

SPELLED WRONG

written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. SENATOR'S OFFICES - AFTERNOON

An early winter afternoon in an American city, outside a quaint, colonial-era townhouse converted into local headquarters for Senator Leonora Bitterman. People amble on the sidewalks, going about their usual business.

INT. SENATOR'S OFFICES - SECOND FLOOR

A GUIDE (late 20s, smartly dressed) is speaking to a group of visitors, none of whose faces we see, walking in the hallway.

GUIDE

(rehearsed)

As you know, Senator Bitterman sponsored the Act Necessitating Oversight and Regulation of Magic through Affirmative Legislation. Otherwise known as...

GROUP

(mostly enthusiastically)

"Act NORMAL."

The group stops at the doors to the library. The doors are French, with clear glass, allowing a good view of the room.

GUIDE

And this is where the Senator's legislative aides did the research that enabled her to put her full support behind the bill.

After a pause to let the group take in the majesty of the library...

GUIDE (CONT'D)

Now, I believe I've heard an outrageous rumor...

(faux sotto voce)

...about a gift shop?

The faceless group laughs and moves on, but we remain outside the library. Through the door, we see the back of an aide to the senator. This is BRANDON ANDREWS (33, trim, fit), sitting at the table, with his back to the door. He wears suit pants, a dress shirt, and suspenders. He is unnaturally still.

A young woman's manicured hand comes into view to try the door knob. The door is locked. The HAND KNOCKS on one of the panes.

INT. SENATOR'S OFFICES - LIBRARY - CONTINUOUS

Facing the doors, we see a female colleague of Brandon's on the outside, confused, trying in vain to get his attention. We hear further KNOCKS, growing more urgent.

The CAMERA pulls back until Brandon is in view. He is utterly motionless, his eyes open, staring -- serenely, unblinking -- at his laptop screen. There is no life in Brandon Andrews.

In the background, Brandon's colleague continues to bang on the library door....

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. BROWNSTONE APARTMENT - FRONT DOOR

Someone outside the apartment KNOCKS -- calmly, almost timidly.

SUPER: "Days Earlier"

JESSAMYN (O.S.)
(ironically)
Keep your pants on.

JESSAMYN (early 30s, gorgeous) enters from another room, off screen, and though we don't yet see her face, we do get a good sense of her shapeliness through the ornate silk robe she wears. Long, straight, black hair obscures her nape.

Jessamyn opens the apartment door to reveal NATHAN SPECTOR (late 20s, lanky). Over Jessamyn's shoulder, we see Nathan's eyes looking her up and down. Eventually he blinks. Then his mouth opens, but he can't find the right word. Or any word.

Jessamyn steps out of frame, allowing Nathan to enter.

INT. JESSAMYN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Rugs, tapestries, pillows, books, candles. Against one wall, a couch and a side table. In the center of the room, a rustic, wooden stool.

We don't see Jessamyn again just yet. As Nathan deposits his winter gear onto the couch, he notices her robe there. He goes to touch the silk--

Jessamyn clears her throat. Nathan turns to see her, now nude. Her green eyes are striking, and her body will knock you out.

NATHAN
(flustered)
Ah... you're--

JESSAMYN

Jessamyn. But I think the word you want is "skyclad." That's witchspeak for "naked."

NATHAN

I think there's been a misunderstanding. I came for a haircut.

JESSAMYN

(amused)

You're cute. Sit, Professor.

Jessamyn nods toward the stool.

NATHAN

Assistant Nathan. Professor. Assistant Professor. But, also, just Nathan is fine.

Nathan sits on the stool. He can't stop staring at Jessamyn, though he tries not to be obvious about it. He watches her as she collects something from the side table. Then she takes up a position at Nathan's side, very close to him, brushing his shoulder with a breast. He flinches.

JESSAMYN (CONT'D)

(mock-sternly)

Keep your hands in your lap, Assistant Nathan. And sit still!

NATHAN

I wasn't--! Maybe if you could--

JESSAMYN

(matter-of-factly)

Clothes keep the magic from getting out.

Trying to remain still, Nathan moves just his eyes to see what Jessamyn is holding. It's a wand, and it looks as smooth as Jessamyn herself does. And did she just say--?

NATHAN

Wait. Magic?

JESSAMYN

Magic. Didn't Carolyn tell you?

NATHAN

I'm... not even sure anymore.

(MORE)

NATHAN (CONT'D)
She said her cousin could help me,
and I assumed-- So what are you
planning to do, if not cut my
hair?

JESSAMYN
Spell it shorter.

NATHAN
(bemused)
Spell it... shorter?

JESSAMYN
Yes. Ready?

Nathan is about to protest, but he just laughs. This is ridiculous, but what the hell, right?

NATHAN
Sure.

JESSAMYN
Okay. Close your eyes.

Nathan closes his eyes, smiling, humoring the beautiful naked woman... but then suddenly opens his eyes again.

NATHAN
This is all... "white" magic,
right?

JESSAMYN
Black magic is the new white
magic. I'm kidding. It's a
superficial styling spell, Nathan.
Hardly the stuff of demons and
dark forces. Now close your eyes!

Nathan closes his eyes again. We follow Jessamyn to the side table again, where she flips through pages in a large book.

NATHAN (O.S.)
That actually feels nice.

JESSAMYN
Hmm?

Jessamyn turns from the book to Nathan, sitting on the stool, his eyes closed. A LARGE, BLACK BIRD is standing on his head.

JESSAMYN (CONT'D)
Oh. That's Renée.

NATHAN
 (relaxed)
 What?

Nathan opens his eyes, sees Jessamyn standing several feet from him, then turns his head until he sees his reflection in a cheval glass in the corner of the room. RENÉE remains on his head. Nathan yelps and springs to his feet, sending Renée flying off. Nathan collects himself, then sits down again.

NATHAN (CONT'D)
 Your... familiar?

Jessamyn returns to Nathan's side.

JESSAMYN
 No. Just a friend. My familiar's
 in a tank in the bathroom.

NATHAN
 A tank?

JESSAMYN
 A tank. For a tarantula.

NATHAN
 A tarantula? Why not just a cat?

JESSAMYN
 No cats allowed in the building.
 And I don't want to get my aunt
 and uncle in trouble. Carolyn's
 parents. They own this cozy place
 and give me a deep discount on the
 rent. Now, if you have no further
 questions--

NATHAN
 Close my eyes?

JESSAMYN
 Nah. You can leave them open.

Jessamyn circles her wand around Nathan's head, murmuring as she does. Nathan is still but for the shifting expressions on his face as he strains to hear what Jessamyn is saying and keeps an eye out for birds or big spiders... until finally:

JESSAMYN (CONT'D)
Abbreve-derci!

A quiet moment as Jessamyn looks at Nathan's unchanged hair. Nathan himself steals a glance in the cheval glass. Jessamyn waves her wand again:

JESSAMYN (CONT'D)
 (unsure)
Abbrevia...cadabra?

NATHAN
 (tactfully)
 Nothing's happening.

JESSAMYN
 I see that!

Jessamyn gets her robe, puts it on, and drops onto the couch.

NATHAN
 Are you--?

JESSAMYN
 (upset)
 I'm not good at this! I'm not bad.
 I'm just... not good.

Nathan gets off the stool and joins Jessamyn on the couch, leaving some distance and his outerwear between them.

JESSAMYN (CONT'D)
 You don't have to pay me, of course.

After a moment, during which Jessamyn cries softly and Nathan tries to think of something comforting to say:

NATHAN
 (comfortingly)
 Do you... do you have scissors?

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

Nathan exits Jessamyn's building. Because it's dark, and because Nathan wears a hat, we can't see how his haircut came out just yet. Nathan walks.

NATHAN (V.O.)
 My name is Nathan Spector, and I am an etymologist. If you're thinking, "Ew, bugs," then, like most people, you're mistaking etymology for entomology. Etymology is the study of words. Specifically, the origins and historical developments of the meanings of words.
 (MORE)

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

(beat)

Careers for bug people pay much better than jobs for word people, though. Which is why I have two jobs and I still try to save money on luxuries like haircuts.

(beat)

My afternoon job is teaching at a community college. For the most part, my students are nice kids. This semester, one of them even had a cousin who could help with my hair. When I'd called Jessamyn and she'd told me to "come over for a spell," I just thought she was being... folksy.

(beat)

Even though Carolyn, my student, Jessamyn's cousin, herself can see auras.

(beat)

Or, she believes she can see auras. I didn't know if I believed her.

Nathan finally arrives at his apartment building -- larger and less charming than Jessamyn's -- and goes into the front door, after fighting with it to open for a moment.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

I also didn't know whether I believed that Jessamyn knew magic, but she quickly convinced me that she did not know how to cut hair.

EXT. NATHAN'S BUILDING - MORNING

It's a bright, sunny Monday morning with great promise. Nathan emerges from his apartment building in the same outerwear we saw him in the previous night, including his hat. He takes to the streets again, but now he heads to the nearest above-ground subway stop to catch a train. While he walks:

NATHAN (V.O.)

My morning routine is pretty simple: I wake up, I shower, I get dressed, I leave my apartment.

(beat)

What I don't do probably says more about me: I don't usually make my bed. I don't use conditioner.

(MORE)

NATHAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 I don't read, watch, or listen to
 the news. I don't eat breakfast at
 home. I don't put on a tie.

Nathan arrives at the train stop. While the train pulls up and
 commuters board:

INT. SUBWAY TRAIN - CONTINUOUS

NATHAN (V.O)
 The train I catch every weekday
 morning eventually goes
 underground and lives up to its
 designation as a subway.

The train goes underground.

NATHAN (V.O) (CONT'D)
 Then it takes about fifteen
 minutes until it gets me to
 Government Quarter, downtown,
 where the government has all of
 its local offices, all of them in
 buildings as boring as buildings
 can be made.

EXT. DOWNTOWN - GOVERNMENT QUARTER - MOMENTS LATER

Nathan emerges, with hundreds of others, from a train station
 onto street level... walks to an unremarkable concrete
 building... and enters.

NATHAN (V.O)
 My afternoon job is teaching
 college kids how to write better
 essays about the books they read,
 or their favorite sports teams or
 cars or movies or celebrities.
 (beat)
 My morning job -- the one that
 provides my health insurance --
 isn't something I talk about with
 my students.

INT. GOVERNMENT BUILDING - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Nathan enters the building and lazily takes out an ID card to
 show someone... but there's no one checking credentials. Nathan
 heads to an elevator and gets in when it arrives.

INT. ELEVATOR CAR - CONTINUOUS

NATHAN (V.O)
 I'm a part-time forensic
 etymologist for the government,
 and it's entirely possible that I
 was hired by accident.

INT. GOVERNMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Nathan walks...

NATHAN (V.O)
 Most of the time at my government
 job, I do... nothing.

INT. GOVERNMENT BUILDING - BUG LAB DOOR - CONTINUOUS

On the closed door of the office are two items: a computer
 printed sign and a sticky note. The sign reads:

Federal Bureau of Insects

NATHAN (V.O)
 Maybe ironically, maybe not, the
 government paired me up with the
 local forensic bug guy.
 (beat)
 Fortunately, I like the bug guy.

Nathan peels the stickie from the door.

**INT. GOVERNMENT BUILDING - BOSS'S OFFICE - MOMENTS
LATER**

Deputy Special Agent in Charge HOUGH (60s) sits at a desk full
 of framed photographs in an office with walls full of framed
 honors, commendations, certificates, and newspaper clippings.
 There is a KNOCK at his door.

HOUGH
 Come in.

We hear the door open but remain on Hough. He looks up at his
 visitor and grimaces.

HOUGH
Oof. Son, never argue with your
 barber.

REVERSE ANGLE ON Nathan, taking a seat opposite Hough. Nathan wears his usual weekday uniform: khakis, a dress shirt, and a sweater vest. This morning, he sports a very lopsided coiffure. Nathan holds up the sticky note.

NATHAN
You stickied me, sir?

By way of response, Hough produces and hands Nathan a very slim FILE. Nathan accepts it.

NATHAN (CONT'D)
What's this?

HOUGH
It's a birthday card.

NATHAN
(surprised)
But it's not--

HOUGH
It's an assignment.

NATHAN
(more surprised)
Wait -- really?

HOUGH
I know your country doesn't ask very much of you, Spector, but you might at least pretend to be of service.
(beat)
Can I trouble you to have something by the end of the week?

Nathan stands.

NATHAN
(enthusiastic)
Of course. Thank you, sir.

INT. GOVERNMENT BUILDING - BUG LAB - LATER

The room is well-lit, filled with expensive scientific equipment. Lots of microscopes. Lots of canisters on shelves, with lots of creepy-crawlies in them, some alive, some not.

ARTIE COMBS (late 30s), pale, pudgy, and balding, enters and walks to the back part of the room to put a jar down on a cluttered lab table. He stops moving when he hears something -- a soft clicking. Has something gotten out of its container?

Artie turns around slowly and peers into the far corner. The sound is definitely coming from there...

ARTIE
(suspicious)
Nathan?

NATHAN
(preoccupied)
Gimme a minute....

Nathan is hard at work, typing away at the old computer on his small desk in his poorly-lit corner of the room. Because he's working at a computer, Nathan is wearing eyeglasses.

Artie walks toward Nathan and watches him. There's something... different about his officemate.

ARTIE
Are you... doing actual work?

Nathan punches a key on his keyboard with emphasis -- prompting a very old-school BEEP -- then swivels in his old, metal desk chair to face Artie.

NATHAN
Yes, Artie, I am!

ARTIE
(incredulous)
There's actually something for you to do?

NATHAN
Yes, Artie, there is!
(beat)
But that's not what I'm working on.
(beat)
Over the weekend I learned about a conference I'm thinking of submitting a paper to.

ARTIE
Ah.
(beat)
What else did you do this weekend?

NATHAN
That's, ah... well, it's kind of personal.

ARTIE
Personal.
(MORE)

ARTIE (CONT'D)

(beat)

Were you in a fight?

(beat)

With a lawnmower?

EXT. GOVERNMENT BUILDING - LATER

Nathan and Artie loiter outside the building, each with a government-issue ration of coffee -- foam cup, plastic lid.

ARTIE

Tell me you're kidding.

NATHAN

It's not a big deal.

ARTIE

It could have been. Does she know you work for the government?

NATHAN

I didn't tell her.

ARTIE

Well, she must not know, because people who consider themselves enchanted don't associate carelessly with people like us.

(beat)

Although it does look like she was pretty careless with you.

(beat)

Did she use pruning shears?

NATHAN

I doubt she's an actual witch.

ARTIE

That kind of doesn't matter, though. What you believe isn't as bad for you as what someone else might suspect you believe. Seeing a witch -- or someone who thinks she's a witch -- even just to get your hair... dealt with -- magically or otherwise, could cost you this job, Nathan.

Nathan and Artie are quiet for a moment, then Artie shakes his head and says, not to Nathan but generally:

ARTIE (CONT'D)
 (chagrined)
 Act NORMAL, man. You know?

INT. GOVERNMENT BUILDING - RESTROOM - LATER

We're looking at the row of mirrors above the sinks in the room when we hear a urinal flush. Nathan comes over to stand at a sink, his back to us. He washes his hands, then looks at his face in the mirror. He squints, then gives his reflection a quizzical look. He is not wearing glasses in the mirror. But only in the mirror.

He brings a hand to his face and removes his glasses, then leans toward the mirror, then back again. Finally, he and his reflection both return his glasses to his face. Nathan starts to step away from the sink, but steps back to take one more look in the mirror, then exits. We remain at the sinks.

During all of this:

NATHAN (V.O.)
 I knew that Artie was just looking out for me, and I knew that he was right about government agents and the supposedly enchanted not mixing well. Especially since the passage of "ACT Normal," the law meant to keep tabs on practitioners of witchcraft. Even if it wasn't clear whether anyone believed that anyone else was actually magical, whether they believed it themselves or not.
 (beat)
 It was all very... confusing.

EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS - EVENING

A large sign reads **BRICKLAINE COMMUNITY COLLEGE**. Students move to and fro in the dusk.

INT. COLLEGE CLASSROOM - EVENING

A utilitarian college classroom. Nothing fancy. A desk at the top of the room for the instructor, tablet arm chairs for the students. On the blackboard is the word **HELICOPTER**. Nathan is standing, wrapping up a humorous anecdote:

NATHAN

...but the crossword puzzle editor
hasn't yet responded to my email.

