

ONCE UPON A SKYLINE

Pilot

Written by

Elliott Maya

June 29th, 2022
elliodor@gmail.com

COLD OPEN

EXT. TENNIS COUNTRY CLUB - MANHATTAN - MORNING

A pink ELECTRONIC BILLBOARD dominates the screen. It cycles through candid snapshots of a BLONDE WOMAN (late 40s, evil Elle Woods vibes) doing "charitable" deeds:

- Evicting a poor Troll family and moving in hipster humans.
- Sweeping fairydust off a perfect white family's sidewalk.
- Woodchipping a baby mandrake to mulch a church lawn.

The cycle ends on a close-up of her plastic smile. Quaint text wreaths her face: "**CALL PRISSILLA WIMPLE TODAY TO FIND YOUR HAPPILY EVER AFTER HOME!**" We hold on Prissilla, then:

A tennis ball bounces off the billboard, squishing a FROG in a ball-boy uniform against it. The frog falls into the grass below with a groan.

FROG

What the hell! You're supposed to
hit the ball, not the ball-GIRL,
you ri-rib-riBITCH!

A Karen-type and her dog walk down the hill toward the frog.

KAREN

You ran into *my* racket mid-swing.
(kissing dog)
Isn't that right, Woof Bader
Ginsburg?

Woof Bader Ginsburg, an overbred Chipoodle, runs over the frog to growl at a RUSTLING BUSH several feet away.

KAREN (CONT'D)

Ginsie get over here! You have no
idea what could be over there. What
if it's a filthy homeless person?

FROG

Woah, that is NOT okay.

The Karen rolls her eyes and racket-smacks the frog.

KAREN

Shut up, bug.

FROG

I'm clearly a magical frog! And my name is Brenda! You KNOW that!

Ginsie lifts his leg to pee. His face softens with pre-piss bliss -- when A HUGE SHADOW looms over dog, frog, and Karen.

They all turn -- and SCREAM up at A MUSCULAR WEREWOLF WOMAN stepping out of the bushes. This is BEAUREGARD (late 20s), Beau to her friends, and THE BIG BAD WOLF to her enemies. She's large in size, small in confidence.

BEAU

Didn't mean to scare you! I'm trying to get to an appointment, but I'm lost. Actually, could you read this for me?

She holds up a thumb-nail sized APPOINTMENT CARD. Ginsie pees on himself in fear. So does the Karen. Beau steps back. Ew.

BEAU (CONT'D)

Oh. Okay. I'm just going to...

She side-steps Karen's pee-puddle, shows the frog the card.

FROG

"Junebug Jim's, Fairytale Village, 10:00 AM." Ugh. My ex-bf lives near there. It's that way.

The frog points her tongue in the right direction. Beau checks her watch. She's late.

BEAU

Aw, shiitake mushrooms. Can't be late. Nice to eat, er, *meet* you!

Beau trots off. Karen falls in her puddle and breaks down.

KAREN

This is the future Democrats want. This country is going to the dogs!

The frog spots WOLF EARS under Beau's hoodie and realizes:

FROG

That's no dog. That's the - the -
<GULP> **the Big Bad Wolf.**

"NOW YOU KNOW MY NAME" BY THE DEREVOLUTIONS PLAYS. CREDITS.

END COLD OPEN

EXT. FAIRYTALE VILLAGE - RESIDENTIAL - MORNING

Beau walks through a historic fairytale neighborhood, mid-gentrification. Fairytale creatures do mundane work: take out trash, handle coffee orders, and get yelled at by humans.

Gastro-pubs replace brownstones. A homeless gnome holding a "**Ghomeless, please help**" sign shakes his hat out for change.

Tourists crowd and snap selfies with him like he's an art installation. Beau drops some bills in his hat. He smiles.

GNOME

Say, do I know you from somewhere?
Did we use to do coke together?

Beau pulls her hood lower over her face.

BEAU

No, Jerome. Just passing through.

The gnome stares as she walks away, wandering between tourists and locals, no longer sure which one she is now.

