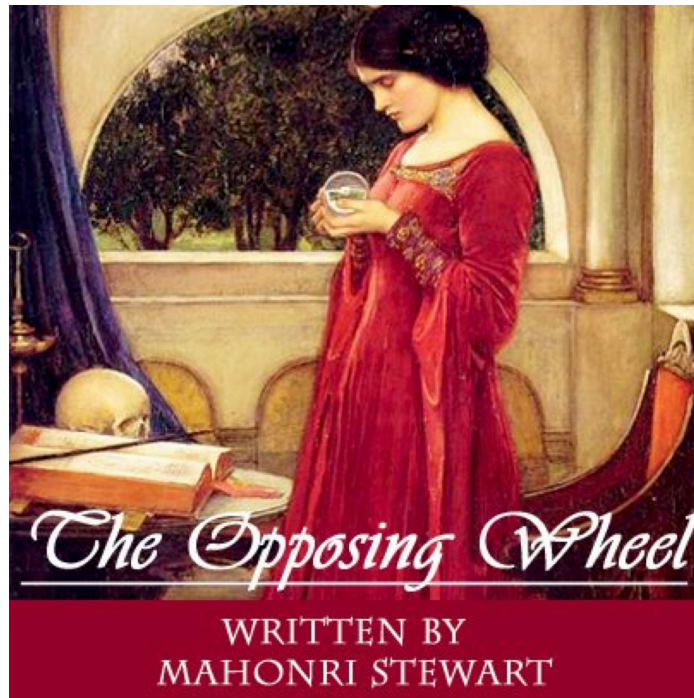


PERUSAL SCRIPT



A Mythical Fantasia in Two Acts



Newport, Maine

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THE OPPOSING WHEEL

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Production History

The Opposing Wheel premiered at the Castle Theatre in Provo, UT on November 7, 2014. It had the following cast and crew:

CAST (4f, 4m)

Maggie: Jyllian Petrie (Unice)

Daniel: Jason Kelly Fullmer

Ether: Jason Sullivan

Morgana: Jamie Denison

Frenzy: Rebecca Minson

Tempest: Brian Randall

Veiled Woman: Stephanie Robertson

Secret Character: Chris Clark

CREW

Director: Heather Jones

Producer/Sound/Original Music: Nathaniel Drew

Costumes: Heather Jones

Lighting: Mike James

House Manager: David Tertipes

Set: Daniel Jones

Fight Choreography: Adam Argyle

Executive Producer: Mahonri Stewart

THE OPPOSING WHEEL A Mythical Fantasia by Mahonri Stewart. 4f, 4m. Surreal setting. Fantasy/contemporary costumes. 2 hours. In this magical fantasy, the ancient, the modern, and the future collide. As heir of the curse of the famous Lady of Shallot, Magdalena Devonshire has never set foot outside her castle and is plagued by devils, but soon the world will be coming to her. A strange man calling himself Daniel drops a dead body on her table. Next, he brings the body back to life! But this is only the beginning of what Time has in store for Maggie. Follow along with Maggie's adventure as immortal prophets, amnesiac wizards, and Arthurian legends descend upon her world for a conflict that will affect the future and the past! **ORDER # 3308**

MAHONRI STEWART is an award winning writer and educator. He has written over two dozen plays, most of which have been produced throughout the U.S. and Europe, including productions in Los Angeles, Scotland, and Switzerland. In 2004, his premiere play *Farewell to Eden* won the Kennedy Center's American College Theater Festival's National Playwriting Award (Second Place) and their National Selection Team Fellowship Award. Since then he has received numerous other awards and honors and continues to expand his writing into various mediums, including screenplays, comics, poetry, and novels. He received his MFA degree in Dramatic Writing from Arizona State University. He received his bachelors degree in Theatre Arts from Utah Valley University. He's a former Playwright in Residence at the Noorda Regional Theater for Children and Youth.

Dedicated to

William Arthur Taysom For Friendship,

Tricia H.H. Evanson For Vision,

Anne Marie Stewart For Love.

The Opposing Wheel

Act One

SCENE 1 — *The play for the first act takes place in the library of an old British castle. The time is the current year. The castle belongs to MAGDALENA “MAGGIE” DEVONSHIRE, a woman in her mid-twenties to early thirties, who enters. She is dressed in a medieval dress and carries several very old books, at least hundreds of years old, if not thousands. MAGGIE is followed by two SHADES, a man and a woman. These dark spirits, or SHADES, are not ghosts, thus they do not wear the kind of clothing that can be historically identified. Their clothing, to them, is symbolic and represents their natures and the kind of power they each individually possess. The SHADES call each other TEMPEST (the man) and FRENZY (the woman). MAGGIE sits down and starts searching thoroughly through the ancient texts, while TEMPEST and FRENZY leisurely lounge around. For the first little while, MAGGIE doesn’t ever look directly at TEMPEST or FRENZY.*

TEMPEST. *(Looking over MAGGIE’s books.)* Bah. A dirty waste of her time.

FRENZY. Irritable tonight, Tempest?

TEMPEST. Does that surprise you?

FRENZY. It’s just nice to have you in a calmer disposition for once.

TEMPEST. I’m so tired of your unrelenting flippancy.

FRENZY. The way I see it, if we can’t possess a sardonic view on life, we might as well kill ourselves.

TEMPEST. Very funny.

FRENZY. “Oh, if this too, too solid flesh would melt . . .”

TEMPEST. All right, stop it.

FRENZY. “To die, to sleep! To sleep perchance to dream. Aye there’s the rub, for in such sleep, what dreams may come . . .”

TEMPEST. Stop it!

FRENZY. Ah, but how can we sleep, if we were never awake? Thus if we’ve never slept, how can this be a dream? And if it is not a dream and we’re not awake, what then are we?

TEMPEST. They’re not our stories, Frenzy. I don’t see why you obsess over them.

FRENZY. You have no poetry in your soul.

TEMPEST. I’m careful with my soul. It’s all I have.

FRENZY. Old as eternity, and yet still so narrow. Mankind, you see, is just as much myth as fact. If you look at them simply as a fixed point, a body, an unchanging truth, then they’ll fool you every time.

TEMPEST. I hope you don’t mind if I don’t listen to more of your antiquated philosophy.

FRENZY. When you learn to reach into their myths and stories, then you start understanding that they are just as hidden from us as we are from them. They will be our undoing, if we don’t reach an understanding of them before they reach an understanding of us!

TEMPEST. You give them much more credit than I do.

FRENZY. That, my dear Tempest, is the reason I am in charge of this expedition.

TEMPEST. A mistake, an error of judgment on the part of our Authorities.

FRENZY. If you want to see why I am called Frenzy, then keep talking that way! Your wet storms would wilt underneath my flame!

TEMPEST. Hot air! No substance! I can blow you out in one cool breath.

MAGGIE. Will you two shut up? I'm trying to concentrate here.

TEMPEST and FRENZY both stop, shocked. They look at MAGGIE and notice that for the first time she is looking straight at them.

TEMPEST. Does she mean us?

FRENZY. Is—is she looking at us?

MAGGIE. Looking at you? Well, I'm not sure if that's the right terminology. But I know you're there.

TEMPEST. By Beezlebub's beard, she's a Veil Ripper! Why weren't we told about this?

FRENZY. Damned bureaucracy.

MAGGIE sighs and then goes back to her books.

TEMPEST. This changes everything. I've never dealt with a Veil Ripper before. We'll need to be more careful.

