

Everheart

written by

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EXT. CEMETARY - DAY

We open on a funeral service

FUNERAL OFFICIANT
Friends, family, and esteemed
colleagues, thank you for coming
here today to remember and honor
the life of ILLIA EVERHEART.

Ivy and candles decorate the scene. People cry, a big crowd

FUNERAL OFFICIANT (CONT'D)
She was a talented sorceress, one
of the few in this world of dying
magic. A creator of miracles to
those who needed it most.

We see one of the few younger folk, a soft-featured black
girl (19), not crying, her braids half-shield her eyes

FUNERAL OFFICIANT (CONT'D)
Illia leaves behind a remarkable
legacy to her apprentice HARMONY
SHAEFFER and with it, the sole
potential to change the world.

Black screen with the words "Two Months Later"

INT. KRAVINGS KINGDOM - DAY

Harmony is in uniform with a big fake customer service smile.
Her hair is in a natural afro

HARMONY
Hello and welcome bold adventurers
to Kravings Kingdom! The most
magical place in the Chicago area.

She's stands in front of a table of amused parents and bored
kids, around her is a gimmicky fantasy-themed diner. What a
way to change the world...

HARMONY (CONT'D)
Can I uh- start you all on drinks?

INT. DINER KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Harmony bursts in, reading from her notepad, nerves fraying

HARMONY

Hey, someone's wondering if we can
do the Cherry Chocolate Fudge
Monster with strawberries instead.
Also I think it was either table 21
or 22 that asked for extra ranch??

Everyone is hustling through the kitchen. One of the prep
cooks passes her and nods behind them

PREP COOK

Ranch is over there.

HARMONY

Oh. Yeah. Okay thanks. And the...

No one is listening to her as her voice trails off

HARMONY (CONT'D)

Uh. Nevermind. I'll just...

She grabs the ranch and a plate of drinks, takes a very deep
breath to summon her courage and hurries out

INT. KRAVINGS KINGDOM - CONTINUOUS

A small montage as Harmony works. She takes orders, hurries
around the restaurant, serves food. She's alright at her job,
though she is easily overwhelmed by the chaos

She serves a couple plates, a little confused

HARMONY

No one ordered the carbonara?

(beat)

Oh you...are not table 18. I am so-

She balances dirty dishes, passes a table flagging her down

HARMONY (CONT'D)

Yes! I was uh- just gonna check on
that for you.

(as she leaves)

Didn't forget...

We can feel her stress in the quickening events. She stumbles
past a runaway baby. Almost spills a drink. Stuffs trash in
her pockets. Sits through a very confusing order. Through all
this she seems to feel choked, like a fish trying to force
itself onto dry land-

WOMAN

Harmony Everheart?

The montage halts. And so does Harmony. She turns to find an older woman she only vaguely recognizes

HARMONY

Uh...hi?

WOMAN

Oh, I knew it was you. It's so nice to see you again. Remember me?

HARMONY

I...oh! Yes. Uh- we helped you when your daughter ran off. I remember. It's..it's been a while yeah.

WOMAN

Yes! I really can't thank you enough for that. You and Illia really worked miracles.

HARMONY

Yeah..no problem.

WOMAN

You two really made the world a better place.

We only see Harmony's face, discomfort corroding it

WOMAN (CONT'D)

You don't see sorcerers like that anymore. Bringing magic to those who need it most. Lillian though, I have to tell her. She'll be so happy. Seeing Ms. Harmony Everheart after so long.

Harmony's expression suddenly hardens, ice cold

HARMONY

It's Shaeffer.

WOMAN

Hm?

Harmony hears how she said it, eyes fall to the floor

HARMONY

Uh. I mean my last name. It's..actually Shaeffer, but...

WOMAN

...Oh! Shaeffer. I-I didn't know-

HARMONY

It's fine yeah. You're fine.

WOMAN

Oh and I forgot to say. My condolences. For uh- well with Illia. I can't imagine...

HARMONY

No it's..it's alright. You don't... Uh. Thank you, yeah.

The woman's brows furrow with worry but she still smiles

WOMAN

Of course.

HARMONY

Well. I really should get back to work else my boss will uh- well you get it. Nice...nice talkin though.

WOMAN

Yes. Have a nice day.

HARMONY

Yeah!

The moment Harmony is turned away, her polite front melts to a grimace, fraying at the seams. *Great conversation!*

EXT. BUS STOP - DAY

Cars pass on the street, revealing Harmony waiting at the stop. Her shoulders hang heavy. She clings onto her bag straps, the only things keeping her grounded. Her eyes wander absently until she sees a discarded flier on bench. She cranes her head and reaches to unfold it

A bright colored graphic: "The Age of Magic" a museum history exhibit. The beautiful world it showcases contrasts the industrial cityscape. Harmony's brows furrow...

