the Pacific.

JULIA (O.S.)  
Does it matter?

KAUKO  
Not unless we really fuck it up.

INT. THE TOWER OF BABEL OFFICE SPACE - DAY

A perfectly normal office building. We see the rooms as Kauko describes them.

KAUKO (O.S.)  
The Tower is a normal office  
building. It's got a reception  
desk, tiny food court, bathrooms,  
whatever.

SARA (O.S.)  
Yes, tell us more about the  
bathrooms.

Kauko sighs.

INT. THE TOWER OF BABEL TOP FLOOR - DAY

The top floor of the Tower isn't office space anymore - it's a high-tech security checkpoint that blocks off an elevator.

KAUKO (O.S.)

At the top is a highly-guarded elevator to the next... tier, I guess, of the Tower. That's the part that connects to the other two legs of the Tower, and the part that gets you to the realms of the Elves. This is the first obstacle.

JULIA (O.S.)

This is just mundane security? Metal detectors and shit?

KAUKO

Yeah. But.

INT. THE "ELEVATOR" - DAY

It just looks like a normal elevator. Maybe a little roomy.

KAUKO (O.S.)

The "elevator" they're guarding isn't an elevator at all. It technically can work as an elevator down, but that's just for appearances.

The elevator explodes out into a wireframe diagram, revealing all manner of mystical runes and markings hiding inside the walls, floor, and ceiling.

KAUKO (O.S.) (CONT'D)

It's actually the magical checkpoint, setting off all manner of chaos if anyone enters that doesn't know the proper wards.

A stick figure enters the elevator. Some of the runes glow, and the stick figure POOFS into nothing.

KAUKO (O.S.) (CONT'D)

That's obstacle two.

INT. THE BRIDGE - DAY

A glass walkway through time and space. Walking a hundred yards down the Bridge somehow takes you from the city skyline to the upper atmosphere, and you can look out a window the whole time. Past that, you start going "down" again, this time into a crystal city built in a golden forest - the realms of the elves.

KAUKO (O.S.)

The bridge is the goal. It was built with both human and elven magic working together. If we can pry a little bit of elven magic out of the floorboards, we've got what we need. Then it's just about getting out.

JULIA (O.S.)

But we have to pry the magic out of the floorboards.

KAUKO (O.S.)

Yeah. Without getting caught or triggering any alarms, because we have to get out again. So that's the third obstacle.

EXT. CITY STREETS - DAY

Everyone walks down the street.

HARRY

So what's the plan? How do we get around the obstacles?

KAUKO

Mm-mm. No. Not until you agree to help us.

Harry sighs.

HARRY

Fine.

They continue walking.

HARRY (CONT'D)

Are you going to tell me what I'll be doing, or not?

KAUKO

You're getting us past the first obstacle. You're going to luck the crap out of us and get those machines to let us through.

JULIA

Wait, what? That's not...  
Lucksmithing will get you a green  
light or shorter lines at the  
airport or something, but it's not  
going to get us through that  
security checkpoint, is it?

SARA

Not without an overwhelming amount  
of bad luck to balance it out.  
That's a non-starter.

Harry laughs.

HARRY

No, that's why you got me. I can do  
it, no problem.

SARA

That's easy to say, Harry.

HARRY

You want to know why I'm the best?  
Because I'm the only one who knows  
magic isn't a freaking science.  
Everyone's all "Oh, lucksmithing  
works exactly like this," but I'm  
just like, "Why don't we make it  
work a different way?"

Julia presses her fingers to her temples.

JULIA

Oh my god. You're one of those  
crackpots. You're like, a perpetual  
motion machine-level crackpot.

KAUKO

Guys. I've seen Harry do stuff that  
should be impossible. I watched him  
crash a plane into a brick wall and  
come out okay.

HARRY

I was thrown clear of the accident  
into a garbage truck that was  
carrying a few dozen mattresses.

Julia and Sara look at each other. Sigh.

Harry stops. Everyone else stops too.

HARRY (CONT'D)

It would sure be lucky if some  
incredible circumstances proved I  
could handle this right now,  
wouldn't it?

He holds out his hands expectantly.

A very pregnant beat.

Nothing happens.

HARRY (CONT'D)

Whatever, I can handle it.

They continue walking.

KAUKO

He really can.

INT. HOTEL ROOM

Sara and Julia lie on their beds. Julia flips through one of  
her books.

SARA

You really think this is gonna  
work?

JULIA

I think we've got enough of a shot  
that it's worth going for it.

SARA

Not just the... the heist. The  
spell. Chernobog.

Julia closes the book.

JULIA

I do.

SARA

I've been wanting this for so long,  
I'm convinced something's going to  
take it from me at the last second.

Julia gives her a look.

JULIA

"So long?" You've been running from  
him for weeks. Get a grip. I've  
been running from him for years.

Sara slaps her forehead.

SARA  
Right. Sorry. I keep forgetting.  
Not forgetting. Just... sorry.

JULIA  
Whatever.

Beat. Chewing sounds.

INT. THE ELVEN COURT - DAY

Julia eats greedily from a massive table of food that's been placed in front of her. She has a plate, but she's long since abandoned that in favor of simply grabbing whatever she wants from the table and shoving it in her mouth.

The elves watch her eat, just as interested now as they were when she was talking. None of them are eating.

Julia gathers enough self-awareness to notice everyone still staring at her. She pauses.

JULIA  
(mouth still half full)  
...Are you gonna eat?

FANDEN  
No. We'll wait.

Julia swallows the bite in her mouth.

JULIA  
It's just... it's a little awkward  
for you all to stare at me eating.

FANDEN  
It doesn't bother us. Does it?

The other elves shake their heads. Fanden gestures to the food.

FANDEN (CONT'D)  
Please.

A short beat, and Julia continues eating - with a little more self-control this time.

And of course, as soon as her mouth is full again, Oiva starts talking to her.

OIVA

I confess a bit of curiosity on my part concerning something the lucksmith said. What did he mean when he talked about magic as a science?

Julia starts to respond, thinks better of it, and finishes chewing her bite.

JULIA

It's, uh... science is able to be replicated. And, like, studied.

KAIA

Do humans not replicate and study magic?

JULIA

We do. But it's kind of... magic doesn't always replicate exactly the same. Like, if I was taught that it's easier to become invisible if I'm holding my breath, then for me, it really is easier to become invisible if I'm holding my breath. So some people think magic has rules, others think magic only has rules because we think it does.

OIVA

Fascinating.

JULIA

Is that not... what do elves think about that?

OIVA

Oh, I'm afraid our view is far too nuanced to get into now. Perhaps after you're finished with your story, I could spend a few months going over the basics.

JULIA

A few... you're okay with that?

KAIA

I thought we'd gone over this already. We're immortal.

JULIA

Yeah, but. That doesn't mean you're willing to just spend time teaching me random crap.

FANDEN

Child, we would gladly spend the rest of your life teaching you "random crap."

That gets her attention.

JULIA

What? Really?

FANDEN

Really.

JULIA

Why? Like... why?