The students are silent. Nathan coughs and checks the time.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

Okay, you're free to go.

The students pack up and leave. One student lingers: CAROLYN HEGEL (19) is on the shorter, fuller side, with numerous piercings. She approaches Nathan as he packs his own bag at the desk.

CAROLYN

Um...

NATHAN

(mildly peeved)

"Um" is right.

Nathan walks to the classroom door, then closes it.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

Did you forget to tell me
something about cousin Jessamyn?

CAROLYN

Oh, yeah. She's a witch.

NATHAN

So I heard. I'm not so sure. I do
know she's no stylist.

CAROLYN

Sorry.

NATHAN

It's fine. It'll grow back. And it
was... an experience.

CAROLYN

She's pretty, though, right?

NATHAN

(suspicious)

Are you trying to set us up?

CAROLYN

I don't know.

(beat)

Actually, I wanted to talk to you
about something else.

(beat)

Is everything okay?

NATHAN
What do you mean?

CAROLYN
With you. Is everything okay with you. Other than your hair... are you okay?

NATHAN
I think so. I'm... fine. Why?

CAROLYN
It's... your aura. It's a little different. Than usual.

NATHAN
My aura.
(beat)
Sit.

Carolyn sits in a chair in the front row. Nathan sits on the edge of the desk.

NATHAN (CONT'D)
(indulgent)
Tell me, Carolyn: What does my aura usually look like?

CAROLYN
It's usually... well, it's hard to describe.

NATHAN
I'm sure. And... what does it look like now?

CAROLYN
That's not any easier to describe.

NATHAN
Right. But it looks different.
(beat)
Is that bad? Is it good?

CAROLYN
It's... neutral. But it's like a small piece of you is detached from the rest. Part of your aura sort of lags behind.

NATHAN
It lags? A part of it? Really?

Nathan looks at Carolyn. Carolyn looks at Nathan. Then Carolyn stands up and walks to the blackboard, picking up a piece of chalk to draw a stick figure, as Nathan turns to watch her.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

Is that me? I think I'm better looking than that. Even today.

Carolyn doesn't respond, though she turns to glance at Nathan a couple of times. Sometimes it seems like she's looking just past him. She draws an outline around the stick figure... then, with her finger, she smudges the right half of the outline, outward, away from the stick figure. Then she steps back from the board, grabs her bag, and walks toward the classroom door. Nathan gets off the desk and follows her.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

(quietly)

Am I... in danger?

CAROLYN

I can't see the future, Professor.

Carolyn opens the classroom door and exits. Nathan walks back to the desk to collect his things before he leaves the classroom as well. He doesn't notice, but we see that the word on the board has changed to read **HERETIC POL.**

NATHAN (V.O.)

They say a teacher shouldn't be friends with his students. I'll just say this: I found Carolyn a little creepy sometimes. Inoffensive, but off-putting. Not sinister, but not quite right, either.

(beat)

Anyway, I still have some childhood friends of my own.

EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS - PARKING LOT - EVENING

Nathan gets into his car -- the kind of car you don't want anyone to know is yours. It's beaten-up on the outside and pretty messy on the inside. He takes out his phone and makes a call.

NATHAN

Hey. I'm headed to my folks' house. I should be there in half an hour. Let me know if you want to meet up and... you know.

Nathan puts his phone away and starts his car.

EXT. NATHAN'S CAR (MOVING) - MOMENTS LATER

We follow as Nathan leaves the campus parking lot for the highway, which he travels for a while until exiting for local roads. As he drives:

NATHAN (V.O.)

So, if I'm being honest, I really have just one childhood friend, but she's probably the best one I could have. Ally was the first girl I ever kissed, and ever after everyone went their separate ways, she and I kept in touch. And when we got together now, there was usually some actual touching.

(beat)

Ally lived with her parents again in the same town where mine still lived. Mine were out of town just then, and they'd asked me to pop over and bring in the mail, water their plants, run the water so their pipes wouldn't freeze. I didn't mind. Mainly because it meant I might see Ally.

(beat)

On the other hand, it also meant that I'd have to pick up something for dinner, since my parents never have the right kinds of food. Whole wheat pretzels, for instance. Fat free milk. Unsalted peanut butter.

(beat)

And they never have beer. Not even the wrong kind.

INT. PIZZERIA - NIGHT

One half of the pizza place is for take-out orders, and that side has chairs just inside the front door for waiting customers. The wall behind the chairs is mirrored. Nathan sits in one chair. Another customer, a middle-aged man, sits in another chair. A PIZZAIOLO works behind the counter. A hispanic DELIVERY GUY comes out of the back to talk to the pizzaiolo about an order.

DELIVERY GUY

Audubon Drive. In Walnaught?

PIZZAIOLO

No, Hamilton. I think.

CUSTOMER
That's right. Hamilton. Off East
Remington Road.

Nathan nods and the other customer notices.

CUSTOMER (CONT'D)
My track coach used to have us run
there.

NATHAN
Joe Vespucci?

CUSTOMER
Yes!
(beat)
Is he still there?

NATHAN
(amused)
Just how young do you think--

The men are interrupted by the shouts of the delivery guy, now standing behind the counter, wide-eyed and pointing a shaking hand at the mirror behind Nathan and the other man.

DELIVERY GUY
¡Madre de Dios! ¡Mira! ¡En el espejo!

The other customer turns to look out the front door, but Nathan turns to look in the mirror. He sees nothing unusual. Nathan looks back to the delivery man, who is now looking directly at Nathan.

DELIVERY GUY (CONT'D)
(in a frightened whisper)
Obra del Diablo.

The delivery guy backs out of the pizzeria toward the rear. The pizzaiolo rolls his eyes and shakes his head.

PIZZAIOLO
Sausage and onions.

CUSTOMER
That's me.
(to Nathan)
Nice to meet you. Take care.

INT. SPECTOR HOUSE - FOYER - NIGHT

Nathan comes into the house, eating a slice of pizza, holding an armful of mail.

INT. SPECTOR HOUSE - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Nathan turns on the water at the sink.

INT. SPECTOR HOUSE - STUDY - MOMENTS LATER

Nathan feeds the fish in the aquarium.

INT. SPECTOR HOUSE - DINING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Nathan is watering plants when the DOORBELL RINGS.

INT. SPECTOR HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Nathan and ALLY HOPE (late 20s) are on the couch, each with a bottle of beer from the six-pack Ally has brought. They're snuggling, facing a fireplace with no fire in it. After a sweet, cozy moment:

NATHAN

Do you remember how I used to
tease you about your mom being a
witch?

Ally rolls her eyes.

ALLY

Yes.

NATHAN

Do you remember why I used to
think your mom was a witch?

ALLY

I do not.
(beat)
Do you?

NATHAN

I don't think I do, no. Maybe I
once saw her cooking dinner... in
a cauldron?

ALLY

No.

NATHAN

Did she ever pick you up from school... on a broom?

(beat)

Pull a rabbit out of a hat?

(beat)

So, listen, Ally, is your mom by any chance really a witch?

Ally disentangles herself from Nathan and moves away from him on the couch.

ALLY

You're a moron. My mom is not a witch!

NATHAN

Okay! Okay...

(beat)

I was just thinking... well, I've been teasing you about this forever, but it occurred to me that if your mother really is a witch, then it's probably not something I should tease you about.

ALLY

And yet you brought it up again!

NATHAN

Well, yes, but not as a joke this time.

ALLY

I'm not sure which is worse.

NATHAN

Okay. Never mind. That was the last time. I promise.

(beat)

I'm sorry.

INT. SPECTOR HOUSE - NATHAN'S BEDROOM - LATER

Nathan gets ready for bed -- alone -- on the pullout couch. He turns out the overhead light in the room, gets under the covers, and closes his eyes. After a moment, there's a small explosion of light as the lamp on the desk near the couch turns on by itself. Nathan's eyes fly open and he jumps out of bed, alarmed.

Looking under the desk, Nathan discovers that his parents left that lamp on a timer. As he's about to turn the lamp off again, he sees something out of the corner of his eye. He turns and walks toward the window of the bedroom. As Nathan looks out the window, his REFLECTION arrives in the window just a half-second late. Nathan rubs his eyes, then turns off the desk lamp and returns to bed. In the darkness:

NATHAN
(mock-dramatically)
"Obra... del diablo."

EXT. SPECTOR HOUSE - MORNING

Nathan leaves his parent's house, gets into his car, and heads back to the city.

NATHAN (V.O.)

As it happens, I wasn't seeing things.
(beat)
Or, I wasn't just seeing things. Something was definitely... not right.
(beat)
What happened over the next three days brought me to near total paranoia. It was all I could do not just to hide my growing discomposure from my coworkers and my students, but also to keep myself from seeing the sights that made me doubt my sanity.

EXT. NATHAN'S CAR (MOVING) - CONTINUOUS

Nathan gets on the highway.

INT. NATHAN'S CAR (MOVING) - CONTINUOUS

While driving, Nathan looks into his rearview mirror and sees his reflection in the back seat, uncrumpling a fast food wrapper, then sniffing it.

EXT. NATHAN'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Nathan pulls over to the shoulder, quickly, and gets out of his car, quickly. He runs around to the side away from traffic and looks into his back seat, through the rear door window, then through the rear windshield.

While he's looking, a STATE TROOPER pulls her cruiser up behind his car. She gets out and approaches Nathan. They have a brief conversation, then the trooper leaves. Nathan lingers at his car, eventually putting his head down on its roof.

NATHAN (V.O.)

My reflection had apparently developed, or acquired, a mind, or at least a will, of its own.

(beat)

My reflection was no longer strictly tethered to reality, anyway, no longer compelled by nature to reflect my actions.

INT. NATHAN'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - LATER

Nathan brushes his teeth at the sink. In the mirror, his reflection plays with the toothpaste tube and plays with the faucet knobs. After brushing, Nathan splashes handful after handful of cold water on his face.

NATHAN (V.O.)

Really, it could no longer even accurately be called my reflection, though it still resembled me. It did, it seemed, what it wanted, and what it wanted to do was mischief.

EXT. CITY STREET - MORNING

Nathan walks past a building with reflective windows. His reflection is completely naked.

NATHAN (V.O.)

Maybe I'm overstating the situation: My reflection seemed more curious than mischievous, touching things on its side of the mirror that I didn't touch on mine, inspecting things, playing with them. My reflection seemed... childlike, silently inquisitive.

EXT. CITY PARK - AFTERNOON

Nathan stands on a footbridge over a pond, staring into the water below. His reflection appears, not on the surface but under the surface. Nathan panics, looking around and thinking of calling for help.

He starts to take off his shoes, as if he's going to jump into the water to save his reflection from drowning... but then his reflection starts doing the backstroke, swimming away from the footbridge. Nathan turns around and sits down on the bridge.

NATHAN (V.O.)

None of the mischief done by my reflection on its side of the mirror had any effect on my side -- other than mangling my nerves -- but I didn't know at the time that this was the case.

(beat)

That pizza delivery guy, he'd thought he was seeing the handiwork of the unholyest of unholyes. I thought I was losing my mind. Fortunately, we were both wrong.

INT. COLLEGE - STUDENT UNION - AFTERNOON

Students everywhere, eating, talking, reading. Nathan enters, looking like he hasn't had a decent night's sleep in days. Or a shave. He scans the room, then makes a beeline for a table where Carolyn and some others are sitting.

CAROLYN

Professor Spector! Hi...?

NATHAN

Carolyn, could I have a word?

CAROLYN

Sure--

As the other students exchange looks, Nathan leads Carolyn to a quiet area where they won't be overheard.

NATHAN

Carolyn, I think there's something wrong with me. And I'm telling you because I think you knew about it even before I did.

CAROLYN

Your aura.

NATHAN

My aura.

(beat)

What does it look like right now?

Carolyn looks Nathan over. Frowns. Gasps. Nathan winces.

CAROLYN

Worse.

NATHAN

Worse... how?

CAROLYN

Like there are fragments of your
aura... all around the room.

Nathan looks around. Everywhere he looks he sees reflective
surfaces large and small. Fixtures. Silverware. Windows.

CAROLYN (CONT'D)

I think you should talk to
Jessamyn.

INT. GOVERNMENT BUILDING - BUG LAB - MORNING

Nathan sits at his desk, just staring at his cell phone.
Eventually it rings. The screen reads MOM.

NATHAN

Mom? Listen, I'm waiting for a
very important-- Yes, you're
important-- please tell Dad not to
call me right now.

Nathan hangs up, His phone rings again almost immediately. The
screen reads DAD.

NATHAN

Hi, Dad. I just spoke to-- Yes,
she did. She-- Isn't she with
you-- Look, Dad, I have to go.
I'll call you guys tonight,
Probably.

Nathan hangs up his phone again. Then some time passes in
silence before it rings a third time. The screen reads
JESSAMYN. Nathan grabs it.

NATHAN

Jessamyn! Thank god.

JESSAMYN (V.O.)

Nathan, are you o--

NATHAN

I have to see you. Today. This
morning. Now.

JESSAMYN (V.O.)
 Okay... I'm home. Come over.
 What... what's wrong?

NATHAN
 I can't give you details over the
 phone.

JESSAMYN (V.O.)
 Oh. I... understand.

NATHAN
 I'll be there... as soon as I can
 be there, Pull all your... stuff.

Nathan hangs up and collects his things.

INT. GOVERNMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Nathan runs into Hough. Nearly literally.

HOUGH
 Done for the day, Spector?

NATHAN
 (distracted)
 Yes, sir. I need to--

HOUGH
 Then your report's on my desk?

NATHAN
 My--?

HOUGH
 You're not going to make me go
 where the bugs are to get it, are
 you? I hate that room.

NATHAN
 No, sir. Of course not.

HOUGH
 Right. And, Spector... maybe try
 to get some rest this weekend. You
 seem very tense. Do you fish?
 Maybe go fishing.

INT. GOVERNMENT BUILDING - BUG LAB - MOMENTS LATER

Nathan is back at his desk, in his coat and hat, looking
 through his bag.

After a quick search, he pulls out the slim file Hough gave him on Monday. He opens it... and finds a single piece of paper. Nathan shakes the file to see if there's anything else, but there isn't. He turns the sheet over, but there's nothing on the reverse.

Nathan grabs a pencil, starts reading and circling words.

HARD CUT TO:

**INT. GOVERNMENT BUILDING - HOUGH'S OFFICE - MOMENTS
LATER**

Nathan drops the file onto Hough's desk. ANGLE UP to Hough.

HOUGH
(calling after Nathan)
Go fishing!

INT. SUBWAY TRAIN - DAY

Nathan sits on the train, headed to Jessamyn's apartment. He stares out the window.

NATHAN (V.O.)
It's been said that a lottery is a tax on people who are bad at math. I've also heard, more seriously, that those who win large lottery jackpots often wind up no happier than they'd been before... and many of them wind up much less happy.

(beat)

But after the week I'd been having, when I finally opened the file from Hough -- which I'd forgotten all about -- I felt like I'd won the lottery.

(beat)

I'm not great with numbers, but I'm really good with words. And on that single sheet of paper in that file were words... a letter written to the editor of our city's largest newspaper. An anonymous letter, critical of Act NORMAL.

(beat)

Hough hadn't even had to tell me what he wanted. It was obvious.

(MORE)

NATHAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 He wanted me to tell him what I
 could about who might have written
 the letter. Of course Hough didn't
 tell me why he wanted to know.
 That was well above my pay grade.
 (beat)
 In any case, I had much more
 immediate concerns.

INT. JESSAMYN'S APARTMENT - LATER

Jessamyn opens the door and Nathan walks right into the living
 room. He takes off his outerwear, depositing it on the couch.

JESSAMYN
 Hi.
 (beat)
 What--

NATHAN
 My reflection. It's--

Nathan leads Jessamyn to the cheval glass. Only her reflection
 appears in it.

JESSAMYN
 You're a vampire!

NATHAN
 No... I don't think so.
 (beat)
 I don't remember being bitten by
 anything. Or anyone. And my
 reflection comes and goes. At
 least, it was coming and going
 before it went completely.
 (beat)
 And when it was still around, it
 was... doing its own thing.

Jessamyn steps away from the mirror.

JESSAMYN
 You mean it was coming and going
 in and out of sight?