Suddenly theres a pair of hands on her shoulders-

VOICE

Wassup!

Harmony jumps a little , whirls to see friend BIANCA PEREZ chatty, flashy, feminine, sporting a high-sugar energy

BIANCA

Woah-ho there Harmonica! No need to break out the laser eyes. Really spaced out there, hm?

She tries to crane her neck to look at the paper, but Harmony quickly balls it up, shoves it into her pocket

HARMONY

Sorry sorry. Just a bit tired today

BIANCA

Figured you'd be!

She shoves a bottled tea to her, grinning. Harmony gapes

HARMONY

You're my actual savior..

The pair looks up as the bus arrives. Their conversation continues as they scan their cards, enter, take their seats

INT. BUS - CONTINUOUS

HARMONY

But uh- how was class?

BIANCA

Mm! Pretty good. I just gotta work on that damn group presentation. It's been really looming, yknow?

Harmony is happy to focus on the conversation, showing genuine interest in whatever her friend wants to discuss

HARMONY

Really? Why's that?

Over their conversation we see the lively city of Chicago. The clusters of people, tall buildings, tourists, restaurants

BIANCA

Well y'know. I've been public speaking *queen* since middle school. Soooo I'm thinking of going all multimedia with it. But in a cool way not a cheesy way.

HARMONY

Mmm. Yeah. College coolness.

BIANCA

Exactly! But I need something with that Bianca flair! Something no one else can or will ever do.

Harmony looks up at the window, a habitual motion, as the bus passes a wisteria tree. Her attention locks on it

BIANCA (CONT'D)

Something...magical.

Harmony looks back at Bianca. It takes a beat for her to realize what she said. Then what she meant. Her eyes widen

HARMONY

No...Bianca-

BIANCA

Look look! Just one *tiny* illusion. You still have crystals right?

HARMONY

Yeah but *magic* is not for projects. I've told you this.

BIANCA

I said you don't even use your illusions.

HARMONY

Because illusions are cheap.

BIANCA

Then why not put them to good use?!

Harmony frowns stubbornly , looking away. A slight distance strains between them for a pause. Then Bianca sighs

BIANCA (CONT'D)

I mean I get it. They mean a lot to you. Those are the only ones you have left. No worries.

HARMONY

Maybe next time.

BIANCA

Mhm. That's cool. Uh. How was your day though? Other than long.

Harmony thinks about this for a moment. She's hunched over in her chair, fiddling with her hair. She pauses, having decided

HARMONY

Normal.

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - DAY

Harmony waves the bus off as it leaves. Bianca enthusiastically waves back from inside with both hands. Harmony smiles a little, then starts down the sidewalk

Some kids skating nod to her. A shop owner greets from the window. Someone in their car honks as she passes and she gives a timid smile. As she reaches her apartment building, a neighbor leaving holds the door open for her

NEIGHBOR

Hey Harmony! Back from work?

HARMONY

Yep. Making that money and stuff.

INT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - CONTINUOUS

Harmony stands in the middle of the elevator as it ascends. She absently puts her hands in her pockets and realizes she still has the flier. She pauses to look at the crumpled thing, sighs, fixes it to neatly fold

INT. SHAEFFER APARTMENT - MAIN ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The Shaeffer residence is a mess, groceries and clutter on the tables and counters. Bags, boxes, fond childhood pictures, origami long-forgotten. It's not the worst, but it could certainly use some spring cleaning

Her mother, ELENORA SCHAEFFER, her desk and appearance a tornado of chronic grief-ridden depression, is websurfing

The door quietly opens, and Harmony enters.

HARMONY

Mom, I'm home.

Elenora starts a bit, changing tabs to a spreadsheet

ELENORA

Oh- uh Harmony hi! How was work?
You get off early?

Harmony pauses to look at her, before dropping her bag

HARMONY

Um. No? I got off the regular time.
It's uh..almost 3pm.

Elenora blinks at her, then her computer. She leans back in her chair, trying to play it off

ELENORA

So it is. Would you look at that

HARMONY

...Mom.

Harmony cranes her neck to look at her computer, and Elenora smiles innocently. Harmony is unimpressed, sees through her

ELENORA

I lost track of time. Really, I did

HARMONY

(sighs)
Yeah it happens. I'm gonna get some
pretzels. You want some?

