



## INFINITY MIRROR: YOU AND ME AND THE DEVIL MAKES THREE

Mabel: Infinity Mirror, Part Three – You and Me and the Devil Makes Three. In which an important message is relayed.

[INTRO]

BECCA: Dear listeners, this is Becca De La Rosa, co-creator of the Mabel podcast.

MABEL: And this is the rhizome occasionally known as Mabel Martin.

BECCA: In celebration of our upcoming fifth season, we're going to be running a little competition.

MABEL: A big competition.

BECCA: Our biggest competition, actually.

MABEL: We're going to be offering one of our loyal listeners a chance to stay overnight in the house that inspired the podcast: an empty mansion built over the cliffs of the Irish Sea.

BECCA: We'll pay to fly you over here from anywhere in the world. First class.

MABEL: No entries are necessary. Just keep listening - [GLITCHES]

[BEEP]

[LAUGHTER]

[STATIC]

TRESSA: [SHOUTS] Is someone here? Hello? Hello! Hello hello hello -

[STATIC FUMBLING]

No one. No one.

[SIGHS]

It's seven fifty-six in the evening. I don't know what time is, anymore, really, but that's what the clock says. I don't know how long has passed. The sun just set, barely; there's still red over the water. The moon is up already, gold and full. I am trapped in a house without windows or doors, but I have running water, I have scones and chocolate, I have a working furnace and milk in the fridge and a bag full of apples, minus one. My phone works, it's just – as if no one else in the world exists. I don't understand this kind of disaster. If that's even what this is.

[DISTANT LAUGHTER]

On the flight over here I sat beside a woman who shared her bag of butterscotch candy when the plane took off. I'd never been on a plane before that, not even when I was a kid. The woman's name was Maebh, she had – long white hair. She wasn't old, maybe like in her forties. Her eyes were the, like, most ridiculous shade of green, like actual emeralds. Every time I fell asleep I woke up to find her watching me, but that sounds really fucking creepy, and it didn't feel that way. It felt like she was interested in me. Is that – stupidly naïve? I *dreamed* about her, she was sitting on a rock – no, three rocks, a great big flat boulder balanced on two smaller ones, like a table – she was still wearing her grey tailored suit, filing her nails. She said, "We've heard the reverberations even here, such is the gravity of their choice; so greatly have we been untethered from our own axes." I remember in the dream thinking oh, okay, this is how Irish people talk, I guess, they're a nation of poets, aren't they? Maybe I would have found the whole thing weirder, but *all* of this has been so surreal. Winning the competition. Being shipped off here, like someone important. Leaving the country, coming to Europe,

coming to Ireland, this big empty house – only it was weird, wasn't it? People aren't like that, they don't – don't *do* that, not in the real world.

[PAPER UNCRUMPLING]

“Number six: go to the kitchen and open the cupboard directly to the left of the fridge.”

[SIGHS] Might as well.

[FOOTSTEPS, CREAKING CUPBOARD DOOR]

Ha. That's funny.

It's a bag of butterscotch candy. Same brand as Maebh had on the plane.

[CRINKLING]

Why is it that you find butterscotch in the weirdest places? I always thought it just appeared in someone's pockets, or in a tin somewhere, randomly. It doesn't seem like a thing that you can buy. Is this all I'll eat for the night? Candy and chocolate and honey and apples?

It's not really food for a real person. Hey, Becca, is this what you eat? Is this what your partner eats, all sugar and...fruit? [LAUGHS]

You were so disarming on the phone. You sound nothing like Anna, there's a. Lightness to your voice that she doesn't have. Maybe you just sound happier. There's a change in a person's voice that happens when they're joyful, truly instead of just. Filling the minutes, I guess. I know what that's like, too, to stack activities on top of one another. The sacrificial altar of time. [LAUGHS] That's something Mabel would say, wouldn't she? Something about death and time eating itself. Feeding it with entropy. I had to take a physics class in high school, to graduate - do they do that here, too, is that like a universal school trait, making people muddle through subjects they have no interest in, just to test their rote memorization skills? Or prepare them for jobs they don't want or that don't exist anymore? I don't know anything about the Irish school system, but people - they're just the same all over. I was never good at any math classes. I learned in my physics class that the only way we can measure that time exists at all is through entropy. Through things decaying and dying. So time and death are twins.