NATHAN
 I mean it was coming and going as
 it pleased. Not getting dimmer and
 brighter. Getting up and walking
 away. Not following my lead.
 Acting on its own.
 (MORE)

NATHAN (CONT'D)

And then at some point it just took off for good.

JESSAMYN

Oh.

(beat)

Oh!

NATHAN

"Oh"?

JESSAMYN

Oh: That sounds familiar.

NATHAN

Does it? Do you know other people with this affliction? Is it common in your circle? Or... pentacle?

JESSAMYN

(amused)

It's not an affliction, Nathan. It's a spell!

NATHAN

A spell. And who put the spell on me?

JESSAMYN

(seriously)

Have you been seeing other witches, Nathan?

NATHAN

Of course not.

JESSAMYN

Then it must have been me.

NATHAN

You?

JESSAMYN

By accident, of course. Anyway, don't worry. I think I know what happened, and I'm pretty sure I know how to reverse it.

(beat)

I'll fix you, Nathan. Let me just get undressed.

Jessamyn leaves the room. Nathan looks around and sees the stool off to one side. He pulls it out and sits on it again.

Jessamyn returns, naked, holding her large tome, which she places on the side table and flips through.

JESSAMYN
(over her shoulder)
Eyes forward.

NATHAN
Always!

JESSAMYN
(cheerfully)
I've got it. Which do you want first -- the explanation or the counterspell?

NATHAN
The counterspell. I'll be able to focus on the explanation better when I'm... whole again.

JESSAMYN
Sure. Close your eyes.

NATHAN
Where's the bird?

JESSAMYN
On an errand.

Nathan closes his eyes. Jessamyn runs a hand through his hair. Nathan opens his eyes again.

NATHAN
Is that--?

JESSAMYN
No, that was for me. You have really great hair.

NATHAN
Ah... thanks?

JESSAMYN
Ok, relax.

Jessamyn murmurs an incantation, then:

JESSAMYN (CONT'D)
Done.

NATHAN
(opening his eyes)
Really?

Nathan gets up, walks to the cheval glass, sees his reflection. He moves his various body parts, testing out his reflection's reaction times. Everything looks good again.

JESSAMYN

You might want to keep your gesturing to a minimum. There's magic here, you know.

NATHAN

I'm all better!

JESSAMYN

All better.

NATHAN

Thank you!
(collapsing on the couch)
I was worried I was in some serious trouble.

JESSAMYN

I can't say for certain that you weren't, entirely.

NATHAN

No?
(beat)
Jessamyn, what the hell was that all about?

JESSAMYN

Are you hungry? I'm hungry. Let's go get food. I'll slip into something less comfortable.

INT. RESTAURANT - TABLE - AFTERNOON

Jessamyn wears jeans, boots, and a chunky sweater. She is not shy about eating in front of Nathan.

JESSAMYN

I'll try to be succinct. Nobody really likes a lecture. Professor.
(beat)
First of all: I'm sorry. I accidentally spelled you last time. I mean I put the wrong spell on you. By accident. And I apologize.

NATHAN

Fair enough.

JESSAMYN
When I tried to spell your hair--

NATHAN
You spelled my reflection.

JESSAMYN
Sort of. I actually summoned for you an enchanted entity that inhabited your reflection.

NATHAN
(dubious)
No.
(beat)
Seriously?

JESSAMYN
Seriously. A mirmyj. I summoned a mirmyj for you. But by accident.

NATHAN
And a... mirmyj...?

JESSAMYN
Inhabits a reflection. An umbryj inhabits a shadow.

NATHAN
(shaking his head)
But to what end?

JESSAMYN
Whatever end you want.

NATHAN
Why would I want my reflection... or my shadow... to be possessed--?

JESSAMYN
Inhabited.

NATHAN
--only for it to grow more and more independent until ultimately it ran off?

JESSAMYN
Well, that's not what norm-- what typically happens. As I said, I summoned your mirmyj by accident--

NATHAN
Yes. You've said. I believe you.

JESSAMYN

No, my point is that because it was by accident, and because I'm still relatively inexpert at this, the mirmyj I summoned was not very powerful. Or obedient. It was a pretty useless mirmyj, actually, but under the circumstances....

NATHAN

Useless. Harmless? What could a... powerful mirmyj do?

JESSAMYN

(uncomfortable)

Do you need another drink? We should get more drinks.

Jessamyn looks around for a waiter.

NATHAN

I still have to teach a class today.

(beat)

Jessamyn.

JESSAMYN

Nathan--

NATHAN

Jessamyn, you undid the spell. You can tell me now: What are mirmyjs and umbryjs for? Who would want to control his reflection or shadow? Who would want them to do something they themselves weren't doing? And what would the point be?

(recalling something)

My reflection squeezed my... its toothpaste tube, but nothing came out on the other side of the mirror, and certainly nothing happened on my side, this side.

(beat)

So what's the use?

JESSAMYN

(matter-of-factly)

A powerful mirmyj could do things on the other side that would have implications on this side.

NATHAN

Negative implications?

JESSAMYN
Possibly.

NATHAN
(hesitantly)
You accidentally used black magic.

JESSAMYN
No!
(beat)
No. The magic to summon a mirmyj
or umbryj is white. Mirmyjs and
umbryjs are neutral when summoned.

NATHAN
But they can be used to do bad
things.

JESSAMYN
And good things.

NATHAN
And bad things?

JESSAMYN
Yes.

NATHAN
Like?

JESSAMYN
How much time do you have?

INT. SUBWAY TRAIN - LATER

Nathan rides toward home, looking less peaked than he has recently, engrossed in a big blue book.

NATHAN (V.O.)
Rather than lecture me, Jessamyn
lent me a book. I thought it would
explain in detail the nature of
mirmyjs and umbryjs, but instead
it was a copy of the Encyclopaedia
of Superstitions. That actually
made more sense, since books with
practical information probably
didn't circulate among regular,
non-enchanted people.

(beat)
The contents of the Encyclopaedia
were fascinating all the same.

(MORE)

NATHAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Ancient beliefs lie at the root of many modern superstitions. We still say that breaking a mirror means seven years of bad luck. Time was, that bad luck was the loss of a close friend or a death in the house.

(beat)

Many mothers don't allow their babies to see themselves in a looking-glass before twelve months. Brides shouldn't look in mirrors while wearing their wedding gowns. Actors won't look into a mirror over the shoulder of another actor.

(beat)

The worst of all mirror omens, though, is for someone to look into one and see no reflection of himself. Death is... Well, to quote the book, "Death is certain then, and very near, for the soul has already departed."

(beat)

On the other hand, the Encyclopaedia also has entries for mistletoe, moles, cobwebs, confetti, fiddle-fish, and hot cross buns... which are other things people are sometimes afraid of.

INT. COLLEGE CLASSROOM - AFTERNOON

Nathan's students file in and take seats. Nathan scans them, looking for Carolyn... but he doesn't see her.

NATHAN

Anyone seen Carolyn?

Murmurs, but no information.

INT. COLLEGE - DEPARTMENT OFFICE - LATER

Nathan checks his mail cubby, pulls out a phone message slip, reads it.

EXT. COLLEGE - DEPARTMENT BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

Nathan bursts out of the building already on his phone.

NATHAN

Carolyn. I got--

(beat)

No, it's okay. Are you okay?

(beat)

Questioning? By whom?

(beat)

Are they -- no, never mind.

Listen, call me if there's anything I can do. Otherwise, just take care of yourself, and them.

(beat)

No, of course. Absolutely. You're welcome.

INT. JESSAMYN'S BROWNSTONE - APARTMENT DOOR - EVENING

Nathan knocks on the door. Jessamyn opens it.

JESSAMYN

Weren't you just here?

INT. JESSAMYN'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Jessamyn sits on her couch. Nathan paces. A minute passes.

JESSAMYN

Is there something wrong with your--

NATHAN

My conscience.

(beat)

What do your aunt and uncle do? For a living?

JESSAMYN

My uncle teaches at Harding.

NATHAN

What's his field?

JESSAMYN

Ancient Latin and Greek history, philosophy, and literature.

NATHAN

Wait. Carolyn's father is Dr. Hegel? The Dr. Hegel?

JESSAMYN

I guess so. To me he's just Uncle Jameson.

NATHAN

And your aunt...?

JESSAMYN

Sarah.

NATHAN

She's a lawyer?

JESSAMYN

That's right. How do you--

NATHAN

Damn it.

JESSAMYN

You don't like lawyers?

NATHAN

Do you know that your aunt and uncle were questioned by government agents this afternoon? I know because Carolyn told me.

JESSAMYN

Why did she tell you?

NATHAN

Because I'm her teacher. And she wasn't in class.

JESSAMYN

What were they questioned about?

NATHAN

I don't know. But I have an educated guess.

(beat)

Now I guess it's my turn to try to explain something... difficult.

(beat)

Teaching at Carolyn's college is one of two jobs of mine. The other is working for the government.

JESSAMYN

(not thrilled)

You work for the government?

NATHAN

In the smallest capacity you could imagine, yes. But from time to time....

(beat)

My area of expertise is word origins and usages. It's the kind of thing that most people don't ever think about. It's also the kind of thing that an expert can use to determine, for instance, who might have written an anonymous letter to a newspaper.

(beat)

And the identity of someone who writes an anonymous letter to a newspaper is the kind of thing that might be of interest to, say, the government.

JESSAMYN

And...?

NATHAN

And I think your aunt and uncle wrote an anonymous letter to the Sphere-Herald, critical of ACT Normal.

JESSAMYN

And if they did?

NATHAN

Then I think I might have helped undo their anonymity.

JESSAMYN

Why? Why would you do that? Is that... what you do?

NATHAN

Not usually, no. But that's what I was asked to do this week. And if I hadn't been so distracted--

JESSAMYN

You're going to blame it on me, now?

NATHAN

Well, yes. A little. I thought we could share the blame. Jessamyn, I was a head case all week!

(MORE)

NATHAN (CONT'D)

I did my analysis in five minutes, before running out to see you this afternoon, to have you undo the spell you put on me--

JESSAMYN

By accident.

NATHAN

--that made it impossible all the same for me to concentrate on anything, including the assignment I had to do to, you know, keep my job. Anyway, I don't know if one thing really led to the other. We don't know what the questioning was about.

JESSAMYN

I'll know as soon as Carolyn knows.

NATHAN

Will you call me?

JESSAMYN

(unsure)
I might.

INT. BROWN BAG (DIVE BAR) - NIGHT

Nathan sits at the bar, drinking to get drunk. He takes a shot, then orders another. After that shot, he takes out his phone and makes a call. He activates the speakerphone, then drops his phone onto the bar.

ARTIE (V.O.)

Nathan? What's up? You okay?

NATHAN

Come have a drink with me, Bugsy!

ARTIE (V.O.)

A drink? Nathan, are you-- Are you in a bar?

NATHAN

Yes, I am. And I am drinking. And you should be here drinking with me.

ARTIE (V.O.)
 Wordie, you know I can't do that.
 Not right now, anyway.
 (beat)
 Hey, are you all right? You seemed
 out of it most of the week.

NATHAN
 Yeah?

ARTIE (V.O.)
 You almost knocked me down this
 morning.

NATHAN
 I'm okay. Sorry about that.
 Anyway, I gotta go. See you in
 school on Monday.

ARTIE (V.O.)
 In sch--?

Nathan ends the call and waves for another drink.

INT. NATHAN'S APARTMENT - LATER

Nathan returns home and heads to his fridge, looking for something to eat. He finds nothing appetizing.

NATHAN (V.O.)
 Forensic linguistics has a long
 and admirable history. Forensic
 linguists have given expert
 testimony that has both convicted
 and acquitted, as appropriate.

Nathan sits at the small, sad table in his apartment.

NATHAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 In Australia, a forensic linguist
 compared a missing woman's
 "farewell letter" to samples of
 her "other" writings -- and some
 of her husband's -- and concluded
 -- based on similarities in
 sentence breaks and omitted
 prepositions, among other things
 -- that the letter had been
 composed by the husband, who
 consequently confessed to having
 written it and also to murdering
 his wife.

Nathan gets up from the table to scan his bookshelf, but he finds nothing he wants to read.

NATHAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Forensic linguistics contributed significantly in England to the vindication -- sadly, more than forty years too late -- of a feeble-minded nineteen-year-old who was in fact already in police custody when someone else fatally shot the victim.

INT. NATHAN'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nathan walks into his bedroom and stares out the window.

NATHAN (V.O.)
Most recently, forensic etymologist Nathan Spector identified not a murderer or a terrorist or even a cat burglar, but the authors of a non-threatening, 250-word letter to a newspaper. It wasn't libelous, abusive, or malicious, though it was anonymous.

Nathan collapses onto his bed and stares at the ceiling.

NATHAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I wouldn't call myself a man of principle, but I'm sure that had I considered my assignment at any length I'd have at least asked Hough why the government wanted to know who'd written the letter.

Nathan gets out of bed, kneels beside it, pulls out from under the cheap, metal frame a lockbox.

NATHAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I'd practically drawn the government a roadmap to the door of Dr. and Mrs. Hegel, coincidentally the parents of a student in one of my classes. What if it had been my own parents?

Nathan opens the lockbox and removes a handgun. Turns it over in his hands.

NATHAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
When I'd gone to work for the
government, after training in
personal defense and
investigation, I'd been issued a
firearm.

INT. NATHAN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nathan takes the handgun to a desk, sits with his back to us.

NATHAN (V.O.)
I'd never fired that gun to defend
myself.

We leave Nathan in the living room....

INT. NATHAN'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

After a tense moment... Nathan enters and gets back into bed.

NATHAN (V.O.)
On Monday, I would resign my
government job.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CLOSE ON DESK - CONTINUOUS

Nathan's gun, government ID card, and old-school pager sit on
his desk.

INT. NATHAN'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - MORNING (SATURDAY)

It's a new day. Nathan's bed is empty and unmade.

NATHAN (V.O.)
I didn't resign on Monday, I'll
just tell you now.

INT. NATHAN'S APARTMENT - MONTAGE

Nathan works on a crossword puzzle in a book... until he throws
the book across the room. Then he throws his pen.

Nathan sits with a guitar, tuning a STRING until it POPS. Then
he tightens each of the remaining five STRINGS until they POP.

Nathan tries to juggle balled up socks. Eventually he just
throws his socks across the room.

Nathan reads the Encyclopaedia of Superstitions.

Nathan practices shuffling cards. Then he tosses each card across the room. Not into a hat, just across the room.

Nathan turns on his TV and flips through the channels. Then he throws his remote across the room.

Nathan eats olives from the jar. Mustard from the bottle. Dry cereal from the box. Potato flakes from the bag.

Nathan sits on his couch and holds his gun. He points it at the distance and pulls the trigger. CLICK.

NATHAN (V.O.)

I spent the weekend moping, mostly. Sleeping as much as possible, and then, when I just couldn't stay in bed any longer, when I was in actual physical pain from being immobile... moping.

(beat)

But by "moping" I don't mean just sitting on my couch for hours on end, staring into the middle distance, feeling sorry for myself. I mean staying in my apartment for two days and feeling guilty but periodically, maybe once an hour, doing something that might have taken my mind off what I was feeling guilty about.

(beat)

I don't remember half of the different things I did, or which were and which were not effective at distracting me.

INT. NATHAN'S APARTMENT - MONTAGE - MORNING (MONDAY)

Nathan collects the trash from around his apartment -- the food jars and boxes and bottles. He puts his socks in the hamper. He picks up the playing cards. He puts his guitar away. Finally, he showers, shaves, and gets dressed.

NATHAN (V.O.)

I didn't resign from my government job on Monday: I called in sick. I couldn't bring myself to go back to the field office yet, even if it was to be for the last time.

(MORE)

NATHAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 (beat)
 I didn't mope on Monday morning,
 though. A man can only mope so
 much, and I was all moped out.

INT. COLLEGE - HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

Nathan stands outside the classroom door. When he see Carolyn,
 he leads her aside.

NATHAN
 Are you all right?

CAROLYN
 I'm fine. Thanks. Are you?

NATHAN
 Yes. And I owe you an apology.
 Maybe more than one.

CAROLYN
 For what?

NATHAN
 Let's start with not believing
 that you can see auras.

CAROLYN
 It's okay. A lot of people don't
 believe it.
 (beat)
 The good news is: Your aura's back
 to normal.