FRENZY. Don't say a word.

A sound of a door opening is heard, followed by a gust of wind and rain from outside, and then the sound of the door slamming. All are startled when DANIEL, a young man in his mid-twenties, enters carrying in his arms another young man named ETHER. MAGGIE gives out a cry of surprise.

DANIEL. Sh, sh, sh! Magdalena Devonshire?

MAGGIE. Yes, but how did you . . . ? Who are . . . ?

DANIEL. Brilliant. Where may I put the body?

MAGGIE. Body? Is—is he dead?

DANIEL. Yes, currently.

MAGGIE. Pardon?

DANIEL. You're right, the table will do nicely. Hm, very nice volumes. I will have to look at those later.

DANIEL pushes the books aside and puts ETHER on the table.

FRENZY. Now this is an interesting development . . .

MAGGIE. Are you tuned to the moon?

DANIEL. Ugh, your house is infested with Shades.

MAGGIE. You can see them too?

DANIEL. No. But they do have a nasty stench, don't they? The important thing, however, is that you can see them. Enough chit chat, we have more important matters to attend to. This fellow is dead.

DANIEL starts rummaging through a back pack he carried in.

MAGGIE. Dead, he's really—oh my—you're not taking the mickey out of me, are you?

DANIEL. You can check his pulse, if you want.

MAGGIE. What happened?

DANIEL. A very nasty battle with a very nasty woman. I won't bore you with details—ah, here it is!

DANIEL takes out a wooden cup.

MAGGIE. The poor lad. Were you two close?

DANIEL. Oh no, not at all. We just met last week. But he's very important to me, so . . .

DANIEL brings out a bottle of wine or grape juice and pours some into the cup and then pours it into ETHER's mouth.

MAGGIE. What are you doing?

DANIEL. Come on, Peter Priesthood

MAGGIE. Was that his name then? Peter? Is this some kind of last rights?

DANIEL. Oh no. His name is Ether. And, no, he's not Catholic—not that his religion hardly matters at this point. But all of this can be explained later.

MAGGIE. Excuse me, but I'm in a bit of a tizzy here. I think you'd better explain now.

DANIEL. No. It can be explained later.

MAGGIE. All right. Later.

(Pause.)

Ether. Interesting name.

DANIEL. You seem rather cool and collected for a woman who has a dead body in her library.

MAGGIE. And you seem rather cool and collected for a man who just saw the body murdered.

DANIEL. Oh, but you see the difference is that I know that he's going to come back to life.

ETHER gasps and sits up violently, having just come back to life. MAGGIE gasps in shock.

FRENZY. Damn.

MAGGIE. He—he—man alive!

DANIEL. Exactly.

ETHER gasps and coughs and sputters.

ETHER. I'm back! I saw—I saw so many things—no, no, they're fading—no, wait! I can't remember anymore! It was so—so beautiful. But now it's gone.

DANIEL. It's all right, mate, you're safe now.

ETHER. No thanks to you. You nearly got me killed back there.

DANIEL. Technically, I did get you killed. Lucky for you, I clean up after myself.

ETHER. How am I alive?

DANIEL. Ah, details, details, all of you always want details. Well, you wouldn't believe me, if I told you.

ETHER. I think I'm willing to believe anything now!

DANIEL. It's a trinket I picked up. I hate that I had to use it in front of the shades. It'll be broadcast all over hell now—they're infamous tongue waggers. Isn't that right, Tempest and Frenzy?

FRENZY. Double damn!

TEMPEST. *(Simultaneous)* How did he know our names?!

MAGGIE. *(Simultaneous)* How did you know their names?

DANIEL. I've been well briefed.

MAGGIE. You—you just brought a man back from the dead!

DANIEL. Well, yes, but don't be too impressed. It's been done before by people much better than me and with much more style.

MAGGIE. Not in my house, it hasn't! And—and—what the hellfire and brimstone are you doing here?

DANIEL. I don't exactly know.

MAGGIE. Who are you?

DANIEL. My name is Daniel, I think.

MAGGIE. How do you know so much about me and the Shades?

DANIEL. A shiny woman in a lake told me.

MAGGIE. A shiny woman in . . . What's going on?!

DANIEL. I'm still trying to figure that one out myself.

MAGGIE. But . . .

DANIEL. I'm sorry, but at the moment things are rather urgent. We still have that matter of a murderous woman on the loose, so I need to check the perimeter of your house, if you don't mind.

MAGGIE. Mind! What does it matter if I mind?

DANIEL. Now you're getting the idea. I'll be right back—you two can, uh, get acquainted.

Exit DANIEL.

MAGGIE. Er, hello. **ETHER.** Uh, hi.

Awkward pause.

MAGGIE. He's not a nutter, is he?

ETHER. Haven't quite figured that out yet. This your place?

MAGGIE. Yeah. It's a castle. We're in the East tower.

ETHER. Nice.

MAGGIE. Ta.

Awkward pause.

ETHER. And this library! How old are these books?

MAGGIE grabs the volumes suddenly and puts them back on the shelves.

MAGGIE. That really isn't any of your business.

ETHER. Oh. Sorry.

MAGGIE. As soon as your friend gets back and everything is clear, you two are going to leave.

ETHER. Uh, actually, we're not.

MAGGIE. Pardon?

ETHER. I'm sure you have a bunch of questions.

MAGGIE. A few did cross my mind.

ETHER. Well, I'll tell you what I know. I'm Ether Kimball. The other guy calls himself Daniel. But he doesn't think that's his real name.

MAGGIE. How can he not know his own name?

ETHER. See, that's the thing. He comes to me in America and tells me that the End Times are coming . . .

MAGGIE. End times? As in . . .

ETHER..... the Last Days. The Apocalypse. He told me that the world's going to be burned to a crisp, but that I was going to help support a man who would save a remnant of mankind . . .

MAGGIE. A remnant?

ETHER. Those were his exact words. A remnant.

MAGGIE. And what is that supposed to mean?

ETHER. I don't know. And neither does he.

MAGGIE. Well, that takes the biscuit. And how does he claim to have a baldy notion about any such thing?

ETHER. Like he said, a shiny woman in a lake told him.

MAGGIE. And you just up and left America to go with this toss pot?

ETHER. There's a lot more to him than what he first seems to be. He has a purpose. But he has many tests to pass before he fulfills that purpose.

MAGGIE. Oh, and you have such insight into his soul then?

ETHER. Yes.

MAGGIE. How?

ETHER. I dreamed the whole scenario before he told me a thing about it.

MAGGIE. You dreamed it, and then—no, wait. Pardon?

ETHER. Come now, you're the practitioner of magic, aren't you? A visionary dream shouldn't be so farfetched for you.

MAGGIE. I don't really practice magic. Not the spells and enchantments kind, at least. I—I just have certain gifts. Like you, it seems. You have prophetic dreams?

ETHER. That's why he said the woman in the lake wanted me. I often see things before they happen, almost down to the finest details. I saw fire and armies and smoke and cities laid to rubble. I saw powerful men and women use abilities I had never seen—they weren't natural. They were frightening people who were near impossible to kill. These people, these beings brought whole nations to their knees. It all got pretty depressing, but then . . .

MAGGIE. You didn't happen to get tanked up at the pub the night before, did you?

ETHER. I don't drink.

MAGGIE. Not at all?