OIVA

We're immortal. That gives us plenty of time. But it also means that we-

FANDEN

-know each other-

KAIA

-quite well.

FANDEN

When you've spent an eternity with everyone you know, there gets to be very little that you don't know about them.

OIVA

Not to say that we get bored of each other, but...

KAIA

Humans are such a novel experience.

FANDEN

All elves are unique individuals, of course, but we already know each other. We don't - we can't possibly - get to know every human.

OIVA

Which makes all of you interesting.

Julia takes all of this in. Her food is completely forgotten.

JULIA  
So you're saying I could just spend  
the rest of my life here studying  
magic with you.

FANDEN  
It would be our privilege.

Julia laughs. She almost cries.

JULIA  
I... I don't know what to say.

FANDEN  
Don't say anything. Finish eating,  
then continue with your story.  
There will be plenty of time for  
this later.

JULIA  
Holy shit. I don't think I'm hungry  
anymore.

A short beat. She grabs more food.

JULIA (CONT'D)  
Okay. So the day-of comes.

INT. THE TOWER ENTRANCE - DAY

Julia, Sara, Kauko and Harry enter the building. They walk to  
the receptionist's desk, all casual.

HARRY  
Hey there. What floor is Consumer  
Solutions?

RECEPTIONIST  
That'll be the eighth floor.

HARRY  
Thanks so much.  
(to everyone else)  
Eighth floor.

KAUKO  
We know, we're standing right here.

Harry shrugs. They get in an elevator.

INT. ELEVATOR

Kauko hits the button for the top floor. The doors close.  
The casual facade drops. The mood is tense.

KAUKO  
Okay, okay, okay. Don't freak out.

JULIA  
(kinda freaking out)  
I'm not freaking out.

Sara takes deep breaths.

Only Harry seems somewhat relaxed.

KAUKO  
Someone give me a boost.

Harry lifts Kauko up to the ceiling. He flips open a ceiling hatch and crawls out of the elevator.

He pokes his head back in.

KAUKO (CONT'D)  
You guys know what you're doing?

JULIA  
(voice cracking)  
Yeah.

KAUKO  
You're gonna come back for me,  
right?

SARA  
Just go, we're almost there.

He disappears.

Beat.

The elevator dings.

Game faces back on.

INT. THE TOWER OF BABEL TOP FLOOR - DAY

The elevator opens. Everyone steps out.

A SECURITY GUARD looks up.

SECURITY GUARD  
Good afternoon, folks. Right over  
here.

INT. ELEVATOR SHAFT - DAY

Kauko climbs into a vent.

INT. VENTS - DAY

Kauko shimmies through the ceiling, over everyone else.

SECURITY GUARD (O.S.)  
(through the vents)  
If you'll just hand me your passes,  
I can... oh, that's weird.

HARRY (O.S.)  
Is there a problem?

SECURITY GUARD (O.S.)  
Not... no, just give me a second.

SARA (O.S.)  
We're kind of in a hurry.

SECURITY GUARD (O.S.)  
Just hold on.

Kauko reaches the "Elevator."

INT. THE "ELEVATOR" SHAFT - DAY

The inside may look like a normal elevator, but it sits in a hollow sphere surrounded by all manner of magical wards and runes. Kauko takes a deep breath. Crawls onto the "elevator."

INT. THE TOWER OF BABEL TOP FLOOR - DAY

The lights switch to red. An alarm sounds.

The security guard looks up.

SECURITY GUARD  
What the hell-

A magical rod drops from the ceiling. Shoots a blast of energy at Harry, who's suddenly... not there anymore.

Poof.

SARA

SHIT.

The security guard pulls out a gun and a magic wand, points both at Julia and Sara.

SECURITY GUARD

Don't move!

The rod shoots another blast of energy, this time at Sara. She dodges it, and the security guard opens fire at her, gun spitting bullets, wand spitting flames.

Julia runs around behind him and shoves him into the path of the rod's next blast. Rather than disintegrating him, it just knocks him unconscious.

Sara pulls out a rod of her own and points it at the ceiling rod. It shuts down.

The alarm still blares.

JULIA

FUCK.

SARA

SHIT.

JULIA

What do we do now?

SARA

We need to get out of here!

JULIA

Kauko!

Kauko's voice comes from the "elevator."

KAUKO (O.S.)

It's ready! Come on!

JULIA

No! We have to leave!

She looks at the elevator they came in on. It's on its way back up.

SARA

We're not going that way. Come on!

She grabs Julia, and they run into the "elevator."

INT. THE "ELEVATOR" - DAY

Kauko is in there and waiting. He pulls them in. The doors close behind them.

KAUKO  
What the fuck happened?

JULIA  
How should we know? We thought it was you?

KAUKO  
It was me! As soon as I touched the elevator, it just... where's Harry?

Sara shakes her head.

KAUKO (CONT'D)  
Fuck! Is there any way to stop now?

SARA  
No. We have to keep moving.

JULIA  
Even once we get the magic, how do we get out?

SARA  
We worry about that when we get it.

KAUKO  
You don't think we should worry about that now?

The lights go out.

Beat.

JULIA  
So... Kauko...

KAUKO  
I don't know what to tell you.

The lights come back on, but it's... different. Somehow.

The doors open, and they're on...

INT. THE BRIDGE - DAY

No alarms here. No red lights. They're between worlds now.

They step out of the "elevator." Kauko puts a stick in the door so it won't close.

JULIA  
Where is everybody?

Sara freezes.

SARA  
Oh fuck. Oh fuck.

JULIA  
What?

SARA  
We've got about three seconds to get this done.

KAUKO  
Before what?

SARA  
We're in neutral space. Neutral space is governed by the Treaty. And the Treaty is enforced by-

JULIA  
Chernobog.

All the lights fade. It's deeper, more ominous than before.

He's coming.

They run to one of the support pillars.

JULIA (CONT'D)  
Is this it?

KAUKO  
I don't know! Yes!

SARA  
You don't know, or yes?

KAUKO  
YES DO IT

Liquid darkness drips in from the walls.

Sara's hands glow with power. She shoves one hand straight into the wall, which cracks and ripples and just generally doesn't like it.

She wraps her fist around something. Pulls out a tiny crystal tree.

All three stare at it in awe.

All at once, the darkness is no longer dripping, it's streaming. They're all standing ankle-deep in Chernobog.

JULIA

What the fuck is this?

SARA

The spell won't work here! We need to get back to the elevator!

KAUKO

What spell?!

SARA

GO!

Running through Chernobog is surprisingly easy. They make it to the elevator just as a massive face-like thing starts forming out of the darkness.

INT. THE "ELEVATOR" - DAY

Kauko snags his stick. The doors shut.

They're... safe?

JULIA

What the fuck was that?

SARA

Chernobog.

JULIA

Why was he... like that? Normally he's different.

KAUKO

Normally? Who the hell are you?

SARA

Alright, look. On the other side of this elevator, we're gonna have a lot of company. How quickly can you cast the spell?

JULIA

It should be really simple. Ten seconds, tops. If it works.

Sara hands Julia the crystal tree.

SARA

Cast it on me as soon as the doors  
open.