EXT. FAIRYTALE VILLAGE - RUNDOWN OFFICE - BUSINESS SECTOR

Beau stops outside an office building. She checks the address on the card, neatly folds and pockets it, then and enters.

INT. RUNDOWN OFFICE BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Beau approaches the front desk. A receptionist scrolls through Timber (a Tinder knock off) on her phone. A small sign on her desk declares she's "**ON BREAK.**"

BEAU

Hi, uh, I'm Beau. I'm looking for
Junebug Jim--

The receptionist keeps swiping without looking up.

RECEPTIONIST

Read the sign.

BEAU

I know you're off the clock, but I--

RECEPTIONIST

The sign.

BEAU
(getting frustrated)
It would only take a second--

RECEPTIONIST
Read. It.

Beau SLAMS her fist on the desk with a deep growl. She's suddenly sharper, more feral. A clipped inhale sucks the phone into Beau's hands. She squeezes. The screen cracks.

BEAU
(snarling)
I COULD TURN YOU INTO CARNE ASADA
WITH A *SNEEZE*. Would you like
that?! Because my stomach would!

The receptionist trembles. Beau tries to calm herself down.

BEAU (CONT'D)
(deep breath, to self)
Come on Beau. Granny Guadalupe said
to stick with 'I feel' statements.
(to receptionist)
I'm sorry. Let's start over.

She taps the phone against the desk with her best fake smile.

BEAU (CONT'D)
I *feel* like I am being ignored.
When the old me *felt* like this, she
also *felt* like maiming people. Do
you see the issue here... "Amber"?

The receptionist, "Amber," covers her name card and nods.

BEAU (CONT'D)
Great! So. Junebug Jim?

RECEPTIONIST
F-fourth floor.

Beau puts her palms together around the phone and bows.

BEAU
Namaste.

Beau sets the phone on the desk and hustles upstairs.

Amber looks down. Her broken phone swipes right on ugly guys.

RECEPTIONIST
Ew, not Kyle! He looks like an
abortion!

EXT. SHODDY LAW OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Beau stands in front of a cheap glass door labelled "**Junebug Jim, Estate Management.**" A small post-it note has been added to the end: "**And Photo-copying Services.**"

Beau points at her reflection. Schools herself.

BEAU

You control how you feel.
Suck anger in, breathe peace out.

She takes a deep, sorta-self-assured breath, and exhales--

WHOOSH! Accidentally SHATTERING the glass door.

BEAU (CONT'D)

(like a swear)
Aw chutes and ladders.

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BROKEN GLASS--

REVEAL PINNOCHIO (25), a Hollyweird twink in a marionette body. He listens to headphones while using the photo-copier. He hasn't noticed Beau yet.

PINNOCHIO

(singing)
*I'm hot. I'm smoking. I'm fuckin'
kindling. I'm a nasty puppet bitch
and you can pull my streeeeeeeeengs~*

He aggressively humps the copier, sending prints flying everywhere. One lands at Beau's feet. She examines it. It's a scan of his nose and nostrils made to look like a dick pic.

BEAU

Is this your... "hardware"?

Pinnocchio snatches the print back.

PINNOCHIO

It's art.

He indignantly presses the intercom.

PINNOCHIO (CONT'D)

Mr. Junebug, your 10:00 is here.
(pointedly)
Early.

INT. JUNEBUG'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Beau squishes into a ridiculously tiny desk. Pinnochio sits in one nearby, taking notes and singing under his breath.

JUNEBUG JIM (O.S.)
Well huff and puff and blow my
thorax right off, it's really you.
The Big Bad Wolf herself.

Beau squints at a large desk across the room. On top of it at a matchbox desk is JUNEBUG JIM (50s), a sleazy Madagascar cockroach with slicked back antennae. Our Jiminy Cricket.

BEAU
Actually Jim, it's just Beau now.
If anything I'm the Big Glad Wolf.

She gives an unconvincing double thumbs up. Jim winks.