INT. COLLEGE CLASSROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Carolyn enters and takes her seat. Nathan enters and sits
 behind his desk.

NATHAN
 Okay, people. Midterms. You'll
 have forty minutes to compose--

A DEVICE BEEPS.

NATHAN (CONT'D)
 Come on, guys. You know the rule--

The DEVICE BEEPS again.

NATHAN (CONT'D)
Seriously?

The DEVICE BEEPS a third time. The students murmur. A STUDENT in the front row speaks up:

STUDENT
Professor...? I think it's you.

The BEEPING continues. It is not a phone ringing. Nathan tilts his head toward his bag on the floor. Then he reaches into the bag and pulls out his PAGER. It BEEPS. He stops it beeping.

NATHAN
I'll be right back.

Nathan leaves the classroom. We remain. The students shuffle in their seats curiously. After a moment, Nathan returns.

NATHAN
(grabbing his things)
Carolyn, you're in charge. Collect all the papers at the end of the exam and drop them off with the department secretary. I... I have to leave. Keep your eyes on your own essays, and... enjoy your winter break.

INT. GOVERNMENT BUILDING - AUDITORIUM - LATER

Scores of government agents are filing in and taking seats. Nathan stays toward the back. Artie taps him on the shoulder.

ARTIE
Hey. You look much better.

NATHAN
You know what this is about?

ARTIE
I do not.

They sit in the last row. The room is abuzz. FIELD OFFICE EXECUTIVE CHARLES WRIGHT (late 50s) takes the stage to stand behind a lectern.

WRIGHT
(into microphone)
If you'll please settle in. We have a situation.

The room gets quiet immediately.

WRIGHT (CONT'D)
Thank you.
(MORE)

WRIGHT (CONT'D)

This information is not for public consumption. No one is to speak to the press.

(beat)

Yesterday evening, a legislative aide to Senator Bitterman was found dead at her headquarters here in the city.

A slight murmur rises from the audience.

WRIGHT (CONT'D)

The body of Brandon Andrews, age thirty-three and in excellent health by all accounts, including that of the medical examiner, was discovered by a colleague at four forty-eight p.m. yesterday in the library at the senator's local headquarters in Laurence Hill.

(beat)

Mr. Andrews was alone, and the library was locked from the inside. So far, we have no suspects. Nor an apparent cause of death.

(beat)

It would seem that Mr. Andrews just... died.

Another murmur from the crowd.

WRIGHT (CONT'D)

I'm asking everyone to pitch in. Senator Bitterman is at the Capitol this week. She has been informed. She will be back in town next Monday. I want her aide's death explained by this Friday. The senator's headquarters are open for regular business. The room where the body was found is not. This is our top priority.

(beat)

Go.

EXT. CITY PARK - NIGHT

Nathan walks around the park.

NATHAN (V.O.)

Normally, a pair of agents would have been assigned to a run-of-the-mill homicide... but this wasn't quite run-of-the-mill.

(beat)

For one thing, the deceased worked for capital-S Someone capital-I Important. And even though it wasn't Senator Bitterman who'd been found dead, the Powers That Be obviously didn't want her to be found dead next.

INT. SUBWAY TRAIN - LATER

Nathan rides, seated.

NATHAN (V.O.)

The other unusual thing was that this aide to Someone Important had no apparent reason to be dead. And people do not just die. It's extraordinarily rare, anyway.

INT. NATHAN'S APARTMENT - LATER

Nathan returns home, hangs up his coat, drops his bag, and heads into his bathroom.

NATHAN (V.O.)

A person is more likely to burst into flames than simply stop living. Often, even against all odds, people live. The human body is designed to keep on keeping on. Dying is the last thing your body wants to do.

INT. NATHAN'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - LATER

Nathan brushes his teeth.

NATHAN (V.O.)

So when one stops, and when it belongs to someone aged thirty-three and in good health who works for the government, and in particular in a confidential capacity to a senator, it becomes something to be looked into carefully.

INT. NATHAN'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - LATER

Nathan tosses and turns in bed.

NATHAN (V.O.)

It took me a long time to get to sleep that night. I kept thinking about Brandon Andrews, in perfect health but dead.

(beat)

It could have been worse. I could have been thinking, still, about Dr. and Mrs. Hegel, Carolyn's parents. But what about Brandon Andrews's parents, who also would be visited by government agents, not for questioning but to be told that their son was dead, and for no apparent reason?

(beat)

What if my parents had to be told that I'd suddenly died, maybe in the line of duty... marking papers?

(beat)

What if I suddenly died?

(beat)

If people were now suddenly dying for no reason, why not me?

**INT. GOVERNMENT BUILDING - BUG LAB - AFTERNOON
(TUESDAY)**

Nathan enters and sees Artie at his workstation, looking into a microscope.

NATHAN

Been to the scene?

ARTIE

(not looking up)

Yeah.

NATHAN
And what'd you find?

ARTIE
Nothing.
(beat)
Absolutely nothing.

NATHAN
Then what are you looking at?

ARTIE
My hand.

Nathan walks over to Artie, sees Artie's not kidding.

NATHAN
What's gotten into you?

Artie finally looks up. He looks despondent.

ARTIE
I don't know.
(beat)
No, that's not true. It's this case. It's got everyone a little spooked.

NATHAN
Spooked how?

ARTIE
Wondering what it's all about. Until yesterday, a person only died for a reason. Today, you can die for none at all.

NATHAN
Artie, slow down. Listen to me for a minute. This... thing has me spooked, too, but we shouldn't be. We know better than that. Nobody dies for no reason.

ARTIE
(unconvinced)
Right.

NATHAN
Dude. Take your hand out of the microscope and talk to me. Why does a person die?

ARTIE
There are hundreds of ways--

NATHAN

No. Everyone who dies dies for the exact same reason. Right?

ARTIE

(mechanically)

Irreversible heart failure and consequent lack of oxygen to the brain.

NATHAN

Correct. Now, what are the four general causes of death?

ARTIE

Disease, accident, suicide, homicide.

NATHAN

And which can we rule out right away here?

ARTIE

None.

NATHAN

Why none?

ARTIE

Insufficient evidence.

NATHAN

Of what?

ARTIE

Of it not being any of the four.

NATHAN

Artie, that's ass-backward. You don't not rule out a cause of death because there's insufficient evidence that it wasn't the cause. You rule it out when there's no evidence that it was.

ARTIE

Yeah, but...

NATHAN

Let's do this the usual way, unusual though the circumstances seem. Now, which can we rule out?

ARTIE

Suicide.

NATHAN

I agree. What about disease? The M.E. found zero evidence of disease. At least, nothing external.

ARTIE

Or internal. Autopsy's been done. We got the supplemental report this morning.

NATHAN

Oh. And?

ARTIE

No disease. Nothing bad enough to kill the kid, anyway.

NATHAN

So not suicide and not disease.

ARTIE

So you think it was an accident?

NATHAN

We've only ruled out two--

ARTIE

You're not ruling out homicide?

NATHAN

You didn't.

ARTIE

Yeah, well... but he was in a locked room. And there's no evidence of murder. And as you said--

NATHAN

Touché. But you always rule out homicide last.

(beat)

So, did Brandon Andrews have an accident?

ARTIE

No. He was reading. He was sitting at a library table, behind a closed door, doing research.

NATHAN

Maybe he read something really scary.

ARTIE
That's not impossible.

NATHAN
What?

ARTIE
A person can die of fright.
Perfectly healthy people have died
of fright.

NATHAN
Sure, but it's basically cardiac
arrest that kills a person who
dies of so-called fright. They
work themselves up over something,
often the fear of dying. It might
even be the irony that kills them.

After a moment:

ARTIE
You think Brandon Andrews was
murdered.

NATHAN
I think we have to assume that he
was. I think the government is
assuming that he was.

ARTIE
So where did this just get us?

NATHAN
It got us thinking that a young,
healthy man did not simply die for
no reason, and that there's a
killer out there who needs to be
found. And we're the ones who are
going to find him. Well, not you
and me, probably. Definitely not
me.

(beat)
I might have had a chance if
Brandon Andrews had died of fright
from something he'd read. That's
more my thing.

Artie starts packing some gear with renewed focus.

NATHAN (CONT'D)
Going somewhere, Buggy?

ARTIE
Back to the scene. Wanna come?

EXT. SENATOR'S OFFICES - LATER

A quaint, colonial-era townhouse converted into a local headquarters for Senator Bitterman. Nathan and Artie enter through the front door, each carrying a medium-sized bag.

INT. SENATOR'S OFFICES - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

The men flash badges to a receptionist at a desk and sidestep the metal detector, heading directly to the central staircase.

INT. SENATOR'S OFFICES - UPSTAIRS - CONTINUOUS

They walk down a hallway, passing various staffers, to the outer doors of the library. French doors. They walk in.

INT. SENATOR'S OFFICES - LIBRARY - CONTINUOUS

The scene of the crime. A gorgeous, old-fashioned library. Floor-to-ceiling bookcases on three of the four walls. Rolling library ladders. A large wooden table with reading lamps on it and sturdy chairs around it. Sconces on the wall without books. Carpet underfoot. A chandelier overhead.

Nathan and Artie unpack the bags, placing gear on the floor.

NATHAN

Bugsy?

ARTIE

Hm?

NATHAN

Who would want to kill Brandon Andrews?

ARTIE

As far as we know, no one. His parents and colleagues all described him as someone that everybody liked.

NATHAN

Everybody? Come on. No one is liked by everybody. Even someone liked by everybody isn't liked by everybody.

ARTIE

Be that as it may, the working assumption is that Brandon Andrews did not know his killer.

NATHAN

He didn't owe anyone money?

ARTIE

No.

NATHAN

Did he renege on a favor he'd promised to the wrong person? He was an aide to a senator. Maybe he'd been peddling his influence and oversold himself.

(beat)

What about his co-workers?

ARTIE

All questioned and cleared.

NATHAN

He never hogged the copier or took credit for someone else's good job or ate food from the fridge that wasn't his? At least someone here would have had the opportunity--

ARTIE

Except that this room was locked when the victim died, and he was alone in here.

Artie crouches and investigates the carpet with a magnifying glass and tweezers. Nathan walks around the room.

ARTIE

Turn off the light for me, please?

Nathan walks to the switch that controls the chandelier.

NATHAN

In the mood for romance?

Artie has donned goggles and is holding an ultraviolet rod.

ARTIE

Glomance.

Nathan turns off the lights. Artie scans the floor.

NATHAN

Oontz. Oontz. Oontz.

ARTIE

You're being pretty flip for someone investigating a murder.

NATHAN

You're right. I'm sorry. I must be overcompensating. Also...

ARTIE

What?

NATHAN

Well, it's weird. I know that somebody died in this room, in one of those chairs, but right now, it's just you and me in here. I guess it's just hard to imagine, without seeing--

ARTIE

You can see the body.

NATHAN

What?

ARTIE

Andrews's body. It's at the morgue. You can see it there.

NATHAN

Oh. No. No, that's just fine.

ARTIE

Hey, hit the lights again. There's still nothing here.

(beat)

Besides what you'd expect to find in a carpet.

NATHAN

(turning on the lights)

I suspect that's pretty different for you and me.

ARTIE

Oh, for sure.

(beat)

I'm done. I'm just gonna use the restroom, then we can go.

Artie leaves the library. Nathan walks around the table, first looking at the chairs, then eyeing the rolling ladders. Finally he looks out the doors and sees no one in the hall.

Nathan climbs onto the rolling ladder on the middle wall and pushes off the back wall. As he slides, he extends one arm as if he's going to sing... but the table catches his eye.

When the ladder stops sliding, Nathan climbs down again, slowly. He walks toward the table. He looks at the table intently but hesitantly as he walks to the farthest chair.

Nathan pulls out the chair, then stands on it, to be able to look down at the table from just above it....

In the sheen of the stained and lacquered table, Nathan sees a reflection of the face of BRANDON ANDREWS, contorted, pained, frozen. The face of someone who was strangled to death.

INT. SENATOR'S OFFICES - RESTROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Artie comes out of the restroom and walks in the hallways until he reaches the library, where Nathan is standing outside, both bags at his feet.

ARTIE
(noticing the bags)
I guess we're ready to leave.

EXT. SENATOR'S OFFICES - ARTIE'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Artie puts the bags into the trunk of his car while Nathan finishes a phone call several feet away.

ARTIE
Take you back to the office?

NATHAN
(discomposed)
Know what? I'm gonna meet up with
a friend near here.

ARTIE
Must be nice to be young and
irresponsible.
(getting into the car)
Have fun. Thanks for the company.
And the pep talk.

Artie drives off. Nathan waves weakly. As soon as Artie's car is down the road, Nathan throws up in the street.

INT. POUR HOUSE (TAVERN) - MOMENTS LATER

Nathan walks in the front door, wiping his mouth. He gets a beer from the bartender and takes it to a table.

NATHAN (V.O.)

I decided that the best thing for the taste in my mouth and the image in my brain was a beer.

(beat)

Not that I thought I'd ever be able to fully erase the mental picture of Brandon Andrews, strangled... and not that I wouldn't be returning to the room where Brandon Andrews, strangled, somehow still was, in some form or fashion.

(beat)

All the same, I wanted a beer. And I had about twenty minutes to...

(beat)

To spend.

EXT. CITY STREETS - LATER

Nathan walks around the block from the Pour House back to the Senator's townhouse offices. As he approaches from one direction, Jessamyn approaches from the other, wearing a vintage knapsack. When they meet:

JESSAMYN

You okay?

NATHAN

Not really, no.

INT. SENATOR'S OFFICES - LIBRARY - MOMENTS LATER

Nathan leads Jessamyn in, then closes and locks the door behind them. Nathan turns on the light.

JESSAMYN

I brought what you asked for. Do you have the cloak and a dagger?

NATHAN

This is serious, Jessamyn. Take out the sheet.

(off her expression)

Please.

Jessamyn removes from her bag a large, dark bedsheet. Nathan moves a chair to the French doors, stands on it, then motions for Jessamyn to hand him the sheet. She does. Nathan wedges an edge into the space above the doors, covering the glass panes.

JESSAMYN
 (watching him)
 Is this going to get kinky? Is the
 mirror going on the ceiling?

Nathan gets down again, moves the chair back. Jessamyn hands him a tabletop mirror from her bag.

NATHAN
 Have you ever seen a dead body?

JESSAMYN
 (grimacing)
 No.

NATHAN
 You're going to now.

JESSAMYN
 Here?

NATHAN
 Sort of.
 (beat)
 Jessamyn, there's something in
 this room that doesn't belong
 here. I'm going to show it to you.
 (beat)
 It's not pleasant. But I need you
 to see it.

JESSAMYN
 Why?

NATHAN
 Because I need you to explain it
 to me.

Nathan places the mirror on the table where it would have reflected the image of someone sitting in the chair that Brandon Andrews sat in. Nathan motions for Jessamyn to look.

Jessamyn comes around, and she sees in the mirror a clear reflection of Brandon Andrews, violently asphyxiated.

Jessamyn shrieks, brings her hands to her mouth. Nathan brings his hands to Jessamyn's mouth as well.

JESSAMYN
(whispering)
What... who is that?

INT. SENATOR'S OFFICES - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Nathan brings a cup of water to the library, opening the door and entering.

INT. SENATOR'S OFFICES - LIBRARY - CONTINUOUS

Nathan closes and locks the door again. He hands Jessamyn, seated at the other end of the table, the cup of water. The mirror is no longer on the table.

NATHAN
The man you saw was an aide to Senator Leonora Bitterman. He was found dead, sitting in that chair, Sunday afternoon. Cause of death is unknown. Completely unknown.

JESSAMYN
But he was... wasn't he... strangled?

NATHAN
The body of Brandon Andrews, the real body, the one that was found in this room, is unmolested. It's... there's nothing wrong with it. That's the mystery. That's what all this is: Brandon Andrews apparently died for no reason.

JESSAMYN
He wasn't strangled.

NATHAN
He was reading. Alone. With the door locked. To all appearances, he simply... died.

JESSAMYN
But that--?

NATHAN
That is what I need you to explain to me: the reflection of a dead man who is not in this room.

JESSAMYN
You think... it's magic?

NATHAN

I do. And not the good kind. Not the kind that shortens your hair.

JESSAMYN

(getting to her feet)
I think I need to throw up.

