

G.O.B.L.I.N.S.! Intro

*A cello and violin play discordant notes, cymbals and a xylophone join in.
A piano plays a light, twinkling melody over it.*

SFX of a ventilation system running in a large, echoing room.

SFX of a twinkling magic effect.

ELISAR

Okay, Elzabreath, I've done my best with the outfit. Shame you're such a runty, little shorto. But you are now ready for the Beltane Ball.

SFX of ELIZABETH making her skirts swish around her.

ELIZABETH

I feel like a fairy princess!

SFX of HOOPER, TRIPE, and ELISAR making uncertain, disagreeing noises.

ELIZABETH

Hey! I look good.

HOOPER

We're not saying you don't look... fine. But if you looked like a *Faerie* princess, there would probably be a lot more weaponry.

TRIPE

And rendered skulls.

HOOPER

You look more like a... a bog sprite princess.

ELIZABETH

Okay, I'll take it. As long as I don't look like a *goblin* princess.

TRIPE

Oh! Oh, no, goblins don't have royalty. We're a grassroots egalitarian republic!

ELIZABETH

How does that work?

TRIPE

Eh, well, basically, every goblin just does what the hell they feel like, and no one can stop them.

SFX of ELISAR clicking his fingers.

ELISAR

Focus, Eeza. I wanna have one more go with the Glamour. You're not giving me much natural talent to work with.

SFX of a twinkling magic effect.

ELIZABETH

How do I look now?

ELISAR

Well, you're not gonna win any of the Hotness Awards at the end of the evening. But you'll do.

ELIZABETH

Tripe, lend me your spoon a minute.

TRIPE

Oh, here you go—

SFX of TRIPE handing over his spoon.

TRIPE

—and remember—

ELIZABETH

[cutting him off] Yes, yes, Spoon-Elizabeth can't hurt real Elizabeth.

TRIPE

Yeah.

HOOPER

Why don't you just look in that massive mirror over there?

ELIZABETH

Dunno, it just gives me bad vibes.

SFX of ELIZABETH considering herself in the spoon's reflection.

ELIZABETH

Oh, wow... I look... *amazing*.

ELISAR

Enjoy your only day of being a five.

HOOPER

Elisar, it doesn't matter what number she is—

ELISAR

Yeah, but like, a seven couldn't hurt.

HOOPER

—the most important thing is that Elizabeth isn't recognisable to anyone she might have bumped into over the past few months.

ELIZABETH

My skin is literally glowing. Like... Like you could read by it.

TRIPLE

Like cave fungus!

ELIZABETH

And my eyes... My eyes have actual *galaxies* swirling in them.

TRIPLE

Oh, oh! Fun fact: That's our *actual* galaxy, so don't get anything in your eye.

HOOPER

Yes, yes, yes, yes, very nice. But we don't know exactly who is going to be at the Beltane Ball tonight. We are *literally* walking into a lion's den.

TRIPLE

Not 'literally', we're *actually* walking into the li—

HOOPER

[cutting him off] Look, the elves are just looking for a reason to squash us and take over managing the Veil.

ELIZABETH

And my hair...

SFX of HOOPER making a frustrated noise.

SFX of rushing tinkling sound, indicating NYX's magical appearance.

NYX

You look like a porpoise wrapped in tinfoil.

ELIZABETH

Urgh, go away, Nyx.

NYX

Or like the third prize hog at a hog show. And yet there's something unmistakably 'Elizabeth' about you. A sad, pathetic quality that not even the elf's one and only spell can hide.

ELISAR

Hey! I can do more spells.

HOOPER

You can do *one* spell, and only just.

NYX

In fact, you *all* look ridiculous. Who knew it was possible for clothes to make goblins look worse?

HOOPER

This is a necessary disguise. If we're going to pass as waiters tonight, apparently, trousers are 'mandatory'.

TRIPLE

But I was thinking, what if I just—

HOOPER

Trousers. Are. Mandatory.

TRIPLE

Oh, it's discrimination! These calves are not meant to be contained! And you cannot keep these buns in the oven.

NYX

Horrifying.

ELIZABETH

Elisar, couldn't you just glamour Hooper and Tripe a bit? Just in case anyone recognises them?

ELISAR

[scoffing] Utter waste of time.

TRIPE

Goblins are immune to Elf Glamours.

NYX

Plus, there's no Glamour in the world that could fix these two.

HOOPER

We're just going to have to rely on the fact that elves never pay attention to anyone else.

ELISAR

I am pretty amazing.

ELIZABETH

[wistfully] So, [sighing] I suppose this is the last time I'll see this office...

HOOPER

[very cheerful] Oh, that's right, yes! Once Queen Freya wipes the Sight from your eyes at midnight, *poof*. This whole world will vanish, and you'll never see us again!

TRIPE

It'll be like a weird dream you had.

NYX

One that no one is interested in hearing about.

ELIZABETH

So, what will happen? One minute I'll be at the Beltane Ball, Wild Hunt in full swing, and the next minute, I'll be back home?

HOOPER

Oh, no, no, no, no. [laughing] You'll suddenly find yourself standing on a windswept moorland, confused and alone. Everything will have vanished.

ELIZABETH

And then I just walk home?

TRIPE

Or stumble home.

HOOPER

Most people stumble *a bit*. The process is quite disconcerting.

TRIPE

It'll be like you've got a hangover in your soul.

NYX

Oh, I wish I could be there to see it.

ELIZABETH

[bitterly] Well, I suppose you will be. The only improvement will be I no longer have to hear your stupid voice.

NYX

Well, I've been thinking... Maybe, once you return to the mundane world, I might leave you alone.

ELIZABETH

[hopefully] You will?

NYX

Or maybe I won't. That way, for the rest of your life, every time something bad happens, or you screw something up, or there's a weird smell, you'll think, 'I wonder if that was Nyx? Or just my own clumsiness, stupidity, and stinkiness?' And it'll drive you mad to wonder.

ELIZABETH

[confidently] I'll know it was you.

NYX

But what if it isn't? It might not be. [whispering] You'll never know.

ELIZABETH

[tiredly] Well, that's something to look forward to.

HOOPER

Yes, enough chitchat, we've got to get to the ball. Tripe, do you remember the rules?

TRIPE

Er... Oh, oh, oh! Trousers on at all times, if I eat any canapes...

HOOPER

It's one at a time and...?

TRIPE

...and not just by putting my face in them. Oh, oh! And don't accept a tip from *any* of the elves. The coins are usually cursed.

ELISAR

Oh, yah, that's hilarious. [chuckling] Hand a big tip to a waiter, see their happy face, and ten minutes later, *bang*, coin burns red hot or makes their leg fall off or something.

ELIZABETH

[scandalised] Elisar, you've never done that to a waiter, have you?

ELISAR

Umm... [stifling a chuckle] No?

HOOPER

[cheerfully] So, Node Travel there for four of us, back home at midnight for the three of us.

ELIZABETH

Before we go, I... I just want to say that... the last few months have been some of the... most amazing and profound—

HOOPER

[cutting her off] No time for that, let's go.

SFX of a rushing magical effect as HOOPER, TRIPE, ELISAR and ELIZABETH all depart via fast travel.

NYX

[forebodingly] Enjoy the ball, *Elizabeth*.

SFX of rushing tinkling sound, indicating NYX's magical disappearance.

Transitional music.

SFX of a rushing magical effect as HOOPER, TRIPE, ELISAR and ELIZABETH all arrive via fast travel.

SFX of a ball in full progress, elegant string music, the murmured conversation of a cheerful crowd.

ELIZABETH

Oh! I don't think I'll ever get used to Node Travel.

HOOPER

Well, you don't have to now.

TRIPE

Last time ever.

SFX of ELIZABETH making a disappointed noise, followed by her gasping in excitement.

ELIZABETH

Look at this place, everything is so... so...

HOOPER

Tacky?

ELIZABETH

Beautiful! The floor looks like the ocean at midnight, but... but it's like I can see down to the sea floor! And... and the walls, they're... they're golden and black and violet, and all at the same time! Oh, and the elves! They're so elegant and tall and graceful.