ETHER. There were pockets of people all over the world who stood against the onslaught. A group in Jerusalem, a group in Missouri—and here in England I saw a man rise up and gather a handful of people who dared go up against the evil demigods of power that had taken root here. I was one of those people who that man gathered. And so were you.

MAGGIE. Me?

ETHER. I'm the one who directed Daniel here. I saw this house—and you, Magdalena Devonshire—in a dream.

MAGGIE. Actually, I prefer to be called Maggie.

ETHER. Okay.

MAGGIE. You saw me in a dream?

ETHER. Yeah.

MAGGIE. That's creepy.

ETHER. Yeah, it's not a line I use when I pick up girls. Do you believe me, Maggie?

MAGGIE. *(Pause.)* I have—abilities of my own. I'm not exactly one to judge. So what happened next?

In your dream, I mean.

ETHER. I don't know. I didn't see anything beyond that.

MAGGIE. That's a pretty special gift.

ETHER. I've had it since I was young. Normally I had gentle dreams. Comforting ones, which burned all fear and doubt out of my heart, like a white fire of peace. But these—these aren't the same. These are darker, more urgent. These are warnings.

TEMPEST. I think that I've heard enough.

FRENZY. Tempest, don't do anything . . .

TEMPEST. They're too dangerous!

MAGGIE. (*Noting the Shades.*) Ether, we're in trouble.

ETHER. What?

TEMPEST starts muttering an archaic incantation under his breath. All of TEMPEST and FRENZY's spells are in Latin.

TEMPEST. Pluvia Pinguesco Gelu Ventus Levitas Tempestas!

Outside, intense wind and rain starts to be heard. Then, soon enough, lightning and thunder.

FRENZY. You know our orders!

TEMPEST. You're too soft, Frenzy! This is what needs to be done. If there is any chance that they can stop the . . .

FRENZY. Challenge me and you'll burn.

(FRENZY tries to interfere, but TEMPEST pushes her aside. FRENZY becomes angry. She, too, starts an incantation. As she does so, a orange-red light surrounds her.)

Fervens Estus Vomica Exuro Incendia Rabies!

ETHER. Fire!

MAGGIE. It's the Shades!

ETHER. We have to get out of the castle!

MAGGIE. I can't! Anyway, it looks like a hurricane out there! We wouldn't fare much better!

FRENZY attacks TEMPEST. They tussle, and then eventually push against each other with their elements, neutralizing themselves into a stalemate for a moment.

ETHER. How do we stop them?

MAGGIE. I don't think we can. They're intangible . . .

Enter DANIEL.

DANIEL. Magdalena, where are they?

MAGGIE. It's Maggie!

DANIEL. I don't care! Where are the Shades?

MAGGIE. There!

DANIEL. (*Note: All of DANIEL's spells are in Gaelic.*) Diabhal tinneas!

After DANIEL yells out the incantation, a burst of light surrounds TEMPEST and FRENZY. They fall to the ground, severely hurt.

TEMPEST. Ow! That hurts!

DANIEL. Diabhal tinneas!

FRENZY. We're out of here!

Another burst of light. FRENZY and TEMPEST scramble to their feet and exit.

DANIEL. Diabhal tinneas!

Another burst of light.

MAGGIE. Daniel . . .

DANIEL. Diabhal tinneas!

Another burst of light.

MAGGIE. Daniel, stop . . .

DANIEL. Diabhal tinneas!

Another burst of light.

MAGGIE. Daniel! They're gone!

DANIEL. Oh. Yes.

MAGGIE. How did you do that?

DANIEL. Again, always wanting explanations . . .

MAGGIE. Why are you here?

DANIEL. Because a shiny . . .

MAGGIE. . . . woman in a lake told you. You've said that. And Mr. Visionary over here told me about the dreams. It all sounds pretty impossible.

ETHER. "Sounds" impossible. But you don't believe it's impossible.

DANIEL. More than that, with her background, she doesn't even believe it's even unlikely. Do you, Magdalena?

MAGGIE. Maggie.

DANIEL. Boring, but sure. Maggie.

ETHER. She believes us. She has every reason to.

MAGGIE. (*Scrutinizing DANIEL and ETHER.*) I think I want you to go.

DANIEL. That's not likely.

MAGGIE. As you saw—well, I guess you didn't see, but as you experienced, I have enough on my plate with Screwtape and Wormwood.

ETHER. That's not really their names, are they?

MAGGIE. Don't be daft.

DANIEL. Among other things, we're here to help with your particular infestation of devils.

MAGGIE. Oh, tosh. I can handle them.

DANIEL. Yes, we saw how you handled them.

MAGGIE. Look, without my help, you wouldn't have been able to take them on either. You didn't even know where to shoot.

DANIEL. Which is why we need you.

MAGGIE. I don't know you.

DANIEL. But we know you.

MAGGIE. You don't know me!

MAGGIE is about to turn and exit when Ether takes her hand to stop her. She turns, about to

barrel some insults into him, but stops short when she looks into his eyes. The two feel something magic happen between them.

ETHER. Please, don't be angry.

MAGGIE. I'm not angry. At least not anymore.

ETHER. Good.

MAGGIE. But I am a little afraid.

ETHER. Me too.

MAGGIE. It's been a long time since anyone's been here. I should be ecstatic, but . . .

ETHER. Maggie, I know what you're feeling . . .

MAGGIE. Look, Ether, you at least seem sweet, but I do like my privacy. The peace and quiet of being alone here, without any conflicts, without any of the world's arguments. It's all I've known.

ETHER. Yes, I saw that in my dream, too. I saw you here in this castle which your family inherited, pouring over your books, night after night, all alone. Searching for something . . .

MAGGIE. You know . . .

ETHER. Ever since your parents died five years ago, it's been just you. Looking for something they told you about, which has haunted you, cursed you . . .

MAGGIE. You saw . . . ?

ETHER. You have no friends, no family. Just these books. When was the last time you went outside, Maggie?

MAGGIE. Please, stop . . .

ETHER. But every once in a while, you look out your window and see the people in the village below—there but not there. In this in between place. Like in that old poem:

“And moving thro' a mirror clear That hangs before her all the year . . .”

MAGGIE. “. . . Shadows of the world appear.”

There is a small silence as ETHER and MAGGIE regard each other.

DANIEL. So as you can see, Maggie, we do know you.

With that, the spell of attraction is broken.

MAGGIE. Just because you've seen me, doesn't mean you know me.

(Pause.)

It's very late. You'll need a place to rest. Follow me.

DANIEL. You will help us then?

MAGGIE. We'll talk in the morning.

DANIEL. But you have to understand that . . .

ETHER. She said that we'll talk in the morning.

Exit DANIEL, MAGGIE, and ETHER.

SCENE 2 — *The lights raise to reveal ETHER asleep at a desk, piles of books surrounding him, some opened and obviously searched carefully and thoroughly. A VEILED WOMAN enters through a secret*

door and stands above ETHER. She puts back the hood of her cloak to reveal that she wears a veil, which is sufficiently dark to hide her face. She wears an elegant medieval dress.

VEILED WOMAN. “Words that defy explanation, Truth that cuts through most tempered steel, Its cocoon is your protection, Its strength makes all of England kneel.”

(Pause.)

Is this not what you seek, Pilgrim?

ETHER. *(Talking in his sleep.)* I don’t know what I seek.

VEILED WOMAN. What do you see in those visions of yours?

ETHER. A boat full of women—but wait there is also a man, a dead man. They bring him to . . .

