



## LEGACY

Mabel, episode eight: Legacy. In which all bonds are strained against.

[INTRO:]

MABEL: Hi, you've reached Mabel Martin. I'm not here to take your call right now, so please leave a message after the beep. Thanks!

[BEEP]

[KICKING, SMASHING, BREAKING NOISES]

ANNA: God damn it, god damn it, god damn it –

[BEEP]

– not like the clues weren't right in god damn front of me, I mean, Jesus Christ, what is this? "The Grimoire of Mage Therius Pictor, being in four parts a treatise on the subtle bodies, the hierarchy of spirits, the illuminations of the natural world, and the initiation of men"? And – this one, right, "Unnatural Things: A History of Hauntings"? And, here, "Witch's Tools and Rites in Seventeenth Century England". I've been through this library and I never noticed these books – this section of books, there's a whole *section* – so whose fault is this, really? Whose fault is this? Could have walked away, could have – have told someone, could have –

My dad, he used to talk about theology with us, with me and Mona, and – and I don't know who I'm telling this to, because it isn't you, Mabel, it isn't, it's not, I don't know where you are but you're not *here*, not anymore – and anyway, he always stuck on the idea of free will, right? Because, whatever, you can't have a god who controls everything and knows the outcome of every action and still have free will. My dad was, like, pseudo Catholic, by the way, *God*, who am I *talking* to, he went to church and had the two of us baptised and prayed his novena and let my mother keep statues of the Virgin Mary all around the house, but at the same time he also kind of thought he was smarter than all that, than religion. So he'd be drinking beer and smoking out back and he'd say, Anna, come here, mija, I want to talk to you, and if it'd been my mother saying those words I would have lost it, there's nothing worse than hearing your mother say 'we need to talk', but my dad – he'd have me sit beside him and start talking about God and choice and, you know, *What It All Means*. And anyway, when I was fifteen or sixteen – not long before he died – he came up with this theory. That fate, or whatever you want to call it, doesn't exist along straight lines. It has to be more multiple than that, like a tesseract to a square – did you read *A Wrinkle in Time* too when you were a kid? Ah, you're not there, shut *up*, Anna – he said that there was never just one possible outcome of any situation, there were thousands, millions, and all of them were fate. All of them were God. That God didn't just say yes, this will happen, and no, this will not happen, that He spoke in – in potentials, in probability, so predetermination isn't like a graph charting Point A to Point B, it's like – one of those security laser systems in action movies, the kind spies have to navigate around using a series of yoga moves. And Mabel – isn't that like *infinitely* more sinister? Isn't that so much more horrifying? Because either way you're trapped, only in my dad's theory you're not just a car on a track rattling towards the finish line, you're a fly in a spider's web and that spider is everywhere, is everything, the silk and the air and the sky beyond you – and what I'm trying to say is maybe I was always meant to come here, always meant to *stay* –

[BEEP]

Yes, speaking.

Oh, okay. Hi.

Yes.

She –

Oh.

I. No. I. I don't. I don't want. No. No, no, no, no, I can't, she, you – you can't  
– I –

[BEEP]

[SMASHING NOISES. SHRIEKING, CURSING.]

Are you in there? Are you –

[BEEP]

I am brushing her hair. There's only the two of us, in her bedroom covered in posters and magazine cutouts, on her bed full of nail polish bottles, lip gloss, teddy bears and clothes. I am fourteen years old and I am brushing her hair and it is soft as rose petals, it smells like Herbal Essence shampoo. She smells like shampoo, like girl-deodorant, and like her perfume, something she got as a sample in a teen beauty magazine. Chemical smells, but on her they are – warm, and human. Her hair falls through my fingers. The radio is playing, something summery, even though it's autumn. She's singing along. I can feel her voice thrum in her throat when my fingers brush the back of her neck. There is a feeling growing in the pit of my stomach with every note she sings. Because I have the perspective of God, I know that this feeling will lead to something I'll have to examine, something that will cause me trouble and shame, cost me friends and family. But this one moment is the safest I have ever felt and will ever feel, my whole life. Don't you see? It's cruel to be god. You know too many secrets. This moment is finite, worse than finite. It ends and ends and ends. But if I close my eyes, maybe I can –

[BEEP]

“ – thence thou shalt go twice unto the grey dawn and twice unto the black, and upon the fifth morning shall thine eyes be anointed with the fat of a black lamb, and, whispering into the crook of a hollow tree, thou shalt call the spirits to you, with “exasis, exostro, numena, io” upon thine tongue, and henceforth –” what does that, what does that even *mean*, how can I be expected to – ? [BOOK THROWING SOUNDS, PAGE RIFLING SOUNDS]  
Here, maybe this will – what the – what – were people in the olden days just running around with bags of animal fat in their pockets? “The fat of a black cat”, are you kidding me? like I'm going to – like I can even –

[BEEP]

Dear Mabel.

I know you can't hear this. I know that he's taken you somewhere, and I think – I think he did it to punish me. Because I've been plotting. Because I haven't been playing nice. I hope he hasn't hurt you. But if he has, there's nothing I can –

So let this be a time capsule. Let this be something you – something you come back to. I won't give up. You know that.

A man called John Way called me this morning. He said he works for Chaser and Park, some city law firm, representing Sally Martin's interests. He said –

He said, in the absence of any family, or, in fact, any other beneficiaries, there wouldn't be any formal reading of Sally's will, but that – that she'd left the house to me. He said, there's a note for you, do you want me to read it? It took me a long time, but in the end I said yes.