Julia nods.

KAUKO

What is even happening right now?

The doors open.

INT. THE TOWER OF BABEL TOP FLOOR - DAY

A dozen guards in mage robes face the door, wands and staves  
at the ready.

The door opens... and nobody's there.

They hesitate.

INT. THE "ELEVATOR" - CONTINUOUS

Sara stands in front of the door, hands extended, straining  
to hold a magical barrier in front of the door.

Julia holds the tree in front of her, muttering under her  
breath.

She stops.

SARA

(gritted teeth)  
Did it work?

JULIA

I... I think so.

SARA

So I can let loose and Chernobog  
won't notice me?

JULIA

If it worked?

Sara takes a deep breath. Lets her spell drop.

INT. THE TOWER OF BABEL TOP FLOOR - DAY

All of a sudden, the guards can see them.

SARA  
Here goes three hundred years of  
planning.

She waves a hand, and all of the guards are immediately  
POOFED into dust.

KAUKO  
Holy shit.

JULIA  
Sara, what?!

Sara cringes, waits... and nothing happens.

SARA  
It worked.

She laughs. Shoots a fireball at the wall.

EXT. THE TOWER OF BABEL - DAY

A massive fireball big enough to be seen from miles away  
shoots out of the Tower.

INT. THE TOWER OF BABEL TOP FLOOR - DAY

Sara breaks into jubilant laughter.

SARA  
It worked! I can break the limits  
of magic all I want!

Julia's still a little flabbergasted at Sara just murdering  
those guys, but is overjoyed that she's finally free.

JULIA  
Holy shit. I'm free. It's done.

Sara snatches the tree from her hands.

SARA  
And I couldn't have done it without  
you.

JULIA  
Wait. What are you doing? I haven't  
cast it on myself, yet.

Sara's voice sounds... different.

SARA

You don't need to. We're good.

She crushes the tree. It disintegrates into nothing.

KAUKO

Alright, if somebody doesn't tell me what's going on right now, I'll-

Sara's face fades into Yusef's face. Julia's paralyzed.

JULIA

Master.

YUSEF

I wasn't expecting miracles, but eight years? Almost nine? Are you kidding?

JULIA

Master Yusef. What... I don't...

YUSEF

It's almost enough to make me feel bad for the whole "Chernobog" thing. I thought you'd just been slacking, I didn't realize it would take this much effort. If I'd known...

He shrugs.

YUSEF (CONT'D)

Well, it still probably would've taken longer, so I guess I saved myself a few years.

JULIA

You mean... you didn't...

Realization hits her like a train.

JULIA (CONT'D)

It was you. Chernobog was never after me. It was always you.

YUSEF

Like I always say: it's just about finding the right motivation.

KAUKO

Look, I don't know what's-

Sara shoots a bolt of energy at Kauko, who barely dodges it.

Julia screams, furious.

JULIA  
You... fucking...

She screams again and charges at Yusef, but he casually waves his hand and she goes flying into the wall.

YUSEF  
Look, it's been fun, but I've got work to do.

A flash of light, and he's gone.

Beat. Kauko helps Julia to her feet.

JULIA  
So, good, I understand everything now.

KAUKO  
Maybe you can explain it to me, then.

JULIA  
Yeah, sure. Sara's actually an evil old man who was my master who I thought had been killed by Chernobog, and then tricked me into thinking I was being hunted by Chernobog so that I'd come up with a way for her to hide from him, letting her break the Treaty's boundaries on magic with impunity.

Julia shrugs.

Kauko tries to process everything she just said.

KAUKO  
But if that's... then... fuck.  
Fuck!

The building shakes. Julia goes to the window.

EXT. THE TOWER OF BABEL - DAY

Yusef, arms extended, is emanated waves of energy at the Tower. He's going to level it.

INT. THE TOWER OF BABEL TOP FLOOR - DAY

JULIA  
And now we're gonna die.

KAUKO  
What?!

He runs to the window.

KAUKO (CONT'D)  
Shit!

He grabs Julia by the shoulders.

KAUKO (CONT'D)  
Julia. Listen. This is important.

Julia laughs and cries simultaneously. Screams.

JULIA  
No! NO! This is NOT HOW THIS ENDS.

The entire building lists to one side. It's about to fall.

Julia grabs Kauko and throws him in the "elevator."

She enters, closes the door.

INT. THE "ELEVATOR" - DAY

The elevator is listing, too.

Kauko is nervous. Julia's just pissed.

The doors open.

INT. THE BRIDGE - DAY

Chernobog still covers the floor.

Julia storms over to the pillar Sara pulled the magic out of before. She tries to shove her hand in like Sara had, but can't.

She doesn't notice the whole bridge is collapsing.

Or the massive mouth forming behind her.

JULIA  
Fuck! How did she do this?!

KAUKO  
Julia! For fuck's sake!

Kauko tackles her out of the way of Chernobog. Drags her down the bridge.

Chernobog's mouth chases them.

JULIA  
I'm not scared of him anymore!

KAUKO  
I am!

The floor of the bridge is falling out from beneath them; they're barely able to keep going. Even Chernobog is being pulled out into the void.

KAUKO (CONT'D)  
Look, we've got bigger problems than Sara now!

JULIA  
What are you talking about?

KAUKO  
You just violated the biggest fucking peace agreement in history! What do you think the Elves are going to do about this?! This is an act of war!

That thought had really never occurred to Julia.

Fuck.

JULIA  
...Fuck! But I wasn't... Fuck!

KAUKO  
Yeah! Fuck!

They're in sight of the elevator on the far side of the bridge, but they're not going to make it. The floor is collapsing too quickly.

The floor directly beneath them falls, Kauko shoves Julia to safety, at the expense of his own footing. He falls into the void.

Julia doesn't look back. She can't. She books it to the end of the bridge.

She leaps into the "elevator" as it starts to fall itself.  
She screams.

CUT TO:

BLACK

JULIA (O.S.)  
And that was when you found me.

FADE TO:

INT. THE ELVEN COURTS - EVENING

Julia stands in front of the court, her story told; the telling has reminded her of her goal, and she stands strong.

JULIA  
So that's why I'm here - to beg  
your mercy, and let you know this  
is not an act of the kingdoms of  
men, but a solitary mistake for  
which I bear all the blame. There  
is no need to go to war over this,  
and I'm sure-

Kaia can't take it anymore. She bursts out laughing.

Julia is stunned.

Now that Kaia's laughing, Fanden can't stop himself either.

Soon, the entire court, Oiva excepted, is laughing their heads off.

JULIA (CONT'D)  
I... I don't...

She can't get a word in edgewise. What the fuck is going on?

Fanden tries to get a hold of himself.

FANDEN  
Oh... oh my goodness. I'm sorry,  
I'm sure you're...

He takes another beat to control himself.

FANDEN (CONT'D)  
You must be so confused...

The thought of what she must be thinking makes him lose it all over again.

JULIA  
Okay, seriously, what the fuck?!

OIVA  
I think, Julia!

He's not talking to Julia, he's trying to get everyone to shut up. And they do quiet down a bit.