JUNEBUG JIM
And I'm a pretty butterfly.
Enough of me being a gabbipillar.
Let's talk inheritance.
(to Pinnochio)
Pinnochio. Pinnochio!

PINNOCHIO
(singing to himself)
*Your abs are made of rock. My
body's made of wood, just like my--*

JUNEBUG JIM
(to Beau)
Smack the boy. He don't listen.

Beau taps Pinnochio's shoulder. He removes a headphone.

PINNOCHIO
What! I'm working or whatever.

JUNEBUG JIM
Give her the documents.

Pinnochio hands Beau a binder and a magnifying glass. She opens the binder. A single tiny page is inside.

JUNEBUG JIM (CONT'D)
Despite all her big talkin', your
ol' Granny Guadelupe didn't have
much to her name aside from this.
Now it's your problem.

Beau examines the tiny page with the magnifying glass.

BEAU

This is the Monday crossword. The only word used is 'anus.'

JUNEBUG JIM

Damn it Pinnochio, a man's crossword is sacred! Here.

He SPRINGS into her hands and holds a tiny PICTURE up. She peers through the magnifying glass at an old picture of a chic jazz bar. Its marquee reads, "**The Ever After.**"

On Beau's nostalgic expression:

BEAU

The Ever After... I loved hanging around this place growing up. What's the problem?

Junebug Jim and Pinnochio share a look.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. THE EVER AFTER BAR - AFTERNOON

Beau's expression withers to ash. REVERSE: the EVER AFTER, collapsing on itself from disrepair.

PINNOCHIO

It looks like a gay club bathroom after the poppers run out.

Junebug Jim (on his shoulder) smacks his ear.

PINNOCHIO (CONT'D)

I mean, it's not *not* **not** that bad?

His nose grows. Beau GROANS.

INT. THE EVER AFTER BAR - SHOWROOM - CONTINUOUS

Beau looks around. The inside is as bad as the outside. Rat droppings speckle the floor and the bar countertop.

BEAU

What happened?

JUNEBUG JIM

Same thing that happened to my third marriage. Nobody wanted to put the work into it anymore.

Beau examines a wall of old photos. Pictures of fairyfolk across the ages illustrate a rich communal tapestry.

BEAU

This place took care of us. Someone should have been taking care of it.

PINNOCHIO

Granny G would've but she was busy babysitting you.

Beau stiffens. Junebug shoots Pinnocchio a warning glance.

Beau stares at claw marks scoring a photo/the wall behind.

JUNEBUG JIM

My advice? Sell this dump.

BEAU

It's not a dump. Granny loved this bar. Maybe it can be renovated.

PINNOCHIO

Into a termite love-hotel? Why not.

JUNEBUG JIM

Renovatin' means sticking around.

BEAU

I could... for a little while...

JUNEBUG JIM

(incredulous)

You spent years terrifying the Village on the Straw-man's say-so. If people knew you were back, they'd turn you into puppy chow.

Pinnocchio gyrates on the bar, rubbing his things on other things that definitely should not be rubbed upon.

PINNOCHIO

The Enchanted Objects Guild still has a hit out on you for what you did to Gepetto's beautiful, beautiful hands.

Beau winces. That stings. Junebug Jim snaps at Pinnocchio.

JUNEBUG JIM

OUT! Before I turn you to kindling!

PINNOCHIO

I'm going, don't yell at me!

Pinnocchio scurries out. Jim awkwardly clears his throat.

JUNEBUG JIM

He's a brat, but he's not wrong.

He jumps onto the last wall photo. Beau picks it up and goes to blow the dust off, pauses, then rubs it clean. We see a gruff older woman, GRANDMA GUADALUPE, an Afro-Dominican woman, with her arms around TWO GIRLS: her mischievous GRANDDAUGHTER (16) wearing a red hoodie and a locket, and Beau (16), posing with hatchets below a sign that reads "**Annual Hatchet Throwing Contest.**" Beau smiles bitterly.

BEAU

I know.

Junebug jumps onto her shoulder.

