

You know, legends and fairytale stories have never been so kind to us, have they? Us, the witches, the femmes, the fairies, the outsiders. Jadis, The White Witch killed by the lion just because she wanted perpetual fur coat weather, the “wicked” witch of the east crushed by a house before she even got a word in edgewise, The Snow Queen saddled accidentally with someone else’s boyfriend because some goblins got into a fight, pitting witch against woman, Medea betrayed for a younger beauty after all she gave up for love, and poor old Simaetha, me, the jumping spider, burned by her lover.

Left out, left behind, bereft on islands, exiled to deserts, relegated to huts in the forest by those who need us but don’t want to see us.

And then we’re the bad ones for getting even. But, hey, if you can’t join them, beat them—did I get that right? The weird sisters toppling the tyrant-to-be with the promise of power, Medea leaving her Jason alone in the world, no wife, no children for him, nothing personal, darling, she says as she rides off in a chariot made of sunfire, and me, poor old Simaetha, burning him back.

I: Witches & Their Greeks

[“Idyll 2” track is played to accompany the following text by Theocritus. THE DANCER putters around and dances, one part witch’s assistant, one part spirit. Stars and bolded words below indicate props that are activate and/or actions that are taken. A wheel is turned.]

Where are the **bay-leaves**? And the love charms? Fetch them!
With **fiery wool** I crown the **cauldron** now;
Let glamour win me back that false man’s heart!
Twelve days, he doesn’t come to me,
Doesn’t even care if I live or die,
doesn’t clamor (oh, unkindness!) at my door.

[Sung:]

So shine out fair, O moon! To thee I sing
My soft low song: to thee and Hecatè
The dweller in the shades, at whose approach
E'en the dogs quake, as on she moves through blood.
All hail, dread Hecatè: companion me
and work me witcheries unto the end.

*Turn, magic **wheel**, draw home the man I love.*

*First we ignite the **grain**. Nay, pile it on:
Sprinkle it, say, “It’s his bones I scatter!”*
As he burns me: I burn him in these **bays**.
As, flame-enkindled, they lift up their voice,
Blaze once, and not a trace is left behind:
So waste his flesh to powder in the fire!

My magic wheel, draw home the man I love.

[Sung: E-Eb-C#-Ab]

Just as I melt, with the god's aid, this **wax**,
So swiftly may he melt this hour with love:
And, swiftly as this brazen wheel whirls round,
May Aphrodite whirl him to my door.

Turn, magic wheel, draw home the man I love.

Next burn the **husks**. Hell's adamantine floor
And aught that else stands firm can Artemis move.
Listen how the hounds bay up and down the town:
The goddess stands i' the crossroads: sound the gongs.

My magic wheel, draw home the man I love.

[sung]

Hushed are the voices of the winds and seas;
But O not hushed the voice of my despair.
He burns my being up, who left me here
No wife, no maiden, in my misery.

My magic wheel, draw home the man I love.

Thrice I pour **libations**, thrice I say,
"Whatever face hangs o'er him be forgot,
Clean as, in Dia, Theseus
Forgot his Ariadne's locks of love."

My magic wheel, draw home the man I love.

The coltsfoot grows in Arcady, the **weed**
That drives the mountain-colts and swift mares wild.
Like them may this man rave: so, manic, wise,
Race from his burnished brethren home to me.*
*He lost this **tassel** from his robe; which I
Shred thus, and cast it on the raging flames.
Ah baleful Love! why, like the marsh-born leech,
Cling to my flesh, and drain my dark veins dry?*

My magic wheel, draw home the man I love.

*From a crushed eft tomorrow he shall drink death!

But now, now, take these herbs and smear
This threshold over, where I still cling,
Still, still—though he thinks scorn of me—
I spit, and say, “It is his bones I smear.”

My magic wheel, draw home the man I love.

**Now, all alone, I'll weep a love whence sprung
When born? When born? Who wrought my sorrow? Who?
For thrice, nay four times, daily he would stroll
Hither, leave here full oft his Dorian flask*:
Now—'tis a fortnight since I saw his face.**

**Am I forgot? I'll charm him now with charms.
But let him try me more, and by the Fates
He'll soon be knocking at the gates of hell.
Spells of such power are in this chest of mine.**

*[sung]Lady, farewell: turn ocean-ward thy steeds:
As I have purposed, so shall I fulfil.
Farewell, thou bright-faced Moon! Ye stars, farewell,
That wait upon the car of noiseless Night.

[The spell is done. THE DANCER leaves the stage. THE WITCH takes to the piano.]

-[“Witch’s Lover” (original song)]
Give me diamonds, give me death
Amethyst and baby’s breath
Shut your mouth and close your fist
Paint me with a palette black and blue
Darling I belong with you
Drink me like I’m poisoned, too
Lock me up for 14 years
Eat the key and see if I still scream

[Chorus]
Emerald hands, steal my light
I can’t quit, try as I might
One bird fell; one bird flew
Bury me in emeralds made of you

In the sleepless, soundless night
Hunt me where the owl takes flight
Bring me 16 skins to brew
I will make a hero out of you

[Chorus]

Kiss like spiders, fuck like hell
Pen me in a villanelle, and
Come to me when you are through
I will make a killer out of you

[Bridge]

Burn the Hesperides Tree
Dance, my pagan, dance for me
Give yourself up to the night
Scorn the angels, shun the light, and
Come to me when you are through
I will make a monster out of you

[Chorus]

Tied your toenails to a doll,
Stay with me, goddammit all
Stuck a pinprick in its heart
To be a child again is such an art

I tied your hair around the doll
Boxed it in with barbed wire wall
Cut its feet to make you stay
You can hide, but you can't run

Away

[End song.]

Oh, but it wasn't always that way... Theocritus wrote that little love spell, about poor old *me!* Little Greek guy. Dead now, long dead. We knew each other. He was terrified of women, as you can tell, terrified of us violent femmes and our need to ensnare men. Whose fantasy is that, anyway? The one about witches who cast love spells? Whose dream is it that a man would be so obsessed with you he'd never leave you alone, burn for you, cry for you, turn up at your door and, well, you see the point. Whose nightmare? Back then, I just thought it was something men fed women and witches and femmes, a warning to scare us off from power. These days, I'm not so sure.

But Theocritus got some things right. My anger, my vengeance, my power. The spinning wheel. He even got that fuck boy Delphis right. You know the type. Mad for you, total romantic—you're all he can think about, until he gets you thinking of him, and then, poof! Like magic.

But Theocritus didn't get the whole story in. How could he? I'd been around a lot longer than him, and I've outlasted him, as you can see. And yes, I was pissed at Delphis. But he wasn't the first, and he wasn't the last.

See, they talk to you about Maiden, Mother, and Crone, the three faces of Hecate, goddess of witchcraft and magic. They talk about it like it's three phases of your life. You're the maiden, wild and free, oversexed or virginal, take your pick. You're the mother, taking witchy women under your wing. You're the crone, all alone in your hut, just wanting to be left alone.

When you've lived as long as I have, these phases come and go in seasons. Sometimes you're all of them at once—wild and free and oversexed, taking care of others, wishing you could escape to the woods and be done with it all.

Perhaps you'll understand why I might have done... all of this... if I go back a little.

II. Family Ghosts & Demon Lovers

[Soundscape piece in which THE DANCER plays the family ghost on the outskirts and also opens the scene with some dance, THE WITCH goes through various actions like practicing divination on a spirit board; the two occasionally interact and, if possible, perform small wonders while the following text is played in voiceover throughout the soundscape.]