ELENORA

That'd..really help me stay on
track. Thank you.

Harmony heads to the kitchen, takes some paper bowls and a pretzel bag that is already out and opened

ELENORA (CONT'D)

I also got some of that yogurt dip
delivered. It's by the paper towels

HARMONY

(gasps)
Wait no way!

She find the bag, triumphantly fishes a small container of pure flavor bliss, rips off the lid with a big grin

ELENORA

Make it last!

HARMONY

Oh, no promises.

As she moves the bag to a less cluttered corner, she looks where it sat and sees a stack of papers. Mail

HARMONY (CONT'D)

Hey, are these papers new?

ELENORA

Hm? What papers?

She sifts through them as she crunches on a pretzel. Most of it is junk. But as she reaches for another chip, her eyes go wide. She sees:

a RENT NOTICE.

HARMONY

(hiding her stress)

Mom...Did you..did you know rent was due *five days ago*?

ELENORA

What? I thought it was due Friday.

HARMONY

Uh. Yeah. *Last Friday* I guess. Why didn't you show me this? You- you put this here right?

Her mom stares at her computer, nerves fraying, purses her lips. She shuts her eyes tight, internally cursing herself

ELENORA

I guess...I forgot.

A fervent fire burns behind Harmony's eyes, barely holding it in. She looks from the paper to her mom and back

HARMONY

You...

ELENORA

Yes. I know. I just...It's been so hard to focus since...

Harmony's expression melts sympathetically. She finishes pouring the pretzels. She gives one bowl to her mom. Elenora gives a tired smile

HARMONY

I'll just be right back.

ELENORA

Mm. Thanks, hun.

Elenora watches Harmony head down the hall and out of sight. Gloom shadows her face and she scrubs her face with her hands

INT. SHAEFFER APARTMENT - HARMONY'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Harmony enters, not bothering to turn on the lights. It's not much cleaner than the house. She has to move two laundry baskets just to cross the room to her dresser

She opens a drawer, takes out an envelope, one of many, labeled "August". She meticulously retrieves some of the cash. She fishes through her pockets, throws the flier on her bed, adds in some tip money from the day. After doing some mental math...dread colors her expression. A frustrated sigh hisses between her teeth

HARMONY

You've got to be kidding me...

She sits there on the carpet for a long moment, looking around, willing her brain for some plan. *Some magic solution*

Until her eyes catch her half-open closet. That's it

Harmony stands and beelines to the door. After some rummaging, she sees it. Pulls an unmarked box from the very back, inspects the contents. It's filled with books, candles, and other magicky stuff. She picks up a velvet pouch, opens it and holds one of the small cloudy crystals to her eye like its an old friend. Fond yet somber memories

HARMONY (CONT'D)

These...could work.

Past it, she notices something the box dragged with it. She reaches into the darkness...

Her eyes go wide, and she holds up a tarnished PENDANT with an ornate design and a very small heart in the center. It swings and spins idly in a mesmerizing dance. A pang of longing brushes past Harmony's expression. She quickly balls it up, shoves it in her pocket

She stands, reconsiders with a grimace. She doesn't want to do this. But...

INT. SHAEFFER APARTMENT - MAIN ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Harmony hurries down the hall with a big shopping bag where its assumed the box is

HARMONY

Bye mom! Running an errand. Don't eat my pretzels!

The door is closed before her mom can respond. Elenora frowns

EXT./INT. APOTHECARY - DAY

We see the exterior of a small family-owned business, a modern apothecary surviving on its community. Harmony enters

A bell announces her arrival. It's clean, jars on the walls, candles, medicine, other materials on display. Incense burns from a ceramic cat in a bathtub. Harmony makes for the front desk, a tortoiseshell cat brushes against her leg. She smiles

HARMONY

Oh, hi Carly. Long time no see.
(to the store)

Mrs. Sienna, Mr. David. You there?

She hefts the bagged box onto the table with some difficulty. A voice calls from the back, one she doesn't expect to hear

VOICE (O.S.)

One moment please!

Harmony looks up in surprise. JUDE CARDENAL enters from the back, a young transmasc Latino, all band shirts, chains, and tattoos and a million dollar smile. He dusts off his clothes as he speaks

JUDE

Alright. How can I help ya, miss...
(sees her)

Woah! WHAT! Harmony!?

HARMONY

Jude!?

He lets out a loud laugh, Harmony hides a flustered giggle

JUDE

Man! It's been what? Oh god 6?
No...I want to say 7??