JUNEBUG JIM

I got a link in real estate. She's buying property all over Fairytale Village, and for good money, too!

He hands her a card: "**PRISSILLA WIMPLE REALTY.**"

BEAU

Is she the reason there's a gastropub on every corner? I don't even know what a gastropub is.

JUNEBUG JIM

You don't gotta know. All you gotta do is scrap this hunkajunk and skedaddle before the Straw-man hears you're in town.

BEAU

I can handle Rumpelstiltskin.

Junebug Jim HISSES and rattles his wings.

JUNEBUG JIM

Don't say his name! He'll hear us.

BEAU

C'mon Jim. That's a rumor he spread to spook people into paying up faster. I wish it had worked more. I would've broken fewer legs.

Beau forces herself to touch the claw mark. Her hand's bigger now, but it's definitely hers. Jim knows what she's thinking.

JUNEBUG JIM

I may be an old bug with a nice mug, but uh, you can't save broken things. Trust me. I used to lease hay houses. Just kept blowing away.

BEAU

It doesn't *feel* right.

JUNEBUG JIM

The only right that matters is *the right price*. She found hers. I'll help ya find yours. I even had the paperwork specially printed for your monstrously meaty hands!

He steers her to the bar, *Ratatouille*-style. On the bar is the binder Pinnocchio left. Beau skims the normal-sized docs.

BEAU

(realizing)

Wait. "She"? Who's she?

JUNEBUG JIM

Huh? Right. The other inheritor.

BEAU

The what.

JUNEBUG JIM

I told you that. Didn't I? I did.

Beau pulls her hood down and sniffs the air.

BEAU

Ohhhh my God. Not *HER*.

WHUMP! A red combat boot kicks in the door.

WOMAN (O.S.)

That's my line. 'Cause I wanna know-

A short woman in a hooded red romper swaggers in. Everything from her kinky red hair to her combat boots is in-your-face. This is CARMINE (20s), Guadelupe's grown up granddaughter. She looks like a walking, talking L'oreal commercial.

Until she breaks a bottle on the bar and jabs it at Beau.

CARMINE

Why the FUCK this backstabbing bitch is on MY goddamn property?

INT. THE EVER AFTER BAR - MORNING - MOMENTS LATER

On the photo of Granny Lupe, Beau, and Carmine on the wall.

SMASH! A bottle shatters the photo, narrowly missing Beau.

BEAU

What is your problem?!

She ducks another bottle. It embeds in the wall like a knife.

CARMINE

It's not a what, it's a who!

Every sentence is punctuated by another smashing bottle. Beau's wolf features sharpen with frustration.

BEAU

Will you stop throwing bottles?!

CARMINE

Sure.

She throws a bar stool. Beau catches it with a mocking look. Junebug Jim RATTLES his wings atop the piano.

JUNEBUG JIM

Ladies! I asked you both here as co-inheritors of Guadelupe's estate to sign Prissilla's sale agreement.

He points at the sale binder on the bar.

Beau dusts the stool off, sets it at the bar, looks between it and Carmine. Carmine kicks it over and sits on the bar.

JUNEBUG JIM (CONT'D)

It's a good deal. Take it and you'll never see each other again.

CARMINE

Say less.

Carmine signs without reading. Beau's hackles raise.

BEAU

Prissilla is a *gentrifier!*

CARMINE

As long as she cuts me a check, she's gentry-fine with me.

BEAU

The Ever After was the soul of this neighborhood. You can't sell it to someone whose name sounds like a venereal disease! I thought you were an artist, not a sell-out.

CARMINE

First off, I'm a comedienne now, which is how I know you're a fuckin' joke. Second, don't talk to *me* about selling out when you curbstomped Goldilocks for a paycheck!

BEAU

I never curbstomped her. It was more of a light tap, *maybe* a kick--

JUNEBUG JIM

Girls, why don't we regroup here tonight when the estrogen drops...?

He trails off as Carmine saunters toward Beau. She trails the pen up Beau's arm. They share a look heavy with history.