OIVA (CONT'D)  
I think what my friends find so funny is that this was not a violation of the Accords.

JULIA  
It's not?

Fanden shakes his head through his giggles.

OIVA  
This was a deliberate exception to the limits on magic. Sara... no, Yusef bound himself to the realms of man, voluntarily giving up his capabilities of ever setting foot in our courts. There is no need for the limits to apply to him; he is no threat to us.

JULIA  
You mean...

KAIA  
I myself am bound to the Court, as a part of my role as High Sorcerer. Otherwise, I would not be able to access the Deep Mysteries. I know your memories are short, but could the humans truly have forgotten this?

JULIA  
I... I don't... So this was all pointless.

KAIA  
If your only goal was to prevent a war, then... yes.

JULIA

But... so there's nothing to be done about Yusef.

Fanden shrugs.

FANDEN

Nothing we care to do.

JULIA

But I was hoping you would help me stop him. He's the only one who can break the treaty, so nobody else can hold a candle to him! People are going to die!

Fanden sighs. He feels sorry for Julia.

FANDEN

I'm sorry, child, truly, I am. But even if we wanted to help - and I'll repeat, we have no reason to interfere in human politics - we just wouldn't. Elven lives are just worth more than human lives. So some of you are going to die sooner than you otherwise would - it's sad, but it's not a tragedy. Every elf that dies is a loss that echoes throughout eternity.

Julia is floored.

JULIA

So it's like that. We're just... unimportant to you.

KAIA

Don't take this the wrong way, girl. Suppose elves lived and died over the span of an hour. Would you really be so sad to see one die after half that time?

JULIA

But... No, but... yes! No!

She sees their point, but they're just wrong, damn it!

JULIA (CONT'D)

Fuck!

Fanden gestures to Oiva. Oiva descends to Julia, takes her gently by the arm.

OIVA

Why don't you get some sleep?  
You'll feel better about all of  
this after you rest.

JULIA

I can't sleep! People are dying,  
and-

OIVA

And there's nothing you can do  
about it. Accept it and rest.

Julia is not happy, but she lets herself be led away.

INT. ELVEN BEDROOM - NIGHT

Oiva leads Julia into a delicately ornate room - lavishly decorated, but with gentle silks and tapestries, rather than the precious stones and metals of the courtroom.

In the middle of the room is a large circular bed, surrounded by a curtain. The curtain parts as they enter the room.

OIVA

You can rest here. Perhaps the  
point does not need repeating, but  
there is no time limit. Sleep as  
long as you desire.

JULIA

...Thank you.

She stifles a yawn; just being in here is restful.

Oiva hesitates by the door; Julia notices.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Is there anything else?

OIVA

Kauko... is dead?

JULIA

What, you care about half-elves but  
not humans? They aren't immortal  
either, you know.

Oiva shakes his head.

OIVA

You misunderstand us. We have no desire for any harm to come to humans.

JULIA

I know. Whatever. Yes, Kauko's dead. I think he'd be surprised you cared, though.

OIVA

I hope not. Kauko... was my son.

JULIA

What? But if... how could you abandon him like that?

OIVA

You must understand, a mortal creature can never entirely fit in with the elves. I had thought his life would be more complete among others who could understand him.

JULIA

You were wrong.

She thinks.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Or at least, his life wasn't complete among humans, either.

Oiva nods, sad.

OIVA

His death was inevitable. But that does not mean I do not mourn his passing, or my mistakes. I will live with my regrets for the rest of my life.

JULIA

Oh, shit. I hadn't thought about that.

OIVA

About what?

JULIA

Living with your regrets for the rest of your life. You guys have perfect memories, too, don't you?

Oiva smiles a sad smile, nods.

OIVA

It is a gift and a curse. There are days we envy you. I suspect I shall for centuries to come.

He turns to leave.

JULIA

Wait.

He does.

JULIA (CONT'D)

I'm... I'm sorry for your loss. I didn't know him very long or very well, but Kauko was an okay guy. Not saying you couldn't have done better, but you could've done worse, too. Probably.

Oiva actually laughs.

OIVA

Yes. That's very comforting. Thank you.

Julia laughs.

JULIA

You know what I mean. I'm just saying-

OIVA

I know what you're saying. And I appreciate the sentiment, but it's unnecessary. This is not the first mistake I've made in my life.

Julia nods.

Beat.

JULIA

Goodnight, I guess.

OIVA

Goodnight.

He leaves.

INT. THE ELVEN COURT - DAY

Julia eats from a massive feast, the same as before.

JULIA

...So while I appreciate the offer, I think I have to go back home to try to stop him.

FANDEN

That may prove difficult. From what we understand, he has destroyed the second Tower, and is currently assaulting the third, though your wizards are trying to defend it.

JULIA

What? Why?

FANDEN

One can only guess. Perhaps he is afraid of our retaliation, the same as you were.

JULIA

Do they stand a chance against him?

OIVA

They are putting up a valiant effort. And he is not immortal. But they are likely to lose the Tower.

JULIA

Which would mean I can't go home.

FANDEN

There are other passageways, but it will take time. Something we have plenty of, but you...

JULIA

What about the other elves back on Earth? Lumi?

KAIA

They have time as well. We are patient.

Julia chews slowly, thinking.

She slams a fist on the table.

JULIA

No. I can't... I have to go. This is my fault to begin with.

OIVA

Don't be so quick to assume all of the blame. You were tricked.

JULIA

Yeah, but I cast the spell once, I can cast it again. Make it a fair fight. I just need some Elven magic, and I can level the playing field.

KAIA

And you assume we will generously grant you this magic?

JULIA

Yes! You have to!

KAIA

Why?

Beat.

JULIA

...Because! You're good people! You don't want humans to die!

FANDEN

I think you overestimate our generosity.

JULIA

Oh COME ON. I just can't catch a break with you guys! Just once, I'd like...

Beat. She realizes something.

JULIA (CONT'D)

He's destroying the Elven magic.

FANDEN

What?

She shoots to her feet.

JULIA

That's why he's destroying the Tower!

(MORE)

JULIA (CONT'D)

So that nobody else can access  
Elven magic, to hide from Chernobog  
like him!

The elves look worried.

FANDEN

But that would mean-

JULIA

That Lumi is his next target. An  
elf! Now you have to help us!

The elves all exchange glances.

Beat.

Julia gets angry.

JULIA (CONT'D)

No. After all that talk about elves  
being immortal and every death  
echoing through eternity, you can't  
just leave her to die!

KAIA

It's not that simple.

FANDEN

Suppose we sent two warriors to  
rescue her, and they fail. We have  
lost three lives, rather than only  
one.

JULIA

So send three! Send a thousand!

FANDEN

His power is beyond a level we are  
capable of attaining in the realms  
of men. There will be casualties.

OIVA

His power is not beyond your reach,  
however.

His words sink in.

JULIA

You're going to give me your magic.

FANDEN

We're going to give you all of the  
magic.

EXT. THE ELVEN TOWER - DAY

The Elven Tower is a massive tree, the trunk as wide as a building, stretching up to the sky. The "elevator" doors are set into a rather large knot.