VEILED WOMAN. To where? Do you understand what you see?

A sound is heard. The VEILED WOMAN puts back on her hood and opens a secret door; into which she exits and it closes behind her. Enter MAGGIE. Upon seeing ETHER, she hardens. She comes to him and shakes him. ETHER mumbles and pushes back slightly, still asleep. MAGGIE shakes him harder. ETHER pushes back harder. MAGGIE then pushes ETHER off the chair. ETHER tumbles to the floor and then wakes up, startled.

ETHER. Agh! Maggie—what am I doing here?

MAGGIE. Took the words right out of my mouth.

ETHER. Where is she?

MAGGIE. Who?

ETHER. The woman.

MAGGIE. You were sleeping.

ETHER. Oh. It was so vivid.

MAGGIE. Oh, I’m sure it was. A pretty blonde perhaps?

ETHER. No, it wasn’t like that. And I couldn’t see her face.

MAGGIE. I’m not sure if I want to psychoanalyze that one. But that is beyond the point. You were sleeping. In my library. Which means you were looking through my books.

ETHER. Maggie, I know how this looks . . .

MAGGIE. These books are priceless, irreplaceable . . .

ETHER. Maggie . . .

MAGGIE. Why were you looking through my books?!

ETHER. I was trying to help you!

MAGGIE. Help me? Help me do what?

ETHER. “Entombed within the ancient tower,

The lost, sacred words lie dormant,
Arms fold over the sheath’ed power,
Opening them ends the internment,
Springs to bright life the ancient stories,
Holy blade rising to the sky,
Read the words engraved for glories,

His eyes open, his voice will fly.”

MAGGIE. How do you know the riddle?

ETHER. I told you. I dream.

MAGGIE. No. You can’t dream all of it—not every word, no one dreams like that! This is a trick.

ETHER. It’s not a trick.

MAGGIE. Who sent you?

ETHER. We were sent by a shiny woman . . .

MAGGIE...... in a lake. Did you see this woman?

ETHER. No.

MAGGIE. Then perhaps there is no woman.

ETHER. I know what I saw. Merlin knows what he saw. Maggie, Providence has brought us to you, to help you.

MAGGIE. I didn’t ask for help.

ETHER. I think you did. On those nights you used to cry in fits after so much wasted time, such maze-like efforts.

MAGGIE. I can do this.

ETHER. You think it’s a book.

MAGGIE. Pardon me?

ETHER. You think the answer to the riddle is a book. After all the tower is a library. The riddle talks of “sacred words” and arms folded over— like the covers of a book. “Ancient stories” and “eyes will open”—it makes sense, a book.

MAGGIE. Ether, please, let’s not talk about this. It’s my family’s secret, our quest . . .

ETHER. Reading and re-reading every volume. Hoping beyond hope that you misinterpreted something that will suddenly leap out at you. You have filled whole volumes of your own with your theories and guesswork, but they have led to dead ends every time. All day and deep into the night and then early in the morning you do this, until you are exhausted and caught in the web of your own making.

MAGGIE. How can you know all of this?

ETHER. And you have found hidden information, haven’t you, Maggie? Magic and necromancy and old occult secrets are only a few of the revelations you have uncovered in those aging pages. But those aren’t what interest you. You just pass by those, looking for something that will make you free.

MAGGIE. You know too much.

ETHER. Maybe. I think so.

MAGGIE. I want you to leave.

ETHER. I’m not leaving. I’m here for you.

MAGGIE. I want you to leave!

ETHER. It’s not a book. What you’re looking for, it’s not a book.

There is a pause, as MAGGIE looks over ETHER, stunned.

MAGGIE. Of course it’s a book.

ETHER. You misinterpreted the riddle.

MAGGIE. It’s a book. I have gone over that riddle a million times, as did my parents before me, and

their parents before them, as did every ancestor before them, even before my own family's recorded history. We all agree. It's a book.

ETHER. It's not a book.

MAGGIE. It is so.

ETHER. Then why you haven't you found anything?

MAGGIE. What do you know about it? You just got here. My family has searched for this for generations.

ETHER. And that's why they haven't succeeded, because they've been looking for the wrong thing. That's why you so desperately need a new set of eyes.

Enter DANIEL.

DANIEL. Good morning, you two!

MAGGIE. I want both of you out of here.

DANIEL. That again, is it?

ETHER. Why won't you accept our help?

MAGGIE. This is mine. The burden is mine. The glory is mine. The loneliness is mine.

ETHER. It doesn't have to be that way . . .

MAGGIE. It is that way!

ETHER. Maggie, you can't do it alone. And I don't think that you really want to do it alone.

MAGGIE. It doesn't matter what I want.

ETHER. Please, be sensible.

MAGGIE. *(Laughs.)* Sensible! Look, if I make a mistake, then I make a mistake. But if you two come in here and make a shambolic mess of things, the consequences could be dire. I don't want to see you—either of you—hurt. You don't know the world you've stepped into.

ETHER. I'm willing to take those consequences on my own head, thank you very much. You don't need to worry your conscience about that.

MAGGIE. Ether, truly, you seem nice. Really nice. Pleasant. My life isn't nice. It isn't pleasant. I've already seen you dead on a table once, let's not go through that again.

DANIEL. Oh, if that's all that's worrying you, Ether's not going to die again.

MAGGIE. You can't make that promise. No one can.

DANIEL. Actually, that's not true.

Pause.

MAGGIE and DANIEL. What?

DANIEL. He drank from the cup.

MAGGIE. So now he's alive. We know that.

DANIEL. Ether, I'm sorry. I'm so very sorry. It's more than that. It not only brought you back to life—it made you immortal.

MAGGIE. You made him . . . ?

ETHER. That's not possible.

DANIEL. It's not only possible, it's what happened.

ETHER. But didn't you consider what I would . . . ?

DANIEL. I knew what you would want. But I also knew that we needed you. I'm sorry, I'm so sorry.
ETHER is stunned for a moment, but then a wave of anger crosses him and he punches DANIEL. DANIEL falls stunned to the ground, and ETHER exits clearly upset. MAGGIE looks flabbergasted. She helps DANIEL up to his feet.

MAGGIE. That was a rather violent reaction from a man who just learned he would have a clean bill of health for the rest of eternity.

DANIEL. Don't be naive, Maggie. I denied him the very thing he wanted most.

MAGGIE. What was that?

DANIEL. Eternal life.

MAGGIE. Isn't that what you just gave him?

DANIEL. No. You must understand, Ether is a very devout Mormon— in his mind, what I did to him was close the door to heaven.
MAGGIE considers this for a moment. Then she looks up at him, understanding.

MAGGIE. So in his mind, you just put a curse on him.

DANIEL. Yes, I'm afraid so.

MAGGIE. And you knew he wouldn't want that?

DANIEL. Yes.
MAGGIE slaps DANIEL.

MAGGIE. You know you deserved that.

DANIEL. You know a thing or two about curses, too, don't you, Maggie?
MAGGIE exits. Exit DANIEL.

SCENE 3 — *Enter TEMPEST and FRENZY, cautious.*

FRENZY. They're not here.

TEMPEST. That's a relief. So what are we supposed to do now? A veil ripper, a prophet and a warlock!
Not to mention that cup . . .

FRENZY. We're still elementals, Frenzy. That still gives us an edge . . .

TEMPEST. Not against a line up like that.