NATHAN

Yeah. It helps.

INT. SENATOR'S OFFICES - LIBRARY - MOMENTS LATER

Jessamyn returns, looking much less green. Nathan is pacing.

JESSAMYN

What you really want to know is whether this man was killed by someone using a mirmyj.

NATHAN

Yes.

JESSAMYN

It's absolutely possible. But there are some things that make it seem unlikely.

NATHAN

What things?

JESSAMYN

Well, to start: We brought the mirror. We brought the reflection. A mirmyj lives on the other side of the mirror, in what we call the Aspect Realm. There are no other mirrors in this room.

(beat)

There's really nothing in this room that reflects at all.

NATHAN

The table does. That's where I first saw the... it.

JESSAMYN

(peering at the table)

I see it.

(beat)

But the table would only reflect someone... well, sitting at the table. Or standing at it. You said... Andrew?

NATHAN

Brandon. Brandon Andrews.

JESSAMYN

You said that Brandon was alone in this room.

NATHAN

With the door locked. Wait.

(beat)

Why was the door locked?

JESSAMYN

Are you asking me?

NATHAN

(distracted)

Andrews was working in this room, alone, with the door locked. Why would he have locked the door? Who would have bothered him?

JESSAMYN

Co-workers, probably.

NATHAN

That seems like overkill. Pardon the expression.

(beat)

No, he must have wanted to keep someone else out. So either he did know that he was in mortal danger, or--

JESSAMYN

Or?

NATHAN

Or he was merely in danger of being disturbed. Not by a co-worker, though. But who else might have been walking by the library? Who would he want to keep out?

(beat)

I'll be right back.

Nathan leaves the library.

INT. SENATOR'S OFFICES - CONTINUOUS

Nathan walks downstairs and to the receptionist's desk in the foyer. They have a brief conversation that we do not hear.

NATHAN (V.O.)

In hindsight, it's a little troubling that of all the agents working the locked-room mystery I was the one who wondered why the room was locked in the first place.

INT. SENATOR'S OFFICES - LIBRARY - MOMENTS LATER

Nathan enters once more. He's holding a brochure.

JESSAMYN

Well?

NATHAN

(waving the brochure)

They give tours of this building. It's a national landmark, so they give tours. On Sundays.

(beat)

So Brandon Andrews must have been working on Sunday and must have locked the door in case someone on a tour tried to walk into the library, even innocently. And he was probably sitting with his back to the door so he wouldn't be distracted by the gawking rabble.

(beat)

Someone on a tour could have brought a mirmyj and killed Brandon Andrews from the hallway, outside the locked doors. Yes?

JESSAMYN

Well... no. There's still the problem of the reflection. Someone could have killed Brandon with a mirmyj from the other side of those doors if a mirror was where our mirror was... but there wasn't.

Nathan thinks... then holds up a finger. He takes out his phone and makes a call in a corner of the room. Jessamyn looks at books on the shelves until:

NATHAN

Why would the reflection still be here? Now, I mean.

JESSAMYN

Because the killer was sloppy,
maybe pressed for time. Or because
the killing was an accident.

NATHAN

Elaborate, please?

JESSAMYN

Someone with experience using a
mirmyj to kill would know that the
corpse would have two reflections:
the molested reflection, to borrow
your word, being separate and
detached from the body on this
side... and its reflection.

NATHAN

Slow down.

(beat)

What?

JESSAMYN

(patiently)

Because the spirit, the... essence
of the person is disconnected from
the body at death, the reflection
that was harmed, in the Aspect
Realm, will stay put, even if the
body on this side is moved.

NATHAN

How do you know all of this?

JESSAMYN

I've read. Case studies.

(beat)

So the experienced, level-headed,
magic-using killer would spell
away the violated reflection of
the corpse. Before leaving.

NATHAN

If the murder was intentional.

JESSAMYN

Granted. But if the killer didn't
mean to kill, if the mirmyj user
didn't know that their mirmyj had
killed--

Nathan nods. Then:

NATHAN

Can you spell away the reflection?

JESSAMYN

Get rid of it? Are you sure you want to? Isn't it... evidence?

NATHAN

It's evidence that Brandon Andrews was killed by a magic user. If the government sees it, the repercussions to the enchanted community will be enormous.

(beat)

And I figure I owe the community one.

EXT. SENATOR'S OFFICES - AFTERNOON - MOMENTS LATER

Nathan and Jessamyn walk away from the building.

JESSAMYN

Now. What do you know?

NATHAN

Brandon Andrews was working on a laptop.

JESSAMYN

And?

NATHAN

Most laptop screens, when you don't do anything for a few minutes, go dark. And when the screen goes dark...

(beat)

Instant mirror.

INT. JESSAMYN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Nathan and Jessamyn sit on the couch, drinking beers.

NATHAN

The senator's headquarters must ask visitors to sign in. You must have to put your name in a guest book or something. I can ask for a copy of that in the morning.

JESSAMYN

And then? You're going to talk to everyone who took a tour?

NATHAN

Everyone? How many people could possibly be interested in seeing the senator's local headquarters? It's a nice house, sure, but on the inside it's just like any other office.

(gesturing like a guide)

"Here we have a Class A fire extinguisher. And here's the minimum wage poster, in English and Spanish...."

JESSAMYN

Okay, but still. What if thirty people were there on Sunday?

NATHAN

Then I'll have to talk to thirty people.

(beat)

But anyway, I should be able to narrow down the field some, maybe a lot, before I begin my interviews.

JESSAMYN

How?

NATHAN

(hesitant)

Well...

JESSAMYN

Well...?

NATHAN

The government keeps... lists.

JESSAMYN

Lists. Lists of...?

NATHAN

Lists of persons.

JESSAMYN

Persons who...?

NATHAN

Persons suspected of being magic users.

JESSAMYN

(miffed)

Oh. Of course. Those kinds of lists.

(beat)

Have you seen those lists?

NATHAN

No. Those lists are restricted.

INT. JESSAMYN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Nathan and Jessamyn are snuggled close on the couch, under a blanket. Jessamyn rests her head on Nathan's shoulder.

NATHAN

Listen... I need to know how a mirmyj works. Like--

JESSAMYN

Like--?

NATHAN

Like... well, you said, the first time we talked about them, that a mirmyj is a creature--

JESSAMYN

It's an entity.

NATHAN

...an entity that inhabits a person's reflection, on the other side of a mirror. And that other side... is it... is it the whole world, only in reverse? Or is it... is it just what can be seen in that mirror from this side?

JESSAMYN

I don't know what it's like on the other side of a mirror. I've never been.

NATHAN

Fair enough.

(beat)

So... a magic user summons a mirmyj, let's assume on purpose, and with the intent to kill someone else.

(MORE)

NATHAN (CONT'D)

The summoner then arranges to be in the same place at the same time with his intended victim, or at least to have his reflection and that of his victim in the same reflective surface.

(beat)

The summoner then does what?

JESSAMYN

Commands his mirmyj. To kill.

NATHAN

To kill the victim?

JESSAMYN

To kill the victim's reflection.

NATHAN

And how does the mirmyj do that? In any way that a person on this side might kill another person on this side?

JESSAMYN

No. A reflection can only be killed -- but not harmed, by the way, it's all or nothing -- directly. That is, directly by the mirmyj.

NATHAN

Can I get an example?

JESSAMYN

Sure: A mirmyj can't poison a reflection.

NATHAN

So, when you say directly, you mean through direct physical contact. Why?

JESSAMYN

Because the... influence of a mirmyj extends only through touch. Overlap, let's call it.

(beat)

If a mirmyj picks up a... a spoon on the other side, a mirror would show the mirmyj holding that spoon, even if the summoner didn't pick up a spoon.

(MORE)

JESSAMYN (CONT'D)

As soon as the mirmyj lets go of the spoon, though, the reflection of the spoon goes right back to its expected place.

NATHAN

It wouldn't fall to the floor.

JESSAMYN

It would not fall to the floor. It would instantaneously return to being an accurate reflection of reality.

NATHAN

So a mirmyj could kill another reflection with a knife -- or even a spoon -- as long as the mirmyj holds the knife... but a mirmyj couldn't throw a knife at another reflection?

JESSAMYN

Exactly.

NATHAN

Huh. I get it. But I have to wonder who makes up these rules.

(beat)

Last question. For now.

(beat)

What if the victim, on this side, saw what was happening on the other side of the mirror? Saw his own reflection being killed by a mirmyj? What could he do?

JESSAMYN

Nothing.

(beat)

Unless he's got a mirmyj of his own... or can otherwise function on the other side... there would be nothing he could do from here.

(beat)

Even stopping the person controlling the mirmyj on this side wouldn't do it. The command has already been given.

NATHAN
 (horrified)
 The victim would have to watch
 himself be killed.

JESSAMYN
 Well, he could look away, until it
 was over, at which point--

NATHAN
 He would be dead on this side.

A respectful pause, then:

JESSAMYN
 Nathan? What are you going to do
 when you find Brandon Andrews's
 killer?

NATHAN
 I don't know.
 (beat)
 I can't turn him over to the
 government. I suppose I have to
 turn him over to... whoever in
 your community killers get turned
 over to.

JESSAMYN
 Even if it was an accident.

NATHAN
 Even if.

JESSAMYN
 You know, Nathan, even if it was
 an accident, the killer could
 still be dangerous.

NATHAN
 Killers generally are.

JESSAMYN
 You know what I mean.

NATHAN
 I do. So... I wonder if there's a
 way to buy some insurance.
 Something like a bullet-proof vest
 that would stop a mirmyj.

JESSAMYN
 The only thing that will stop a
 mirmyj, Nathan--

NATHAN

Is another mirmyj. I know.
 (beat)
 I want you to summon for me
 another mirmyj.

JESSAMYN

Are you serious?
 (beat)
 I could do that, but... remember
 what happened the first time? When
 I summoned you a mirmyj by
 accident?

NATHAN

As if it were just last week...
 and it nearly drove me insane.

JESSAMYN

Yes, well, your debatable sanity
 aside, I summoned you a
 mischievous mirmyj because those
 are the easiest to summon, and I
 hadn't meant to summon one at all.

NATHAN

I feel like we've had this
 conversation before.

JESSAMYN

Not this part: I told you that I'm
 not a powerful witch. Even if I
 summoned a mirmyj for you
 intentionally, I could only summon
 one a little bit more compliant.
 You'd never be able to control it.
 It could wander off like your last
 one did. And if it's not there
 when you need it...?

Nathan nods, seeing Jessamyn's point. Then:

NATHAN

You said that a person could stop
 a mirmyj with a mirmyj of his own
or the ability to function on the
 other side of the mirror another
 way.

(beat)

What if a person inhabited his own
 reflection?

JESSAMYN

What if... what?

INT. GOVERNMENT BUILDING - BUG LAB - MORNING

Artie enters and is surprised to find Nathan already at his desk, flipping through a sheaf of photocopied pages.

NATHAN

Artie. What time did Brandon Andrews die?

ARTIE

Gah! What... what time... quarter to five. No, wait.

(looks at a paper on his desk)

He was found at four forty-five. Time of death was put an hour earlier.

NATHAN

Quarter to four. Thank you.

Nathan pulls one sheet from his bunch and tosses the rest into his garbage pail.

ARTIE

You... you got something?

NATHAN

Me? No. No, I was just curious.

(beat)

That's not true. I have a... thought.

ARTIE

That's something. What's your thought?

NATHAN

Do you have access to the... lists?

ARTIE

Lists?

NATHAN

Bugsy, there's a time to be coy, and there's a time to just be helpful.

ARTIE

So you want to know if I have access to the lists.

(beat)

I do not.

(MORE)

ARTIE (CONT'D)
 (off Nathan's reaction)
 But I know someone who does.

INT. GOVERNMENT BUILDING - BUG LAB - MOMENTS LATER

Nathan sits at his desk, staring at the one sheet of paper he kept. He taps a pen against his own head.

NATHAN (V.O.)
 While Artie was trying to get me a peek at the confidential and guarded files the government keeps on suspected magic users, I looked over the short roll of persons I would be cross-referencing against those files.

(beat)
 There were seven names. I was surprised that even that many people had taken a tour of Senator Bitterman's headquarters in our city, although I did notice that two of the visitors were a married couple, sharing a last name and address.

Over Nathan's shoulder, we see the seven handwritten names, each with a street address next to it:

**Todd Kaczmarek
 Cary Benson
 Valerie McCaffery
 Donald McCaffery
 Anna Graham
 George Gelfand
 Jordan Almond**

NATHAN
 Jordan... Almond? Really?
 (beat)
 That's nuts.

Artie returns to the room.

ARTIE
 I can't get us into the files. However, if you would like to know if a particular person has a file, that can be arranged.

NATHAN
 (handing Artie the paper)
 That's good enough.

EXT. GOVERNMENT BUILDING - LATER

Nathan and Artie are outside again, with hot drinks again. Nathan holds his list. Two names are now starred: *Todd Kaczmarek & *Valerie McCaffery.

ARTIE

So what's this all about, Wordie?

NATHAN

It's... it's something--

ARTIE

You know we don't officially believe they have any... powers, right?

NATHAN

Who?

ARTIE

The ones on the lists. We keep those lists, but the government doesn't really think anyone is... different.

NATHAN

But there's legislation. Act NORMAL--?

ARTIE

Nathan, there's all kinds of ridiculous laws on the books. In this city, you can't eat peanuts in a church.

NATHAN

No peanuts in church?

ARTIE

So just because there's a law--

NATHAN

A federal law.

ARTIE

As if that makes a difference. I'm just saying that a star next to a name on that list of yours isn't necessarily a mark against a person.

NATHAN

I know that, Buggy.

(MORE)

NATHAN (CONT'D)

But someone on the list -- not my list, the big list -- wouldn't know that. The mere passage of Act NORMAL is a slap in the face to an entire community, at the very least. And not everyone who gets slapped turns the other cheek.

ARTIE

You think there's going to be backlash?

NATHAN

I think there already has been.

ARTIE

You think someone killed Brandon Andrews in protest of Act NORMAL.

NATHAN

Sort of. Maybe.

After a moment:

ARTIE

My brother's on the lists.

NATHAN

What?

ARTIE

Yup, Aaron Combs. My brother used to perform at children's birthday parties. When he was a teenager. Twenty years ago. Smoke-and-mirrors stuff. He made balloon animals, too.

(beat)

My point, Nathan, is that these lists are bullshit. Need-to-know, password-protected bullshit. The government doesn't believe in real magic.

NATHAN

Do you?

ARTIE

No. Do you?

NATHAN

What you and I believe might not be as important as what some others believe.

ARTIE

Who?

NATHAN

Those who believe themselves to be enchanted. Whether they in fact are or not.

ARTIE

But whether they are or not makes all the difference! If the government doesn't believe--

NATHAN

For the sake of argument, let's assume that the government doesn't. What about those who do have powers?

ARTIE

There are none!

NATHAN

But if there were... would you agree that they would have something to fear?

ARTIE

Still no. Because the government in that case would be blind to... well, to the truth. So no one has anything to fear from Act NORMAL.

NATHAN

But they don't know that! The law was obviously intended to suggest that some people should have something to fear. And, in fact, that the government itself is a little afraid. And those people that the government does or does not fear could be forgiven for seeing the passage of such a law as a warning. A pre-emptive strike.

(beat)

And then someone might do something to strike back.

ARTIE

(dubious)

Someone like one of those who really, really wants to be a witch or a wizard... but, of course, isn't.

NATHAN

Perhaps.

ARTIE

And such a person somehow killed Brandon Andrews.

NATHAN

Well, I don't think Andrews was the intended victim. I think Bitterman was. If you're going to make a statement, you don't kill the legislative aide. You take out the one whose name everyone knows.

ARTIE

Then how did Andrews wind up dead?

NATHAN

I think our killer killed Andrews accidentally while casing Bitterman's headquarters.

ARTIE

Which leads us all the way back to how Andrews was killed. If he was, in fact, killed.

(beat)

You've got someone who wants to make a political statement... visiting Bitterman's place while she's out of town and accidentally killing her aide... in a locked library... in a way that leaves no mark on him or any other evidence in the room. Is that right?

NATHAN

Right enough. And that's exactly why I think it wasn't someone who really, really wishes they had magic powers... but someone who actually has those powers.

ARTIE

You really think there are such people?