TRIPE

Yeah, it's all a bit much, isn't it? Like, we get it, you're magic, chill out.

ELISAR

[scoffing] Jealous much? What's a goblin ball like? Two goats rutting in a cave while everyone drinks room temperature ale?

TRIPE

No. There's also apple bobbing.

HOOPER

Quiet, you two!

ELIZABETH

And look! There's a huge black dog! [gasping] So regal and majestic, guarding the ball like an eternal sentinel.

HOOPER

Be careful of him. [sighing] That's Black Shuck.

TRIBE

He always knows when you're going to die.

ELIZABETH

[terrified] Why is he looking at me?

ELISAR

Well, humans are always about to die. Sucks to be mortal.

ELIZABETH

I can't believe I won't get to see things like this anymore... [sighing] Oh, the past few months have had so many wonderful and life-changing experiences, and I just wanna say—

HOOPER

[cutting her off] Right, Elisar and Elizabeth, you head over to the receiving line. Tripe and I will slip over to the buffet and mingle with the other waiters.

TRIBE

Do you think that all the other waiters will be—

HOOPER

[cutting him off] Yes, Tripe, they will all be wearing trousers.

SFX of HOOPER and TRIPE's footsteps leaving.

SFX of snippets of conversations fading in and out as ELIZABETH and ELISAR move through the crowd, merry ball goes mingling around them.

GUEST 1

More wine! I demand more wine!

GUEST 2

Yes, very good! More wine!

GUEST 3

...and you'll never guess who he was with... Weyland the Smith.

SFX of GUEST 4 gasping.

GUEST 3

It's true, it's true.

SFX of GUEST 4 laughing delightedly.

GUEST 5

Well, at the end of the day, sometimes you just got to trap your aunt in a mirror and smash it. That's just part of growing up.

SFX of a group of guests laughing in agreement.

ELIZABETH

So, where should we start?

ELISAR

Listen up, newbie, you are lucky enough to be with the Prince of Parties, the Baron of Beltane, The God-Emperor of good... Like... [stammering] I really know my way around. So, past this receiving line, you've got the main area for, like, mingling and being seen...

ELIZABETH

[whispering] But we don't want to be seen.

ELISAR

That giant cornucopia-shaped portal to the left is the main gluttony area, *infinite* indulgence, *rivers* of wine, that sort of thing... Those padded crawl ways to the right spill out into the *Carnal* Pits, *infinite* indulgence, *rivers* of cu-

ELIZABETH

[cutting him off] Yes, yes, I... get it, thank you. And up those stairs?

ELISAR

Ah, that's the Grand Stairway to the ballroom. Right, Eezebert, what do you want your Elven name to be?

ELIZABETH

My what?

ELISAR

Come on, come on! It's basic stuff, the host announces us to the assembled company, and then we... make our entrance. So, what's your name gonna be?

ELIZABETH

[panicking] Ah! I need to have an Elven name? [huffing] You didn't tell me that!

ELISAR

Quickly, people are staring.

ELIZABETH

Urgh... I don't know, something ethereal? Er... you know, but still with substance. Ah, something that implies that I'm... yeah, not only elegant but also have, er, *really* good management skills.

SFX of the HOST approaching.

HOST

[grandiosely] Your name, please?

ELISAR

Prince Elisar Crowshackle.

ELIZABETH

Erm... Oh, God...

HOST

And yours, if you would be so kind?

ELIZABETH

It's, erm, it's... [whispering inaudibly]

HOST

[announcing] *Princeling*—

ELISAR

Dick.

HOST

—Elisar Crowshackle of the Darkening Plains and Lady Pwun-teyers Excel-shee-yet.

SFX of ELIZABETH and ELISAR entering the ballroom.

ELIZABETH

[pained] I'm really sorry.

ELISAR

Just... style it out. Ketty! How amazing to see you.

KETSIA

[audibly not pleased] Oh. Elisar. You're here. How... fun... And don't call me that.

ELISAR

Sorry, *Ketsia*. May I introduce my... colleague?

ELIZABETH

[putting on a posh voice] Silly Elisar, [laughing] I'm your *date*, remember? How charming to meet you, I'm Pwun-teyers Excel-shee-yet.

KETSIA

Ketsia Vasilis, at your service.

ELIZABETH

But not really, right?

SFX of ELIZABETH laughing poshly and KETSIA joining in.

KETSIA

So, what are you doing at the ball with the Eternal Virgin?

ELISAR

Hey!

ELIZABETH

I lost a bet. [chuckling]

ELISAR

That nickname is really old. I've... done it... like... loads.

ELIZABETH

[with slight hesitation and pauses] My dear friend, er, Calen-dhar Ring Binder, er, and I had ten minutes to turn as many mundos into deckchairs as possible. [forcing a cheerful tone] And then get them to sit on each other, hmm, and whoever lost had to come to the ball with, er, Elis-Oh-My-God-Why-Am-I-So-Lonely here.

KETSIA

Calen-dhar sounds fun! Are they here tonight?

ELIZABETH

No, er, sadly, they're visiting an old friend in Norway, who's had some bad news. So, ah, Calen-dhar had to pop over there and... steal her boyfriend.

KETSIA

Oh, what a shame. Ah, but I simply must introduce you to a *dear* friend of mine! Weyland? Weyland! Come over here!

SFX of small chains clinking as WEYLAND approaches.

ELISAR

Oh, erm, maybe we should just...

WEYLAND

[enthusiastically] Ketsia! How the hells are you doing?

KETSIA

Deliciously, my darling!

SFX of KETSIA loudly kissing WEYLAND on both cheeks with more clinking of small chains.

KETSIA

And what an outfit! I didn't know chainmail could be so see-through.

WEYLAND

It's all in the tempering.

SFX of WEYLAND laughing poshly.

KETSIA

I can see that, and everything else.

SFX of KETSIA giggling and WEYLAND laughing poshly.

ELIZABETH

[forgetting her act] Wow, isn't that a bit cold?

WEYLAND

What's that you say?

ELIZABETH

[going back] Oh, ah, I was just saying, er–

KETSIA

[cutting her off] Oh, yes. I wanted you to meet this *delectable*, new thing! I present to you Pwun-teyers Excel-shee-yet.

SFX of WEYLAND's chainmail clinking as he steps closer.

WEYLAND

Charmed, simply charmed.

ELIZABETH

[in a slightly strained voice] Likewise, very charmed, charmed, loads.

KETSIA

She's here on a date with Elisar, would you believe? *But* I'm assured it's a lost bet situation.

WEYLAND

[laughing] I remember one time, old King Niðhad tricked me into dancing all night with a rotting pig carcass! [laughing] Those were the days, back when folks knew how to have fun.

ELISAR

[strained] Weyland. Hi. Bit awkward, I know.

WEYLAND

What is?

ELISAR

Running into an old flame like this, bit of history, you know, [stammering] but I think we can let the past be in the past.

WEYLAND

I'm confused. Am I supposed to know you?

ELISAR

It's Elisar. Ketsia said, Elisar... Crowshackle, Prince of the Darkling Plains?

KETSIA

[clearing her throat] You remember Elisar? The Equinox Gala in '58? Couldn't handle the moonstill brandy and... made a pass at the standing stones?

WEYLAND

Oh, yes! Never saw someone strike out with a rock before! [laughing] But I don't recall us ever 'hammering the old anvil'. Can't let any old metal in forge, you know? Might poison the whole blade.

ELISAR

Well, yah, I mean, it wasn't a grand affair. I offered to carry your bag...

WEYLAND

Now, dear Pwun-teyers here, *that's* a different matter.

ELISAR

...You said no...

WEYLAND

I think we could 'beat out' something rather fine. *Rather fine*, indeed.

ELIZABETH

Oh... [gasping] Oh my...

SFX of footsteps hurrying over.

SFX of HOOPER lifting the lid off his tray.