FRENZY. If we only knew what they were looking for.
Enter MORGANA from a hiding spot. MORGANA is a majestic woman dressed in medieval, Celtic clothing, ceremonial in appearance, as if she were part of some sort of sect or mystical order. She also carries a shield, upon which is the design of a knight that is stepping on the heads of a queen and a king. She also wears a scabbard which, curiously, contains no sword within it.

MORGANA. I believe that's where I can help you.
(FRENZY and TEMPEST, shocked again, turn towards MORGANA and their elements start swirling around them.)

Don't be rash. I can help you.

(FRENZY considers this, but TEMPEST tries to attack MORGAN. MORGAN casts her spell before TEMPEST can finish his. All of Morgan's spells are in Gaelic.)

Diabhal bhí sé i bhfostú!

(A shaft of light strikes and stays upon TEMPEST, pinning him to the floor. He tries to resist and break out.)

Do you want to fight me, too, She-Shade?

(FRENZY considers this and then disperses her elements.)

What's your name?

(FRENZY doesn't answer.)

Oh, come on, I'm not here to hurt you.

(FRENZY still doesn't answer.)

Well, if you won't give your name, I won't give mine.

TEMPEST has finally given up trying to break out of the shaft of light.

TEMPEST. All right, I give up!

MORGANA. Saor Diabhal!

The shaft of light is released. TEMPEST breathes more easily and can once again move without restraint.

TEMPEST. You're the one who killed that prophet, aren't you?

MORGANA. Well, he's not exactly dead, is he?

TEMPEST. Now only if we knew who that wizard was . . .

FRENZY smacks TEMPEST in the back of the head.

MORGANA. You don't know?

TEMPEST. Well, no.

FRENZY smacks TEMPEST in the back of the head.

MORGANA. Haven't your leaders told you anything?

TEMPEST is about to speak again, but FRENZY smacks him in the back of the head. TEMPEST decides not to speak anymore.

So they left you in the dark.

(Gives out a short laugh.)

Damned bureaucracy.

(The voices of DANIEL, MAGGIE, and ETHER are heard approaching.)

Hide. Wait, you can't. Between the veil ripper and the warlock, you're completely exposed.

(Pause.)

I can cover the smell for the warlock. If you hide just outside, the veil ripper won't detect you.

Exit FRENZY and TEMPEST. MORGANA recites a quick incantation and then hides. Enter DANIEL, MAGGIE, and ETHER.

MAGGIE. So tell me again—what did she tell you in your dream?

ETHER. “Words that defy explanation,

Truth that cuts through most tempered steel,

Its cocoon is your protection,
Its strength makes all of England kneel.”

DANIEL. And you think it’s connected to your other riddle?

MAGGIE. “Entombed within the ancient tower,
The lost, sacred words lie dormant,
Arms fold over the sheath’ed power,
Opening them ends the internment,
Springs to bright life the ancient stories,
Holy blade rising to the sky,
Read the words engraved for glories,
His eyes open, his voice will fly.”

DANIEL. “Tempered steel. ” “Sheath’ed power.” “Holy blade rising to the sky.” Both riddles are talking about a sword.

MAGGIE. That’s what I’m thinking, too. And both riddles talk about words, which is why my family thought of books. But they’re engraved words. Which means there’s something written on the blade . . .

DANIEL. “It’s cocoon is your protection.” “Sheathed power.” There’s something special about the scabbard . . .

ETHER. But can it really be a sword? I mean the riddle, it talks about a person. “His eyes open, his voice will fly.”

DANIEL. Perhaps it’s personifying the sword.

MAGGIE. No, I think they’re separate. “Arms fold over sheath’ed power.” I kept thinking that the arms were covers of a book, and that the power was written in the book . . .

DANIEL. The riddle does talk about ancient stories. Maybe you weren’t wrong . . .

MAGGIE. No, no, I think Ether’s right. It’s not a book. At least not directly. The riddles are being much more literal than I assumed. I kept looking for symbolism, metaphor and allegory—but what if it’s being literal. What if the arms belong to a real person? What if the sword is a real sword? What if—oh, I’m an idiot.

MAGGIE goes directly to the book shelves and starts searching.

DANIEL. I thought we decided it wasn’t a book . . .

MAGGIE brings down a very old volume of L’Morte de Arthur by Thomas Mallory and places it down on a table, searching through it frantically.

MAGGIE. If I’m right, then it is and it isn’t. Here we go . . .

(Reading from the text)

“Damosel, what sword is that, that yonder the arm holdeth above the water? I would it were mine for I have no sword. King, said the damosel, that sword is mine, and if ye will give me a gift when I ask it of you, ye shall have it.” How did I not see it before . . . I know these stories . . . how did I not see it?!

ETHER. Who would have thought to be literal with fairy tales?

MAGGIE. I’ve read all of this. The sword was supposed to be able to cut through anything. On it were

engraved words—on both sides. On one side it said “take me up,” on the other side, “cast me away.” And then it’s supposed to have been accompanied by a magical scabbard. It protected whoever wore it in battle, but the scabbard was lost. Morgan le Fay took it and threw it in a lake. It was never found again. No, wait, these are fairy tales—fairy tales!

ETHER. Are they?

MAGGIE. Of course they are! Magical swords and scabbards, ancient enchantresses . . .

ETHER..... prophetic Americans, immortality granting cups, a woman who sees evil spirits . . .

MAGGIE. But that’s different—these stories aren’t real

ETHER. We are now stumbling upon another reality.

MAGGIE. This is too much!

ETHER. Open your eyes!

DANIEL. Wait. “Entombed within the ancient tower..... ” It’s not in your books, Maggie. It’s behind them. It’s in the tower.

MAGGIE. Then . . .

DANIEL. There must be some sort of mechanism or trap door or . . .

ETHER. Perhaps the library was built to hide the entrance . . .

MAGGIE. . . . but this can’t be . . .

DANIEL..... it could be walled up, I suppose, in that case, we may need a sledgehammer or something . . .

ETHER..... perhaps it’s in this very room!

MAGGIE..... can the curse be finally over?

DANIEL. Excalibur could be ours!

They all pause.

ETHER. This is monumental.

MORGANA emerges from her hiding spot.

MORGANA. So close, so far.

(Indicating DANIEL.)

I expected more out of you, especially. You’re going by Daniel these days, aren’t you?

They all react, DANIEL about to recite a spell.

MORGANA. Calm down, calm down!

MAGGIE. Who are you?

MORGANA. One who knows you, Magdalena Shallot-Devonshire.

ETHER. That’s the witch who killed me!

MORGANA. *(With a knowing smile.)* I didn’t do a very thorough of a job of it, apparently. And it looks like I won’t get another stab at it either. The girl, however—Iompar speisialta bean sí!

ETHER. Get away from her!

ETHER throws himself in front of the spell which throws him back, knocking him unconscious.

DANIEL. Maggie, get behind me!

MAGGIE. Ether!

DANIEL. Don’t worry about him! He’s immortal, he’s in a much better condition than you would have been. Just get behind me!

DANIEL tries to recite a spell, which MORGANA interrupts with a spell of her own.

MORGANA. I know all your tricks, Daniel, you're the one who taught them to me.

DANIEL. Taught you? I don't know you!

MORGANA. You, see, Daniel, I don't know if you're telling me the truth, or just flirting. Tempest! Frenzy!

TEMPEST and FRENZY enter, attacking DANIEL with their elements. MORGANA then recites a spell, which delivers the knockout blow. DANIEL slumps to the floor, unconscious. MAGGIE now faces MORGANA, TEMPEST, and FRENZY alone.