CARMINE

What's your game plan here? You run the bar, save the neighborhood, and then everyone forgives you?

BEAU

I -- I haven't thought about it.
(beat, then hopefully:)
You think they'd forgive me?

Carmine smiles. It's stunning until it twists into a SNEER.

CARMINE

Not even Cinderella would forgive you, and she made up with a woman whose legal name is *literally* "Evil F. Stepmother."

She shoves the legal documents against Beau's chest.

CARMINE (CONT'D)

Forgiveness is earned, not bought.

Her phone rings. Carmine checks it, curses. She turns to Jim.

CARMINE (CONT'D)

Figure this shit out by tonight.
(to Beau)
And you... I missed you.

Beau looks hopeful. Until Carmine lobs one last bottle.

CARMINE (CONT'D)
Next time I won't. Ciao bitch.
(answers phone)
Calm your tits Eugene, I'm coming!
I can't be late to my own show.

Carmine strides out. Beau struggles to control herself.

BEAU
(desperately Zen)
You are not your anger. Carmine
just makes you so. Very. Angry.

JUNEBUG JIM
So sign and be done with her!

BEAU
(livid howl)
I CAN'T!

The howl blows a hole in the wall and Jim out with it. Beau stomps out, not noticing Jim's been blown out.

JUNEBUG JIM (O.S.)
Hey, it's all good! I'll be back
tonight for you to sign-- when the
wind blows me back around.

We hear <PIGEONS COOING CURIOUSLY>.

JUNEBUG JIM (O.S.) (CONT'D)
H-heh fellas, watch the beaks!
PINNOCHIO? PINNOCHIOOOOOOO!

EXT. MANHATTAN - PRISSILLA WIMPLE REALTY - EARLIER

Amid boring high-rises glistens a pink tower with PRISSILLA WIMPLE REALTY atop it in perfect, orderly bubble letters.

INT. PRISSILLA WIMPLE REALTY - MAIN OFFICES

An office that puts Google HQ to shame. Human professionals work at breakneck speeds in open-concept cubicles.

PRISSILLA struts in like a cougar on the hunt. Employees stare at her hot pink dress to avoid eye contact. Her assistant PEONY (20s, as wallflower-y as her name implies) scuttles after her, holding reports.

PRISSILLA

I don't pay you to dawdle, peon.
Financial report.

PEONY

Actually it's Peony, Miss Wimple--

Prissilla shoots her an ice cold glare. Peony gulps.

PEONY (CONT'D)

Uh-uhm, overall earnings are up--

PRISSILLA

Obviously. Next.

ASSISTANT

Err -- oh! Last summer Prissilla
Wimple Realty bought brownstones in
the Bronx and flipped them into
"urban cottages."

PRISSILLA

Prissilla Wimple Realty owns MOST
of the boroughs. *What. Else.*

PEONY

Well...

The assistant holds up her phone to show a NEWS ARTICLE: the
MAYOR shakes hand with a WHITE HIPSTER. On the edge of the
photo, PEOPLE OF COLOR AND FAIRYFOLK PROTEST.

ASSISTANT

Today that borough was officially
renamed "Dark Meat Manhattan." Its
neighborhood value has skyrocketed.

For the first time, Prissilla's shark-eyed smile looks real.

PRISSILLA

I love my job.

She throws open conference room doors and struts in. Peony
tries to follow but is caught halfway between the doors.

INT. PRISSILLA WIMPLE REALTY - BOARDROOM - LATER

Prissilla presents to her board of investors. Peony sets
something covered by a cloth in front of Prissilla.

PRISSILLA

Homeless people. Magical "beings."
Ethnic restaurants. What three
things do these have in common?

A balding investor in glasses slowly raises his hand. Peony
gently but firmly lowers his hand.

PRISSILLA (CONT'D)

One: They smell weird. Two: Rich
people spend our hard earned money
cleaning up after them.

SMACK! A griffin-pigeon slams into the window and looks very
dead. A window-cleaner appears on a slack-line and scoops the
bird into a bucket. REVEAL more birds in the bucket.