NATHAN

I think I do.

ARTIE

I'm disappointed in you, Nathan.
And if my brother were here, and
if he weren't out of practice...
he'd make you a balloon rat.

INT. NATHAN'S CAR (MOVING) - AFTERNOON

Nathan drives around a block in an affluent suburb of the city.
Jessamyn is in the passenger seat.

JESSAMYN

I'm not sure about this.

NATHAN

I need you, Jessamyn. I need you
to tell me whether one of these
two people has a mirmyj. Or both,
though that would complicate
things considerably.

JESSAMYN

I could give you a charm to do
that.

NATHAN

Like the switching charm?

JESSAMYN

Well, different. I could give you
a crystal that would glow in the
presence of a mirmyj. You'd have
to get a little closer to the
person than I'd have to, but it
would... you know.

NATHAN

I mean, crystals are nice, but not
as good company. Are you blushing?
I can hear you blushing.

JESSAMYN

You're assuming that whoever
brought a mirmyj to the senator's
office still has it.

NATHAN

I have to. Especially if we're
assuming that Brandon Andrews was
not the true target.

Nathan pulls the car to the curb. It has started raining.

NATHAN
You didn't happen to bring an umbrella, did you?

JESSAMYN
Don't believe in them.

NATHAN
You mean you don't like using them? You believe they exist, right?

JESSAMYN
Look.

A car pulls into the driveway of the house they're watching. A woman (late 60s) gets out of the car and hustles inside.

NATHAN
Valerie McCafferty looks like my great aunt Dorothy.
(beat)
I thought you'd want to know that.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - LATER

Nathan and Jessamyn exit his car and walk to the house. Nathan knocks. The door opens and VALERIE McCAFFERTY greets them.

VALERIE
May I help you?

NATHAN
Good afternoon, ma'am. We'd like to talk to you about a great new religion--

VALERIE
No, thank you.

She closes the door decisively. They sprint back to the car.

INT. NATHAN'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

JESSAMYN
Negative. No mirmyj.

NATHAN
Is she magical... in general?

JESSAMYN

(amused)

Anyone can be magical, Nathan.
It's not so much a gift as a
choice.

NATHAN

You're not going to try to
interest me in a new religion, are
you?

INT. NATHAN'S CAR (MOVING) - MOMENTS LATER

Nathan and Jessamyn drive back to the city proper.

NATHAN

Jessamyn, what's your opinion of
Act NORMAL?

JESSAMYN

It's complete bullshit?

NATHAN

Bullshit meaningless, or
bullshit--?

JESSAMYN

Bully-tactic bullshit.
Persecution. Harassment.
Oppression. Tyranny.

NATHAN

Got it. The bad kind of bullshit.
What about your aunt and uncle?

JESSAMYN

Don't you think you know their
opinion already?

NATHAN

So... they did write that letter?

JESSAMYN

I don't know. I really don't.
(beat)
We don't always see eye-to-eye on
matters of magic. So, as much as I
love them and they love me, we
hold our peace about some things.

NATHAN

They let you babysit Carolyn.

JESSAMYN

Sure. But I didn't come out of the broom closet until later. And even then I wasn't going to try to teach anybody anything. Or practice what I was learning on anyone I knew.

NATHAN

Only people you didn't know?

JESSAMYN

Not them, either. Maybe some wild animals. Small ones. The ones no one would miss. I'm not proud of that, but it's the truth.

NATHAN

You're pretty cozy with animals, now. A bird, a tarantula. How long have you known Renée?

JESSAMYN

Nathan, can I ask you what your larger plan is?

NATHAN

I was hoping you wouldn't. Because it's not so much of a plan. If Todd Kaczmarek doesn't have a mirmyj, this grand, renegade investigation of mine is at an end. I've got no other ideas.

JESSAMYN

But if he does? Have a mirmyj?

NATHAN

Well, that'll actually be worse. I don't know how he might react.

JESSAMYN

To learning that he killed someone by accident?

NATHAN

Right. I don't know how I'd react. Do you?

JESSAMYN

Why would I?

NATHAN

Exactly. You wouldn't.

(MORE)

NATHAN (CONT'D)

(beat)

I hope not, anyway. Because I think you and I have an immediate future together.

JESSAMYN

That's... mean.

NATHAN

What is?

JESSAMYN

What you just said, Nathan. Maybe this isn't a... forever thing, but you don't have to point it out.

NATHAN

I'm sorry. I'm... sorry. I didn't mean... What I meant....

JESSAMYN

Just forget it. It's fine.

It is not fine.

EXT. CITY STREET - APARTMENT BUILDING - EVENING

Nathan and Jessamyn at the front door of an apartment building. It has stopped raining. Nathan pushes a buzzer. No answer. Nathan pushes the buzzer again. No answer again.

NATHAN

It just occurred to me that I have no idea how to find this guy if he's not here.

(looking at his watch)

So let's hope he comes home soon.

JESSAMYN

(irritable)

What if he doesn't come home, though? What if he's on a business trip. Or at the gym? Or on a date with someone he has an immediate future with?

(beat)

We can't just stand outside his building all night.

NATHAN

We shouldn't anyway.

(beat)

Okay. Let's go.

JESSAMYN
 Why don't you get the car. I'll
 wait here.
 (sarcastic)
 Just in case he does come home in
 the next five minutes.

INT. NATHAN'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Nathan pulls up to the curb to fetch Jessamyn. She gets in the car shaking her head.

NATHAN
 What?

JESSAMYN
 You are one lucky idiot. Guess who
 showed up.

NATHAN
 (looking out the window)
Kaczmarek? No. Just now?

JESSAMYN
 Well, he's not standing outside!
 He went in.

NATHAN
 Did you-- How did you--?

JESSAMYN
 I said I was meeting a friend and
 asked if he would let me into the
 entryway to wait. When he did, I
 thanked him and asked him his
 name. He said, "Todd--"

NATHAN
 Well, okay, but--

JESSAMYN
 --but his friends call him "Kaz."

Nathan nods, then takes a breath.

NATHAN
 (apprehensively)
 And did he-- Does he have a
 mirmyj?

Jessamyn shakes her head, then looks out her window, facing
 away from Nathan.

JESSAMYN

You can take me home now.

INT. NATHAN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Nathan returns home, looking drained. As he walks in, his phone rings. He punches the button for the speakerphone.

NATHAN

Bugsy.

ARTIE

Nathan, the investigation's over. Brandon Andrews's death has been ruled a natural one. No foul play. We can all stand down.

NATHAN

Oh. Ok. Thanks... thanks for letting me know.

Nathan hangs up. He collapses onto his sofa, exhausted.

NATHAN (V.O.)

So that was it, then. The official matter was officially closed, because I alone of the agents on the case knew that Brandon Andrews had been killed -- maybe accidentally, maybe not -- by an enchanted entity exerting lethal influence over his reflection.

(beat)

And although I was therefore the only agent who might have discovered who had brought that entity within striking-- within strangling distance of Brandon Andrews, I had failed to do exactly that.

(beat)

The saying about something turning up in the last place you look for it is true only when you find what you're looking for, of course. Sometimes you don't. Sometimes, you just run out of places to look. Sometimes you run out of people to suspect.

Nathan reaches into his pocket and extracts his list of suspects. He stares at it.

NATHAN
Oh, son of a b--

CUT TO BLACK.

NATHAN (V.O.)
Jessamyn. It's Nathan. Just...
just call me back?

FADE IN:

INT. NATHAN'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Nathan gets dressed.

NATHAN (V.O.)
There's a good deal of wisdom to
the notion that many a criminal
will return to the scene of a
crime. The reasons why vary. Some
return to remove incriminating
evidence... or to assure
themselves that they left none in
the first place.
(beat)
Some criminals crave the thrill of
viewing their handiwork.
(beat)
And some -- more than a few --
subconsciously want to be caught.

EXT. NATHAN'S BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

Nathan leaves his building to catch a train. It's a beautiful
sunny Monday morning.

NATHAN (V.O.)
Trust me. I'm a part-time forensic
etymologist.

INT. SUBWAY TRAIN

Nathan rides to the office.

NATHAN (V.O.)
Sometimes, a criminal leaves a
calling card. Sometimes a criminal
just can't help thumbing their
nose at authority.

Nathan takes out his list of suspects and looks at it.

NATHAN (V.O.)(CONT'D)
 Sometimes, when a criminal is asked to sign a register at the scene of the crime, they give a fake name. Sometimes that fake name is an anagram of their real name, using the same letters in a different order.

CLOSE ON the names on the list.

NATHAN (V.O.)
 Sometimes the fake name is literally "Anna Graham."
 (beat)
 Someone dishonest had been on the 3:30 tour of Senator Bitterman's offices the previous Sunday. Someone dishonest and a too clever by half. But only half.

EXT. GOVERNMENT QUARTER - SUBWAY STATION - MOMENTS LATER

Nathan exits the subway station.

NATHAN (V.O.)
 "Anna Graham" had given a fake name but a real address.
 (beat)
 That address was familiar to me, as it happened.
 (beat)
 I'd called Jessamyn, but I didn't want to tell her over the phone. I had to tell her in person.

INT. GOVERNMENT BUILDING - LOBBY

Nathan walks in, not even bothering to take out his ID.

NATHAN (V.O.)
 I knew who had killed Brandon Andrews.

QUICK CUT TO:

EXT. GOVERNMENT BUILDING - LATER

Nathan and Artie drink coffee and talk.

ARTIE
You're not serious, are you?

NATHAN
I'm afraid so, Bugsy. I'm leaving.

ARTIE
So you've already quit?

NATHAN
I'm resigning, first of all.
Quitting involves making a scene.
I'm going to sit down calmly and
professionally with Hough.

ARTIE
Oh. So you haven't told him yet.

NATHAN
I thought I'd tell you first.

ARTIE
So I could try to change your
mind?

NATHAN
No. But you're welcome to take
your best shot.

ARTIE
(clearing his throat)
Please don't go, Wordie.

NATHAN
That's... it? That's your best
shot?

ARTIE
Come on. We both know you belong
somewhere better than this.
(beat)
So, about your hunch...?

NATHAN
It didn't pan out.

ARTIE
Mmm hmm. And you're not just
saying that?

NATHAN
What?

ARTIE

You're not just saying that your personal investigation didn't pan out even though it really did, but because I don't believe in witches or wizards, you figure it doesn't make sense to tell me that you think you've identified the witch or wizard who killed Brandon Andrews?

NATHAN

Of course. Or of course not. You kinda lost me there.

ARTIE

So you're not going to do something foolish.

NATHAN

Right.

ARTIE

You're sure, now.

NATHAN

I'm sure!

ARTIE

Nathan, be careful.

NATHAN

Artie, you don't believe in people with magical powers.

ARTIE

Regular people are plenty dangerous enough. And you're, you know, an etymologist.

EXT. GOVERNMENT BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

Nathan carries his and Artie's empty cups to the nearest trash receptacle. When he gets there, he comes face to face with a large, black bird. They look at each other for a moment, then:

NATHAN

Tell her I need to see her.

INT. NATHAN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Nathan lounges on his couch, idly fingering a small metal charm on a lanyard around his neck.

NATHAN (V.O.)

The idea to use an old game token as a charm to hold the switching spell had been Jessamyn's idea. As it happens, the iron is the only one you can loop a cord through.

(beat)

Don't drag out your own set. Just take my word for it.

(beat)

I supposed I no longer needed the charm -- or the spell -- but I wasn't quite ready to take it off.

Nathan picks up his phone and looks at it. Nothing new.

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

And I could no longer avoid the conclusion that Jessamyn was avoiding me. I decided against popping by her apartment. She'd call me when she was ready.

Nathan grabs his phone and checks it again. Still nothing.

INT. NATHAN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Nathan is out of the room. We hear the sounds of ablutions in the bathroom. Facewashing. Toothbrushing. Gargling.

CLOSE ON Nathan's phone on the couch. Jessamyn is calling.

INT. GOVERNMENT BUILDING - HOUGH'S OFFICE - MORNING

Nathan sits opposite Hough across Hough's desk.

HOUGH

Something on your mind, Spector?

NATHAN

Yes, sir. I think the time has come for me to move on.

HOUGH

You don't say. Too good for government work, are you?

NATHAN
No, no, sir. Nothing like that.

HOUGH
Going to focus on teaching, then?

NATHAN
Yes, sir.

HOUGH
You're full of shit, Spector.

NATHAN
Sir?

HOUGH
Son, I didn't get to where I am
because I don't know when
someone's not telling me
everything.
(beat)
You're not happy here. Why not?

NATHAN
It's-- It's not--

HOUGH
Come on, Spector. I can take it.
What's eating you? Out with it!

NATHAN
(blurting)
The lists, sir. I have a problem
with the lists.

HOUGH
What lists?

NATHAN
Sir....

HOUGH
Okay, Spector. The lists. You
don't like your government keeping
lists.

NATHAN
I don't like that I might have
helped put names on those lists.

HOUGH
They're just lists, Spector.

NATHAN

With all due respect, sir,
sometimes just keeping lists is
bad enough. And I'm not convinced
that they are just lists.

HOUGH

Don't let your imagination run
away from you, son.

NATHAN

No, sir. But all the same I think
it's time I was moving on.

HOUGH

I understand. When?

NATHAN

I can stay until you've hired a
replacement.

HOUGH

I don't see us hiring a
replacement for you, Spector.

Hough's PHONE RINGS, and he picks up the receiver and waves
Nathan away.

CUT TO:

INT. GOVERNMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY

Nathan walks back to the bug lab.

NATHAN (V.O.)

I had no illusion that Hough
thought I was irreplaceable. I
knew Hough thought I was
unnecessary.

(beat)

And that wasn't even my most
uncomfortable conversation of the
day.

INT. DINER - AFTERNOON

The restaurant is all chrome and Formica and vinyl. Nathan sits
at a booth toward the back. Jessamyn's Encyclopaedia is on the
table. After waiting for a bit, staring at the door, Nathan
finally reaches for the book... at which moment Jessamyn slides
in to the booth opposite Nathan. He looks up.

NATHAN

Thanks for coming.

JESSAMYN

Is this business, or the other thing?

NATHAN

It's business. Mostly, anyway.

Nathan slides toward Jessamyn a napkin, turning it over as he does, revealing something he's written on the underside.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

Recognize that name?

JESSAMYN

(reading)

"Jane Syms"? No.

NATHAN

Oh.

(beat)

What if you rearrange the letters?

JESSAMYN

Nathan, no games--

NATHAN

Humor me.

JESSAMYN

(concentrating)

I'm not good at this.

NATHAN

When we met, just last week, you said you weren't good at magic. Yet this week you were able to spell away the reflection of Brandon Andrews's corpse, give me a charm to change places with my own reflection, and tell me that neither Valerie McCaffery nor Todd Kaczmarek had a mirmyj.

(nodding to the napkin)

I'll give you a hint: The answer will reveal the identity of the person who did have a mirmyj, and it rhymes with "Oh, what a mess I'm in."

Jessamyn continues to look down... then crumples the napkin in her fist. Her demeanor changes from anger through fear to sadness... and then she starts to cry.

JESSAMYN
 (whispering)
 It was an accident.

NATHAN
 I know. But it was your accident.

JESSAMYN
 How did you--?

NATHAN
 By accident. But the pieces fell
 into place all the same.
 (beat)
 I do have some questions, though.
 Like: How were you able to remain
 so composed when I showed you
 Brandon Andrews in the mirror?

JESSAMYN
 I wasn't! I was sick to my
 stomach... I thought I was going
 to pass out.

NATHAN
 But you didn't. And I was sick,
 too. Merely from seeing Andrews's
 body. But you... you'd just found
 out that you were responsible for
 his death. So how could you--?

JESSAMYN
 I spelled myself calm.

NATHAN
 What?

JESSAMYN
 In the bathroom. I spelled myself
 calm. And again the next morning,
 before we went out looking for
 Mrs. McCaffery.
 (beat)
 But I couldn't keep doing it. Each
 time was less effective. Since
 Wednesday night I've been in my
 apartment, in bed, under the
 covers, unenchanted, coming to
 terms with what I did. I haven't
 eaten. I still can't eat.

NATHAN
 Have some water.

On cue, a waitress brings glasses of water to the table.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

Next question: You didn't need to ask Todd Kaczmarek his name when he came home, did you? You recognized him from the tour of Bitterman's office.

