

Two low-level Magi are smuggling a kidnapped child in a van. They're inexperienced, their nerves are shot, and they are in way over their head. As the Magi are driving, we hear the incessant FOOT TAPPING of Sammy.

CAM
Sammy.

SAMMY
Huh?

CAM
The foot thing.

The TAPPING stops.

SAMMY
Sorry, Cam.
(beat)
It's just, you know. What we have in the back.

CAM
I know what we have in the back.

The van STOPS. A police cruiser pulls up next to them. We can hear INDISTINCT RADIO CHATTER.

SAMMY
I'm to think this wasn't such a good idea. What if we get stopped? There's a cop right there. Somebody's bound to have noticed him missing by now.

CAM
Nobody's missed him.

SAMMY
But what if?

CAM
If a cop pulls us over, we'll fuck 'em up. I know a few Bloodsinger spells, I'm not afraid of the pigs.

The van starts MOVING again. The cop car speeds off, the radio CHATTER fading away.

SAMMY
(sigh of relief)
I'm not just talking about the cops.
(MORE)

SAMMY (cont'd)

(beat)

I'm talking about the...the guys with the tattoos.

BEAT.

CAM

(uneasy)

They won't be a problem. They don't mess with people like us.

SAMMY

They mess with people like us when we fucking kidnap kids, Cam. I read about it.

CAM

(mocking)

I read about it.

(ruefully)

You wanna be stuck doing small-time shit? Because fuck that. I got student loan debt out the ass and I can't get a halfway decent fucking job that doesn't involve a fryer or five different gig economy apps.

(beat)

Fuck that. Fuck everything about that. Fuck slaving away for some Jeff Bezos wannabe when the power of the Gloom is right there for the taking. I can finally make something of myself.

SAMMY

I'm just saying man. We should watch out for the Imagomancers.

CAM

(condescending laugh)

You worry too much, Sammy. Don't worry, I'll keep you safe from the guys with the mystical tramp stamps.

(beat)

The kid still out?

RUSTLING as Sammy checks.

SAMMY

(yelling back)

Still asleep.

CAM

That's good, that's good. Hopefully

(MORE)

CAM (cont'd)
the Slumbersalt keeps him out for a
while. Christ, I can't believe
there's actually stuff called
Slumbersalt. It's like I just stepped
into Hogfarts.

SAMMY
It's Hogwarts.

CAM
Shut up.

SAMMY
What if we wakes up?

The van screeches to a STOP.

CAM
Then we do it anyway Sammy! I didn't
snatch that little bastard just to go
halfway, you feel me? I don't have
anymore Slumbersalt. If he wakes up,
he wakes up and the ritual proceeds
regardless.
(hesitant)
It might just be more...messy.

SAMMY
(sighing)
Okay, okay. I can do this. It better
be worth it.

CAM
It will be. I've done the research.
The suffering of the innocent, the
young, the elderly. It has plenty of
power if we're willing to do what
needs to be done. This is the
beginning, you know? A new life. A
way out of the rat race.

SAMMY
Cam, slow down!

CAM
Huh?

SAMMY
There's a guy in the middle of the
road.

CAM
I see him.

SAMMY
He's not moving!

CAM
Then I'll make him move.

HONKING.

SAMMY
He's not moving!

CAM
Then I'll make him move.
(beat)
What's his deal?

SAMMY
I can't believe this! Get the fuck
out of the way!
(beat)
He's not moving!

CAM
He'll move.

SAMMY
Oh jeez, oh fuck, are you seeing what
I'm seeing?

CAM
Yeah, an asshole who's about to be
roadkill if he doesn't get out of my
way.

SAMMY
His skin is glowing! Christ, it's one
of the tattooed men! They use their
bodies like tomes, inking on the
magical spells
(beat)
Cam, what are you doing?

CAM
High speed tattoo removal.

Sammy SCREAMS, followed by a CRASH and the vehicle smashes
into Wexler.

CAM (cont'd)
(stunned)
What the hell? Did I hit a lamppost?
What the hell just happened? Sammy,
check the kid.

(MORE)

CAM (cont'd)
(beat)
Sammy?

Sammy SLUMPS over, dead.

CAM (cont'd)
Fuck. The kid looks like they're
still good.