HARMONY

Yeah I think 7 years! Uh. How- how are you? I didn't know you were back. When..how? Heheh!

JUDE

You didn't know? I posted on social media like a week ago ago.

HARMONY

Oh! Oh my bad I haven't really..been on there lately.

JUDE

Ah! Y'know that makes sense. I probably should have visited too. It's just kinda been go-go-go these past days with school starting.

HARMONY

No, it's fine. You're- going here?

JUDE

I am! Yeah, there's not many schools that offer magic history.

Harmony's energy noticeably dims at this. She saves face. Jude is too excited in his plans to notice

JUDE (CONT'D)

And I get to be closer to my aunt and uncle and old home. Forgot how much I missed it.

HARMONY

Yeah it's..no I get it. Um. Music history, huh?

JUDE

Mhm! I'm thinking of teaching it. Or. Like. Maybe even trying to be a sorcerer like you!

HARMONY

Oh...super cool! You found a mentor then?

JUDE

Ah. Yeah about that. I was thinking...maybe..you...

Then he reads her face. He tries to backtrack a bit

JUDE (CONT'D)

I mean like..not now. Eventually!

HARMONY

Yeah. Yeah uh..well I. It's just kinda been hard lately..with...

JUDE

No no! I get it. I *totally* do. It's alright. Just a vague idea. Actually, forget I said anything.

HARMONY

Sorry.

JUDE

No it's totally alright. It's fine.

A brief thread of silence is pulled taught between them

JUDE (CONT'D)

So uh! What brings you here today?

HARMONY

Oh. Um. I'm actually here to sell some stuff. Don't plan to use 'em.

She peels off the bag to reveal the box. Jude peers at it inquisitively, then opens it. His brows jump up. Then furrow

JUDE

Wait your...magic stuff? You sure you wanna get rid of *all this*?

HARMONY

(shrugs)

They've just been collecting dust,

JUDE

I..see. Well I guess I can do that.

HARMONY

Oh. And--

Lips pressed together, Harmony fishes out the pendant.

HARMONY (CONT'D)

This too.

Jude practically does a double take seeing this. He drops his inspection to give it his full attention

JUDE

Woah! The Everheart Pendant?!

HARMONY

Mhm.

JUDE

But...Harmony. That's- that's Illia's. She *always* wore it.

HARMONY

Yeah. And now she can't. I'm fine getting rid of it, really.

Jude searches her distant expression, worried and confused seeing the sorceress doing something so irrational

JUDE

Alright. But- but a magic amplifier
of this strength it..well it-

HARMONY

It's worth a lot.
(beat, relaxes)
Please, Jude. This would...mean a
lot to me.

A longer silence. The whole room seems to hold its breath

JUDE

...Let's..do that after we take
care of all this, alright?

He carefully rummages through the box, pulling out assorted
objects and laying them out on the table

JUDE (CONT'D)

Man, your collection really grew
huh? It's impressive. Focus
candles, learning books..No way!

He plucks the big pouch, eagerly opens it like a kid on
Christmas. Pours the crystals in his hands, turns them over

JUDE (CONT'D)

You're selling your spell
crystals!? How old are these?

HARMONY

(shrug)
It's pretty much all of the unused
ones I made since I was little.

JUDE

Wow! Man, this is what I love most
about magic. How you can put a
spell into a simple object, and
then *anyone* can use it! Brilliant!

Despite her distance, Harmony smiles fondly at his excitement

JUDE (CONT'D)

These are *definitely* worth the
most. Though..I haven't seen this
book before. Maybe...

His voice starts to fade away as Harmony is momentarily
distracted by the pendant, having been fiddling with it
absently since taking it out

Her fingers catch an odd notch on the side and she looks down. Her full attention is now on the pendant

JUDE (CONT'D)

But. I'll have to ask my aunt about it; she knows this stuff...

(notices)

Better. Uh-

Just a little bit of pressure. It clicks open

Harmony's eyes lock onto it; a photo of a young Harmony hugging Illia. They look...happy. Emotion pulls at her, uncomfortable, unwelcome

JUDE (CONT'D)

Harmony...?

Harmony snaps up from her thoughts. She saves face

HARMONY

Oh! Uh- Sorry.

She looks down, makes to close it. But suddenly sees a shadow-like form snake up her wrist!

With a gasp, she lets go of the pendant like it's hot metal. SMACK. It hits the floor at an unpleasant angle. The photo falls out, flutters, lands face up. And then silence

The pair look down at it, stunned. Harmony moves first. She frantically makes to pick up both the pendant and photo

HARMONY (CONT'D)

Shhhhoot! I'm so sorry. I-I was just kind of messing with it. I didn't mean to..ugh my bad.

