

The Summoning

By

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Lights up on the living room of a cramped college apartment. A threadbare rug, a sagging couch, a dining room table with mismatched chairs. The table is littered with papers, textbooks, and crumbs.

Circe, a college senior, has pulled up the rug. She sits on the floor in the dim light, thinking. Then she almost smiles. Then she starts to draw something on the floor in chalk.

Suddenly, the door bangs open and Morgan enters from outside, flipping the lights on and breaking the spell. She wears a raincoat and carries a paper bag. Circe, startled, breaks her piece of chalk.

MORGAN

What's that book with the eyes and the big blue face?

CIRCE

What?

MORGAN

You know. The blue face has a city in it. The first page is about how you shouldn't judge people.

CIRCE

I don't know.

MORGAN

Yes, you do. But never mind, never mind, never mind...

Morgan throws her coat on the floor and rushes out of the room again with her paper bag.

CIRCE

(about the paper bag)
Is that the...?

MORGAN

(from offstage)
Yes!

CIRCE

And you're putting it...where are you putting it?

MORGAN

(offstage)
The freezer.

CIRCE

Won't it freeze?

Morgan re-enters.

MORGAN

We won't take that long, will we? But careful opening the freezer door, it's very precarious in there with all my sad diet ice cream.

CIRCE

Where--not that it matters, but where did you get it?

MORGAN

Jason. From Jason, from his lab.

CIRCE

Oh. You and he aren't still...?

MORGAN

No! No, no no.

CIRCE

Ok.

MORGAN

I mean yes, a little, but he has a girlfriend now, so officially, no.

CIRCE

Morgan!

MORGAN

I mean, hardly!

Circe realizes that her chalk is broken.

CIRCE

Chalk...do we have more chalk?

MORGAN

I'm not going to be lectured about this by you--

CIRCE

You bought chalk?

MORGAN

Yes. I mean, ok, we've stopped actually *doing* doing anything, but only because I'm so morally evolved. It's not like I've even met the girlfriend, and they're going to break up after graduation anyway, so like--

CIRCE

Where's the chalk, Morgan?

MORGAN

I'll get it.

Morgan exits. Circe stands, nervously.

CIRCE

Do we have enough wine?

Morgan re-enters with the chalk.

MORGAN

Yes Cece, we have wine.

Circe takes the chalk.

CIRCE

Good...just red, or...?

MORGAN

I know, red gives you
a headache--

CIRCE

Red gives me a
head--yes.

MORGAN

We have white. I think it's one of the California ones
with all the arsenic in it. Want some?

CIRCE

Please.

*Morgan gets a bottle of cheap white wine, two mugs
and a wineglass from the kitchen. She tries to
open the bottle with a corkscrew, before realizing
it's a twist-off. Circe goes to start drawing in
chalk on the floor, but stops. She moves a chair
across the room. She looks at the chair. She moves
it back. She paces.*

MORGAN

What are you doing?

CIRCE

I'm just...seeing what would be better.

MORGAN

You're like a dog during a rainstorm.

CIRCE

Go be helpful.

MORGAN

I'm just Mickey Mouse, you're the wizard guy. If you don't tell me what to do I'll end up flooding the apartment with, um...

CIRCE

You know the herbs in the kitchen?

MORGAN

...the magic walking broom guys...

CIRCE

You know the herbs in the kitchen?

MORGAN

Yeah?

CIRCE

Put them in a bag, one by one.

MORGAN

Ok.

CIRCE

Then lift the bag over your head--

MORGAN

Ok?

CIRCE

--wave it in a circle--

MORGAN

Why?

CIRCE

--and scream like a chicken!

MORGAN

(unamused)

Ha.

CIRCE

The Dick Van Dyke Show.

MORGAN

I know.

CIRCE

It's the one where Dick Van Dyke gets a phone call--

MORGAN

I know, you showed me the clip, Cece, I know.

Circe starts drawing on the ground with the new chalk. Morgan exits, re-entering a moment later with a bag of chips and a large bowl, humming the theme from The Sorcerer's Apprentice. She drops the bowl, making Circe jump.

MORGAN

Just chips.

CIRCE

In a bowl? What's the occasion?

MORGAN

For what's-her-name.

CIRCE

Who?

MORGAN

What's-her-name!

CIRCE

Who's what's-her-name?

MORGAN

That girl, the girl, you know...she was in my fiction workshop? In her profile picture, she's like on top of a mountain wearing a sports bra, being better than everyone else.

CIRCE

I don't have Facebook.

MORGAN

Right. I forgot that you are also better than everyone else.

CIRCE

I just don't feel the need to pay some sort of tithe of attention to a bunch of people who I spend most of my waking hours trying to avoid.

MORGAN

Yeah, yeah, but you know this girl. She was on the same improv team as me, until I remembered that improv's for white men. She was at Rohit's Halloween thing? She was a breakfast monster?

CIRCE

Oh. With the horns. She was a "deviled egg."

MORGAN

Yeah, her.

CIRCE

She's the one from your classes, who's completely obsessed with you?

MORGAN

She's not obsessed, she's just a friendly person. You don't understand because you're all withered inside like a divorcée.

CIRCE

Yes, but why does she need chips?

MORGAN

She doesn't need them, she might want them.