Cam tries STARTING THE ENGINE. It SPUTTERS.

CAM (cont'd)
Come on, come on! Please. Oh, no,
this is all wrong! Think, Cam, think!
Fuck it, just cut the losses and run.

She TRIES the door.

CAM (cont'd)
I'm stuck. Did I break a rib?

Cam FORCES the door and STUMBLES out.

0002 EXT. STREET - NIGHT

0002

CAM
What the... This is the middle of the
goddamn road.
(beat)
The front of the vehicle's crushed
in. It looks like I hit a pylon or
something, but there's nothing there.
Nothing I could have hit.

WEXLER
Not quite true.

Wexler KNOCKS Cam down.

CAM
What?

WEXLER
You violated the pact, Magi. I know
what you have back there.

CAM
Impossible! Just...

A distant, monstrous GROWL from out of Cam's line of sight.

CAM (cont'd)

What the hell was that? Some kind of dog? Just who are you?

Cam STANDS.

WEXLER

Evan Wexler. Drafted Imagomancer of the Madhouse. You can surrender yourself to the Madhouse. Submit to interrogation. Submit to judgment.

CAM

And if I say no?

WEXLER

I can give you a moment to prepare your psyche for death.

CAM

Oh. Well. In that case, fuck you!

She pulls out a gun, and FIRES. The rounds are useless.

CAM (cont'd)

Impossible.

WEXLER

Slabskin. A nifty tattoo that turns a skin into stone. You'll have to do better than that.

CAM

So, does that spell make you bulletproof?

WEXLER

Uh-huh.

CAM

And extra tough?

WEXLER

Yep.

CAM

And gives you super speed?

WEXLER

Well, not really. It's kind of hard to move, as you might guess.

CAM

Good.

Cam takes off RUNNING.

WEXLER

(distant)

Hey! Get back here!

Cam DODGES a car.

CAM

Watch it! Shit.

Heavy footsteps FOLLOW Cam.

CAM (cont'd)

He's still after me. I'm faster,
but...ugh, my rib.

Monster GROWLS.

CAM (cont'd)

That abandoned warehouse.

Cam DUCKS into a nearby warehouse.

CAM (cont'd)

(hiding)

Just... go away. Go away.

Wexler POUNDS the door in.

WEXLER

(calling out)

You're bleeding pretty badly. I know
you're here somewhere.

CAM

(whispering)

He doesn't have anything. I'm staying
behind these crates. There's a lead
pipe.

Cam PICKS UP the pipe. Wexler continues to STOMP through the
warehouse.

WEXLER

You know, I've got a particular
disdain for those that hurt children.
Now, I know why the Magi do it.
Children. They're closer to birth,
and death than most.

(MORE)

WEXLER (cont'd)

Closer to the imagination, the other side, the origin of all power. People...no. People is too polite a word. Scum like you think that stealing that fire is a bypass to greatness. That's the Gloom talking, Cam. You think you know what you're doing, but you're weak-willed. You're nothing, Cam. Less than nothing.

Cam starts BLASTING.

CAM

Fuck you!

WEXLER

There you are.

CAM

Die! Die! Die!

WEXLER

I told you-

Cam THROWS the gun.

WEXLER (cont'd)

Okay, if the bullets didn't work, do you think throwing the pistol is gonna...

Cam CHARGES, WHACKS Wexler with the pipe.

CAM

Take that!

Wexler GRABS her wrist, TWISTS. Cam DROPS the pipe.

WEXLER

You done?

CAM

I'm just... I'm just getting started.

Cam PULLS out a knife.

CAM (cont'd)

You aren't the only one with magic, freak.

WEXLER

(concerned)

Where'd you get that knife?

CAM

Enough talk.

(chanting)

The singer calls to the sanguinary.
My blood for bloodshed. Crush my foe.

She CUTS herself, summoning blood tendrils.

WEXLER

Blood tentacles. Idiot. You can't
draw that much, you're gonna bleed
yourself dry.

CAM

Strangle him!

The blood tendrils CHOKE Wexler.

CAM (cont'd)

Impressive, isn't it? I can call to
the blood, make it obey my commands.
The way the blood wraps around you,
restraining you. You can't do
anything, can you? Who said you
couldn't get blood from a stone. This
power, it's so raw. I've wanted this
my entire life.