MAGGIE. Is he . . . ?

MORGANA. No, Daniel needs to be left alive. You, however, my dear, are causing me much deeper complications. I don't quite know what to do with you.

FRENZY. She must be left alive.

FRENZY and TEMPEST flare their elements.

MORGANA. Nice to see you found your voice again. As to the girl, that's for me to decide. She's mine.

MORGANA makes a magical stance, ready to cast a spell if needs be.

FRENZY. You might be able to handle the two of us, but I doubt you'd have such luck with Beezlebub or Mephistopheles.

MORGANA considers this.

MORGANA. I might take my chances.

FRENZY. If you make enough of a ruckus, Lucifer himself has been known to descend upon persistent trouble makers.

MORGANA pauses and then stands down.

MORGANA. *(Pause.)* The girl lives. Which is the conclusion I would have come to anyway.

(FRENZY and TEMPEST flare down their powers.)

Can we chat now?

(FRENZY and TEMPEST don't reply.)

The silent treatment again, is it?

MAGGIE. What are you going to do with me?

MORGANA. I haven't figured that out yet.

MAGGIE. What do you want?

MORGANA. Ah, my sweet Magdalena, you're frightened. Here, I'm not going to kill you, we've already established that.

MAGGIE. Not that you didn't consider it.

MORGANA. I don't take life as lightly as you think, Maggie. Life is a gift from the Lord and the Lady.

MAGGIE. So says the spider to the fly.

MORGANA. *(Considering MAGGIE for a moment.)* Well, we might as well be familiar with one another. You can call me Morgana. Tell me, dear one, about the curse upon your family.

MAGGIE. How do you know about that?

MORGANA. Just humor me. In fact, let's make a deal. For everything you tell me about yourself, I'll tell you something about myself. That sounds like a nice game, doesn't it? Question for question.

MAGGIE. How do I know you'll tell me the truth?

MORGANA. She-Shade, do you know the Gaelic truth binding spell?

FRENZY. Gaelic's a bit crude for us, but yes.

MORGANA. Magdalena, this spell will make it so that we have to tell each other the truth. It works both ways. But it's the kind of spell that has to be voluntary. Will you allow yourself to be bound by it with me?

MAGGIE considers this. She eyes the devils.

MAGGIE. It will only be between you and me?

MORGANA. That's how it works. A clever spell, relying upon the Law of Fair Play.

MAGGIE. All right. But the shades will have to leave after they cast the spell.

TEMPEST shakes his head. FRENZY puts her hand on TEMPEST's shoulder. TEMPEST swats away her hand, staring hard at her. TEMPEST flares up. FRENZY puts up her hand. It appears that TEMPEST may challenge her, but he flares down.

FRENZY. We agree to the conditions.

MORGANA. Then cast the spell and get out of here.

FRENZY. *(Note: this is the one spell in the play where the Shades cast in Gaelic, rather than Latin)*
Cothrom firinne.

FRENZY and TEMPEST exit.

MAGGIE. I hope they're not listening in somehow.

MORGANA. You don't trust them.

MAGGIE. They're devils.

MORGANA. I've found that most devils have a good deal more honor than most humans I know.

MAGGIE. Do you really care about honor?

MORGANA. Yes. Which, by the way, is your first question. With this spell you only get seven questions, so I'd use the rest of yours a little more sparingly.

MAGGIE. Oh. Thank you.

MORGANA. Like I said. Honor.

MAGGIE. All right then. Question for question. I've asked mine first, now it's your turn.

MORGANA. How much do you know about the curse put upon you?

MAGGIE. Only what exists in my family's history. At some point in the Middle Ages, an enchantress put a curse upon us that required us to stay within this castle until we found the key that would unlock our destiny. If I ever tried to wander out of this castle, I would die. So I have not been beyond our little courtyard my entire life.

MORGANA. "Unlock your destiny." Do you know what that destiny is?

MAGGIE. I don't. That's two questions for you. My turn. Why did you kill Ether?

MORGANA. Because I was following Daniel. After he recruited Ether, I discovered that they were trying to get to you and I couldn't have that.

MAGGIE. But why would that . . .

MORGANA. Wait. My turn. Ether's a mystery to me. What do you know about him?

MAGGIE. Only what he's told me. He's a Mormon from America who is now immortal and dreams

about the future, which has allowed him to know an uncomfortable amount of things about me. I also know that I am intensely attracted to him and can't breathe whenever he walks into a room.

MAGGIE yelps, brings her hand to her mouth and blushes.

MORGANA. *(With a smile.)* Sometimes with this spell embarrassing things slip out.

MAGGIE. Why did you care that Daniel and Ether were coming for me?

MORGANA. Because you alone can do what I most fear. My next question: do you trust these men?

MAGGIE. No. Neither of them. Especially Daniel.

MORGANA. Good. Then perhaps you and I can be allies after all.

MAGGIE. I don't want to be allies with you. You're a murderer.

MORGANA. I'm not a murderer.

MAGGIE. That's not what I've heard. How are you not a murderer?

MORGANA. Is that your question?

MAGGIE. That depends if that's yours.

MORGANA. Ah. Good save by making that last one a statement, by the way.

MAGGIE. I think I'm finally getting the hang of it. And that was my question, by the way, which answers your last question.

MORGANA. I can tell that we'll both need to be more careful.

MAGGIE. But you still haven't answered my last question.

MORGANA. I do not kill unless I'm protecting myself, or I am protecting the Right. But in saying that I mean I am not afraid of taking a life, if I feel that person will jeopardize the future as it should be.

MAGGIE. That's pretty severe.

MORGANA. I rise to the severity around me. My next question: Would you be willing to join my cause if I showed you why you shouldn't trust these men?

MAGGIE. Yes. I don't like that answer, but it's the one I have to say. What is it that I can do that you fear most?

MORGANA. You can free my enemy. Could I trust you to be constant to me, if you joined me?

MAGGIE. That depends on whether you deserve constancy.

MORGANA. All right. That's a fair enough answer.

MAGGIE. Is your enemy and what I'm looking for connected?

MORGANA. Yes. Are you afraid to die?

This last question baffles MAGGIE. She takes a moment to answer.

MAGGIE. I'm afraid to die with an unfulfilled existence. Are you the one who cast the spell on my family?

MORGANA. Yes.

MAGGIE. Who are you?! What am I looking for?!

MORGANA. Sorry, questions and answers is over.

MAGGIE. You! You are the one who did this to me, to my family, for a hundred generations! But how is that possible? You look as young as I do.

MORGANA. Magdalena, listen to me, I know the emotions that this must stir up . . .

MAGGIE. Emotions! I wish you had more emotion, I wish you had a real heart so that you knew that

what you did was . . .

MORGANA. utterly wrong. Monstrous. Unforgiveable. I live with that every day of my life.

MAGGIE. And you expect to earn my trust with me knowing that?

MORGANA. Actually, I had hoped you wouldn't have been smart enough to ask that question. But I still harbor the hope that you will not work against me, if I explain things. Magdalena, I'm about to show you a good deal of trust. I hope it's not a mistake. I've always been—fond of your family.

MAGGIE. I doubt that.

MORGANA. Do not pay attention to the past, Magdalena, but to the future that I'll speak of. Then I believe you'll understand me. Look, I'll show you something to make up for everything. I'll put my future in your hands, as you and your family were forced to put yours into mine. That will at least help right this wrong, all right? Miotaseolaíocht éirigh réaltacht!

