



THE MANSION OF THE LADY OF ABUNDANCE

Mabel, Episode 21: The Mansion of the Lady of Abundance. In which everything burns.

INTRO:

[RUNNING]

[BEEP]

MABEL: -a feedback loop. A narrative circle. A metafictional cycle, all coalescing in the same nebulous timeline of this endless -

[BEEP]

[FIRE ROARING]

[INHUMAN SCREAMING, CUT OFF, GLITCHING]

[BEEP]

We got out, we did it, mi reina, we just-

[BEEP]

[NIGHT NOISES, CRICKETS, ETC.]

Anna. Anna. Anna. Here it is: my prayer for you. To you. Built of all I know, earth and sky, dirt and song.

It's dark. I am here in my great-grandmother's garden, my grandmother's garden, my mother's garden. Mine, now, or - it was. I suppose it isn't mine anymore. So this is your garden, and I am trespassing. Can you feel it, where you are? My infiltration, my *snaking* into what should be owed to me, into what is *owned* by you? I hope so. I want you to always be able to find me, the thorn in the muscle of your heart. To feel out wherever I am, even if it hurts.

Your garden does not nourish me. Your garden strikes against my hand at every turn. My feet have bled into the soil but I have not taken root. I have not grown. Here in the green and the black and the wildness of it. The thickness. The dark. The garden grows around me, and through me, and out of me. In no time at all, Anna, I will be more poison than person, more flower than substance. There is a tumor of fruit growing in my gut, I think. I can feel its outline with the tips of my fingers.

At least I think so. This is what my escalation looks like - my rebirth, inside my own mind. Unverified, unverifiable. I'm not interested in checking. You understand. But I wonder - if you cut me open, would all the meat of me be flacid, strange and growing? If I cut myself open, would I excavate green and blooming rot?

[STATIC]

Would you see me differently? Is it changed from both of our perspectives, or only the same truth turned over? All I know is that my body is nothing like the flesh stretched around sticks of bone. It is a body without organs.

[STATIC]

A body without organs. I think it always has been. Hollow backed, hollow boned. A butcherbird. [STATIC BECOMES OVERPOWERING]

A hole in the world. Anna, do you - do you hear -

[THROUGH STATIC]

Anna: She said "I'm going into the ground for you", she - god damn it -

[ECHOING, LOUDER]

Anna?

[BEEP]

Hello? Is anyone there? I can hear -

[BEEP]

HOUSE: Mabel, Mabel, Mabel [INCOMPREHENSIBLE MUTTERING]

No! Leave me alone!

[WHISPERS CONTINUE]

I won't! You can't trap me in you, I won't stay, it isn't what -

[BEEP]

[NIGHT NOISES]

Can you hear it? The house? It calls and calls to me, tries to clutch me like a twisted vine. Like sweet jasmine. It is yourself, Anna - your outstretched arm. Your influence. I can feel it. I know how I sound - I've always known that. This world has told me, the next world has told me. I am the madwoman hidden in the maze, the dead girl walking. [LAUGHS] If you tasted me now, with the moonflowers nursing from the blood of me, would you be twice-poisoned? Would my kiss harm you, strike you dead? I wonder, I wonder....

No. There's no usefulness in hysterics, anyway. Because there's - there's nothing here, Anna, nothing that will give me any comfort, nothing that - am I supposed to self-sustain, the fruit of my flesh, the body of my body, eaten, and -

It only seems to be night here. In the green. The sun has not shown me her face for at least three days. I think, anyway. I guess there's no way to know for sure. I am measuring time in the claw my gut is curving into. I am getting hungrier and hungrier, Anna. I think about swallowing fistfuls of dirt. I have eaten the roses, I have eaten the red clover, I have choked down stinging nettles with elderberries and haws and still the mouth in me is not sated. Isn't this what they say about the false children, the ones with hollow peach pits for eyes? That they will eat up your food and your money and your life and you will never be rid of them? Is this what

your other, mirrored self is like, do you think? A girl with unusual hungers? Is that not both of you?

It used to be people knew what to do with a ghost. With a creature that looks like a person but isn't one, that creeps inside someone's skin and wears their smile and looks at the world sideways with their eyes. They rendered it sightless, burned it over a fire, tricked it with eggshells. Made it disappear.

I understand the impulse, at least. I have to, to rid the world of the other you. It makes everything ugly, that kind of vision. True sight is the hysterical mirror at the sight of a temperate god. Did you ever read that story? The one with the ice queen and the devil-who-was-really-a-troll? I did. I was very young. The idea of a mirror split into a thousand pieces, each one an infestation - it got inside my head. It's still there, curled up.

Maybe I made everything up in order to explain away whatever I felt, women and beasts, the wilds and the sea, an affliction of selves contaminating the world. Maybe I am a creature wearing the skin of another, a werewolf, a phantom, and I wove this story to comfort myself. To sing myself to sleep. I don't know what I am, I can't feel myself, I - there is something wrong with me. [STATIC, DISTORTION] There is something wrong with me. There is something wrong with me.

I think I am the snake in the grass, Anna. Entropy, come to devour all.