HOOPER

[cutting in] Canape?

ELIZABETH

Hoop— Hooo, how, lovely, ah, oh, canape!

SFX of glasses clinking.

TRIPE

Glass of fizzy... stuff?

WEYLAND

Not for me, my short friends. I think I'll be along to the Carnal Pits while the blood is up, hope to see you in there.

ELISAR

Well, you know, *if* there's time.

WEYLAND

Not you. [meaningfully] You...

SFX of WEYLAND's chainmail clinking again.

ELIZABETH

[chuckling in a flattered manner] Oh, we will have to see...

WEYLAND

Oh-ho! Yes, we will. See you around.

SFX of WEYLAND's chainmail clinking as he walks away.

ELISAR

[clearing his throat] The service here is very *attentive*. You can stand a little further back.

TRIPE

Sorry, there's no blood in my arms and this tray—

SFX of glasses clinking.

TRIPE

—is really heavy, do you mind taking some stuff?

ELIZABETH

What... what is on your tray Tri— [stammering] Tri-try-t-t-tryman tray-Trayman?

TRIPE

Uh, fizzy stuff, like I said, in glasses.

HOOPER

Okay, I think everyone is good for drinks, you can move the tray away.

SFX of glasses clinking.

ELISAR

Yeah, thank you, I think were fine.

KETSIA

Thank you for *such* wonderful service. [condescendingly] You've done very well.

SFX of coins jingling.

KETSIA

Would you like a big shiny coin?

TRIBE

Oh, thank you—

HOOPER

[cutting him off] No, thank you, milady.

KETSIA

Pity.

ELISAR

So, is, er, Freya up in the ballroom already? She's normally extra giddy on the day of the Hunt.

ELIZABETH

[excitedly] I can't wait to flense some mundos and wear their skin.

ELISAR

[under his breath] Easy, there.

KETSIA

Oh, didn't you hear? The Wild Hunt is cancelled tonight.

HOOPER

[at the same time] It is?

ELIZABETH

[at the same time] What?

TRIBE

[at the same time] Wait, is it?

KETSIA

Yah! It was so boring last time. I can't remember what we're having instead. Sleipnir?

ELISAR

No need to call Sleipnir over.

KETSIA

Sleipnir, come here for a moment.

ELISAR

Pwun-teyers, er, maybe you should go over to the...

SFX of footsteps approaching.

ELIZABETH

Yes. Err...

SLEIPNIR

Elisar, what an absolutely gushing pleasure to see you.

ELISAR

Yup.

SLEIPNIR

And your friend?

ELISAR

Er, she was actually just leaving—

SLEIPNIR

Ah, ah, ah! I'm not letting new meat get away from me so easily, especially, when it's so tender...

ELIZABETH

Pwun-teyers Excel-shee-yet, what a... pulsating joy to make your acquaintance.

SLEIPNIR

Likewise. And what a promisingly firm grip you have. [grunting]

ELIZABETH

Darling Ketsia was just telling us that the, er, Wild Hunt is off tonight?

SLEIPNIR

That is correct.

ELIZABETH

[trying to play it off] Oh, er, oh... Thank Frigga for that, the last one was an absolute pile of troll pubes, am I right?

SLEIPNIR

Quite. Instead, we will be holding a Masque of the Red Death.

ELISAR

Oh, fun!

SLEIPNIR

Shut up. In ten minutes, Death Herself will join us from the Land of the Unliving, bringing with her a selection of the most interesting and notorious spirits. [sighing] Should liven this place up a bit.

TRIBE

Fizzy wine, milady?

SFX of SLEIPNIR picking up a glass from TRIBE's tray.

SLEIPNIR

Why, thank you. [gasping] Service like that deserves a reward.

SFX of coins jingling.

TRIBE

Oh!

SFX of HOOPER pointedly clearing his throat.

TRIBE

Ah. [sadly] Oh... No, ta very much.

SFX of SLEIPNIR making a small sound of disappointment.

TRIBE

So, just to check, there's definitely no Wild Hunt tonight. Er, er... Did-did you hear that, *other waiter*, who I have never met before?

HOOPER

Yes, I certainly did. I think we should go [pointedly] *back to the kitchen* and see if there are any new instructions for this [even more pointedly] *change of plans*.

TRIBE

Right-o. Back to the kitchen it is. I wonder if we will see *anyone else* there?

HOOPER

[fading into the distance] Yes, I wonder if that's happening.

SFX of HOOPER and TRIBE walking off.

SLEIPNIR

As you can see, we've had to change the décor in the ballroom. Out with the blood drenched antlers, in with the decaying decadence of debauched aristocracy. It's so fun dressing things up.

ELIZABETH

There certainly is a lot of crushed velvet.

SLEIPNIR

So, Pwun-teyers, where exactly are you from? I'm surprised there's an elf I've never met before at the Beltane Ball.

ELIZABETH

I'm from... Norway?

SLEIPNIR

Noahrway?

ELISAR

Erm, Pwun-teyers here is joking. She's on secondment from the Vale of the Whispering Thorns, it's an exchange thing.

ELIZABETH

Right, yeah. That's right.

SLEIPNIR

Oh, the Whispering Thorns. [gasping] So, you must know my good friend Vaelithra Doomscurge, yes?

ELIZABETH

Certainly do.

SLEIPNIR

What do you make of her?

ELIZABETH

Hm, well, she's... mean... er... and unsettling and... thinks a lot of herself?

SFX of SLEIPNIR laughing after a small break.

SLEIPNIR

Glad to hear she's back to her old ways. After the... 'unpleasantness'.

SFX of ELIZABETH sighing in relief.

ELISAR

We... We probably shouldn't talk about the 'unpleasantness'.

ELIZABETH

Well, er, you'll... er... have to excuse me, ah, I have to powder my nose.

KETSIA

[scoffing] What?

ELIZABETH

Oh, right, yeah. I... I mean, I have to... I... just go and speak to someone more interesting because I'm rude.

SLEIPNIR

Of course. But I hope to see you later... Pwun-teyers.

SFX of footsteps.

ELISAR

What *is it* with you and Norway?

Transitional music.

SFX of an extractor hood running.

SFX of a ball in a distant other room, muffled elegant string music, the indistinct, murmured conversation of a cheerful crowd.

HOOPER

This is a disaster! Well, they can't just cancel the Wild Hunt at the last minute?

TRIPE

How are we gonna get Elizabeth home *now*?

HOOPER

Well, never mind getting her home! We have to get her out of here first! [trying to calm himself]
We need to get back to the office to work out how to protect the Veil from whatever this new event is.

TRIPE

The red, masky death-thing.

HOOPER

Typical elves. We've spent weeks preparing for a Wild Hunt and now they go and spring this on us at the last minute because they want a spectacle.

TRIPE

To be fair, they are very generous tippers.

HOOPER

Tripe, tell me you haven't been accepting any money from them.

TRIPE

No! Well... Maybe just a bit. They kept offering them and they're just *so shiny*! Look, this one turned into a scorpion. I think I'll call him Sparky.

SFX of TRIPE presenting SPARKY.

SPARKY

Ooh, come here, you little bastard, and I'll sting ya!

HOOPER

Put him away, Tripe!

SPARKY

Ooh, you're a massive c—

SFX of TRIPE putting SPARKY back into his pocket.

SFX of a door opening, ELIZABETH and ELISAR entering the kitchen.

ELIZABETH

Oh, hello minions! Time for a quick focus meeting?

ELISAR

Can you not do the voice? It's still very offensive.

HOOPER

Ah, Elizabeth, right, change of plans. We need to find out *as much* as we can about *any risks* the Masque of the Red Death poses to the Veil.

ELIZABETH

So, I am not having my Sight wiped and heading back to the land of the mundos– I... I mean the mundane?

HOOPER

[apologetically] I'm afraid not. We'll have to find another way to get you home.

ELIZABETH

[unconvincingly] Oh, no, what a shame! I'm so disappointed. [sighing deeply] Because these last few months... have been some of the most–

HOOPER

[cutting her off] Elisar, I'm confidently expecting the answer is 'no', but do you know anything useful about the Masque of the Red Death?