She checks her hand. Whatever she saw is now...gone.

But before she can return the photo, she notices that behind the paper was a mirror, now with a *big ugly crack*

HARMONY (CONT'D)

That's not good.

JUDE

What's not-

(leans over, sees)

OH. Oh...

HARMONY

I...I *broke* Illia's pendant. It's broken. I broke it! It's broke!!

JUDE

I-it. It's probably not that bad.
It's...oh god that's a *big* crack,
but it's probably not important to
the integrity of the enchantment,
let me see.

He hurries over from behind the desk. Harmony gently passes it, and he looks it over

JUDE (CONT'D)

Uh...I'd say...50/50?

HARMONY

This *can't* be happening.

JUDE

Well, it's a coin flip! I'd have to ask Tia Sienna when she's back.

SMASH! A jar falls from it's shelf, startling the pair. Then three more

JUDE (CONT'D)

What the-!

Something suddenly *flies* at them! The pair just barely jump out of the way. They get a good look at it now: a small shadowy wisp no bigger than a volleyball darts around. It wreaks havoc on the store, crashing into displays and merchandise without mercy

JUDE (CONT'D)

Harmony, what IS that?!

HARMONY

I- I don't know!!

It makes another move straight for Jude, for the pendant. He ducks, grabs a book. It ricochets off, pages fly everywhere. He scrambles behind the counter. A mad game of dodgeball!

JUDE

MAGIC?!

HARMONY

MAYBE!?

She yelps as it hits a framed painting.

HARMONY (CONT'D)

Okay PROBABLY!

JUDE

No, no! Like USE your magic! Craft a spell to like..capture it or something.

HARMONY

Uh- I don't think that'd work.

Jude peeks out, ducks back as it bangs against the register

JUDE

Like a net spell, nothing fancy!

HARMONY

W-well. Look it's kind of...

She dives under a table as it whizzes past. Jude creeps from the counter, grabbing a flyswatter

JUDE

Look, I can stall while you focus.

HARMONY

Jude I- it's not that. I can't-

JUDE

I know it's not the best environment but if you-

HARMONY

LOOK, I CAN'T USE IT ANYMORE! MY MAGIC IS GONE!

Jude stops in his tracks, shocked

JUDE

It's what?

He's dropped his gaurd. An opening. Their assailant bullets and grabs onto the pendant he holds!

HARMONY

NO!

Jude doesn't let go. A struggle. With some difficulty, he manages to tackle the shadow to the ground, pry it free from the pendant. But as he sits up to face it, a single white eye locks on to his. He freezes

It speaks in Jude's voice

SHADOW

What do you run from?

Jude stares back, pained, in some sort of compelled trance

HARMONY

Jude...?

JUDE

It's my fault. I...still love her.

The small creature grows, contorts. A mass of shadow. Powerful legs, four eyes, sharp antlers. A shadowy lion-sized two-headed JACKALOPE stands. Jude's face drops with dread

It roars, then charges! He barely manages to leap from its destructive pounce. It hits the wall and knocks down a half dozen jars. A bull in a china shop!

HARMONY

JUDE!

JUDE

Harmony the CRYSTALS!!

Harmony meets his eyes. She understands. The ex-sorceress scrambles across the room to the box and swipes the pouch

Jackalope rears, barrels toward its victim once again. This time, Jude is less lucky. It snags its antlers on Jude's jacket, YANKS him into the air, inches from its right head

JUDE (CONT'D)

WOAH WOAH! HARMONY HELP!!

Jude grabs onto the antler. On contact, his eyes turn black. His expression contorts in pain.

JUDE (CONT'D)

No..no, no please.

It's jaw stretches open. His jacket starts to tear. But before it can finish its prey—

HARMONY

SHARD!

A thick spike of ice pierces its conjoined neck. It roars in pain, shaking its heads violently. Jude slips from his jacket and onto the floor. He jolts from his daze and sees Harmony standing on the shop's counter with a glowing blue crystal

HARMONY (CONT'D)

Jude, are you okay!?

JUDE

...Y-yeah. I...Just don't touch it.

HARMONY

Got it.

Battle continues; they have more of a chance. Jude runs out of the way for Harmony to release her ice barrage, each time saying "SHARD." Chunks of shadow chip off

JUDE

It's working!

But then her crystal dims. Harmony sourly smacks it

HARMONY

Augh! Out of juice.