CIRCE

...you didn't invite her over *now*?

MORGAN

Yes.

CIRCE

Morgan!

MORGAN

What? We discussed it.

CIRCE

And we decided not to!

MORGAN

Oh. Did we?

CIRCE

No! I mean, yes! Yes, we decided *not* to invite anyone.

MORGAN

Well, I can't un-invite her now.

CIRCE

Yes you can. She's not a vampire.

MORGAN

Wait, is this a vampire thing now?

CIRCE

No, I mean like how vampires can only enter your home if they're invited--never mind, just text her and say she can't come.

Circe exits. Morgan sets up the chips, continuing the conversation.

MORGAN

I can't just text her *not to come*. That's not text-able!

Circe re-enters with a large kitchen knife and an empty Tupperware. She sets them down and goes back to her chalk drawing.

CIRCE

Text her some excuse, then.

MORGAN

What like, "My roommate watched *The Craft* at an impressionable age and now she's weird, don't come to our apartment"?

CIRCE

Sure, that works.

MORGAN

Look, she's the only one who fits your...who has the "qualifications," right?

CIRCE

...you sure?

MORGAN

Mostly.

CIRCE

Is she religious?

MORGAN

High maintenance. Or high standards. What must it be like to have standards?

CIRCE

Ok, but I don't want to make it about that.

MORGAN

She's the only virgin that I know.

CIRCE

I really don't want--

MORGAN

She's the only virgin that you know, too, unless you want to invite someone from your Dungeons and Whatever club.

CIRCE

They're all sleeping with each other--

MORAGN

Ew.

CIRCE

--But I don't want it to be a "virgin" thing, I don't want it to feel like we "condone" the concept of virginity, or like we're taking advantage of her...state...

MORGAN

"Her state"?

CIRCE

Not like that--I just don't want to fetishize her personal, intimate choices--

MORGAN

Yeah, Ok, we've all seen Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's TED Talks. Call it a *commentary* on virginity, if you want.

CIRCE

You know that just saying the word "commentary" doesn't actually do anything, right?

MORGAN

You said we needed a virgin to do the thing!

CIRCE

It'll be able to communicate *better* through a...yes. I mean, I was going to use a scrying glass--

MORGAN

--you mean the mirror you found in that dumpster?

CIRCE

--*but* a human vessel is better. The reception will be clearer. The vessel just has to be...unsullied.

MORGAN

How much better?

CIRCE

Internet Explorer versus Google Chrome. Better, even. A drawing versus a photograph. Skype versus being able to touch someone.

MORGAN

So...?

CIRCE

It would be better. Ok. Yes. Fine. Fine! We'll use her.

MORGAN

Cool.

CIRCE

I'll have to change all the runes if we have a human vessel. When is she coming?

MORGAN

We've got time. But...maybe don't do that right now?

Morgan gestures vaguely at Circe's chalk pentagram.

CIRCE

Why?

MORGAN

It might freak her out.

CIRCE

You didn't tell her what we're doing?

MORGAN

Of course I didn't tell her!

CIRCE

But then how--

MORGAN

I didn't want to scare her off! You know, not everyone spent their childhood performing exorcisms at summer camp--

CIRCE

It wasn't an exorcism.

MORGAN

I just mean, not everyone is all New York hipster elite.

CIRCE

I'm not--how is this a New York thing? And you're also from New York.

MORGAN

I am not, I'm from Brooklyn.

CIRCE

So what does she think is going to happen?

MORGAN

She thinks she's coming over for a party. That's why I'm putting out chips. For the party atmosphere.

CIRCE

Two people and chips are not a party.

MORGAN

It's a party *atmosphere*.

CIRCE

And *how* are we supposed to do it if she doesn't know what we're doing?

MORGAN

She'll come over, we'll small talk at her, we'll do our business--she won't see it coming.

CIRCE

All right, but don't say it like that, you make it sound like we're going to do something horrible to her.

Circe carefully arranges the Tupperware and goes to cut herself with the kitchen knife.

MORGAN

Cece! What are you doing?!

CIRCE

We need blood.

MORGAN

Don't cut yourself! God. I have blood.

Morgan exits to the bathroom. Circe lowers the knife.

CIRCE

What are you doing?

MORGAN

Give me a sec.

CIRCE

(Looking into the bathroom)

Oh God...please close the door at least, Morgan, jeez.

Morgan returns triumphantly with a bloody tampon.

CIRCE

That's disgusting.

MORGAN

How is this worse than cutting yourself with a kitchen knife?

CIRCE

I don't know if period blood counts.

She consults her phone.

MORGAN

Of course it counts.

CIRCE

It's not real blood though, is it? It's uterine lining.

MORGAN

Of course it's blood.

CIRCE

I think it's a mucus, really--

MORGAN

It's red!

CIRCE

Put that down! It's making me sick.

MORGAN

There's nothing gross about it! It's natural, it's part of life, it's part of womanhood--

CIRCE

Don't say "womanhood." Feces are natural, but we don't pretend like they're empowering--

MORGAN

That is so typical you, to be grossed out by the nature of the female body--

CIRCE

All bodies are equally gross--

MORGAN

--but to be totally cool with hacking up your own arm--

CIRCE

I wasn't going to *hack*--