[LAUGHS, THEN SIGHS]

No one's listening. There can't be anyone at the other end of this - recorder, it's. It'd be. Vulgar, or something. Maybe. Or else they just don't care about that. Politeness or - the social contract. I had wondered if they'd bugged the house, I mean if - if you had, but. I don't know. I don't know.

I can see how a person could go crazy in here for too long, just talking to themselves. We're good at that, aren't we, girls like us? Making ourselves go crazy? Or maybe that's just what it looks like to everyone else. Making connections that aren't there, or aren't, like. Immediately visible. In my spare time, I - [CHUCKLES] I sew historical costumes. Spare time's all I have, really. Filling the minutes, like I said. That's all costuming is - making connections where no one else sees them. There's this stitch called a slip stitch - it's what makes seams look like they're connecting by nothing until you pull at them to look. So I know how to follow threads too.

Whatever.

[SIGHS]

"Number seven: pick up the phone." Wait, what?

[ANY/ALL BACKGROUND NOISE STOPS]

[BREATHING]

[PHONE RINGS]

[SCREAMS]

[STATIC]

[PHONE RINGING IN THE BACKGROUND]

It's been ringing the whole time I - god. I dropped this recorder but I think it's still working. I still have to keep up my end of the - bargain, or whatever. I don't know what this is.

I don't want to pick up. I know it doesn't make sense, I know it doesn't - ah, fuck it, I'll -

[ANSWER PHONE NOISES] Hello?

[STATIC]

[DISTANT VOICE, THROUGH STATIC] *Tressa Davies?*

Yes, that's - Yeah that's me I'm trapped in this weird house on the coast do you think you can send someone I don't know what's going on I -

[VOICE LAUGHS] *Tressa Davies. Remember the mourning dove?*

[PHONE CLATTERS]

[SCREAMS]

What the fuck is happening! What the fuck is happening - what is  
[HYPERVENTILATING] I - I - I don't know what to do, I don't know what you want me to do, I don't know what you want from me, just tell me what you want so I can - I'm going to -

[RUNNING SOUNDS, VOMITING SOUNDS]

Okay. Okay. You're okay, you're - it's okay. [SHAKY BREATHS]

[LONG PAUSE]

I know someone is listening now. You kind of - this is overplaying your hand, isn't it? Because now I know you can hear me. Like when Anna - when Mabel erased those messages on her inbox and Anna knew. Some people just like to play at being distant.

Is this what it feels like to be trapped in a spiderweb? That's how you want me to feel, isn't it? It must be, or why - why would you -

I don't know how you got my personal information. I don't - does it matter, really?

[SIGHS. SOUNDS OF CRUMPLED PAPER]

"Number eight: talk about a time you made a bargain."

Faeries and their freaking bargains. Okay. Um. Let me think, let me think.

Once, way back in - it must have been third or fourth grade, I don't think I was more than nine years old - there was a girl named Larissa Knight. Larissa, do you know what that means? It means *fortress*. Something strong, something standing. Larissa Knight was - god, she wasn't even bright, she wasn't even clever, but she was pretty. Her disability - oh, for a little while I went to Primary, this, like, special school for kids with various disabilities? I know, I know, insert *special school* jokes, insert *short bus* jokes, whatever. [PAUSE] Larissa was deaf. She used to make fun of the other girls, the ones with more obvious physical problems. Made up cruel names. Hid their crutches. Tormented them in that particular way only a kid can. A bully, basically. Everyone's known at least one.

Anyway. One day I went to school and Larissa was wearing this ring. This little opal ring, with the stone cut in the shape of a heart. I saw it, and - I wanted it. No, honestly, more than that, I felt like it belonged to me, like I was owed it, like it should never have belonged to her in the first place - Larissa Knight, who tripped Miel Figueroa, a girl with polio, with her legs in fucking *braces*, and then laughed when Miel couldn't get up again - it just wasn't fair, and I knew it wasn't fair. You know what I mean? When you just. You just *know*?

I wasn't exactly a scheming kid. I wasn't super precocious, even, I liked to keep my head down, mostly, but it bothered me more than almost anything had. So I went up to Larissa during recess. Larissa loved hopscotch, I knew that, so I said *if you beat me in hopscotch, I'll do your homework for a week*. And Larissa said yes, obviously, because - well, how the fuck was I going to beat her? She could run and jump, I was a tiny little twig with a malformed chest. She took her turn, and then - well. This is embarrassing, I was such a little psycho. When it was my turn, I made sure no one was watching, and collapsed on the ground.