PRISSILLA (CONT'D)

Three: Getting rid of them will
make us all millions.

Peony removes the cloth: it's a mini of Fairytale Village
with stand-ups of OFFENSIVELY STEREOTYPICAL FAIRY CREATURES.

PRISSILLA (CONT'D)

Acquiring Fairytale Village will
allow us to price out the
undesirables, cater to the nouveau
riche, and transform this city into
a pristine *and profitable* magic-
free paradise.

INVESTOR #1

"Getting rid" of them sounds...bad.

PRISSILLA

They're monsters. What has humanity
always done to monsters, gentlemen?

INVESTOR #2

Elect them?

PRISSILLA

No, we *slay them* and profit off
their corpses! We'll be the capital
kings of New York!

The investors CHEER. Peony hands out paperwork to sign.
Prissilla watches smugly, a lioness enjoying her kill.

We pull away to the top corner of the room, where a SMALL
PORTAL is tucked. The portal BLINKS. We zoom into it--

INT. HIDEOUT - LUSH ROOM - DAY

And see a spidery hand covered in gold rings covering someone's face. The hand lowers, revealing a short man with pointed ears and gold glasses sitting at a grand piano. This is RUMPELSTILTSKIN, king of Fairytale Village's underbelly. He opens his eyes. His gold pupils fade to brown.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

Alas, there's already a King.

He hums and settles into playing "La Campanella" with ease.

EXT. FAIRYTALE VILLAGE - BUSINESS SECTOR - MUCH LATER

Light rain falls. Beau sits on the pavement against a wall.

GNOME (O.S.)

I knew I recognized your crazy ass.
You still doing crack?!

REVEAL the homeless gnome from before sitting by her, with a pipe in his lap. The gnome shakes a rough looking pixie's ass over the pipe's bowl until rainbow dust poots out. The motion-sick pixie vomits rainbow puke. The gnome scoops that in too.

The gnome offers the pipe. She shakes her head. He shrugs.

GNOME (CONT'D)

So you were saying-- got a light?

Beau fishes a Zippo from her pocket and lights his pipe.

He takes a huge hit and continues inhaling as he speaks.

GNOME (CONT'D)

So your ex-girlfriend, who's grandma took you in as a troubled teen and later helped you through anger management rehab or whatever, invalidated your past few years of emotional growth by saying you're still a bad dude? Did I get that right?

Long beat.

BEAU

Well we never technically dated--

The gnome raises his eyebrows. Beau backtracks.

BEAU (CONT'D)

Close enough. Carmine doesn't know how hard I've worked on my anger issues. <SNARL> SHE DOESN'T KNOW ANYTHING!

PIXIE

Sounds like she knows you pre-tty well. You've got history.

BEAU

With the old me. Not the new one.

PIXIE

She hasn't met the new you yet so she's reacting to the old you. Like- I don't wanna make your thing about *me*, but you actually extorted my entire swarm a couple years ago.

GNOME

Woah. Heavy.

BEAU

I knew you looked familiar. You're from the McKellen hive! How are y'all these days?

PIXIE

I'm on a corner with a junkie and an ex-con. How do you *think* we're doing.

Beau grimaces, ashamed. The gnome clears his throat.

GNOME

I'm homeless 'cause the Straw-man paid you to burn my hill down. How do you BURN a HILL?

BEAU

Willpower. Hey guys, I'm sorry about all that. It was just work.

GNOME

Yeah. We know.

PIXIE

But your girlfriend doesn't.

BEAU

Not my girlfriend.

Beau gets it. She stands and puts change in the gnome's hat.

BEAU (CONT'D)

Thanks guys. I needed that. (beat)
Hey, are we... cool?

GNOME
My wife was in that hill.

PIXIE
Not on your life.

BEAU
Right. Sorry. Uh. I'm just gonna...

She empties the rest of her wallet into his hat and slumps away, dejected. The gnome and pixie watch her go. Beat.