TRIBE

I wonder if Sparky likes canapes?

SFX of muffled crunchy chewing.

SPARKY

[muffled from inside TRIPE's pocket] Cracking.

TRIBE

My... finger is... is gone?

ELISAR

Oh, the Red Death Masquerade? Yah, I've been to loads.

HOOPER

Really?

ELISAR

I've... heard about loads.

HOOPER

So... what exactly happens?

ELISAR

Well, it's like Sleipnir said! Death Herself shows up and brings a selection of dead party guests.

ELIZABETH

What, like... vampires or something?

ELISAR

That's the *Undead*, stupid. No, more like... amusing humans who have passed over.

ELIZABETH

Ah, you mean, I'm going to get to hang out with really cool ghosts like... Shakespeare? [gasping]
Or Melvil Dewey?

HOOPER

Who?

ELIZABETH

The inventor of the Dewey Decimal System. The greatest filer of all time! Although... [sighing]
something of a massive racist.

TRIPE

Oh, oh! What about Bloddrack the Surprising, greatest goblin warrior ever? He was always up
for it. Although... something of a massive racist.

ELISAR

Yeah, that's often a problem hanging out with pastos. But nah, human spirits only, I'm afraid.

HOOPER

Well, that settles it! No point staying here talking to dead racists. We need to go back to the
office and prepare for whatever this might do to the Veil.

ELIZABETH

[whining] Oh, come on, can't we stay a bit longer?

HOOPER

No, it's too risky. We might get found out!

ELIZABETH

But my disguise is working perfectly! Even *Sleipnir* didn't recognise me. And the canapes are
amazing, the wine is intoxicating, and [getting high-pitched with excitement] I might get to meet
Mary Wollstonecraft.

TRIPE

And the tips are new friends.

SPARKY

[muffled from inside TRIPE's pocket, panting in excitement] I'll stab ya, ya shitehawk!

ELIZABETH

And anyway, I don't see what harm a few ghosts floating about could do to the Veil. It's not like there's any other humans around here.

HOOPER

Well... I suppose all our Baffling Charms and human-repellent spells are still in place around the venue, and we're probably more likely to find out what we're up against by asking around.

ELIZABETH

Exactly! [soothingly] Everything is in hand. Lighten up, Hooper. Let's have some fun for once!

HOOPER

I *think* that Glamour has done something to your brain.

ELIZABETH

My brain is fine! Let's just stay a bit longer.

HOOPER

Well... okay. We can stay until midnight, if we leave now, it'd raise a lot of suspicions, no elf would leave Beltane early. [sighing] But you have to promise to keep a low profile. And steer clear of Sleipnir!

TRIPE

That's just generally good advice.

HOOPER

Or anyone else you might have bumped into.

ELIZABETH

Great! Let's go mingle.

Transitional music.

SFX of someone tapping a champagne flute with a knife.

SFX of a loud gong.

SLEIPNIR

Elves of the Red Death Masquerade, please welcome our guest of honour, Death Herself.

SFX of guests applauding as a loud, ominous whooshing sound drowns out their murmuring.

DEATH HERSELF

I'm lowkey so hyped to be at your party, and your fits are fire. You all are iconic, and I mean that. No cap.

SFX of more applause and appreciative murmuring from the crowd.

DEATH HERSELF

And to guarantee the vibes will be immaculate, I've pulled up with a stone-cold crew of a hundred and one of the most banging inhabitants of the Land of the Unliving.

SFX of more applause and excited murmuring from the crowd.

DEATH HERSELF

Including: Queen of the Geeks, Ada Lovelace.

SFX of ADA being summoned with a whoosh and startled noise.

ADA LOVELACE

If anyone gets between me and my difference engine, I'm gonna throw a glass of wine in their face!

SFX of the crowd whooping in approval.

DEATH HERSELF

Total weirdo illustrator, Dr Seuss.

SFX of DR SEUSS being summoned with a whoosh and startled noise.

DR SEUSS

I may not like green eggs and ham, but I'm getting smashed, Sam, I am!

SFX of the crowd cheering even more.

DEATH HERSELF

That's some big oof energy, thank you, doctor. And with him tonight, H. P. Lovecraft.

SFX of H. P. LOVECRAFT being summoned with a whoosh and a startled noise.

H. P. LOVECRAFT

Such gaiety. And yet, the very walls seem hungry for dark secrets that would break a mortal mind.

DEATH HERSELF

Yeah... maybe don't talk to him. And the inventor of the very concept of science fiction: the one, the only, Mary Shelley!

SFX of MARY SHELLEY being summoned with a whoosh and a startled noise.

MARY SHELLEY

Watch me bring this party to life, bitches!

SFX of the crowd cheering and hollering even more.

DEATH HERSELF

Y'all can hang with my super fun crew. It's going to be jokes.

SFX of the crowd applauding and then beginning to talk among themselves again as the party resumes.

ELIZABETH

Oh, this is going to be the best night of my life!

ELISAR

Just try not to embarrass me by fangirling all over some nerd who invented the laminator or something.

ELIZABETH

Just try and stop me.

Transitional music.

SFX of party guests chatting loudly and mingling, muffled string music in the background.

J. R. R. TOLKIEN

And of course, the other thing to remember about elves is that they are seldom swayed by the desires of the body, concerning themselves only with higher matters such as poetry and the harp.

ELIZABETH

That is very interesting, Mr Tolkien.

J. R. R. TOLKIEN

Please, call me John.

ELIZABETH

And what does the R stand for?

J. R. R. TOLKIEN

Ronald.

ELIZABETH

And the other R?

J. R. R. TOLKIEN

[trying to be mysterious] Ah!

ELIZABETH

Alright, keep your secrets. I'm just wondering, have you ever actually *met* any elves?

SFX of a twinkling magical effect as FREYA enters the room.

J. R. R. TOLKIEN

[whispering] She's *exactly* how I imagined them to be.

ELIZABETH

Who *is* that?

FREYA

That's right my little scoundrels, gather round! I know you can't help yourselves. My magnetism is unrivalled.

SFX of footsteps.

CROSSANDRA

They are like moths to your seductive flame, Your Majesty.

FREYA

Get your head out of my arse, Crossandra.

CROSSANDRA

Oh, anything you wish, Your Regalness.

ELIZABETH

‘Your Majesty’? [gasping] It’s Freya, Queen of the Elves!

J. R. R. TOLKIEN

‘Queen of the Elves’? Your Highness! May I express my immense admiration.

FREYA

[with high-pitched enthusiasm] Oh goody, another spirit. It was so clever of *me* to decide to have a Red Death Masquerade, rather than another boring old Wild Hunt. Death is a personal friend of mine and no one else could have got her here.

CROSSANDRA

Game recognises game, Your Highness.

FREYA

You really are insufferable. What is your name, spirit?

J. R. R. TOLKIEN

J. R. R. Tolkien, Your Highness.

FREYA

Fabulous. Meet some of the other guests for the evening. This is Caligula, he’s really fun, prone to violence, teeny bit paranoid and will sing over you during karaoke.

CALIGULA

[hysterically] Who told you that? I’ll kill them. I’ll kill you. I’ll kill you all. [suddenly calm] This wine is excellent.

J. R. R. TOLKIEN

Erm...

FREYA

This is Smindyrides, delicate little soul. Don't touch him! Unless you're wearing the finest of silk gloves.

SMINDYRIDES

I can barely even tolerate these clothes. [under his breath] Oh, take them off! [gasping] Who said that? We couldn't possibly, could we? [chuckling]

ELIZABETH

[gasping] Oh my.

FREYA

And this little walking scandal is the Marquis de Sade. I can unleash him, if you wish.

MARQUIS DE SADE

[chuckling, followed by a French accent] I can draw a distressingly accurate picture of an anus!

J. R. R. TOLKIEN

I... I... I thought I... wrote about elves but you're... very different to what I imagined. Beautiful, certainly, but more... coarse.