[BEEP]

[DISTANT LAUGHTER]

I can hear you. I can hear you. In the mist, in the garden, in the green, in the sea, in the wilds, I can hear you. I can always hear you. You are on my tongue and in my blood. I am being haunted by your ghost. I am being haunted by the idea of you.

But it's...even stranger than that, because I can hear your voice, I hear it every time I call you in your voicemail message. I know you're real, you're right there - only you aren't, you're not even close. Isn't that funny? I think it's kind of funny. Most of all it's like I'm talking into a wishing well. Just - water, and echoes. The longing to know where the end is, if it goes on forever. I think you go on forever. I think there is no end to you, like there is no end to god.

[LAUGHTER CONTINUES, LOUDER]

Anna. Why didn't you run from me? Everyone else would have. Would they be horrified if they saw my hands, do you think? Saw the rotting skin of me, the truth of me? [GROWING SOUNDS] The vines wrapped around them, their bursting fruit, the terror of my flesh, that I can only remove if I mutilate myself? I am unwilling to do so. I am unwilling to change for any purpose except my own will, my own apotheosis. [DISTORTION]

This is what I have made of myself - the imposter. The thief of my own life. This is the story in which I have trapped myself - one cage for another.

[BEEP]

[RUSTLING SOUNDS]

Oh, black bird, oh red devil, oh Anna, Saint Anna, will you hear my petition? It is this - I woke up in this nightland garden with my long hair tied to a rope made of quetzal-colored ribbon, a [single](#), cable-thick cord made of many strands. I would like it to be gone. I would like to be, for *once*, unbound.

Failing that: follow me to the end of this thread in the labyrinth. Follow me to every end.

[STRUGGLING SOUNDS]

Ha. You have to anyway, don't you? I hold your ear. I'll keep it pried open. I wish I had a knife, to cut myself free. I wish my teeth were sharp enough. If I can just -

[TEARING NOISES, FAINT RINGING]

Oh, christchild - that's. I won't do it again. Oh, that hurts. Is this you, tying me to yourself? Binding me to something? No, that's - it's wish fulfillment. I can't see where it goes, the rope, it's - pulled taut, leading somewhere. I want it to lead to you. I want it so badly.

It doesn't matter. This - whatever this is, it brings me closer toward you or it doesn't. There's only one path to find out and either way I owe a debt to you. We keep our promises. We pay our debts. Our word is binding, to bone, to breath. Our truth imbues it with *meaning*. Without that we have nothing. At least, that's how it is for myself. (laughs) I should probably stop projecting, shouldn't I? A little self-awareness wouldn't kill me. Then again, it might. I drowned, I burned up, I ate poison, I ate the world into darkness - I stopped eating. Who knows what will kill me now? Maybe this. Maybe being captured, like a creeping insect.

There, it's - I see the end. My noose of hair is tied around an oak tree. No, it's - actually it's - what -

[RUSTLING]

The rope ends inside the oak tree. In a hollow, but it's - there's a kind of - almost a door, I can see the edges of it, glinting, like there's light beneath, like it is lit from within. As if there's a fire inside.

Anna. I need to tell you - I made every decision that led me to you. I ate every fruit. And you - you opened the box. Nobody forced our hands. This is the crux of who we are, Anna. I am unraveling myself piece by piece.

Here goes nothing.

[CREAKING SOUNDS]

[ECHOING] Hello? Hello? Hello?

[DISTANT REPETITIVE NOISE]

[ECHOING] Is it you? Come to rescue me in firelight and song? Is it you, with your dark eyes, ineffable Anna, incomprehensible -

[MUFFLED] Anna Limon is not available. At the tone, please record your message.
Anna Limon [CLEARER] is not available. At the tone, please record your message.
Anna Limon is not available. At the tone, please record your message. Anna
Limon is not available. At the tone, please record your message.

[SCREAMING, INTERRUPTED, GLITCHING]

ANNA'S DOPPLEGANGER: Hello, Mabel Martin.

OUTRO:

This is Becca De La Rosa, one of the co-creators of Mabel, and before I read the end credits I have a special message for you: because you all constantly amaze us with your interest, your talent, your analytical skills, and your dedication to the show, we have hidden somewhere within season three a secret message. The

message will not be complete until the season is finished. The first person to send us the finished message in full through the messaging system on our website will receive a substantial prize, and one we both frankly want to keep for our own. More details will be made available soon, but for now, all you need to do is keep consuming the show.

Mabel was created by Becca De La Rosa and Mabel Martin. This episode was written and performed by Mabel Martin, and produced by Becca De La Rosa. The music in this episode was by Ars Sonor, Slow Blood, and (morse), and all of it is available to download from the Free Music Archive at freemusicarchive.org. For more information about this episode, including a full tracklist and transcript, visit us online at mabelpodcast.com.

We rely on your help to keep Mabel going. If you enjoy what we do, please check out the range of rewards on our Patreon at patreon.com/mabelpodcast. Huge thank you to Charles Poretto, Elias, Gemma Rose, Thomas Farley, and Marcelle Liemant for your support.