The gnome offers the pixie a hit. The pixie rips a big one.

PIXIE
Y'know my girl left me for not eating ass. It's fucked up bro.

GNOME
You know you kinda just ate your own ass. Well, smoked it, really.

PIXIE
...BRENDA, WAIT FOR ME BABY GIRL!

The pixie flutters off drunkenly. The gnome salutes him.

EXT. FAIRYTALE VILLAGE - BUSINESS SECTOR - LATER

Rain pours down now. Beau shelters in a phonebooth and rests her head against the glass, resigned to the truth:

BEAU
I don't belong here anymore, do I.

A pink glow illuminates her. She looks. A Prissilla billboard in the distance flashes: "**Sell NOW!**" With a contact number.

She punches it in. As it DIALS, she looks out the booth again-

And Carmine grins back at her. A flier stuck to the booth advertises, "**Comedienne Carmine Redd at Star Struck Theater!**"

PEONY (OVER PHONE)
Prissilla Wimple Realty, how can we make your day Prissilla Perfect?

Beau looks at the flier. She drops the phone and hurries out.

PEONY (OVER PHONE) (CONT'D)
(hushed)
Is this the feet pic guy again?
Do you still want to meet? Hello?

EXT. STAR STRUCK THEATRE - LATER

A centaur ticket vendor snacks on a stack of unsold tickets.
Unseen, Beau jimmys open the back entrance and slips inside.

INT. STAR STRUCK THEATRE - BACKSTAGE / ONSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

Beau peeks from the backstage curtain. Carmine, half-drunk, sways uneasily at the mic. She downs her drink.

CARMINE
New Yorkers never give up on what we want, even when we should. Take this guy I ran into on the way here. He's busking like hell in the middle of the sidewalk while we're all sardine'd against the storefronts to get away from him. Finally he yells, "I don't care if I don't make a single dollar. I'm not giving up on becoming a star!"

The lighting flickers. Carmine sees the crowd: one heckler on his phone. Carmine falters, then forces herself to recover.

CARMINE (CONT'D)
I-- I said, "That attitude'll get you further once you put your dick back in your pants!"

HECKLER
Boooooo. You're not fuuunny.

CARMINE
At least I'm not funny-looking.
'Cause your shit is *hilarious*.

She throws her glass at him and heads off-stage. Beau trails.

INT. SHABBY DRESSING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Carmine shuts the door as something SMACKS the other side. She tries locking it; no lock. She barricades it with her back. Her agent EUGENE, the ugly duckling, flaps at the door.

EUGENE (O.S.)
Quack, quack, quack, quack.

CARMINE
I know it was a ghost town tonight!
I was there, Eugene.

She hurriedly starts packing up her dirty dressing room. She pauses to grab a liquor bottle for a quick handle pull.

EUGENE (O.S.)
Quack.

CARMINE
Oh, today I'm "volatile talent who doesn't take her career seriously," but last night I was "Mommy." How would Linda feel about that Eugene?

She mimes pegging a duck while grunting crude sex noises.

EUGENE (O.S.)
Quack quack QUACK quack quack!

CARMINE
I'll leave her out of this when you leave your beak out of my business!

EUGENE (O.S.)
QUAAAACCKKK!

Carmine yanks open the door to flip him off. Eugene's frazzled tie drags on the floor as he waddles away furiously.

CARMINE
An enchanted beanstalk could manage me better than you! AND YOU LOOK RIDICULOUS IN BUSINESSWEAR!

She slams and locks the door and resumes packing.

CARMINE (CONT'D)
I DO take my career seriously. I take it more seriously than anything in my life, ever. <BELCH>

She hangs her head, on her way to drunk. We hear a <CLICK>.

BEAU (O.S.)
Yup. You're the portrait of professionalism.

Carmine spins around. Beau sits on the other side of the room beneath a small window that looks pried open by claws.

CARMINE

Why are you here? And how'd you get your dumptruck ass through there?

Beau pulls her hoodie over the fabric tears on her huge ass.

BEAU

I came to talk.