Fanden, Kaia, Oiva and Julia stand nearby.

OIVA

You should be warned. You only used our magic before, you didn't own it. Once you do own it...

KAIA

Elven elements are different than human elements. They won't... fit... properly.

JULIA

I can take it. Give it to me.

FANDEN

Are you certain? We can give you only a small amount - something easier to manage. It will still be enough to cast your spell.

JULIA

No, I want all of it. Every bit of magic you give me is magic he doesn't have access to, something he won't know how to fight.

KAIA

And something you won't know how to use. Think carefully.

JULIA

Just give it to me, damn it!

Oiva touches her forehead.

CUT TO:

BLACK

JULIA (O.S.)

What the FUC-

EXT. THE ELVEN TOWER - DAY

Julia's head is exploding. Everything around her is

shaking. Or mayb

e she's shaking. She looks blurrRRRRrrrry, then everything else looks yrrulb, then you can like, c thru her, and then for a scneod everything is just EYES.

Things are NOT RIGHT.

JULIA  
What is HAPPENING?!

The elves' voices are perfectly, painfully clear. They pierce through the chaos and confusion.

OIVA  
You're breathing for the first time.

FANDEN  
Hyperventilating, more like.

JULIA  
HOLYSHIT STOP TALKING

FANDEN  
It will pass.

JULIA  
Fucking WHEN?

FANDEN  
In ordinary circumstances, we'd recommend a few years of meditation.

JULIA  
YEARS?!

OIVA  
Calm yourself, child.

Julia takes a few breaths. It helps, but not enough.

OIVA (CONT'D)  
Listen to my voice.

JULIA  
I can't fucking not listen!

OIVA  
Forget everything else. Listen to me. Listen.

She focuses on Oiva's voice, and everything calms down.

OIVA (CONT'D)  
You can handle this. You are okay.

A long beat. Okay.

This is okay.

JULIA  
For now. But... yeah. For now.

FANDEN  
There isn't much time. The Tower is  
going to fall.

JULIA  
I can do it. I can take it.

Nobody believes her, including her. But what are they gonna  
do about it?

KAIA  
Just because we don't value your  
life doesn't mean we want to throw  
it away.

JULIA  
You know what? Fuck you in  
particular. You're kind of a dick.

Kaia is taken aback. Fanden laughs.

JULIA (CONT'D)  
Let's do this. Can we do this?

OIVA  
First.

He hands her a quiver of sorts, filled with magic rods and  
staves.

Julia looks at it. Sees something.

She reaches in and pulls out...

JULIA  
A gun?

It's a fucking beautiful gun, too. Big revolver, ivory  
handles, inlaid with gold.

FANDEN  
If it works, it works.

She shrugs. Slides the gun in the back of her pants, throughs the quiver over her shoulder.

She steps to the elevator. Oiva gestures, and the doors glow, then open.

JULIA  
So this is what it's like to be invited, huh?

FANDEN  
Savor it. It will be your last time using it ever again.

Julia had kind of forgotten about that. She's binding herself to the realms of man, she'll never be able to come back.

JULIA  
Oh. Yeah.

She shakes Fanden's hand. It's pretty awkward.

JULIA (CONT'D)  
Bye forever, I guess. And thanks.

FANDEN  
Goodbye forever, I guess.

She sticks out a hand to Oiva, but he hugs her instead. She hugs him back.

Oiva opens his mouth to speak, but changes his mind. They nod to each other.

Julia looks at Kaia. Flips her the bird. Kaia rolls her eyes.

JULIA  
Fuck it.

She steps into the elevator.

The doors close.

EXT. THE RUSSIAN TOWER - NIGHT

This tower is no skyscraper; it's old, ancient maybe, designed to look like it was carved out of a single, massive block of stone.

It's in the middle of fucking nowhere, just tundra all around.

Oh, and also like a shit ton of wizards.

They're throwing fireballs and lightning bolts at Yusef, who now stands at least twelve feet high and is wreathed in green flames.

Yusef doesn't even waste time fighting back; he just keeps throwing blasts of energy at the tower. Chunk after chunk explodes, disintegrates, or just generally is made to not be there anymore.

Finally, it's taken all that it can handle. The tower implodes, the very top falling down on its own.

As it falls, Julia falls out of it.

JULIA

SHIT

She throws up her hands, and is suddenly anchored in place. Falling chunks of tower pass right through her like she's a ghost.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Okay. Now I know how to do that.

Yusef sees her. He's surprised, but not too surprised to chuck a fireball at her.

Julia yelps, and suddenly falls again, out of the path of the fireball.

She hits the ground in a roll and is immediately running away.

Yusef hovers across the ground after her, casually batting some of the defending wizards aside.

Julia's head starts breaking again. Colors are wrong, sounds are wrong, things are-

Now her feet start glowing, and even though she's running the same speed, her steps are taking her farther and farther.

Elven magic is fucking weird, man.

Yusef stops just hovering and starts flying, picking up speed. But with each step, Julia is farther away, until eventually she's just gone.

EXT. BEIJING - NIGHT

Julia finally slows down, and she's in the middle of a crowded Chinese street.

Nobody seemed to notice her arrival, which is good, I guess?  
She scurries out of the street and into an alley.

EXT. BEIJING ALLEY - NIGHT

She catches her breath, shakes her head, tries to get a hold  
of herself.

JULIA  
I'm starting to think I made a big  
fucking mistake.

Down the alley, two tough-looking alley guys are doing tough-  
looking alley guy things. They aren't too happy about Julia  
showing up.

She stares at them with the eyes popping out of her forehead,  
and they decide they'd rather hang out in a different alley.

JULIA (CONT'D)  
Oh, gross!

Julia tries to shove the eyes back into her forehead, but  
they all pop out and roll on the ground instead.

JULIA (CONT'D)  
Fuck!

She takes deep breaths. Calms down a little.

JULIA (CONT'D)  
But no, this is fine. And then when  
I do my thing I'll be able to do  
all of this but like a hundred  
times more powerful, and then  
nothing will go wrong ever again.

Beat.

JULIA (CONT'D)  
FUCK. Okay. We'll just keep that in  
the back pocket, then. Now how do I  
get out of-

EXT. THE WOODS - DAY

Julia's in the woods now.

JULIA  
-here?

She's getting less and less confused, and more and more despondent. Like seriously, what if she just can't handle this?

JULIA (CONT'D)  
Um. Okay. Okay. Don't... don't  
freak out.

She's freaking out.

She collapses against a tree and cries a little bit.

JULIA (CONT'D)  
No. No no no no no.

She stops getting sad and starts getting mad.

Short, angry breaths.

JULIA (CONT'D)  
Fucking. I can do this. I can  
fucking do this. And if I have  
to... no, if I get to do this with  
extra eyes falling out of my head,  
all's the better!

She gets to her feet.

JULIA (CONT'D)  
Now how do I get out of-

Beat.

JULIA (CONT'D)  
-here?

EXT. THE CITY - MORNING

She did it! She's back home - or would be, if she had a home.  
She nods.