Jessamyn looks at Nathan as if she can't believe that he doesn't see the obvious. Then Nathan gets it, shakes his head.

NATHAN

Kaczmarek didn't come home in the five minutes it took me to get my car. You didn't need to see him to know that he didn't have a mirmyj.

Jessamyn lowers her head again.

NATHAN

Well, look, I figured it out, anyway. And I came up with a better fake name for you than you did. You couldn't think of "Jane Syms"? At least you knew it's called an anagram.

Now Jessamyn looks at Nathan as if he's a raving loon.

JESSAMYN

What are you talking about? What's an anagram?

NATHAN

(confused)
Are you serious?

JESSAMYN

Is that when you make a word from the first letters of--

NATHAN

That's an acronym. An anagram--
(taking out his list, placing
in on the table)

"Anna Graham."

(beat)

You're "Anna Graham."

Jessamyn calmly points to another name on the list.

JESSAMYN

I'm "Cary Benson."

NATHAN

What? Who's Cary Benson?

JESSAMYN

She's a friend of mine from grade school. I don't think you know her.

NATHAN

But... But Anna Graham's address. That's the building where your aunt and uncle and Carolyn live. I've seen it on my class roster.

JESSAMYN

They're not the only ones who live there. They have neighbors.

(beat)

Do you ever do any research, Nathan, or do you just get really, really lucky all the time?

NATHAN

I'm not sure now. But anyway, being lucky isn't a crime. Homicide, on the other hand, is. And the fact remains: You brought to the scene of that crime the mirmyj that killed Brandon Andrews.

(beat)

But you didn't bring the mirmyj to kill Brandon Andrews, did you?

JESSAMYN

(crying again)

I was--

NATHAN

Casing the joint. Getting the lay of the land. And test-driving a mirmyj of your own. In anticipation of Bitterman's return. Am I right?

The waitress reappears.

WAITRESS

Another minute?

NATHAN

Please.

(to Jessamyn)

You'd already had it in for Bitterman, I assume, but your aunt and uncle's arrest put you over the edge.

(MORE)

NATHAN (CONT'D)

You were going to take Bitterman out to protest her pet bullshit law. And you figured a mirmyj was the way to do it.

(beat)

As long as you could get yourself and the senator in the same reflective surface. So you went to take a look around her place, and maybe practice controlling your mirmyj at the same time.

(beat)

But the mirmyj you brought was too independent for you. Like mine was. Like--

Jessamyn waits for it... waits for it...

NATHAN

(slaps the table)

Son of a bitch.

(beat)

You gave me a mirmyj on purpose!

Nathan rubs his temples with his fingers, massaging the truth into his brain.

NATHAN

You thought you could control a mirmyj carried by someone else! Then you wouldn't have had to be anywhere near Bitterman! You wouldn't have had to watch her die. When my reflection was disappearing on me, that was you trying to get it to... do your bidding.

(beat)

You've been using me this whole time!

JESSAMYN

I can only guess that my mirmyj was paying more attention to my emotions than my directions. The one I brought to Bitterman's office. I didn't know it had done anything. Until you showed me.

NATHAN

But then you were more than happy to get rid of the only evidence when I gave you the opportunity.

JESSAMYN

I wasn't happy about anything,
Nathan!

Jessamyn cries. Nathan lets her cry. Then:

NATHAN

I believe you. But I also expect
you to do the right thing now.

JESSAMYN

And that means what?

Nathan takes a deep breath.

NATHAN

You asked me what I would do if I
found the accidental killer. I
told you that I'd report what I
knew to the appropriate person or
persons. I will, still, if I have
to. I expect you to make it a moot
point, though. I expect you to
turn yourself in.

JESSAMYN

To the police? To the government?

NATHAN

To the Witchguard.
(off her reaction)
I can do research when I need to.
(beat)
I'll give you until Monday.

Jessamyn searches Nathan's face for an indication of the depth
of his conviction. Nathan stares back, with deep conviction.

JESSAMYN

(whispering)
Okay.

NATHAN

Okay.
(beat)
I'm going to get lunch. You
don't... have to stay.

JESSAMYN

I don't want you to think I've
just been using you. I care about
you, Nathan.

NATHAN

Do you?

JESSAMYN

Yes.

NATHAN

That's nice to hear, Jessamyn.
Thanks for saying so.

Jessamyn exits the booth and leaves the diner. Nathan watches her go... then realizes he forgot to give back her book.

INT. DINER - MOMENTS LATER

Nathan is still at the table. The waitress brings him a plate of eggs, toast, bacon, coffee. He eats & reads.

NATHAN (V.O.)

At the turn of the millennium,
more than 134,000 adults in the
United States identified
themselves as Wiccan. Ten years
later, the number topped one
million.

(beat)

As I told Jessamyn, I'd done some
research.

EXT. DINER - LATER

Nathan emerges, walks on the street. He stops at a sidewalk cart and gets a cup of hot chocolate to go.

NATHAN (V.O.)

Some Wiccans seek to cultivate the
eight virtues of mirth, reverence,
honor, humility, strength, beauty,
power, and compassion. Wiccan
morality generally is based on the
Wiccan Rede: "An it harm none, do
what ye will."

(beat)

In other words: It's all good, as
long as nobody gets hurt.

(beat)

But when someone does get hurt?

EXT. CITY STREET - SUBWAY STATION - MOMENTS LATER

Nathan waits for, then boards, a train.

NATHAN (V.O.)

Census figures notwithstanding, truly enchanted persons prize secrecy and will go to great lengths to conceal anti-social uses of magic from the non-Wiccan world.

(beat)

So the Wiccan community created the Witchguard, an internal regulatory, investigatory, and disciplinary authority. Rumor has it that in order to protect Wiccans generally, the Witchguard rarely if ever spares the magical rod, so to speak.

EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS - LATER

Nathan walks on a mostly empty campus.

NATHAN (V.O.)

The witch who has accidentally killed can expect to be forbidden to practice any further magic forever and possibly exiled.

(beat)

The witch who has murdered can expect to be destroyed.

EXT. COLLEGE - DEPARTMENT BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

Nathan approaches, then enters, the building.

NATHAN (V.O.)

And the experienced, powerful, elder sorcerers of the Witchguard will leave behind no evidence, no traces back to the community.

INT. COLLEGE - DEPARTMENT OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Nathan is pulling a bundle of exam booklets out of his cubby, but they're wedged in there real good.

CAROLYN (O.S.)

Professor Spector!

NATHAN
 (dropping all of the
 booklets)
Gah. Carolyn, you--
 (with more composure)
 You scared me.

CAROLYN
 Sorry, Professor.

Nathan and Carolyn bend down to gather the booklets.

NATHAN
 I haven't marked these yet,
 Carolyn.
 (smirking)
 As you can see, I'm first picking
 them up.

CAROLYN
 Oh, I don't care. I was actually
 hoping to find you.

Nathan looks at Carolyn, waiting for more....

CAROLYN (CONT'D)
 (looking around)
 Can we walk somewhere?

EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS - MOMENTS LATER

NATHAN
 What's on your mind?

CAROLYN
 I was just wondering. I mean, I
 know it's probably not my place,
 but, you know, she's my cousin,
 so... how are things with you?

NATHAN
 And Jessamyn? I think our...
 relationship has run its course.

CAROLYN
 Oh. That's too bad.
 (beat)
 Jessamyn can be tough, but when
 she likes someone, she tends to
 give everything to making it work.
 Anyway, she's been happier since
 she met you than she's been since
 she broke up with her ex.

NATHAN
What was wrong with her ex?

CAROLYN
Married.

NATHAN
While he was dating Jessamyn?

CAROLYN
She.

NATHAN
No, was he married while dating her, Jessamyn?

CAROLYN
She was married while dating her, Jessamyn.

NATHAN
(stopping)
What?

CAROLYN
Jessamyn's ex is a she. Renée.

NATHAN
(walking again, amused)
I think you're a little confused.
Jessamyn's bird is named Renée.

CAROLYN
Is that... slang? From your time?

NATHAN
How old do you think I am, Carolyn?
(beat)
No, Jessamyn has a bird. An actual bird. It's black. A raven, maybe. I don't really know my birds.

CAROLYN
I've never seen Jessamyn with a bird. But if she has one now, maybe she named it after her ex.

NATHAN
Have you ever seen her tarantula?

CAROLYN
(bemused)
Renée had a tarantula. Is that what you mean?

NATHAN
Renée the bird?

CAROLYN
Renée the ex.

NATHAN
The... woman? Had a tarantula. You saw it?

CAROLYN
No. Jessamyn mentioned it, though.

NATHAN
Let me ask you this, Carolyn: Did you ever see Jessamyn -- and Renée together?

CAROLYN
I never met Renée. Or her tarantula.

NATHAN
Forget the tarantula for a minute, Carolyn. Forget the bird.

CAROLYN
I didn't mention the bird.

NATHAN
Good. Don't. Just focus on the women. You never met Renée?

CAROLYN
Right.

NATHAN
You just heard about her from Jessamyn.

CAROLYN
Right.

NATHAN
Did your parents ever meet her?

CAROLYN
Jessamyn? Of course, she's their niece!

NATHAN
Renée! Of course they've met Jessamyn, Carolyn!

CAROLYN

So have they met Renée? I don't know. Maybe. I don't think they've ever seen the bird Renée either, though. Or Renée's tarantula. Renée the woman, I mean.

NATHAN

(pinching the bridge of his nose)

What about Jessamyn's friend, ah... Cary Benson? Have you met her?

Carolyn doesn't answer right away. Then:

CAROLYN

(quietly)

I never met her. That was before I was born. I was named for her.

NATHAN

You were named for her?

CAROLYN

Car-y... Car-olyn.

NATHAN

What... what happened to her? Cary Benson. What was before you were born?

CAROLYN

She disappeared. When they were ten years old. She was Jessamyn's best friend. She was never found. Cary, I mean.

Nathan and Carolyn stop walking. They're outside the library.

NATHAN

One more question, Carolyn: What's Jessamyn's last name?

(beat)

Would you believe I never asked her myself?

CAROLYN

You know her name's not really Jessamyn, right?

NATHAN

I... did not know that. What's... her real name?

CAROLYN
It's Jean.

NATHAN
Jean--?

CAROLYN
Jean Syms. "Jessamyn" is--

NATHAN
(pained, wincing)
An anagram.

CAROLYN
Right.
(beat)
Hey, are you okay?

NATHAN
Why? Is my aura bright red or
something?

CAROLYN
No. You are.

Nathan takes a deep breath, then looks at his wristwatch. It's 4:30 p.m. Perfect.

EXT. GOVERNMENT BUILDING - EVENING

The Government Quarter of the city is deserted, it being after five p.m. on a Friday. Nathan walks up to the front door of his office building and uses his ID card to gain entry.

INT. GOVERNMENT BUILDING - BUG LAB - MOMENTS LATER

Nathan locks the door of his office from the inside. He sits at his desk and starts up his computer. He logs in, then navigates to the entry point for a specific set of records.

ON COMPUTER SCREEN:

MPDb: Missing Persons Database

We hear Nathan type:

cary benson

The system responds:

Searching...
Found 1 record.
Review?

Nathan types:

Y

The system complies:

Retrieving...

MISSING PERSON RECORD 1/1

Name: Benson, Cary

Age: 10

D.O.B.: 05/17/199-

Gender: F

State of disappearance: CT

Date of disappearance: 07/02/200-

Last seen by: Jean Syms, friend, age 10, female.

FLASHBACK - EXT. WOODS - DAY

A young Jessamyn (10) and CARY BENSON (10) play in the woods. Jessamyn counts with her eyes closed, then attempts to find Cary, but can't. Distraught, she runs out of the woods to find Cary's parents, in their backyard abutting the woods.

NATHAN (V.O.)

(dryly)

Narrative summary: Missing Person and Witness had been playing alone in rural wooded area adjacent to home owned by Missing Person's parents. Witness reported to investigating agents that she and Missing Person had been playing "Hide-and-Seek." Witness was counting, with eyes covered, while Missing Person hid in wooded area. When Witness attempted to find Missing Person, she was unable, and, after searching wooded area for approximately ten minutes, exited wooded area and informed Missing Person's parents of Missing Person's disappearance.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. GOVERNMENT BUILDING - BUG LAB - CONTINUOUS

Nathan clicks through the computer file until he finds a photograph.

ON SCREEN: a school photo of a ten-year old Cary Benson.

We hear a MOUSE CLICK. Then:

ON SCREEN: an age-progressed photo of Cary Benson at age 20, labelled as such.

BACK TO SCENE

Nathan jabs a button on his monitor to turn it off. He sits for a moment... then turns his monitor back on and types.

ON SCREEN: Various items from Brandon Andrews's case file, as Nathan scrolls through them, until he reaches a scanned newspaper page:

**CELEBRATIONS & MILESTONES
BRANDON & RENÉE ANDREWS**

...and under that a photograph of a smiling Brandon Andrews and a woman who is clearly Cary Benson in her early 30s. The resemblance to the age-progressed photo is unmistakable.

Nathan looks away from the screen, rubs his eyes, then looks again.

NATHAN
(whispering)
What?

INT. GOVERNMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Nathan paces the halls, cup of coffee in hand, agitated.

NATHAN (V.O.)
Barely two hours earlier I'd been congratulating myself for single-mindedly solving a case of involuntary manslaughter... and assuring myself that Senator Leonora Bitterman was no longer in any danger.
(beat)
Senator Bitterman had never been in danger.
(beat)
All this was -- all this ever had been, from start to finish -- was a premeditated crime of passion committed by a woman scorned, the very thing like which Hell hath no Fury.
(beat)
In other words, I'd gotten it all wrong.

INT. GOVERNMENT BUILDING - BUG LAB - MOMENTS LATER

Nathan types a letter on his computer.

ON SCREEN, as Nathan types:

Artie, if you're reading this, then something has happened to me.

The cursor moves back to after the word "something," and the word "bad" appears, so the sentence now reads:

Artie, if you're reading this, then something bad has happened to me.

INT. GOVERNMENT BUILDING - BUG LAB - MOMENTS LATER

CLOSE ON Artie's workstation. An envelope drops to the table. On the envelope:

DO NOT OPEN BEFORE MONDAY P.M.

We see Nathan's hand take one of Artie's business cards from a card holder on the desk.

EXT. NATHAN'S BUILDING - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Nathan gets into his car.

NATHAN (V.O.)

Brandon Andrews had not defied the odds, after all. Even if he had not known his killer, she had known him. And she'd known his wife for much longer. They'd been childhood friends.

EXT. NATHAN'S CAR (MOVING) - HIGHWAY - LATER

NATHAN (V.O.)

I'd never met Brandon Andrews's wife, but I'd seen pictures. Specifically, I'd seen a photo of her at age ten, and an artist's rendering of what she might have looked like at age twenty, ten years after she'd last been seen by anyone previously.

(beat)

But not, in fact, the last time she'd been seen.

EXT. NATHAN'S CAR (MOVING) - SUBURBAN STREETS - LATER

Nathan passes his parents' home, but keeps driving.

NATHAN (V.O.)

Cary Benson had disappeared, but she had returned, as Renée, and I had no doubt that Jessamyn knew this.

EXT. SUBURBAN COTTAGE - LATER

Nathan parks in front of a house -- quaint, covered in vines -- gets out, walks to the front door, knocks.

The door opens. A WOMAN (early 60s) invites Nathan in.

NATHAN (V.O.)

And I was now sure that it was why Jessamyn had killed Brandon Andrews. And not by accident.

The door closes and we...

CUT TO BLACK.

OVER BLACK:

A GUNSHOT.

NATHAN (V.O.)

Crap.

FADE IN:

INT. GOVERNMENT BUILDING - FIRING RANGE - MORNING

Nathan is standing at the firing line of the last alley, away from anyone else. He wears protective eye and ear gear. He looks downrange as paint chips fall from the ceiling.

Nathan fires several more rounds.

CLOSE ON the paper target. With each GUNSHOT, no hole appears.

INT. FIRING RANGE - FRONT DESK - LATER

Nathan hands in his protective gear to the PROCTOR behind the counter. He carries his sidearm in its locked box.

NATHAN

Thanks.

The Proctor slides Nathan's phone to him on the counter.