FREYA

Aww, thanks! De Sade, wrestle him!

SFX of the MARQUIS DE SADE laughing in anticipation with a clear French accent.

J. R. R. TOLKIEN

Erm, no thank you. I think I'm going to go away from here, please.

SFX of a whooshing noise as J. R. R. TOLKIEN leaves the conversation.

ELIZABETH

But I wanted to ask you about the goblins' happy, little feet!

FREYA

De Sade, after him!

SFX of more French laughter, followed by a whooshing noise as the MARQUIS DE SADE leaves the conversation.

SFX of hurried footsteps as ELISAR rushes over.

ELISAR

Elizabeth, there you are!

ELIZABETH

Elisar, Freya is here!

ELISAR

Whatever. Elizabeth, can I talk to you? Come over here a minute.

SFX of footsteps, the party fading further into the distance.

ELISAR

[seriously] Elizabeth, I have to tell you what's in my heart.

ELIZABETH

Elisar, are you okay?

ELISAR

No, I'm not. I'm mad with love for you.

ELIZABETH

[doubtfully] You are? Er... Since when?

ELISAR

Ever since I met you, I have been tormented by thoughts of your... human attributes.

ELIZABETH

Ever since you've met me, you've continually made jokes about how stupid I am.

ELISAR

That was but a ruse, to conceal my true passion.

ELIZABETH

...Really?

ELISAR

Oh, yes.

ELIZABETH

[sounding pained] The thing is... I don't really think about you like that.

ELISAR

[startled] What? But you used to have a honking great crush on me.

ELIZABETH

Yes, that's true. But... as I've gotten to know you better, I've realised that you're not really boyfriend material.

ELISAR

[defensively] Cheekbones, tick. Lineage, tick. Astounding collection of bejewelled weaponry, *tick*. What else is there?

ELIZABETH

Erm... ever thinking about anyone other than yourself?

ELISAR

Well, I'm thinking about you now.

ELIZABETH

[sighing] That's a start, but... I really think we're better as friends.

ELISAR

Let me get this straight. You, a human, are turning down me, an elf?

ELIZABETH

That is what it looks like is happening, yes.

ELISAR

You have to give me a chance, Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH

Do I?

ELISAR

Yes. Meet me at midnight, under the clock in the main dancing hall. I'll prove to you that I can change. And you can be the woman to make it happen.

ELIZABETH

Real change should be for yourself, not because you want to—

ELISAR

Elizabeth...

SFX of a twinkling magic effect.

ELIZABETH

[angrily] *Don't* try to englamour me!

ELISAR

Urgh, fine, okay. Just promise you'll meet me at midnight. I've got something *really* important to show you.

ELIZABETH

Okay, alright, if it really means that much to you, I'll see you there.

ELISAR

Don't forget: under the clock in the main hall, at midnight.

Transitional music.

SFX of party guests chatting loudly and mingling, muffled string music in the background.

TRIPLE

Can I recommend these wobbly, little balls, Sir? They taste awful but I think they're *really* expensive so they must be good.

GUEST 6

Oh! Well, I-I'm not sure...

HOOPER

[whispering] Triple, over here!

TRIPLE

Oh, er, er, tell you what, just... just take the whole tray.

SFX of TRIPLE shoving his tray into the guest's hands.

GUEST 6

[fading into the distance] Hey! Don't leave your slimy balls, you little creep!

SFX of footsteps as TRIPLE goes to join HOOPER.

HOOPER

I don't like this, Tripe, I don't like it one bit!

TRIPE

No, they're disgusting, but I think they come from something endangered so–

HOOPER

[cutting him off] No, not the food!

TRIPE

Oh.

HOOPER

Just, just... Well, everything. This wasn't the plan! [sighing heavily] I think we should just find the others and get out of here.

TRIPE

Come on, Hooper, it's not all that bad. I've been making a fortune in tips. [excitedly] This last one turned my hand into a big spider!

SFX of TRIPE's spider-hand scuttling.

HOOPER

Tripe, I've told you, stop accepting money from the elves. They're all a bunch of– Hang on, do you smell that?

TRIPE

Oh, sorry, I don't think the balls agreed with me.

HOOPER

No, not that! [sniffing] Sort of brimstone, and saltpetre, and dead horse. I know that smell.

TRIPE

Mumsy?

HOOPER

It's Nyx! It's Nyx's scent! Oh, hells, urgh, the last thing we need is that wretched poltergeist! And look! Look, it's Sleipnir coming over. Quick, in here before they see us!

SFX of a cupboard door opening.

TRIBE

Yay, cupboard time!

SFX of a cupboard door closing.

SFX of footsteps approaching.

SLEIPNIR

Ah, poltergeist. Good of you to grace our little soiree.

NYX

I couldn't resist seeing the human finally getting what's coming to her.

SLEIPNIR

I'll admit, you have been of... *some* assistance but, of course, I would have realised by myself that the goblins were harbouring a filthy mundo.

NYX

[sarcastically] Of course, you would.

SLEIPNIR

That said, your information has been *most* useful. And I will admit your suggestion to turn the Wild Hunt into a Masque of the Red Death *was* quite clever.

NYX

This time, she'll have no way out. Now, she's the only living human at the party and she can't claim anyone kidnapped her and brought her here.

SLEIPNIR

I had already decided on this plan, just hadn't mentioned it yet, because I am, of course, *extremely* clever.

NYX

Whatever you need to tell yourself, elf.

SLEIPNIR

As a reward for your *small* help, I am throwing an *intimate* afterparty, perhaps you would like to...

NYX

[scathingly] You wish.

SLEIPNIR

Hmm, pity. The possibilities that a poltergeist offers are most intriguing. You could make anything go anywhere....

NYX

Well, you'll have to put it there yourself. My reward will be what is in store for Elizabeth.

SLEIPNIR

It was so easy. A quick Glamour to turn myself into that oaf Elisar, and she was on the hook.

NYX

I bet she couldn't wait to climb that pathetic elf like a flagpole.

SLEIPNIR

Actually... She played surprisingly hard to get. It seems that even with a human, Elisar struggles to get a date.

NYX

I can't believe Elizabeth would turn down anyone.

SLEIPNIR

She certainly doesn't have much going for her. I find it hard to see how the human has... outwitted you, so far.

NYX

[offendedly] She hasn't outwitted me! She's just been lucky, that's all.

SLEIPNIR

Hmm, whatever you need to tell yourself, poltergeist.

NYX

But she definitely agreed?

SLEIPNIR

She will be waiting for him under the clock in a few minutes. [taking an excited breath] I am engorged with *anticipation*.

NYX

Tone it down, elf, no one is impressed.

SFX of receding footsteps.

SFX of HOOPER and TRIPE tumbling from the cupboard and shutting the door behind themselves.

HOOPER

I knew it! I knew something wasn't right about this, it's a trap! [despairingly] Oh, why didn't we just go back to the office?

TRIPE

No time for that, Elizabeth needs us!

HOOPER

Yes, you're right, fine, yes. Let's go, er, to the ballroom and find her before Sleipnir does!

Transitional music.

SFX of party guests chatting loudly and mingling, muffled string music in the background.

ELIZABETH

Elisar? Elisar? Oh, oh, there you are! [huffing]

SFX of footsteps as ELIZABETH joins ELISAR.

ELIZABETH

What was that thing that was, you know, so important?

ELISAR

What important thing?

ELIZABETH

That very important thing, you know, that [sighing] you know, [embarrassedly] that you were going to... use to prove you... *loved* me?

ELISAR

[snorting and scoffing] What in the Elysian fields are you talking about?

ELIZABETH

Ten minutes ago, when you told me to meet you under the clock, and you'd prove your love?
And I just wanted to say that I think you are a really great elf—

ELISAR

[cutting her off] I think you're drunk. [scoffing] Does that sound like something / would say?

ELIZABETH

Well, now I come to think about it... You did get my name right. You've never done that before.