JULIA  
Okay. Time for some intentional  
magic.

She does her weird walking thing and winds up at:

EXT. LUMI'S COURT - MORNING

There are guards posted outside - two big, BURLY DUDES with  
tattoos that are moving around their skin.

They're not terribly enthused about Julia's sudden arrival.

As soon as she appears, one of them draws a magical rod, the other a Glock.

BURLY DUDE

Who the fuck are you?

Julia doesn't flinch. Truth be told, she's kind of afraid that if she flinches, she'll cast another spell.

JULIA

I'm a friend. I'm here to save Lumi.

BURLY DUDE

Save her from what, asshat?

JULIA

Um... do you guys know about Yusef? That news has gotten around, right? I'm legitimately asking.

BURLY DUDE

You been under a rock? Why do you think we're out here?

JULIA

I have no idea. Maybe because you're morons who think you could slow him down for a second or two.

They look at each other.

BURLY DUDE

I think maybe you oughta get your ass out of here before-

Julia takes one step, and is standing behind them.

JULIA

I really don't have time for this.

She does her ghost thing and walks through the front door.

INT. LUMI'S COURT - MORNING

Inside, it's clear that Lumi knows she's in deep shit. Or if she doesn't know, she's at least a good guesser. All of her cronies are armed, with barricades scattered around the room.

Lumi herself is wearing Elven battle armor - it's clearly made with materials not available on Earth, but it's also not over-the-top ornate like most other Elven things - this stuff was clearly made for a purpose, function over form.

Nobody's, like, in go-mode, but it's clear that if shit started, they'd be ready for it.

Speaking of which, Julia showing up certainly makes them feel like shit's about to start.

No sooner is she there than someone throws an icicle the size of a javelin at her. It passes right through her.

She throws her hands up.

JULIA

Don't shoot! I come in peace!

Lumi has a pair of magic wands pointed at her - one crackles with electricity, the other glows green light.

LUMI

You. I see you got your hands on our magic.

JULIA

And I have no idea what I'm doing with it.

LUMI

Let me teach you.

And suddenly she's behind Lumi. She blasts her with electricity, and Lumi shrieks in pain. She collapses to the floor, but doesn't stop at the floor - she flows right through it.

Lumi dives into the floor after her.

Beat.

They both crash in through the ceiling, wrestling with each other.

JULIA

Stop it! I'm trying to-

They never hit the ground, instead wrestling as they float through the room.

Lumi gets Julia with the green glowy wand, and her eyes roll back in her head. She starts spouting gibberish, like she's speaking in tongues or something.

She takes a deep breath, and suddenly she and Lumi are hurled against opposite walls of the room.

Immediately, Julia is surrounded by Lumi's cronies.

But then, she's standing behind the cronies. Each of them, individually. There's like a dozen of her.

JULIAS

I'm here to help you!

Lumi gets to her feet. She stalks over to the Julias, examining them.

LUMI

Why?

JULIAS

Yusef is destroying all the Elven magic left on Earth. He's going to come for you. Fanden sent me here to get you back to the Court.

Lumi grabs one of the Julias by the throat. The others collapse, then fade.

LUMI

Keep talking.

JULIA

(struggling to breathe)

He told me to tell you to use the Charmed Path! He says it's okay!

LUMI

Why? Why not take the Bridge?

JULIA

Because Yusef destroyed the last one about five minutes ago!

Lumi's eyes widen.

She drops Julia. Julia collapses to the ground.

LUMI

If that's true...

JULIA

I saw it happen. I was coming out as he did it.

LUMI

So why did they send you?

JULIA  
I'm expendable. They didn't want to risk-

LUMI  
I know that. Why you?

Julia gets her feet back under her.

JULIA  
Look, I think you're kind of a raging asshole. And like, dangerous to mankind. But saving you was the only way to get them to give me the power I needed to stop Yusef. And maybe they've got a point about your life being worth more because it's infinite and shit.

Lumi snorts.

JULIA (CONT'D)  
I mean, Kauko thought you were okay.

LUMI  
Does he?

JULIA  
He did.

Lumi understands. She's saddened by the news.

LUMI  
Oh.

JULIA  
Yeah.

Beat.

LUMI  
So how exactly can you protect me?  
What can you do that I can't?

JULIA  
For starters, I have this bag full of wands and staves and shit.

She holds up the quiver. Lumi reacts as if she was showing her a rocket launcher and an M60.

LUMI  
Holy shit. You could take down a  
dragon with all that firepower.

JULIA  
Dragons are real?!

Lumi is just so done.

LUMI  
Oh my god. I am so sick of humans.

JULIA  
Yeah okay but dragons are real?!

LUMI  
No! God! It's an expression!

Julia's disappointed.

JULIA  
Oh.

LUMI  
We killed all the dragons like a  
million years ago.

JULIA  
WHAT

INT./EXT. ARMORED SUV - DAY

Lumi and Julia ride in the back along with four of Lumi's  
cronies.

LUMI  
...Fortunately, I always have a  
backup plan.

JULIA  
Which in this case is...

LUMI  
So imagine the human realms are  
Earth, and the elves live on the  
moon.

JULIA  
Okay.

LUMI  
The Tower was a space elevator that  
can take you back and forth easily.  
(MORE)

LUMI (CONT'D)

Yusef broke that. But that's not the only way to get there. Way back in the day, we used to take rockets to the moon, and I happen to have an unused rocket waiting for me.

JULIA

Does it use Elven magic? Could Yusef know about it?

LUMI

Nope, this was one of yours. 100% Earth, Wind, Water and Fire.

JULIA

Nice. Okay. So how far away is it?

LUMI

About an hour without traffic.

She aims that at her DRIVER. The driver shakes his head.

DRIVER

We're looking at at least two hours right now, and it's getting worse. Everyone knows Yusef is coming and everyone's trying to get out.

Lumi groans.

JULIA

Wait. Where are we?

She looks out the window. Points down a clear side street.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Go that way!

LUMI

You have no idea where-

JULIA

This isn't about that. Go that way.

The driver looks back at Lumi, who shrugs. He turns.

EXT. HARRY'S MANSION - DAY

Harry's mansion is like a fucking palace. You know those crazy elegant beach houses some people have that look they're for royalty? Yeah, he has one of those, in the middle of the city.

The SUV drives up.

JULIA  
This is it. Pull over.

Julia hops out of the car.

LUMI  
What is this place?

JULIA  
This dead lucksmith's house. His  
apprentice might have some juju he  
can lend us.

Lumi just waves a hand and closes the door.

Julia runs up the steps. Pounds on the door.

Beat.

She pounds again.

Beat.

JULIA (CONT'D)  
Fuggit.

She pulls one of the tougher-looking rods out of her quiver,  
points it at the door-

And the door swings open, revealing...

JULIA (CONT'D)  
Harry?

She lowers the rod.

HARRY  
Hey! Julia! I figured you'd died!

JULIA  
I watched you die!

HARRY  
What? No.

JULIA  
Uh, yeah. You got blasted by that  
thing in the ceiling and poof.

