

Chapter 1

Panting heavily, I look up to the ceiling. *What happened?* I feel my wife's hand land on my chest as she softly plays with my chest hair. *How did sex become boring?*

"That was good honey" she says, trying hard to make it sound genuine.

I don't see why we bother; it's been like this for months now.

"Yeah..." I pant.

It's gotten more and more difficult to climax with her, we hardly speak to each other and then we fuck like it's a tick box exercise. At least it's still fairly frequent...

She turns away from me and grabs her phone, the light of her screen illuminating the room. I turn the opposite way and try to fall asleep. *Is this what we have become?*

It wasn't all bad, once upon a time we were young and in love. We would go out partying every weekend, hit all the bars and have passionate sex often. Now it's been 10 years and we are both closer to 31 than 21. Time has been good to us in general. We got married, got a house, we both have great paying jobs and two cars. Not a lot missing other than kids. But Sally wants to wait a few more years yet, myself? I'm ready now.

So where did it all go wrong?

I find myself asking after these bad nights, but I never come up with an answer. I look over to the clock and see that it's been two hours. Sally purrs softly next to me yet I don't get the relief of sleep. *Curse this overactive mind.* Slowly I slip out of bed and decide to go for a walk. *Maybe the fresh air will help.*

We live close to downtown; I head towards the city centre. *Maybe the pharmacy has something to help with my insomnia.*

01:42 on a Thursday... What the fuck am I doing with my life...Hmmm that place looks new?

I can't quite recall what was there but I am sure I would have recognised this before. *The lights are on... Late trading? What does the sign say? Cure'ems.* I peer through the large window, the bright lights inside illuminating all the odd trinkets. It looks like an antique shop. *What the hell is this doing open at this time?*

Curiosity getting the better of me I open the door. There is a bell attached to the door which pierces the quiet night causing me to jump.

“Just a minute!” a muffled voice calls out from the back end of the shop.

My eyes dart from shelf to shelf looking at all the old trinkets and random memorabilia. In my peripheral vision I see a woman walk through a door by the till. She is strikingly beautiful, almost impossibly so. *She's much too pretty to be working here...* A big smile forms on her face as if she is reacting to my thoughts. *What the fuck?*

“Hi there Calum!”

“What? How?” I ask, taking a step back.

“A good guess?” she winks.

“Right... I’m going to...” backing toward the door.

“Sure, you can go if you want, or I can help fix that little problem of yours.” She pauses and stares at me, as if into my soul. “The problem with your marriage.”

What the fuck...

“I’m exceptionally good at what I do. If you wish to fix your problem, then I think you should heed my advice.”

Scared by her demeanour, I am unable to act. She points to an antique chair to my immediate right. Slowly without taking my eyes off her I sit down.

“I did think you seemed like a man of reason.” she giggles... *There is something sinister about her laugh...*

“C’mon now, give me some credit, I’m here trying to help you.”

“Ok, sure, I’ll listen.”

“Let me guess. You’ve been married for a number of years and the passion is fading? Sex doesn’t feel the same. When she touches you there isn’t this spark of raw primal anticipation?”

I nod.

“Well good thing you stumbled upon my shop, I have just the thing to help, wait right there.” She turns and heads into the backroom.

Now is my chance... I should run...

My body protests my attempts at movement.

I... Maybe... Hmmm... Maybe it is worth a listen at least.

The woman comes back through the door, catching me off guard again with how striking her features are. I notice she has a pocket watch in her hand, from what I can see it looks ancient and dull. As her hips sway towards me she throws it my way. I fumble and juggle it before finally securing the catch. I let out a huge sigh.

“Good catch. Would’ve been a shame if you were to have dropped that” she smirks as if she knows something I don’t.

I inspect the watch and see the weird design on the front. It is hard to explain the complex patterns, sharp edges to shapes and thick runes cover the surface, on the top is a button to release the lock that would open the mechanism. Curiosity getting the better of me I start to reach for the button, almost drawn to it by something else.

“STOP!” she shrieks.

I jump out of my skin and cause the watch to launch into the air once more but this time the shopkeeper catches it.

“Sorry, I didn’t mean to scare you. This is a powerful artifact. You only open it if you intend to use it.” She throws it back at me.

Catching it and holding it in my hand I ask dumbly. “So... What does it do and how will it help?”

“Glad you asked Calum. It has the power to fix relationships, quite simple when I put it like that but that is the quick version.”

“And the long version?”

“It brings the user happiness and fulfils their desires. Your wife will become the vision of your desires. Over the course of the magic, she will become your version of a goddess.”

This bitch is crazy.

She raises her voice “I’m not a bitch and I’m not crazy!”

Fuck.

I recoil into my seat, feat taking over.

She read my mind.

“Yes, I did, now that should at least let you know that magic is real. At least we got over that hurdle quickly. Now to use that thing you need only press the button on the top and read the inscription on the inside. It will do everything else for you. Close the watch and wait.”

This is insane...

“Maybe it is insane but trust me, this will work but proceed with caution Calum. Once you have opened the door you must follow the instructions through or there will be grave consequences. Be warned that you might not know what your deepest desires are so think carefully before you use it.” Her face is cold and serious.

“Ok... I’ll take it and have a think... How much will it cost?” I ask.

“I can read your mind; I’ve heard the nice things and the naughty things you’ve been thinking about me. For a gentleman such as yourself, no price. Just a simple ‘I.O.U’ – so if I call on you requesting something, you have to abide.”

“Uhh...”

“Now leave, I’m going to close up now” she quickly ushers me out the door.

I hear the door close behind and turn around to see the brightly lit shop has been replaced by an abandoned wreck of a store front.

What the fuck, its gone?

I start to make my way home, clutching the pocket watch tightly. My mind is racing about its possibilities.

It's so fucking dumb, no way this can work... I guess no harm in trying. I do love Sally and I would do anything to make us happy again.

I stop walking and pull the pocket watch out and stare at it once more.

Fuck it.

I click the button at the top and see the door swing open with a spark of green light. The watch only has one hand that is spinning around, the face beneath doesn't read the times it has notches to represent days. One to Thirty. Remembering the instructions from the lady I turn my attention to the inside of the door and read its inscription.

*Read well, this watch will bring back the spark you look for
Desires fulfilled and passion restored
Heed these instructions or be cursed eternal
Say aloud your lovers name and push the button on top once more
Peirce thine flesh on the needle that rises from the centre
Blood is needed as a reagent
The hand of time will decide length of spell
Once complete the watch will flash blue then at once close
Do not reopen until the spell has been completed
Only open if you intend to use its power once more*

Alright

"Sally" I say aloud as I press the button.

A small spike rises from the centre of the watch where the hand is fixed. I take a sharp breath and press my thumb into the spike. The shock causes my hand to jolt back but the deed is done. Blood starts to drip onto the face and with a slight glow, the blood seems to fade into the watch. The hand starts to illuminate red as it quickly moves to the '0' position at

the top. Slowly it starts to pulsate and the hand spins clockwise. The hand stopping on the number '4'. It sits still for a moment as the red hue fades. A spark of blue light erupts from the watch and then in a quick motion the watch is closed once more.

Weird... I wonder if it worked...