All the teachers wanted to know what happened. I told them - [LAUGHS]. I told them that Larissa had pushed me over, after stealing my ring; the ring my dad bought me when my mother died, so I'd know she was always with me. I overdid it, for sure, but I was a little kid, I was crying and bloody-kneed and Larissa was bigger than me, stronger, and everyone knew she was *mean*. Even Miss Ouvriers, the principal. We had to go see her. I hadn't been in her office since the first day of school, when she gave - we were all scared of her, but that just helped me look more pitiful. She said: Larissa, I'm so disappointed in you. I thought you had such *potential*. I thought you could have been - [PAUSES, AS THOUGH CATCHING HERSELF]

I still have that ring. I still wear it, sometimes.

“Number nine: check your voicemail.”

What -

Oh, there's -

Fuck. Fuck. Okay. There's a message, I'm going to –

[BEEP]

AUTOMATED VOICEMAIL: You have one. New message. First message. Sent. Today, at seven. Fifty-six.

[CRACKLE]

BECCA OVER VOICEMAIL: Hi, Tressa, this is Becca De La Rosa - my partner's here, too, hang on -

MABEL: Hi, Tressa!

TRESSA, WHISPERING OVER THEM: Oh my god.

BECCA: We heard you were having some trouble in the house -

MABEL: Yes, we're ever so sorry about that.

BECCA: We are, we're so sorry. We wanted this to be fun and relaxing for you, not stressful. If you're having difficulty opening the door, sometime it just needs to be jiggled a specific way; the keys to the window are in the drawer under the stove. I should have made a note of that, that's my fault.

MABEL: [LAUGHING]

BECCA: [ASIDE, TRYING NOT TO LAUGH] Shh, stop. So, yeah. I know you're worried, but really, I wouldn't be too freaked out. It's an old house, it has...a mind of its own, sometimes.

MABEL: Yes, one *might* call it that.

BECCA: [TO MABEL] I'm just - [LAUGHS, MUFFLED BUT HELPLESS; CLEARS THROAT] So, yeah. We just wanted to let you know. We're here - I mean, not *here*, but we're. We're - monitoring the situation, and you really don't have anything to worry about from Sally's house.

MABEL: You mean your grandmother's house.

BECCA: Yeah, my grandmother's house. What'd I say?

MABEL: [CLEARLY DELIGHTED] You said -

TRESSA [OVERLAID]: Oh my god. Oh my god, oh my god.

BECCA: [COLDER, THOUGHTFUL] I did say that, didn't I? Isn't it funny how the truth slides out? How the truth -

TRESSA: What -

BECCA: - pockmarks even the shape of reality? Even truth itself?

MABEL: There is no truth but time reaching back eternally on itself. Isn't that right, dear?

BECCA: Tressa. We know who you are. And you know who we are, don't you? Anna.

MABEL: And Mabel.

[BOTH LAUGH]

BECCA/ANNA: Oh, I *am* sorry. We tried, didn't we? We played our parts, for a little bit, anyway.

MABEL: I think I have the easier task, not willing to part with any separate face for a second. Didn't you wonder about my name?

BECCA/ANNA: I could let you out. Maybe. If the house wanted me to, which it doesn't. [LOUDER, CLEARER] You made a deal, Tressa. You signed a *contract*. There's an agreement, roles to fulfill. Do you think anything's going to save you now? Do you think anything could?

MABEL: Farewell, small girl.

BECCA/ANNA: Good luck.

VOICEMAIL: To keep this message, press seven. To erase it, press -

[STATIC]

[OUTRO]

Mabel is written by Becca De La Rosa and Mabel Martin, and produced by Becca De La Rosa. The voice of Tressa Davies is Tressa Evans-Salvemini. The music in this episode was by Meydän, Magna Ingress, how the night came, Borrtext, Mutestare, Parallel Park, and (morse), and all of it is available to download from the Free Music Archive at [freemusicarchive.org](https://freemusicarchive.org). For more information about this episode, including a full tracklist and transcript, visit us online at [mabelpodcast.com](https://mabelpodcast.com).

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