She looks up as sees it start to heal, rise to its feet. Harmony frantically fishes through the pouch

HARMONY (CONT'D)

Uhhhhhh..Here catch!

She throws a solid brown-orange crystal. Jude catches mid-air

JUDE

What's the activation word?

HARMONY

Sweep!

The Jackalope sets its four eyes on Jude again, prepares to charge. Jude holds up the crystal triumphantly

JUDE

SWEEP.

It glows. And conjures a...floating broom? Jude, baffled, looks at it, then at Harmony

HARMONY

(wild shrug)

I don't *fight* with magic!

Suddenly, the pendant he holds pulses with a white glow and the broom **DOUBLES** in size! The pendant amplifies spells!

JUDE

WOAH!

The Jackalope charges once again, Jude sends the broom flying

It clashes with its tangle of antlers in a confusing fencing match. Then Jude twists the broom and the antlers with it. **CRASH!** Jackalope tumbles to the ground

JUDE (CONT'D)
I LOVE MAGIC!

HARMONY
Nice! Okay...I think I have a plan
now. Can you weaken it more. I
toss, you cast?

JUDE
I got you homegirl!

Jude plays the matador. Runs around, keeps his distance,
chips away at it

HARMONY
Blast. Grab and toss the paper.

JUDE
BLAST!

Exploding pages!

HARMONY
Grow.

JUDE
GROW!

The potted plants grow and attack with viney tendrils

HARMONY
Shred.

JUDE
SHRED!

Did someone say guitar riff attack?! Cheesy. Yet effective

JUDE (CONT'D)
Dude! I think I had a dream just
like this!

HARMONY
Eyes on the big bunny!

JUDE
It's a jackalope- WOAH!

He dives to avoid a near deadly pounce!

JUDE (CONT'D)
Alright. You're right. But on the
bright side. It's got smaller.

He's right. It's shrunk to a wolf's size by now

HARMONY

Now toss me the pendant! I'll trade
you for Shackle.

Harmony tosses a crystal. Jude slides over the pendant.
Harmony swipes it, puts it on, climbs on top of a shelf.
Jackalope's other head notices, turns to attack

JUDE

SHACKLE.

Chains leap from the floor and subdue the Jackalope

JUDE (CONT'D)

Hurry! I can't hold it forever.

With considerable struggle, Harmony gets to higher ground.
Already the spectral binds seem to be flickering without the
power of the pendant. On top of the shelf, Harmony
frantically rummages through her pouch...

HARMONY

C'mon...C'mon give me something!

But before she can find the right one, Jackalope breaks free
in a burst of magic. It roars and rams its antlers into the
shelf. The pouch leaps out of her hands, crystal flying. She
tries to grab even just one, but the shaking shelf knocks her
off balance!

JUDE

HARMONY!

She loses footing but catches herself on a lower rung of the
shelf. She clings to this makeshift ladder for dear life.
Jackalope rears on its hind legs to snap at her shoes.
Breathing quickly, Harmony stares down at the beast

HARMONY

AH! BACK OFF!

She kicks the snout and an antler catches on her pants. She
gasps. Her eyes flicker black, and a vision flashes before
her: A girl her age, drawing something. She looks up with
charming mischief. Harmony flinches away

HARMONY (CONT'D)

W-what?

Shaking like a leaf, she looks down at Jude. He fumbles with
crystals, unsure what any of them do. He meets her eyes,
helpless. Then he notices something:

JUDE
Harmony, your hair!

HARMONY
What??

She touches her head to find a small pink gem nestled in her afro. She presses her lips together. It'll have to work. She positions herself to look down at the monster, its dual heads snapping at her

HARMONY (CONT'D)
Hey Dopealope!

Its left head focuses on her, lets out a ROAR: her opening

HARMONY (CONT'D)
SURPRISE!

The crystal glows faintly. She throws it in Jackalope's open mouth. There's a beat where it seems to have done nothing. Then a pink light glows from its stomach and eyes.

BOOM!! An explosion of balloons, streamers, confetti decimates it and paints the room in color! Only a small antlered blob of shadow lies in its wake...

Harmony gapes. Still quivering, she climbs down.

HARMONY (CONT'D)
We- we should probably..

JUDE
Way ahead of you!

Jude, with an unbroken jar, scoops it up and seals it tight.

JUDE (CONT'D)
There.

Silence falls. The two collapse on the floor of the messy apothecary, panting, trying to process what just happened. Jude is first to speak:

JUDE (CONT'D)
Surprise?

Harmony suddenly laughs, delirious and tired. Jude joins in. They giggle on the ground like idiots.