PROCTOR
 (humorlessly)
 Your phone's been ringing every
 five minutes for half an hour.
 (beat)
 If someone was calling for backup,
 he's probably dead now. You don't
 have a partner undercover, I hope.

NATHAN
 No. I work alone. I'm a forensic
 etymologist.

PROCTOR
 Yeah? Well, you're phone's been
 bugging me.

EXT. GOVERNMENT BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

Nathan plays the message on his phone.

JESSAMYN (V.O.)
 Can you... can you come over?

Nathan fingers the charm on the cord around his neck.

INT. JESSAMYN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Nathan has just arrived. He wears a baggy long-sleeved button-down shirt over a T-shirt. We can't see it, but he has his sidearm in a shoulder holster. Jessamyn is clothed.

JESSAMYN
 (locking the front door)
 Hi.

NATHAN
 Jessamyn.

JESSAMYN
 I called you a few times. Were you
 out?

NATHAN
 I was out.

JESSAMYN
 Is it going to be like this?

NATHAN

It might be.

(beat)

I'm waiting to hear why you asked me over.

JESSAMYN

I just wanted to talk, Nathan.

NATHAN

We could have talked on the phone.

JESSAMYN

You weren't answering. And I wanted to see you.

(beat)

You want to sit?

NATHAN

I'm okay. I'll stand. I might pace.

Nathan walks around the living room, noticing where the potential weapons are. Jessamyn's wand is on the side table, as is a ceremonial dagger.

JESSAMYN

Are you nervous?

NATHAN

I'm a little anxious. I'm... curious. About how this is going to end.

JESSAMYN

Do you think I'm going to hurt you?

NATHAN

The thought has crossed my mind. You can be dangerous. Bad things happen to people when you're around.

JESSAMYN

People?

NATHAN

Brandon Andrews.

(beat)

Cary Benson.

JESSAMYN

(angry)

How dare you! I loved Cary!

NATHAN

You still do. Don't you.

(beat)

You know, when I first read what happened to her, I figured maybe you turned her into a toad and she hopped off into the woods before you could turn her back.

JESSAMYN

Go to hell, Nathan.

NATHAN

Then I realized that all those years ago, you weren't the one with powers. She was. And even now she's got some kind of power over you.

(beat)

Did you think that killing her husband would prove your love for her? Or were you trying to hurt her by killing the man she loved?

(beat)

Which is it... Jean?

Jessamyn walks toward Nathan. Nathan is staying away from the cheval glass.

JESSAMYN

Are we short on time, Nathan? I thought I had until Monday.

Jessamyn walks past Nathan then back around to the side table.

NATHAN

That's when I still thought you'd killed Andrews by accident. But anyway, you aren't going to turn yourself in. And you aren't going to let me turn you in, either.

JESSAMYN

Why do you say that?

NATHAN

I can be slow, but I get the picture eventually. You think you're going to keep me quiet.

JESSAMYN

Can I?

NATHAN

Only if you kill me, Jessamyn.

JESSAMYN

I don't want to kill you, Nathan.

NATHAN

Like you didn't want to kill
Brandon?

Jessamyn sits on the couch next to the side table.

JESSAMYN

You don't really think I'm
surprised by these tidbits of
revelation, do you, Nathan? I know
how much you know.

Nathan sits on the other end of the couch, facing Jessamyn. The cheval glass is behind Nathan. Reflected in the large mirror, we can see both of them on the couch.

NATHAN

Jessamyn, don't make another
mistake.

JESSAMYN

I haven't made a mistake yet.

Behind Nathan, in the cheval glass, we see JESSAMYN'S REFLECTION get up from the couch, pick up the dagger from the side table, then walk around to stand behind NATHAN'S REFLECTION.

The real Nathan brings his hand to his neck and brings out the charm on the cord.

JESSAMYN

(with cruel pity)
Oh, Nathan.

Nathan rises from the couch and turns away from Jessamyn to face the cheval glass. Nathan's reflection has likewise risen. They face each other. Jessamyn's reflection in the mirror, standing, watches Nathan's reflection.

NATHAN

(turning back to the real
Jessamyn)
I'm sorry.

Nathan turns back to face the mirror once more, looks his reflection in the eye, grips the charm around his neck with his left hand. In the next instant--

INT. ASPECT REALM - JESSAMYN'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

--we're on the OTHER SIDE OF THE MIRROR. The Aspect Realm. Everything is backward. There is no sound.

Nathan screams -- but silently -- in pain. Jessamyn has stabbed him in the side with her dagger. Without thinking, Nathan whirls around and pushes Jessamyn away with his right arm. It seems to take more effort than he was expecting. Jessamyn falls onto the couch.

As soon as Jessamyn lets go of the dagger, it disappears from Nathan's side. Nathan looks to the table and sees the dagger there again. Nathan looks into the mirror and sees the real Jessamyn standing up and screaming soundlessly at the mirror, her face contorted in shock and horror.

Nathan turns back to the closer Jessamyn and reaches his right hand into his shirt and under his left arm for his gun. It's not there. After a moment of extreme confusion, Nathan reaches his left hand into his shirt under his right arm and finds his weapon, pulling it out.

Jessamyn is getting up and moving toward the side table to retrieve the dagger. Nathan slowly and deliberately disengages the safety of his weapon, then fires round after round at Jessamyn as she approaches him with the dagger. Though there is no report, the recoil suggests that the gun is working.

Yet Jessamyn is unharmed. Nathan keeps firing. Wait--

Nathan points the gun at his own foot, then shoots. He is unharmed. Nathan looks around on the floor. No shells.

Grimacing with understanding, Nathan closes the distance to Jessamyn. Jessamyn plunges the dagger into Nathan's ribs again. Nathan jams the muzzle of his gun against Jessamyn's chest and keeps it there, squeezing the trigger once, his eyes closed...

...and when he opens his eyes, Jessamyn is gone. Nathan looks to the cheval glass, but Jessamyn isn't on the other side, in the real world, either.

Suddenly, Nathan looks down, in pain. He sees a TARANTULA -- large, brown, scary -- removing its fangs from his ankle. The tarantula then scurries away and under the couch. Nathan just watches it go, utterly bewildered. Finally coming back to the moment, Nathan goes to the cheval glass and looks into the real world living room. His real-world body lies inert on the floor.

WOMAN (V.O.)

Nathan! Visiting Mom and Dad?

FLASHBACK - INT. HOPE HOME - ENTRANCE - EVENING

In the suburban cottage we saw Nathan visit earlier. This is that visit. The woman who invited Nathan in is DIANE HOPE.

NATHAN
They're out of town.

DIANE (WOMAN)
Ah. Well, I'm afraid you're out of luck here. Ally's in the city. You know she goes every Friday night.

NATHAN
I do know. I was actually hoping to chat with you, Diane.

INT. HOPE HOME - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Nathan and Diane sit at a table, with cups of tea.

NATHAN
(nervous)
I don't quite know how to begin.

DIANE
I can imagine. I'll get you started: You want to know if I'm enchanted.
(beat)
Or if I think I am, anyway.

NATHAN
Why would you--?

DIANE
Why would I think that? Because you've been making the rounds with witches lately.
(beat)
I can tell.

Nathan's hand moves to the charm around his neck, the Monopoly token on a cord. Diane notices.

DIANE (CONT'D)
What's that?

Nathan takes the charm out from under his shirt.

DIANE (CONT'D)
That's cute. A classic.

NATHAN

Can you tell what it does? Or what it might do?

DIANE

What it does? It moves around the board--

NATHAN

No. It's been spelled.

DIANE

No. It hasn't.

(beat)

Was it supposed to be? Did you think it had been? Iron is a particularly good element for holding a spell. Of course, that iron is probably plastic.

NATHAN

It's metal. It's from a very old set. But it's... a dud?

DIANE

It's... a dud, sure. It won't do anything magical, anyway.

(beat)

What was it supposed to do?

NATHAN

It was supposed to allow me to switch places with my own reflection. Let me operate in the--

DIANE

The Aspect Realm?

(beat)

Try it. There's a mirror.

INT. HOPE HOME - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Nathan walks to the hallway and stands before a mirrored closet door. He takes hold of his charm, looks his reflection square in the eye, and... nothing happens.

DIANE (O.S.)

May I ask what you want that particular enchantment for, Nathan?

INT. HOPE HOME - KITCHEN - LATER

Nathan is again at the kitchen table with DIANE.

DIANE

Nathan, if this woman had accidentally caused the death of that man, I'd say, okay, try again to convince her to turn herself in.

(beat)

But she killed him on purpose, you say you know now. That's murder, Nathan. That's a whole other ball of wax.

NATHAN

I know. But I don't think she has it in her to kill... you know, everybody. Or just anybody. She killed... she felt she had to kill Brandon, she had a reason to kill him, even if you or I wouldn't kill someone for the same reason. Most people would find another way.

(beat)

At any rate, I don't think she'll kill me. I don't think she'll try to kill me, I mean.

DIANE

I hope you're right, of course. But I still want you to be very, very careful.

NATHAN

I don't want to be a hero, Diane. I just want to do the right thing. I want to make sure the right thing gets done: I don't even have to be the one to do it.

(beat)

And then I just want to get back to my regular, unenchanted, unmysterious life.

INT. HOPE HOME - ENTRANCE

Nathan is getting ready to leave. He takes Artie's business card from his wallet and hands it to Diane.

NATHAN

If you haven't heard from me by noon on Monday, call him. You'll need each other's help to help me.

DIANE

Remember what I told you, Nathan: You have to be able to see your reflection to invoke the spell, and you need to be able to see your body on this side to return.

NATHAN

Got it.

DIANE

And it's not a true switch. You'll be inhabiting your reflection -- much like a mirmyj would -- not really trading places with it. It's like a transfer of your... consciousness to your reflection.

(beat)

Your real body, once you leave it, won't reflect the actions of your reflection with you inside it.

NATHAN

What will it do?

DIANE

Nothing. It'll just stand there.

NATHAN

Huh.

(beat)

Well, that might actually be better. It'll be harder to misplace that way.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. ASPECT REALM - JESSAMYN'S LIVING ROOM

Nathan faces the cheval glass, staring through it into Jessamyn's apartment in the real world.

NATHAN (V.O.)

"I know how much you know," Jessamyn said, but in the end I'd known just a little bit more.

(MORE)

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

(beat)

I'd known one thing she hadn't, anyway. I hadn't been quite as unprepared to see her as she'd expected me to be. That was perhaps the most important thing.

(beat)

How had Jessamyn known the rest of what I'd known?

In the mirror, Carolyn enters the real-world living room, looking sleepy, as if she'd been napping elsewhere in the apartment. Nathan watches as Carolyn discovers his inert body, then bolts to it.

Unfortunately, Carolyn gets right between the body and the mirror. Nathan can no longer see his body. Nathan bangs on the inside of the mirror, to no avail.

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

I don't believe that Carolyn was party to Jessamyn's scheming. I'm sure that Carolyn had simply been staying over at her older, more sophisticated cousin's place and, among other things, talking into the wee hours about boys, about girls, and about me.

INT. JESSAMYN'S LIVING ROOM (REAL WORLD) - CONTINUOUS

Nathan is still banging on the inside of the mirror, behind Carolyn, when she stands up abruptly, knocking into the cheval glass, toppling it... and shattering the mirror.

NATHAN (V.O.)

Probably, Carolyn had been Jessamyn's unwitting pawn. Not unlike I had been. Maybe not even unlike Jessamyn had been for Renée.

INT. ASPECT REALM - JESSAMYN'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The cheval glass is knocked over. Nathan drops to his knees and snatches at shards of the mirror glass, looking into each one, but seeing no means of escape. He is trapped.

NATHAN (V.O.)
 That said, Carolyn's at least partly to blame for my current predicament.

Defeated, Nathan switches to a sitting position on the floor and turns around. He watches the reflection of what's happening in Jessamyn's real living room, only without him in it.

TIMELAPSE:

Carolyn stands up and makes a call on her phone, gesturing frantically toward where Nathan's body is.

Then Carolyn opens the apartment door to admit paramedics, who go to where Nathan's body is and examine it.

The paramedics lift Nathan's body onto a gurney and wheel it out of the apartment. Carolyn follows them to the door.

When Carolyn is preoccupied, A LARGE BLACK BIRD flies into the room and lands on the floor. Then a TARANTULA crawls out from under the couch to stand next to the bird. The bird takes the spider in its talons and flies off with it, out of the room.

INT. ASPECT REALM - JESSAMYN'S LIVING ROOM - LATER

Nathan, trapped, walks around the room, looking at things, touching things.

NATHAN (V.O.)
 If the paramedics took my body to a hospital, and the hospital called the police, and the police looked in my wallet and found my government ID, then the next step would be to contact Hough and ruin his weekend.

(beat)

I'll have to straighten all of that out, somehow, eventually.

Nathan opens the front door of the apartment, there is nothing beyond the door. Emptiness. Blackness. He tries to put his hand into the void, but he can't. The void is impenetrable.

NATHAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Meanwhile, though, I've been sitting here, waiting.

(MORE)

NATHAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 I'm waiting, of course, for Artie
 and Diane to come looking for me,
 and I'm really hoping that Ally's
 mom will know how to get me out of
 here, and then we'll all go try to
 find my body together.
 (beat)
 It shouldn't be much longer now.

FLASHBACK - EXT. WOODS - DAY

The same woods we saw earlier. Young Cary Benson and young Jean Syms are there. Both girls have tears on their cheeks. They stand face to face, very close. Cary leans forward and kisses Jean, then closes Jean's eyes. When Jean opens her eyes again, Jean is gone. A large black bird flies overhead.

NATHAN (V.O.)
 I'm still not quite ready to
 believe it, but it is possible
 that Renée the bird and Renée the
 woman are one and the same... and
 maybe for all or most of the time
 that Cary Benson was missing, she
 was merely living a bird's life.
 (beat)
 And maybe Renée even taught
 Jessamyn that trick, too.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. ASPECT REALM - JESSAMYN'S LIVING ROOM

Nathan opens the refrigerator. There is blackness inside.

NATHAN (V.O.)
 And I wouldn't be surprised if
 killing Brandon Andrews had been
 Renée's idea. But why? If Cary and
 Jean had found each other after
 they'd become Renée and Jessamyn,
 and after Renée had married
 Brandon... why couldn't she have
 divorced him? Or just left him?
 (beat)
 Why kill him? Or have him killed?
 (beat)
 And if she'd wanted him dead, for
 whatever reason, why couldn't
 Renée have killed Brandon herself?

Nathan finds a book, takes it to the couch, sits and opens it. The pages are blank. Frustrated, he just lets go of the book and it disappears from his hands.

NATHAN (V.O) (CONT'D)
 Because she'd have been a prime suspect, to the authorities both mundane and enchanted.
 (beat)
 So she'd have asked Jessamyn to do the deed, and likely Renée had made sure to have as many alibis as necessary.
 (beat)
 Which left just one last question.

FLASHBACK - INT. SENATOR'S OFFICES - SECOND FLOOR

The tour group from the very beginning. As they depart, one woman lingers at the rear, staring through the library door, raising her hand to the glass. Brandon Andrews is at the library table, working.

NATHAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 If Jessamyn had killed Brandon Andrews with a mirmyj not by accident but on purpose, why had she left his other reflection behind in the library? As a memento? A sick inside joke? Something to return to see, perhaps on future tours?

We go through the glass into the library. Brandon Andrews and his laptop disappear.

INT. SENATOR'S OFFICES - LIBRARY - DAYS LATER

A review of what Nathan did when Artie was in the restroom: walking around the table, climbing the rolling ladder, sliding on the ladder, seeing the face in the table...

NATHAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 But the room had no mirrors, of course, and one couldn't see the reflection in the table, except from above.
 (beat)
Above. Where, say, a bird that had flown into the building might be.
 (MORE)

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

(beat)

Jessamyn had left the reflection
as proof of her killing of Brandon
and of her commitment to Cary.

(beat)

She just hadn't counted on a
forensic etymologist -- by all
appearances a grown man --
climbing and sliding on the
library ladders.

(beat)

No one ever does.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. ASPECT REALM - JESSAMYN'S LIVING ROOM

Nathan picks up a shard of the mirror glass and looks at his
reflection in it. He tilts it toward the top of his head.

NATHAN (V.O.)

And speaking of appearances: I
just took a look at myself.

CUT TO BLACK.

NATHAN (V.O.)

I need a haircut.

THE END