ELISAR

Exactly. [scoffing] Dunno who you were talking to, but it wasn't me.

ELIZABETH

But... but if it wasn't you then who was I... Oh, oh, dragon balls.

SFX of very rapid footsteps and panting as HOOPER and TRIPE come running up.

ELIZABETH

Do you think it might have been—

HOOPER

[cutting her off, panting] Elizabeth! Hoh! Elizabeth! We have to get you out of here!

TRIPE

[gasping for breath] Nyx has been setting us up. They're in league with—

ELIZABETH

Oh, no, not—

SFX of a record scratch and the string music stopping abruptly.

SLEIPNIR

Silence!

ELIZABETH

—Sleipnir.

SLEIPNIR

Esteemed partygoers, spirits, dark beings of the Netherworld and, of course, Death Herself.

SFX of the crowd cheering and whooping.

SLEIPNIR

I'm sorry to announce that our little soiree has been invaded by... [pausing dramatically] ...*an outsider*.

SFX of the crowd gasping excitedly and muttering amongst themselves.

HOOPER

[whispering] Everyone, keep quiet. Maybe we can make a run for it.

SLEIPNIR

A human is here.

SFX of the crowd gasping again, this time more scandalized, making noises of disgust and offense.

SLEIPNIR

A filthy, little mundo who has slipped through the Veil and thinks herself worthy to consort amongst us. For months, I alone have been aware of her presence—

SFX of NYX clearing their throat pointedly.

SLEIPNIR

[correcting herself] I and a *small group* have been aware, but before this, I have long suspected that something—

NYX

[cutting in] Did you?

SLEIPNIR

[in annoyance] Fine. I have recently been informed of her existence by an *irritating* poltergeist that is treading on extremely thin ice. Happy?

SFX of hushed murmuring amongst the crowd.

NYX

[delightedly] Delighted.

SLEIPNIR

And now, through my immense and *undeniable* cunning and skill, you will all cast your eyes upon her revolting visage. *Behold!*

SFX of a forceful spell being cast, followed by a twinkling magic effect.

SFX of the crowd exclaiming at the revelation, upset, startled, and confused by what they are seeing.

TRIBE

[matter-of-factly] Oh, so *this* is how we're going to die.

HOOPER

[desperately] Ah, now, if everyone remains calm, we can explain...

ELISAR

[fake gasping] What? The troll is a human? Urgh, that's disgusting!

ELIZABETH

[hissing] Elisar, what are you doing?

ELISAR

[whispering] If they think I'm on their side, I might be able to get you out of here. [loudly] Er... Sleipnir? Leave this mundo to me. No one makes a fool out of Elisar Crowshackle... [pointedly to Elizabeth] Right?

ELIZABETH

Oh, yeah, oh, right! [in fake terror] Please, no! Not Elisar, he's so sadistic!

NYX

Pathetic.

SFX of someone in the crowd giggling.

SLEIPNIR

Elisar, first you told me they're an elf, now you're saying they're a troll. Which is it, or are you just *that much* of an idiot?

SFX of more malicious laughter from the crowd.

ELISAR

Erm... if I say the idiot-one, am I in less trouble?

HOOPER

Oh, Elisar...

SLEIPNIR

Truly pitiful. Elisar and his filthy goblin friends must have had some, slimy, little goblin scheme in

mind for this human, [dramatically] that would have severely damaged the whole Realm of the Fae!

TRIPE

Did we? Oh, that sounds exciting, what was it?

SFX of the doors bursting open and a small group entering among glittering magical effects.

HOOPER

Not. Helping.

FREYA

What's happening, why has the music stopped? Where is the dancing? I want dancing! I [with vibrato] *demand* to dance with Death!

SFX of SLEIPNIR approaching FREYA.

SLEIPNIR

My Queen, I apologise for this interruption you see—

FREYA

[cutting her off with a groan] Urgh, Sleipnir, this isn't another one of your pathetic attempts to be popular, is it? Your poetry nights are just *cringe*. 'Climax' doesn't rhyme with 'vampire bats'.

SLEIPNIR

[defensively] No, My Queen, you misunderstand—

FREYA

[ignoring her and starting to throw a tantrum] Where is my jelly swan? I want the wobbly swan! I want you to ride the wobbly swan!

SLEIPNIR

[hurriedly] Your Majesty, I have uncovered a human interloper!

FREYA

[gasping with sudden attention] A... human? That's so yucky!

SLEIPNIR

And worse, Your Majesty, it was helped by these dirty goblin waiters and the pathetic elf Elisar Crowshackle.

ELIZABETH

[desperately] No, no! They– They didn't do anything wrong!

SFX of footsteps.

ELIZABETH

This has all just a big misunderst–

SFX of FREYA slapping ELIZABETH and ELIZABETH gasping in pain.

SFX of the crowd reacting in shock.

FREYA

Shut up! Shut up! Shut up! Sleipnir, deal with them, they are ruining my party!

ELISAR

[softly] You okay there, Borthy?

ELIZABETH

[shakily] Yeah. Yeah, ah, yeah, I'm, er... okay, her hand was so cold and... hard...

SLEIPNIR

Very good, Your Majesty! And now, as the true entertainment of the evening, for *your* pleasure, and, I assure you, mine, I shall enact upon these miscreants the most intricate and imaginative series of acts–

SFX of the crowd giggling in appreciative anticipation.

SLEIPNIR

–which will ultimately lead to–

SFX of a pompous fanfare.

SFX of the fluttering of many tiny wings as the Faerie Court arrives.

BLACK ANNIS

[with vibrato] Halt!

SFX of the crowd murmuring excitedly.

BLACK ANNIS

And bow! Black Annis, representative of the eternal Faerie Court, demands an audience with the Queen of the Elves!

TRIPLE

Oh, good, it's the Faeries!

HOOVER

[whispering] How is that good?

TRIPLE

I thought I'd give positive thinking a go before I died.

HOOVER

This is literally the *only* way the night could get any worse.

TRIPLE

Or it's an opportunity to be the most murdered anyone has ever been, it's all about your perspective.

ELISAR

It looks like she's brought half the Faerie Court here with her. What do we do?

ELIZABETH

[scared] Run?

HOOVER

[dejectedly] We're surrounded.

SFX of the crowd's murmuring stopping.

FREYA

Your Ladyship, [laughing] what do you think you're doing here? The treaty gives *me* domain in this place, this is *my* place, mine, mine, *mine*!

BLACK ANNIS

[with vibrato] *I* am here on official business of the Faerie Court, I have a brazen and impudent breach of the Veil to reveal.

SLEIPNIR

[angrily] I was just doing that!

TRIPE

Right... so... So, there's two traps now?

BLACK ANNIS

For months, I, Black Annis, have been biding my time and waiting for the perfect moment to reveal that a filthy hu—

SLEIPNIR

[cutting her off in annoyance] I already found her! She's over there!

BLACK ANNIS

Silence, elf!

*SFX of a blast of magic as BLACK ANNIS turns
SLEIPNIR into a flatulent hog.*

SFX of SLEIPNIR producing angry animal grunts and farts.

SFX of the crowd reacting in shock.

SFX of FREYA giggling and clapping delightedly.

FREYA

Oh, yes! A farty hog! Sleipnir is a farty hog! Look everyone, look!

SFX of SLEIPNIR producing more grunts and farts.

BLACK ANNIS

Hogs don't talk. Hmm.

*SFX of the crowd falling silent again and the hog noises becoming softer
in the background.*

BLACK ANNIS

Your Majesty, I think you will enjoy this: Cast your eyes on the human who has been hiding beyond the Veil for months. Behold!

SFX of a forceful spell being cast, followed by a twinkling magic effect.

SFX of the crowd gasping and murmuring in appreciation.

ELIZABETH

Ah! I'm going up! I don't like heights!

ELISAR

Levitating people is just showing off.

ELIZABETH

Somebody, please, do something!

SFX of a forceful spell being cast, followed by squelching noises.

TRIBE

I feel sticky!