JUDE (CONT'D)
So...magic shadow monster huh?

HARMONY

Yeah... Uh- you wanna chill at my place? Order takeout?

JUDE

Sure..Yeah. That'd be sweet.

They exchange a smile, relief and exhilaration wash over them

WOMAN (O.C.)

What in the WORLD?!

They look up to see Jude's aunt and uncle, gaping at the disaster. They too look around, then give guilty smiles

JUDE

Heyyy Tia Sienna. Tio David.

INT. SHAEFFER APARTMENT - EVENING

The pair sit on the couch with takeout, still a bit frazzled

JUDE

Your mom not joining us?

HARMONY

She turned it for the night. It's been hard for her. Yknow. Without Illia. Sure, I was her apprentice, but they were best friends.

JUDE

Hm. That's rough.

HARMONY

(shrug)

Yeah..but we survive. Speaking of. We should probably put together a game plan to get rid of...whatever the heck *that* is.

She points to the jar in front of them, the shadowy creature pushes helplessly against the glass. It manages to lamely topple over. Harmony stands it up again

JUDE

True. The jar definitely isn't a permanant fix.

(beat)

What should we call it?

HARMONY

Like a name? Uh...Shadowy? Shifty?

JUDE
 (snickers)
 Shifty??

HARMONY
 Yeah. It's...shifty. And
 it...shifts into shifty things.

JUDE
 Alright, fair point. Shifty works.

HARMONY
 Wonder why it became a..jackalope
 of all things.

Jude picks at his meal, debating something for a moment

JUDE
 I think I might know.

Harmony looks up, a bit surprised. Jude averts her eyes

JUDE (CONT'D)
 I know it sounds crazy but when I
 uh...touched it. I saw... my ex.

HARMONY
 No..that doesn't sound crazy.

JUDE
 And when it *looked* at me. Like...it
 was like the bad memories were
 yanked to the surface.

HARMONY
 Breakup that bad huh?

JUDE
 Well...it was kinda one of the
 biggest reasons I moved back here.
 Something big I did wrong.

This seems to resonate with Harmony

HARMONY
 I'm sorry that happened.

JUDE
 (sighs)
 What's done is done. But I'm glad
 I'm here. Perilous experience n all

Harmony chuckles. In the silence, she summons her courage

HARMONY

I...think maybe that..*Shifty* might have been what killed Illia.

Jude blinks up at her, agape

JUDE

Wait really??

HARMONY

I mean. I can't be too sure. But I remember it being big and shadowy. But monsters aren't real.

JUDE

Pff! And magic isnt?

The two laugh and Harmony shrugs, dorkishly.

JUDE (CONT'D)

Okay but *how*...? Why'd it come back? What does it want?

HARMONY

I- I don't know. It was *much* stronger than this thing, so maybe not. But..whatever it is, we gotta get rid of it.

JUDE

Definitely.

They both stare at *Shifty*. The jar topples over again. Jude chuckles a little while Harmony fixes it

HARMONY

Maybe we can give this to someone else. One adventure was already *more* than enough and who knows if we'll have any good spells left to deal with another *Shifty* attack.

JUDE

True...But who would we even ask? Magic problem, magic solution. Do you know any sorcerers *in Illinois* who'd be willing to help us?

Harmony opens her mouth to give a triumphant answer. But she draws a blank, taps her fork to her lips

HARMONY

Oh god. Um. Do you know any magic history professors?

JUDE

(snorts)

None that *do* magic. How'd you even lose your magic anyhow?

HARMONY

I really wish I knew. The connection just kinda...poofed after...Illia.

JUDE

Yeah. Well you could always...try and get it back. Somehow.

Harmony purses her lips, uncomfortable, focuses on her food. Jude catches on quick, shifts the conversation

JUDE (CONT'D)

Or maybe you could try to *teach* me?

HARMONY

Um. I mean I can *try*. Magic really isn't something you can learn overnight. Or even in a week.

JUDE

Yeah figured. We can try to contact someone in the meantime? Just in case it doesn't work.

Harmony thinks for a moment. She hates this idea *less*

HARMONY

I'm down with that.

JUDE

Awesome! You free uhhhh tomorrow morning? Meet on campus.

HARMONY

Sure. I'll just...
(glances at Shifty)
babysit *Shifty* in the meantime.

INT. SHAEFFER APARTMENT - HARMONY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Harmony is lying awake in bed at 2AM, staring blankly at the ceiling. Shuffling is heard in the background

She turns to see Shifty aggressively trying to break its glass prison. It rolls around, bumping into everything. She lets out a low groan...