HARRY  
Oh, that. No, that was just a stun  
rod.

(MORE)

HARRY (CONT'D)

It interacted strangely with my amulet of luck, though, and through a strange and unlikely series of coincidences the magics twisted to teleport me back home.

JULIA

Yeah. Okay. Fine. Look, I need your luck amulet.

HARRY

What? Why?

JULIA

I'm trying to get an elf to a rocket ship. Look, this was all going to be way easier when you were dead and I could just take it.

She remembers the rod in her hand. She points it at Harry.

JULIA (CONT'D)

So I guess I'm robbing you now.

HARRY

If you could successfully rob me, how useful could be luck amulet be?

Julia puts the rod away, exasperated.

JULIA

Fuck, man, I don't know!

HARRY

Tell you what. That bag of shit looks pretty sweet, and I can always make a new amulet.

JULIA

I would, but I kind of need it.

HARRY

All of it?

She shrugs.

JULIA

Maybe. Flip you for it? My bag versus your amulet?

Harry laughs.

HARRY  
I'm a lucksmith. And you want to  
gamble with me.

JULIA  
Right? How could this go against  
you?

Harry's suspicious, but he trusts his luck. He pulls out a  
coin.

HARRY  
Fine. But we use my coin.

JULIA  
Fine. Flip it. Heads I win, tails  
you lose.

HARRY  
Fine.

He flips the coin; it lands on its edge, standing upright.

HARRY (CONT'D)  
Hah. Would you look at that.

Julia stomps on it. Looks.

JULIA  
Tails, you lose.

HARRY  
Fuck! This is supposed to be, like,  
the easiest thing for a lucksmith-

Julia rips the amulet off of his neck, runs back to the car.

JULIA  
Yeah thanks man!

HARRY  
How did you beat me?!

Beat. She doesn't stop.

HARRY (CONT'D)  
Fuck.

He turns around. Goes back inside, shaking his head, doubting  
everything that led him to this point.

Julia hops back in the car, throws the amulet around the  
driver's neck.

They drive away.

Beat.

Harry slams the front door open, stomps outside.

HARRY (CONT'D)  
MOTHERFUCKER!

INT./EXT. ARMORED SUV - DAY

Every light they hit is green, every lane they want to change to is open; smooth sailing.

The driver marvels at the amulet.

DRIVER  
This is some sweet swag.

JULIA  
Yeah, well, I'm gonna need it back.

The driver is disappointed. Shifty. He's thinking about stealing it. Julia notices, but she has bigger things to worry about.

JULIA (CONT'D)  
So Lumi. I can, like, anchor myself to this world so I can bypass the limits, yeah?

LUMI  
Yeah?

JULIA  
But suppose, hypothetically speaking, I'd just been given all of the Elven magics about an hour ago, and still didn't know how to control them.

LUMI  
All of them?

JULIA  
Pretty sure.

LUMI  
I'd say you're a fucking lunatic, and so is whoever gave them to you.

JULIA  
Careful, don't let the Elfking hear  
you say that.

LUMI  
Fanden gave them to you?

JULIA  
Well, Oiva, but Fanden was-

LUMI  
Oh, shit.

JULIA  
Yeah.

LUMI  
You're surprisingly sane right now.  
I lost my marbles for a couple  
decades when I got my first human  
magic.

Julia looks out the window, sees cars running around on  
animal legs.

JULIA  
I wouldn't say I'm "sane," per se.

LUMI  
To answer your question, fucking do  
it.

JULIA  
Yeah, but what if-

LUMI  
You weren't alive before the  
Accords set the limits. You don't  
know what he's capable of. It's not  
a question of "What if I snap my  
brain in two," it's a question of,  
"Do I want him to kill me just by  
looking at me particularly hard?"

JULIA  
I would say I do not want that.

LUMI  
Well then.

JULIA  
Shit.

Beat.

LUMI  
Like, fucking now.

JULIA  
Fucking now, now?

Lumi points at a gigantic explosion a couple miles off to their right.

JULIA (CONT'D)  
Fucking now now.

She closes her eyes. Meditates.

PIERCING SHRIEKS AND EYES AND IS THAT GOAT WEARING GLASSES  
WHAT IS HAPPENING

JULIA (CONT'D)  
FUCK! No! I can't do it!

LUMI  
Don't be a bitch.

She puts her thumb on Julia's forehead. Julia SCREAMS. The world EXPLODES with LIGHTS and COLORS and yes, that is a FUCKING ORANGE GOAT that's ABOVE and WITHIN, WATCHING, SEEING, WAITI-

Then suddenly everything's fine.

JULIA  
Was that it?

LUMI  
That was it.

JULIA  
So I can... and no Chernobog?

LUMI  
I don't think it can even see you anymore.

JULIA  
Well. Okay then.

An eye falls out of her forehead.

LUMI  
Oh gross.

EXT. A DOOR IN THE WOODS - DAY

There's just a door standing on the edge of the woods. It's solid oak, covered with gold and silver runs, as well as an awful lot of something that looks like dried blood.

The SUV pulls up and parks. Everyone hops out.

JULIA  
Are we close?

LUMI  
We're here.

Julia looks around.

JULIA  
I was expecting something less...  
just the woods.

LUMI  
It's that door?

JULIA  
What door?

LUMI  
Oh, shit. Yeah. You're bound here.

She points at the door.

LUMI (CONT'D)  
There's a door right over there.  
Right at the treeline.

JULIA  
Oh. So I really can't... like, I  
can't go back?

LUMI  
No.

JULIA  
(disappointed)  
Cool. Yeah.

LUMI  
Look, so I'm going to need a couple  
minutes to get it started, but-

CRASH!

A thirty-foot tall Yusef stomps over a hill and into sight.

His voice shakes the trees.

YUSEF

What have we here? Hiding, are we?

LUMI

Fuck.

JULIA

Back off, Yusef! She's fucking leaving! You don't have to kill her!

YUSEF

And where is she going? I destroyed the only paths out.

JULIA

She's taking that...

Oh, right.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Look, you and I can't see it, but I swear there's a door somewhere over there that'll take her back to the Elven Court!

Yusef just stares at her.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Ffffuck.

Yusef hurls an icicle spear at Lumi. Julia shoves her aside, but gets speared right in the chest. The impact throws her back and the icicle lodges into a tree, suspending her.

Julia coughs blood.

JULIA (CONT'D)

That was...

Her head drops.

Lumi looks at what just happened. She's terrified.

She shouts to her cronies.

LUMI

Don't just stand there!

Her cronies open fire, but Yusef holds up a hand and catches everything the throw at him.

He breathes fire from his mouth, that swallows the cronies, and they all die screaming.

JULIA

That seemed like an unpleasant way to go.

Yusef spins around. Julia's standing behind him, near the edge of the woods.

Yusef looks back. She's still dead, suspended to the tree.

JULIA (CONT'D)

It's really fascinating the illusions you can pull off with some of this Elven stuff. You should really try it.

Yusef hurls a fireball at her. She explodes, her charred body falling to the ground.

Then, another Julia walks out from behind a tree.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Don't worry, I'm sure you'll find the real me soon enough.