HOOPER

We're stuck! It's Faerie Magic, [desperately] there's nothing we can do.

BLACK ANNIS

Silence your insolent [in an otherworldly, multilayered voice] tongue, filth!

SFX of hog snuffling noises.

BLACK ANNIS

[clearing her throat pleasantly] I, as an extremely powerful magical being, was immediately aware that something was amiss in our kingdom from the very moment this human crossed the Veil.

HOOPER

[to himself] But we were so careful.

BLACK ANNIS

[laughing maniacally] 'Careful?' You think you were careful? Ha! Oh, I shouldn't be surprised. Goblins do usually operate at the level of a drunk, stunned gurt worm.

TRIBE

Hey, hey! I'll have you know, some gurt wurms can really hold their drink.

HOOPER

[disbelievingly] Not the time, Tripe!

ELIZABETH

But we were careful! How did you know I was a human?

BLACK ANNIS

Where to start? Hmm.

SFX of the crowd starting to murmur in interest once more.

BLACK ANNIS

You've been wandering around with a poltergeist, and they are known to only haunt humans.

ELIZABETH

I *nearly* got rid of it.

BLACK ANNIS

You gave human technology to a knucker who then started an online cult.

TRIPE

Hey, hey! We all ate all our phones.

BLACK ANNIS

You pissed off a grindylow and then mentioned your Second Sight right in front of her.

HOOPER

Jenny, that gossip!

BLACK ANNIS

You got drunk with two chalk giants and tormented a herd of unicorns with stories about your human boyfriend!

ELISAR

Happens to the best of us.

BLACK ANNIS

And even that idiot, Jack O'Kent, found out you were human before he got himself taken by the Devil, and he literally used to sing about everything he did, everywhere he went. The only fool who didn't realise you were human the moment they met you was our good friend, Fart Hog, the elf.

SFX of SLEIPNIR grunting, farting, and squealing in reaction.

TRIPE

Wow, when you put it like that, I-I'm surprised we didn't get caught sooner.

BLACK ANNIS

Hmm. Where would the fun have been in that?

ELIZABETH

[sighing defeatedly] I really thought I was doing a good job.

HOOPER

[still trying to mitigate] This is all... hearsay! Gossip! H-how could you be sure?

BLACK ANNIS

After a while I installed a Magical Spying Mirror in your office to keep an eye on things, and none of you even noticed. You didn't wander into my garden by mistake, goblin.

HOOPER

Ah, piss!

TRIPE

Yeah, we probably should have caught that one.

ELISAR

[laughing] You idiots. Imagine not spotting a magic mirror!

HOOPER

You didn't realise either! You moved your desk to be facing it!

ELISAR

Yeah, well, the lighting was really good.

BLACK ANNIS

It *really* has been most amusing, but all good things come to an end. This blatant breach of the Veil is an insult to the Faerie Court! And it is now time for your punishment.

ELIZABETH

[dejectedly] I'm sorry, guys. I never meant to get you in trouble. I never should have let you hide me.

ELISAR

[scoffing] I never hid anyone. In many ways, *I'm* the victim here and I should probably be offered some compensation.

FREYA

[whinging] This isn't fun! This is tense! This is meant to be my party! Everyone should be *happy* and dancing or it'll make me sad! [starting to sob] I get spicy when I'm sad!

BLACK ANNIS

Freya! Your Majesty. I was just about to begin torturing this human in surprising and intriguing ways. You love that kind of thing.

FREYA

[giggling] Oh-ho-ho, fun! That sounds more like it! Yay! [suddenly startled] How did a human get here? I thought I decided we weren't doing a Wild Hunt anymore?

BLACK ANNIS

[irritated] I literally just explained that.

FREYA

Well, I. Wasn't. Listening.

BLACK ANNIS

They've been hiding in the G.O.B.L.I.N.S. office.

FREYA

[gasping, then giggling] Oh-ho-ho, naughty, naughty! You can't trust filthy, useless goblins with anything. We could always take that office over for you, Your Highness? Make sure it runs properly.

HOOPER

[desperate] No!

BLACK ANNIS

You know... That might be a good idea. It would definitely help my cause at Court to have a more... 'amenable' office managing the Veil, and these... *creatures*... are going to be spending some time away... reflecting.

TRIPE

[sadly] I don't want to be a mirror.

SFX of SLEIPNIR's grunting and snuffling becoming agitated.

SFX of a straining, ripping noise.

FREYA

Sleipnir, what is it?

SFX of strangled grunting and farting from SLEIPNIR.

FREYA

Oh, change them back, won't you? I think she's got something to say.

SFX of a blast of magic as BLACK ANNIS turns SLEIPNIR back into herself.

SLEIPNIR

[gasping, clearing their throat, and struggling to form words] I have planned– [grunting like a hog] this... *planned* this entire evening around unmasking the human, Elizabeth, and you're [squealing like a hog] spoiling it!

FREYA

Oh, hold your tongue, Sleipnir, darling, and *you* can run the G.O.B.L.I.N.S. office. Or don't, and I can cut it out for you, I really don't mind.

SLEIPNIR

I... [clearing their throat] Our esteemed ruler always knows what's best.

BLACK ANNIS

Wonderful! And now the entire Faerie Court can witness my triumph, my glory, my malevolence!

SFX of a clock striking midnight and a bell beginning to toll.

SFX of an ominous wind and spectral moans and whispers picking up.

BLACK ANNIS

When will I stop being interrupted?

SFX of a spectral moan as DEATH HERSELF enters.

DEATH HERSELF

Chill, bestie. I literally have a schedule to keep here. It is midnight. All the human souls must return with me, no cuts, no exceptions, final boss decision locked in. Let's go!

NYX

[gleefully] At last! It's happening. The culmination of all my plans.

SFX of the bell stopping.

NYX

There's no way you can get out of this one, Elizabeth. You're finally gonna get what you deserve for *ever* challenging me!

SLEIPNIR

What do you mean 'your plans'? You were working for me.

BLACK ANNIS

What trickery is this, Poltergeist?

ELIZABETH

What's happening now?

TRIBE

Three! It's, er, it's three traps now, I think.

NYX

Just the one trap, actually, and it was all mine. These idiot elves and faeries have only served keep you here until the time was right.

BLACK ANNIS and SLEIPNIR

[in unison] I'm not an idiot, she is!

DEATH HERSELF

It's giving midnight... like, hello? If these human souls stay in the living world any longer, they're gonna straight up fade, for real.

SFX of ghostly moans.

J. R. R. TOLKIEN

Thank goodness, these elves are very... upsetting.

*SFX of a strangled gasp and whooshing noise as J. R. R. TOLKIEN
returns to the Land of the Unliving.*

MARQUIS DE SADE

But I did not have a chance to draw everyone's anus!

*SFX of a strangled gasp and whooshing noise as the MARQUIS DE SADE
returns to the Land of the Unliving.*

DEATH HERSELF

Y'all need to come here r-n, so we can all go back to the underworld, like we planned, no extra side quests, please.

*SFX of more ghostly moans, gasps, and whooshing noises as all the souls
are return to the Land of the Unliving.*

FREYA

[whinging] No, Deathy?! You can't leave now! We haven't even danced properly yet, I had choreo!

ELIZABETH

Oh, God, oh! Oh! What's happening? Ah, I feel all, huh, faint and... strange.

HOOPER

[stammering] That's not good, that is, in fact, very bad!

ELIZABETH

Ah! I think my soul is trying to leave my body.

TRIPE

Er, ca-can you sort of... hang on to it?

ELIZABETH

[training] I'm trying to, but... Oh, guys...

ELISAR

Come on, Embereth! Just, like, *clench* or something.

SLEIPNIR

You can't be taking the human, she's not dead and I want to see her get tortured.

BLACK ANNIS

She belongs to me! I claim her in the name of the Fae Realm and the Faerie Court!

DEATH HERSELF

Girl, be so for real, you have *literally* zero authority here. The terms were crystal, every single human soul here is under *my* care, not yours. And b-t-dubbs, it's past midnight now, so... yeah...