As MORGANA speaks the incantation, rising out of the floor, or from the books shelves, a table appears upon which lays a regal man, either dressed in stunning, medieval armor or medieval clothing. Under the man's crossed arms lays a marvelous sword. The noise of the rising table awakes ETHER, but he currently goes unnoticed.

MAGGIE. Oh my . . .

MORGANA. Magdalena, this is who and what you seek. The part of the riddle about the sword you guessed right. That blade is the ancient Excalibur, given by the Lady of the Lake. The man you see is Arthur Pendragon, the Once and Future King. I am Arthur's half-sister, Morgan Le Fay. The legends, though at times distorted, are true.

MAGGIE. If he was here all of the time—if you could access him—then why did you need us? Why did you curse my family?

MORGANA. The laws of the universe require equality—balance. For me to manipulate a situation to my favor, to gain access to certain spells, I must sacrifice something in return.

MAGGIE. Sacrifice? Like what?

MORGANA. Some of the sacrifices are subtle—sometimes you just simply feel weak afterwards. Sometimes the sacrifices are more substantial. In this case, to be able to hide up Arthur, I had to make sure that there was the possibility of someone finding him.

MAGGIE. If you've kept him hidden all this time, then why show him to me now?

MORGANA. Honestly, because you were on the verge of finding him yourself. So I thought that it was far more likely that you won't break the curse, even with him before you, once you discovered the reason for his captivity.

MAGGIE. I don't think you understand me very well then.

MORGANA. I think I do. You're a woman. Once I tell the kind of ruler Arthur really was, then you will not want to wake him up. You'll give up anything, even your freedom, to make sure that he does not gain control of the world once again.

MAGGIE. All right, I'm listening.

MORGANA. Arthur Pendragon was no friend to women, nor pagans. His authoritarian rule had a two pronged purpose. First, the advancement of Christianity. Second, the subjugation of women through the system of chivalry.

MAGGIE. Chivalry? But wasn't the whole point to protect and honor women?

MORGANA. Oh, those men in armor gave lip service to women, surely. They sang songs, they performed heroic deeds, they praised us to the moon—but once they bedded us, or married us, or silenced us with their kindness, things certainly changed then. Exalted and put away in our beautiful towers, crippled and voiceless, with no door to escape.

MAGGIE. But that was a different time. Surely, seeing this new place, this new time, new rules of conduct . . .

MORGANA. Don't be naive. It is harder to change a man's mind than to turn back the tide. Not even his wife, not even poor Guenevere was spared from his exacting code. For her supposed indiscretions, they were going to burn her at the stake—that is until, Lancelot saved her, of course. But Lancelot was no better, always simply wanting to claim her, never truly desiring to honor her.

MAGGIE. All of that's true as well then?

MORGANA. All of the romantic stories, all of the swoon inducing rhetoric—take that all away and Arthur and his knights were no more than cheap bullies. Well, despite our expert abilities, we could not make ourselves men, nor would we accept their Christ and offend our older gods, thus they found their many ways to punish people like me—people like you.

MAGGIE. But what does any of that matter now? It is the 21st century. He'd be just a man now. In a world of democracies and republics, why on earth would you be so afraid of him?

MORGANA. There's deep magic attached to that man, Maggie. Arthur was a greater and more skilled man than any Alexander or Caesar or Napoleon. If Mordred hadn't stepped in and stopped Arthur, he would not have been simply content with England. He would have reached out to take the whole known world. I may have abhorred his flaws, but I never underestimated his abilities.

ETHER. (*Rising.*) Maggie, don't listen to her!

MORGANA. You have no part in this conversation!

ETHER. Oh, I think that I do! You're very persuasive, ma'am, but your story is as one sided as a pancake.

MORGANA. (*Confused.*) Pancakes have two sides.

ETHER. Maggie, if I may remind you this is the woman that . . .

MAGGIE. She's right, Ether. You have no part in this conversation.

ETHER. What?

MAGGIE. I know you're trying to watch out for me, but trust me to make my own decision on this one. The issues at hand deeply involve her and I. You have no claim on it.

MORGANA. Very wise, Magdalena. I suppose that means I have your support.

MAGGIE. My support? You have cursed my innocent family so that you could settle your own private disputes.

MORGANA. It was a hard decision to make, but you have to understand the alternative . . .

MAGGIE. As you said, like the women of your age I was “put away in a beautiful tower, crippled and voiceless, with no door to escape.” In what way has your own behavior differed than this man's who you hate so much?

MORGANA. How dare you compare me to that tyrant? Where are my kingdoms? Where are my knights

swearing blind obedience? Where is my excess of power to control the destinies of millions of people? In what possible ways could I be compared to him?

MAGGIE. I was your kingdom. I was your stewardship. You had an excess of power over my life. And what did you do with that influence? You had your foot on my throat, ready to crush it.

MORGANA. This man is not worthy!

MAGGIE. Maybe you're right. Perhaps this man is no friend to women. But then it is also true that you are no friend of mine.

MORGANA. I can be your ally! If you join me, you can trust me!

MAGGIE. I'm not stupid. I won't have any alliances.

MORGANA. You cannot stand alone in this life!

MAGGIE. You taught me to stand alone!

MAGGIE dashes to ARTHUR.

MORGANA. No!

MORGAN goes to stop MAGGIE, but ETHER restrains MORGANA.

ETHER. I've got her, Maggie!

MORGANA. Get your filthy hands off of me! Magdalena, think of what you're doing!

MAGGIE. All I've done my whole life is think. I'm bored of it.

MORGANA. No!

MAGGIE takes Excalibur from ARTHUR's dormant body and lifts it to the sky.

MAGGIE. "Entombed within the ancient tower,

The lost, sacred words lie dormant,
Arms fold over the sheath'ed power,
Opening them ends the internment,
Springs to bright life the ancient stories,
Holy blade rising to the sky,
Read the words engraved for glories,
His eyes open, his voice will fly!"

MORGANA. No . . .

ARTHUR's eyes open. He sits up, then stands, weakly at first. Yet then a new energy seems to course through him and a strength and power is evident just by looking at him.

ARTHUR. I am made free.

(Noting MAGGIE)

Fair damsel, are you the one who has done this?

MAGGIE. Yes.

ARTHUR. Then I owe you my life and freedom. You may ask any gift of me that is within my power to give, and it shall be yours.

MAGGIE. Then, sir, I—I ask for the scabbard of Excalibur.

ARTHUR. The scabbard.

(Pause.)

That is wise, my lady, but, alas, I cannot give it. My cursed half-sister Morgan Le Fay threw it in a

lake, and it has not been recovered since.

MAGGIE. I think you will find yourself mistaken in that, sire. You'll find the scabbard on her.

MAGGIE motions ARTHUR's attention for the first time to MORGANA.

ARTHUR. Why, it is true! The scabbard! The Christ has smiled upon me after all my troubles to have seen it once again! But why does this man hold this woman captive? It surely does not bring him any worship to do so and shows a villainous disposition.

ETHER. Do you not recognize this woman, your, uh, majesty?

ARTHUR. By my honor, no.

ETHER. She claims to be your half-sister, Morgana. She tried to stop us from freeing you.

ARTHUR. Then I have misjudged you, sir, if what you say is true, and I owe you a debt of gratitude as well. But Morgana, you say? This damsel is no kinswoman of mine. I know my half-sister well and I would recognize her in any guise.