She sticks some pillows and plushies to it with duct tape. Rips it with her teeth and pats it for good measure. Then she unceremoniously *flops* back into bed

INT. SHAEFFER APARTMENT - HARMONY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Match cut to next morning, Harmony ungracefully asleep. The alarm sounds and she stirs with another groan. She snoozes it

INT. SHAEFFER APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY

Harmony brushes her teeth to a pop song, lazily humming along. Something bumps her leg. She looks down and narrows her eyes to find Shifty, baby proofed and exploring

INT. SHAEFFER APARTMENT - HARMONY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Harmony looks through her closet, one foot holding down Shifty. She pulls out a sweater and inspects it when she hears a buzzing from her bed. Bianca is calling her. She reaches over and answers.

HARMONY

Sup girl.

INT. BIANCA'S ROOM - SAME TIME

Bianca does her makeup with one hand, phone in the other

BIANCA

Heyyyyy! My lovely and amazing and beautiful Harmonarchy!

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

HARMONY

(chuckles)

Is this about the project thing?

BIANCA

Nah! I figured out a cooler solution! I was gonna ask if you wanted to hang out before my class. We haven't in like *forever*!

HARMONY

Um. How bout another time? I'm meeting up with Jude today.

BIANCA
 (dramatic gasp)
 Say WHAT? Judiciary?! I completely forgot he's back!

HARMONY
 Mhm. Stumbled across him yesterday

BIANCA
 Cute~!
 (gasp)
 Wait. Oh my gosh! Is this a date?
 You have to tell me everything!

Harmony flushes and frantically waves her hands at the phone

HARMONY
 No no. We're just friends. It's actually for...like a magic thing.

BIANCA
 Um. EXPLAIN?!

LATER

Harmony is now fully dressed and laying on her bed.

HARMONY
 So yeah. I'm meeting him today to start lessons. Or attempt to.

BIANCA
 Toooooo...get rid of the...Shifty?

HARMONY
 The magical shadow in the jar, yes.

BIANCA
 Fun~. Kind of. I almost don't believe it's even possible.
 You tell your mom yet?

HARMONY
 (snorts)
 That's funny. She would *flip*.

BIANCA
 Yeah true. Well, we can raincheck on the hang out. Just...promise to stay safe okay? Keep me updated so I know you aren't eaten.

HARMONY

Heh! Thanks. Yeah. I promise I will. Have fun in class.

BIANCA

Will do! Love you byeee!

HARMONY

Bye!

Bianca makes kiss noises until Harmony hangs up. She lets out a heavy sigh and stares at the ceiling for a moment...She turns to her dresser to look at the Everheart Pendant.

INT. SHAEFFER APARTMENT - MAIN ROOM - DAY

Now wearing the pendant, Harmony finishes the last bite of eggs and throws away the plate. She checks on Shifty in a cloth tote bag and adjusts the blanket over him. She grabs her purse, takes out the crystal pouch, looks over the remaining the spells.

At a sound down the hall, she quickly puts it away. Elenora enters and looks up from her phone.

ELENORA

Morning Harmony! You sleep good?

HARMONY

Uh. Yeah, I slept fine.

ELENORA

Where're you going? Work?

HARMONY

Nah. If I was I'd be in uniform.
Uh. I'm actually hanging out with Jude today. He's back in town.

ELENORA

Oh! Jude. Well that sounds *fun*!

Then Elenora notices the pendant. Her expression changes.

ELENORA (CONT'D)

Is...that Illia's necklace?

Harmony freezes. She opens her mouth to speak.

ELENORA (CONT'D)

Are you doing *magic* again, Harmony?

HARMONY

No! No I just...I wanted to wear this. I swear I'm not.

ELENORA

Where are you going? What's that?

Before she can grab the bag, Harmony pulls away and pulls out a blanket. She glances at Shifty in the jar, hidden away.

HARMONY

Just blankets! We're uh. Doing a study picnic! For magic history.

ELENORA

Magic history.

HARMONY

Look I promise it's just homework help. He's studying it.

A tense beat. Her mom narrows her eyes at Harmony's innocent smile. Then she sighs.

ELENORA

Fine. Just...*please* don't get involved with magic.

HARMONY

I wont! Really. I'm gonna go now.

ELENORA

Bye. Love you.

HARMONY

Love you too!

Then she leaves.

INT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - CONTINUOUS

Once the door closes, she sighs in releif.

HARMONY

Okay..Just one adventure. And then. No more magic. And no more Illia.

She heads down the hall. *Yeah, right...*