Lumi hesitates, not knowing what to do. A tiny Julia crawls out of her hair to sit on her shoulder.

TINY JULIA

I've got this. You get started.

Yusef throws another fireball at the current Julia. She dies, and then another Julia shows up, deeper in the woods.

She laughs, and runs into the woods. Yusef screams and charges after her.

EXT. THE WOODS - DAY

Yusef, now only ten feet tall, runs through the woods, chasing Julias. They run in front of him and then disappear, laugh from all around him, jump from tree to tree, and just generally act kind of like some sort of horror monster.

Yusef throws all sorts of magic at them, but even when he kills one, another takes its place.

Nearby, on Julia hides behind a tree, watching. Who fucking knows for sure, but we get the impression this is maybe the real one.

She opens her mouth to speak, but the voices come from all around Yusef.

JULIA

This must be, like, super frustrating for you. You went to all that effort to get me to make you a god, and now I'm the one who's going to stop you.

Yusef yells, and spears another Julia to a tree.

Julia laughs.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Oh fuck! You got me! That was the real me!

She makes fake dying noises.

YUSEF

Enough of this!

He charges a massive fireball, slams it into the ground.

A huge explosion knocks over all the trees in a thirty-yard radius. There are at least a dozen dead Julias.

Beat.

The Julia that was hiding behind a tree is ducked down, having narrowly avoided getting incinerated. She's kind of surprised she's alive.

Her laughter echoes around Yusef.

JULIA

Wow. You actually almost got me, that time.

Yusef screams.

Julias run circles around him, appearing and disappearing, taunting him.

He hesitates. Catches his breath. Collects himself.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Come on, now, Yusef! Sara? Yura? What should I call you?

YUSEF

Call me...

He stands up straight. Closes his eyes.

YUSEF (CONT'D)  
I'll find you.

JULIA  
That's a funny name.

YUSEF  
You're very witty. I always-

He throws out a hand. The hiding Julia is lifted into the air by dark energy.

All of the other Julias drop to the ground, dead.

YUSEF (CONT'D)  
Hated that about you.

He clenches his hand. A sickening CRACK.

Julia drops to the ground, dead.

Yusef waits. Looks around.

Smiles.

Floats back towards Lumi.

EXT. A DOOR IN THE WOODS - DAY

Lumi rapidly performs various gestures at the door. Its runes glow in rhythmic patterns.

LUMI  
Come on, come on, come on, come on.

She glances into the woods. Sees Yusef through the trees, coming her way.

She turns back, moving faster, almost frantic.

LUMI (CONT'D)  
Work, you damn door!

She looks back towards the woods. Doesn't see Yusef.

Looks back to the door. It swings open; the Elven Court can be seen on the other side.

She's lifted up into the air by the same dark energy that lifted Julia.

LUMI (CONT'D)  
 No! Put me down! I'm leaving,  
 fucker!

Yusef is standing behind her, squeezing her with his magic.

YUSEF  
 I've never killed an elf before. I  
 wonder what it's like.

BANG

Beat.

BANGBANGBANGBANG

Yusef gasps. Five bloody holes are through his chest.

Behind him, the first Julia, the one still speared to the  
 tree, holds the gun given to her by the elves.

She coughs blood. She doesn't look good at all.

Yusef looks at her.

YUSEF (CONT'D)  
 The whole time...

BANG

Right between the eyes.

He falls down, dead.

Lumi falls out of the air, quickly runs to Julia.

LUMI  
 Holy shit. Are you okay?

Julia somehow finds the strength for a laconic stare.

LUMI (CONT'D)  
 Stupid question.

Julia's head falls again. Quick, wheezy breaths. She's not  
 long for the world.

LUMI (CONT'D)  
 Look, I gotta... The door will only  
 stay open so long, and...

She looks at the door.

LUMI (CONT'D)

Fuck.

CUT TO:

BLACK

A long beat of silence, then:

LUMI (O.S.)

How the fuck should I know? It would work on an elf!

FANDEN (O.S.)

Calm down. Look, she's moving.

INT. LUMI'S COURT - DAY

Lumi's court has been repaired and remodeled, but as of now, it's pretty much empty.

Julia lies on a sofa, with Lumi standing nearby, talking to an image of Fanden in a mirror.

Julia stirs awake. Looks at her chest. She's got a big gaping hole in the middle, bandaged all the way through. Seriously, if you had a small enough hand, you could probably fit your fist through. It's pretty gross, and clearly unnatural.

Julia tries to speak, but an eyeball falls out of her mouth.

JULIA

Oh, fuck.

Lumi looks at her.

LUMI

Don't even get me started. What the fuck is it with you and eyeballs?

JULIA

I thought it was an elf thing! Why is there a hole in my chest?

LUMI

Because that guy threw an icicle through it, remember?

JULIA

Yeah, but why is there a hole in my chest?

FANDEN

Elven healing methods sometimes seem unorthodox to humans. It'll probably fill eventually.

Julia sits up, expecting pain, but she actually feels pretty okay. She looks at her chest again. Sticks a finger into it.

JULIA

Probably. Eventually.

FANDEN

Indeed.

Lumi coughs.

Beat.

She coughs louder. Julia doesn't look up.

JULIA

Do you need a cough drop?

LUMI

You're fucking welcome for saving your worthless life.

JULIA

And you're welcome for saving yours. So by my accounting, you saved me like sixty years tops, and I saved you like an eternity. So that roughly adds up to you owing me infinity.

Lumi scoffs, groans. Fanden laughs.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Elven lives are just worth more than human lives, you know.

FANDEN

She's not wrong.

Lumi storms off, swearing under her breath.

Julia walks over to the mirror.

JULIA

'Sup.

FANDEN

You've done us a great service, Julia.

(MORE)

FANDEN (CONT'D)

And don't think we're unaware of the sacrifices you had to make in order to do it.

JULIA

You mean dying?

FANDEN

That, and anchoring yourself to your world. Oiva and I discussed how interested you were in staying at the Court, but that's clearly impossible now.

Julia nods, a little sad again.

FANDEN (CONT'D)

So with that in mind, as well as Lumi's quite reasonable desire to return home for a time, we decided it was time to choose a new Ambassador to the human realms. We did what we could to accelerate the process, as well.

He nods behind her.

Julia turns around and sees Oiva.

JULIA

Wait, what? You're replacing Lumi?

OIVA

Indeed. And then some.

JULIA

What does that mean? That sounds kind of ominous.

FANDEN

In addition to his duties as our representative to the human realms, we've decided it would be helpful for his understanding of humanity to take on a human apprentice.

Julia tries not to get too excited, but she's getting pretty excited.

JULIA

Seriously? Like, really?

OIVA

Like, really.

Julia laughs and hugs Oiva.

JULIA

So I can like, ask you anything and  
you'll explain how it works?

OIVA

There are limits to even my  
knowledge.

JULIA

So like, what's up with all the  
eyes?

OIVA

What eyes?

Julia coughs up an eyeball.

OIVA (CONT'D)

Oh, gross.

FADE TO BLACK