SFX of NYX cackling in ecstatic triumph.

BLACK ANNIS

No!

HOOPER

[frantically] Th-there must be something we can work out! Wha-what can we *give you* so she can stay? Please!

DEATH HERSELF

[suddenly serious, her voice echoing in an otherworldly manner] You cannot barter with Death for the human soul. A ship may as well barter with the wind, a sinking stone barter with the still waters of a deep pool.

SLEIPNIR

But surely the *powerful* and *alluring* Elven Court could convince you...

DEATH HERSELF

It is already done. Carved in stone, a page torn from the book and burned, the corpse light of a long dead star, a future that has already taken place. [back to her plainer voice] Deadass, I'm not even playing.

SLEIPNIR

A simple 'no' would have been fine.

ELIZABETH

Nyx, what have you done? How could you?!

SFX of the ghostly moans, gasps, and whooshing noises stopping.

SFX of the ominous wind and spectral moans and whispers continuing.

NYX

You underestimated me. I always told you *exactly* who I am, but you kept trying to force your disgusting, human morality onto me. I am not your pet, or a quirky annoyance, *I am malignance personified*, and now, I get to watch you suffer.

DEATH HERSELF

[In her otherworldly voice] The final grains have long since fallen to the bottom of the hourglass, we must depart. [back to her plainer voice] Oh, and thanks for the invite. It really has been a most banging party. Straight vibes, all night.

ELIZABETH

Hooper, Tripe, Elisar, I just want to say that these past months have been... some of the most... inspiring... and...

SFX of ELIZABETH's voice fading, she moans weakly before falling silent.

SFX of a soulless body slumping to the floor, followed by a ghostly moan and whooshing noise as ELIZABETH goes to the Land of the Unliving.

DEATH HERSELF

Later, besties.

SFX of a last, very loud rushing noise as DEATH HERSELF departs.

SFX of the ominous wind and spectral moans and whispers stopping.

SFX of silence.

HOOPER

[softly and disbelievingly] Elizabeth?

SFX of melancholy piano music playing, the crowd slowly starting to pick up conversation again.

HOOPER

[gasping, then loudly and desperately] *Elizabeth!*

TRIPE

It's no good... I think she's dead.

ELISAR

Like actually dead?

HOOPER

[shakily] I... I'm afraid so.

TRIPE

Oh, Elizabeth, we failed you.

NYX

I did it! I'm a genius. I tricked her *and* the goblins *and* the elves *and everyone!* I told her I would haunt her until she died. And I not only planned her death, I got to look *deep* into her eyes as the realisation struck her: shock, panic, betrayal, despair! Mmh, delicious. My perfect track record remains intact and now I can finally find a victim worthy of my talents. Screw you all, I hope I never see any of you ever again!

SFX of rushing tinkling sound, indicating NYX's magical disappearance, punctuated by a wet fart.

HOOPER

[after a beat] They actually did it. They killed her.

ELISAR

I can't believe Nyx was actually that evil.

TRIPE

To be fair, they did spend all their time talking about destroying Elizabeth, so...

SFX of the melancholy piano music fading out.

SLEIPNIR

I was really looking forward to torturing her! Now I feel all pent up and frustrated and my tummy hurts.

FREYA

That's just elven blue balls. Cheer up, you run the G.O.B.L.I.N.S. office now! Imagine all the *fun* you can have. Anyway, I'm bored of this. Crossandra! Fetch my stag! We're going to a better party.

SFX of footsteps.

CROSSANDRA

At once, Your Majesty. I have to say, you were magnificent just then.

FREYA

Get your dick out my pocket, Crossandra.

SFX of squeaking hinges and a door closing with a loud thud.

BLACK ANNIS

Well, Sleipnir, you handled that *incredibly* badly. If it hadn't been for you getting in my way with your poltergeist, I'd be right at this moment torturing the human in surprising ways. And now the whole Faerie Court has come here for nothing.

SLEIPNIR

We still have a few beings here in need of a torture.

BLACK ANNIS

We're not interested in watching you enact some pathetic revenge on your work colleagues. [sighing deeply] Make sure my magic mirror is delivered back to me and, *in future*, stay out of my way, elf. I expect your G.O.B.L.I.N.S. office to be run in a way that is much more aligned with my interests. [with vibrato] Faeries, out!

SFX of a pompous fanfare.

SFX of the fluttering of many tiny wings as the Faerie Court departs.

SLEIPNIR

‘Pathetic revenge’? [taking a deep, shuddering breath and letting it out in a grunt] The whole G.O.B.L.I.N.S. office is going to pay.

HOOPER

Oh.

TRIBE

Oh, no.

ELISAR

[obliviously] Oh-oh, you guys are in *trouble*!

HOOPER

So are you, Elisar.

ELISAR

Really? What did I do?

SFX of the crowd fading out.

Transitional music.

SFX of a ventilation system running in a large, echoing room.

SFX of cardboard boxes being folded, packed, and moved.

HOOPER

Tripe, can you give me a hand with some more of these boxes?

TRIBE

Just a minute!

SFX of a box toppling to the ground with a heavy thump.

HOOPER

Oh! Be careful with Elizabeth’s body! We don’t want anything to fall off.

ELISAR

Why are we even keeping that thing? It's creepy.

TRIPE

Elizabeth is going to *need it* when she gets better.

ELISAR

What do you mean, 'gets better'? She's dead.

HOOPER

[firmly] *Elisar*, let him have this.

TRIPE

And she'll need her badge press as well. She'll want that.

HOOPER

Fine. [sighing] But we've already got so much stuff to pack.

ELISAR

You could get rid of some of those stupid scrolls.

HOOPER

[scandalised] Those are my life's work! The wisdom of a thousand years distilled for future generations.

ELISAR

[scoffing] Whatever.

HOOPER

Well, since you're not leaving, maybe you could give me a hand?

ELISAR

I may not be leaving, but the elves have told me I've got to pack up my puzzle. [sulkily] Now I'm never going finish it.

TRIPE

You never did work out where that sixteenth piece should go.

HOOPER

Oh, I hope mumsy has enough space to store all this stuff.

SFX of HOOPER closing another box.

TRIPLE

[cheerfully] Well, Elizabeth can go in the mausoleum with the family. Close to the bones.

HOOPER

Yes! That's, erm... nice.

TRIPLE

All cosy. [cheerfully] Until she comes back.

ELISAR

She's not—

HOOPER

[cutting him off aggressively] *Leave it!*

ELISAR

Have you guys heard what your punishments are yet?

HOOPER

No.

TRIPLE

Apparently, the anticipation is part of it.

HOOPER

[disgustedly] But *nothing* can be as bad as what the elves will do to the Veil.

ELISAR

Yeah, they'll probably just leave it.

HOOPER

Elisar, they openly talk about hunting humans for sport and are repeatedly saying how great it would be if the Veil wasn't here.

ELISAR

That's just bantz, probably. Anyway, it's alright for you. You guys have lost your jobs. I have to stay here and work under Sleipnir, possibly literally.

HOOPER

You have to be our spy! Keep us informed about what's going on.

ELISAR

Why, what are you planning to do?

HOOPER

Er, I don't know yet...

ELISAR

I'd just assumed you two would just go back and live in some stinking mudhole or something.

TRIPE

[making a dismissive noise] The mudholes have gotten really gentrified. Good luck getting a place there.

HOOPER

We're not taking this lying down. Sleipnir hasn't seen the last of us! These badges—

SFX of HOOPER putting a badge onto a desk.

HOOPER

—Elizabeth made for us mean something, you know? We're a team.

TRIPE

A team of two goblins, a useless elf, no offence—

ELISAR

None taken.

TRIPE

—and a dead human.

HOOPER

Exactly.

G.O.B.L.I.N.S.! Outro

*A cello and violin play discordant notes, cymbals and a xylophone join in.
A piano plays a light, twinkling melody over it.*

Transcript by Franziska Mohr.