MORGANA. Arthur, for all of your ability, you can still only see what's in front of you.

ARTHUR. Woman, you are mad to think that you are Morgan Le Fay.

MORGANA. No, Arthur, I have been wise. I have cheated death. For thousands of years my daughters and then their daughters and then their daughters have taken upon my spirit and let me inhabit them. They are the Maidens of Avalon.

ARTHUR. What foul magic is this?

MORGANA. It's truly me, Arthur. I am the one whose father was killed so that our mother could fornicate with your father! I am the one whose husband and son honored you more than they ever did me and betrayed me with their disloyalties. And it was my dear lover, my beloved Accolon, who you butchered. I am the one who you have eternally wronged and I will remember every story so that you and your kind will never forget them!

ARTHUR. False woman, it is you! Your taunting tongue will forever expose you for who you are, Morgana! You dare say that I wronged you? You, who constantly tried to slay my person and to meddle with my wife? You, who helped destroy the very foundations of Camelot? And you talk of Accolon, that traitor who conspired with you against me? I would be justified in cutting off your head right now, for your maidenhood has long been lost by your sins and you are no lady to be protected by the laws of chivalry! Your death is warranted, witch!

MAGGIE. Arthur, please, no!

ARTHUR. You defend this woman?

MAGGIE. I have no love for her, that is sure. She cursed my family and has devastated my chances for happiness.

ARTHUR. Then the more guilty, she!

MAGGIE. Please, have mercy. Spare her.

ARTHUR considers this.

ARTHUR. If she has wronged you, then why do you defend her?

MAGGIE. Is it not the Christian thing to do, sire?

ARTHUR. By my honor, you are a wise maiden and true. I will grant both of your requests: Morgana may have her life for now, and you may have the scabbard of Excalibur.

ARTHUR takes the scabbard from MORGANA and hands it to MAGGIE.

MORGANA. Hypocrites.

ARTHUR. As for you, if you come against me again, Morgan Le Fay, your life is forfeit. May you ponder upon the mercies granted upon you this day by this fair maiden. You may release her, good sir.

ETHER lets go of MORGANA, but she stands still, staring hard at ARTHUR.

MORGANA. You may feel powerful in your supposed mercy, but it means nothing. If you had killed me, another of my daughters would have filled this body's place. Exterminate one of them, and another shall rise from their ashes. You cannot be rid of me, Arthur. I have made sure of that. The Maidens of Avalon will always be set against you.

ARTHUR. Through your flagrant heresies, you have damned your soul to hell.

Enter TEMPEST and FRENZY.

TEMPEST. By Mephistopheles' mullet! What happened here?

ARTHUR. Wicked woman, you have brought the minions of Satan with you! I sense them even now.

ETHER. Oh, don't tell me they're back!

TEMPEST. Is he another veil ripper?!

FRENZY. Oh no. No, no, no, I'm afraid it's much worse than that.

TEMPEST. Well, I don't care who he is, or what you say, Frenzy, this one's a goner!

FRENZY. Tempest, don't!

TEMPEST. Not this time, Frenzy! Not this time!

ARTHUR. Where are you, devils? I can't see you, but Merlin certainly taught me how to smell you! Prove your worship and reveal yourself, you cowards!

TEMPEST charges towards ARTHUR, his elements flaring.

TEMPEST. Pluvia Pinguesco Gelu Ventus Levitas Tempestas! **MAGGIE.** Arthur, sire, he's coming right for you!

Thrusting where MAGGIE indicated, ARTHUR stabs TEMPEST with EXCALIBUR. Those who can see what has happened, watch in shock and awe.

FRENZY. Tempest!

TEMPEST. How . . . ?

ETHER. I can see him . . .

ARTHUR. We all can, because of Excalibur. Merlin was right. It can get rid of your kind.

TEMPEST. What—what have you done, human?

ARTHUR. Demon, I am Arthur Pendragon, son of Uther Pendragon. I am the King of Camelot, the Lord of England. I am God's chosen, the Once and Future King. Remember the name of him who sent you to that which you earned through your misdeeds. I am banishing you from earth, to inherit your eternal home. You are being damned.

TEMPEST. You can't.

ARTHUR. Excalibur can.

ARTHUR twists the blade and pulls it out. TEMPEST screams demonically and vanishes in a flash of smoke.

FRENZY. Oh, hell.

FRENZY exits in a dash, as does MORGANA.

ETHER. Wow.

MAGGIE. I'm free—I'm really free.

MAGGIE collapses in gratitude and relief. ETHER rushes to her.

ETHER. Maggie, are you all right?

MAGGIE. I—I don't know how I am.

DANIEL stirs.

ARTHUR. Who is that man over there? Is he injured?

ETHER. Oh—Daniel!

They all rush to DANIEL, but upon seeing his face, ARTHUR steps back in shock.

MAGGIE. I had forgotten all about him!

DANIEL. *(Getting up.)* Oh, that's nice. I only just saved your life. I did save your life, didn't I? Or are we all dead?

(Seeing ETHER.)

Oh good, you're here, Ether. Still alive.

(Seeing ARTHUR.)

But who's the role playing dude?

ARTHUR. It cannot be—you were caught in the enchanted cave. Did the witch finally let you out?

DANIEL. Pardon?

ARTHUR. What sort of spell allowed you to become so young?

DANIEL. I don't think I'm following.

ARTHUR. Don't you recognize me?

DANIEL. Should I?

ARTHUR. It's me! It's Arthur!

DANIEL. And who do you think I am?

ARTHUR. Why, don't be daft! You're my counselor, my most valued friend.

DANIEL. What?

ARTHUR. You're Merlin!

DANIEL. What? What?!

Blackout.

END ACT ONE

31 PAGES IN ACT TWO

REVIEWS:

“*The Opposing Wheel* is something we don’t get on stage very often: high fantasy . . . Stewart’s script is complex and full of detail . . . [if you] enjoy fantasy stories like the Narnia books, then the show should be irresistible.”

—Russell Warne, *Utah Theater Bloggers Association*

“I wish I could have gotten a shot of the nearly full moon peeking out of the clouds behind us as it rose above the mountain top [at the outdoor Castle Theater]. It was magical, just like Mahonri’s play. Literally. Magical spells and all. What a thought provoking, crazy mix of characters from Camelot, minions of the devil, a lovely pagan trapped in a tower, and a Mormon . . . But nothing turns out the way you expect. It’s pretty difficult to figure out who the real heroes are because everyone has goodness and everyone has flaws . . . an amusing, touching, modern fairy tale. With a nice feminist twist, I might add. Keep your eyes on this Mahonri Stewart, people.”

—Margy Layton, *Shove Me in the Shallow Water*

“On the surface it’s a quirky romance set against a supernatural background, and it can be enjoyed as simply that. Scratch that surface and you find a fascinating merger of Arthurian and Biblical prophesies about the End Times with the characters teaming up in preparation to fight on the side of the divine. Go a few layers deeper, though, and an underlying yin-yang tension is what truly drives the play: ancient and modern, fantastic and mundane, pagan and Christian, past and future, and even life and death. More critical than any of these is the age-old tension between male and female. At the center of all the witty dialogue and the fun of a good mystery is a surprisingly cerebral story . . . Mahonri Stewart is unequivocally the most brilliant feminist I’ve ever encountered, and that really shines through in *The Opposing Wheel*.”

—Hillary Stirling, Audience Response