The tendrils THRASH Wexler.

WEXLER

You're kidding yourself if you think
you're getting away with this.

CAM

This is just the beginning. You're a
road bump on my path to greatness,
scum. I'm done ride sharing and the
only delivery I'm doing is sending
assholes like you straight to hell.
Thrash him like a ragdoll!

Another SMASH.

CAM (cont'd)

Incredible. I could get used to this.
You'll be dead before dawn.

WEXLER

You're drunk on the Gloom.

CAM

Then I'll have another round,
bartender.

Another SMASH.

WEXLER

You're like all the other scrub Magi. You find an abandoned Prop like a knife, learn an incantation or two, think you're unstoppable. You stepped into the big leagues as soon as you kidnap that boy.

CAM

You don't seem like you're in a position to talk.

(beat)

Actually, let's make that literal. Choke him.

Wexler starts choke-laughing.

CAM (cont'd)

What's so funny?

WEXLER

I can tell you're greener than goose vomit because you don't know the first rule of facing an Imagomancer.

CAM

What's that?

WEXLER

We work in pairs.

V AMBUSHES Cam and tears her apart.

WEXLER (cont'd)

You took your sweet time.

V growls.

WEXLER (cont'd)

I'm not Doctor Doolittle.

Wexler opens V's case, gives her the concoctions.

WEXLER (cont'd)

Go take your Nullifier, V.

V MORPHS back into a human.

V.

Ugh, Solomon really needs to add Tums to their concoctions. I don't feel so great. Find anything, Wexler?

WEXLER

Bloodsinger. Inexperienced. She used this knife prop to punch above her weight class. This knife was probably made by an experienced Bloodsinger. No idea how this chump got her hands on it. Did you get the kid?

V.

Yeah. I tore the van door off and carried him with me. I put him just outside the warehouse entrance before scrambling up to the second floor.

(beat)

If the boy woke up, I wouldn't want him to see...

WEXLER

Yeah. Let's take a look at him.

They walk outside.

0003 EXT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

0003

WEXLER

Still breathing. Generally a good sign. Some residue around the nose and mouth area.

Wexler TASTES the Slumbersalt.

V.

Is that safe?

WEXLER

Unlikely it was a severe poison. My gut tells me they wanted to save him for a ritual later. If it is this a severe poison, there's nothing on the books that'll kill me at this low a dose. Not before we can get back to the Madhouse and have Solomon detox, me. It's just Slumbersalt from the taste of it. He'll be fine in a few hours. Like I thought, it was a snag and stab. Snatch the kid, knock him out, harvest him later in a safe environment.

V.

We could have killed him with that stunt back there on the road. We couldn't let those magi get away.

WEXLER

They break the Pact once, they'll do it again, and again, and again. This is how Madhouse does business. You don't like it? You know the alternative.

V.

Whatever you tell yourself to help you sleep at night.

Sirens.

V. (cont'd)

We'd better go. What about the boy?

WEXLER

Nothing Flock medicine won't take care of, given time. Leave him here.

V.

We're just going to leave two corpses and an unconscious child?

WEXLER

They'll come up with some narrative. They won't quite believe it, but it's our job to keep the Pact of Porcelain, not to spin a comforting story for the norms.

(beat)

What a goddamn waste. That Magi looked like she was barely twenty.

V.

While man's desires and aspirations stir, he cannot choose but err.

WEXLER

Milton?

V.

Goethe, from Faust. I don't know much about the Gloom, but calling on it seems like a deal with the devil if I've ever seen one.

WEXLER

Never took you for a reader.

V.

Some of us actually have hobbies. Chain-smoking doesn't count.

Police radio draws near.

WEXLER

That's our cue to leave. I'm going to clean the tattoo residue and get another batch for the next mission.

V.

What's next on the docket?

WEXLER

Small Rock in North Texas. Point of contact is a waitress at a rock and roll greasy spoon.

V.

And the damage?

WEXLER

Missing folks. No kids, thankfully. But we'll still need to check the nature of it out. If there's any violation of the pact of porcelain...

V.

Terminate with extreme prejudice.

WEXLER

My favorite kind of prejudice. We'll swing by the Madhouse to prepare. Then, we'll see what horror Small Rock has been hiding.