Mr. Way emailed me a copy of the note, too, so I'm looking at it now, so I know it's – it's accurate, what I'm telling you.

*Dear Anna. I leave you my house because you are the only person I know who understands how to care for a thing. That has been your job with me, and it will be your job a little while longer. I am sorry for everything.*

She left me money, too, but – she left it in a trust, to be doled out in small increments every month. Like she's. Like she's still paying my goddamned salary. Like I'm – like I'm *indentured*, like money and legal documents are all that could keep me here, like –

That's not fair. Not really. I think she was trying to make my life easier. I think she must have known that it would eat her in the end, the ghost-house, the shadow-house, and she just wanted – she just wanted to know that everyone she loved, everyone she'd lost to it, would be safe. There's a stipulation on the house, too, that I can't sell it for ten years. I figure – maybe she thinks that's how long I'll last here.

She had to have known she was sentencing me. Maybe that's why she apologised, right before I left, the last time I saw her alive. Oh Anna, I'm

sorry the Martins have their hooks in you. Oh Anna, I'm sorry you can never leave.

Because that's the upshot of this, Mabel. Regardless of whether or not I *would* have left, now I *can't*. Regardless of choice, this is my fate. She's tied me here, not unkindly, but *permanently*, regardless. How dare she. How dare she.

But still, I'm not angry at her. I don't know how to be. Even if this is all her fault. If she just never made that promise to Luna. Or: if she'd just kept her promise. If he hadn't – thrown such a temper tantrum. If you'd never come back one last time. If I'd never taken the job here. If –

Don't think I haven't considered burning this house down to its foundations. Don't think I haven't, Mabel. But –

[BEEP]

– doesn't really matter, not really. It's completely irrelevant in the grand scheme of things. A thing that's going to kill you is going to kill you whether you know its structure or not, whether you can classify it or you can't. If it wants to, it'll just – kill you. Of course that's true. But I'm – I studied to be a nurse, you know? I learned the Latin words for things, I was taught that if you can know something, really *know* something, you can control it. You can cure it. So –

– here, it was this one, wasn't it? The hierarchy of spirits? Page – okay, okay. Seraphim, cherubim, aralim, archangels, angels – god, he's none of these, angels and archangels? He's not –

This one has no title. It's bound in leather, stitched like a – like a real book, but it's – I think it's hand-typed, there's the same off-set letter O on every page. It's – there aren't – it doesn't really have passages, just random phrases. "The dying and rising". "On the subject of fatal transformation." "They sought her east, they sought her west, they sought her up and down, and woe were the hearts of those brethren, for she was not to be found." Who would have –

Oh.

[BEEP]

I am there in her room. I am brushing her hair. She is warm in my hands. She does not transform into a tree or a snake or a burning branch. She does not call me disgusting, she does not slap my face. I am brushing her hair. I am brushing her hair.

[BEEP]

Mabel, I know you can't hear me, but I'll tell you anyway: that book, the one someone typed by hand and set in among the other books of occult rituals and history of witchcraft in Sally's library – there was a recipe in it. "To open doors", it was titled. It's – I mean. It's poison. Moonflower seeds, nightshade flowers, wolf's bane root. I looked them up, they're all poisonous. They're all *deadly*. But – on the opposite page there's a drawing of a big wooden door with a moon carved on it, a hound snapping at the moon, a rabbit curled up in its crescent. So I think I. I think I have to.

They were all in Sally's garden shed. All in glass jars covered in dust and cobwebs, all labelled in that spindly old cursive people used a hundred, a hundred and fifty years ago. So here I am. Mixing it up. Poisons, some vinegar, some – honey, for some reason, like it's going to make a difference whether the cocktail of death I'm mixing tastes sweet or not. I'm heating it on the stove. The kitchen smells like – plant-matter and cleaning supplies. Like a pickled wetland. The recipe says I have to –

*"Tenebra tenebrarum. Tenebra tenebrarum. Tenebra tenebrarum."*

There's something a little bit Romeo and Juliet about this, isn't there? What does Romeo say before he drinks the poison? *Thus with a kiss I die*? Yeah. [LAUGH] Not even. Not even close. I'm just – I'm desperate. This is a last shot kind of thing, and I can feel that, everything is – everything is terminal, everything is shrilling at me. This is the end of something. *Shit*. Okay. Here's to you, Mabel, where the hell ever you are.

Oh, that's –

That's not really so bad, I –

[falling sound]

[phone smashing sound]

[dial tone]

[OUTRO:]

Mabel is written and produced by Becca De La Rosa. The voice of Mabel Martin is [censored]. The voice of Anna Limon is Becca De La Rosa. The music in this episode was by Ars Sonor, Blue Dressed Man, Mary Lattimore, Nest, 2Kutup, Scott Holmes, Hallock Hill, Grouper, and (morse), and all of it is available to download on the Free Music Archive at [freemusicarchive.org](http://freemusicarchive.org). For more information about Mabel, including a full tracklist and transcript for each episode, visit us online at [mabelpodcast.com](http://mabelpodcast.com) or on twitter, [@podcastmabel](https://twitter.com/podcastmabel). Stay tuned next week for a very special penultimate episode of season two.