CARMINE

There's nothing to talk about. You have the papers. Sign 'em and go.

BEAU

I will. But before I do, I just want to know. Why do you want to get rid of the Ever After so badly?

Carmine takes one last handle pull, plugs the bottle, and tosses it in her duffle-bag with the rest of her stuff.

CARMINE

If I'm gonna waste my life on something, it's going to be *my* dream, no one else's. Not even Grandma's. Is that it?

BEAU

I have one more. Do you ever wish we... Uh, I mean, do you--

Beau stops and sniffs. Her face scrunches. Grossed out.

BEAU (CONT'D)

Do you smell licorice right now? Like a *nasty* amount of licorice.

CARMINE

(sniffs, gags)

No, just wet dog. You smell like wet sourdough. Hella yeasty.

Someone KNOCKS WHIMSICALLY on the door.

GRETEL (O.S.)

Guten Abend, Carmine. Open up.

Carmine pales. Suddenly scared.

CARMINE

Shit titty fuck. It's *pay day*.

BEAU

Hooray?

Carmine shoves Beau under the dressing table.

CARMINE

Don't speak. Don't breathe. Choke
and die if you can. Okay? Okay.

Carmine throws a bunch of shit in front of the table as HANSEL (20) and GRETEL (20) HUMPERDINCK, fraternal twins with matching blond coifs, enter. Hansel wears a cheerful plastic smile and messes with Carmine's stuff. Gretel eyes the messy room judgmentally; she's clearly the leader. She chews a fat stick of black licorice. Beau gags under the table.

Carmine schools her expression. She's in performance mode.

CARMINE (CONT'D)

Hansel. Gretel. Rumpbutt must be at
the bottom of the new hire barrel
to send the identical idiots.

Under the table, Beau drags a hand down her face. Shit.

BEAU

(softly)
Frick.

HANSEL

We're *fraternal*, bescheuert.

GRETEL

You can't dodge us anymore. You
defaulted on this month's payment.
And the five months before that.
No. More. Extensions.

Hansel holds his hands out and makes "gimme hands."

HANSEL

It's payday, bay-bay!

Beau freezes when Gretel notices something on the windowsill: a clump of Beau's fur. Gretel picks it up, examining it.

Carmine notices and steps between her and Beau's table.

CARMINE

I told you I'd have it by tonight.

GRETEL

Do you?

Carmine grimaces. Gretel TUTS. Hansel wags a finger.

HANSEL
Naughty naughty.

CARMINE
Give me a week. I'll have it.

GRETEL
No. One way or another, your debt
to the Straw-man is paid tonight.

Gretel meaningfully pats the CROSSBOW at her hip. Hansel leans over to Carmine and stage whispers.

HANSEL
Or we'll shoot you many times until
you're dead. In case that was
unclear.

He cheerily pats her shoulder. Carmine plays tough.

CARMINE
I'm from the Heights. You Dark Age
motherfuckers don't scare me.

Gretel stares at her. Then LUNGES. Carmine scrambles back into the table and falls in front of it. Gretel leans down.

GRETEL
Boo.

She laughs and exits. Hansel sidles up to Carmine.

HANSEL
Isn't she like, so the coolest?
(sniffs, grimaces)
Oh girlfriend, word of advice: go
see your gynecologist. Your tail
smells like wet hund.

He blows her a kiss and exits, whistling to himself.

Carmine turns to look at Beau. Beau stares back, furious. Carmine grabs her things and races out. Beau shakes the water and wet-dog smell from her fur and chases after her.

INT. HIDEOUT - LUSH ROOM - DAY

Rumpelstiltskin feverishly plays "La Campanella", losing himself. Sweat drips from him, sticking his hair to his face.

HANSEL (O.S.)
Ahem. Rumpelstiltskin, sir?

Rumpelstiltskin continues playing, passively annoyed.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

I'm *playing*.

(pause)

Kerchief.

Hansel steps up, holds out his sleeve. Rumpelstiltskin uses it to dab away sweat. He gestures for the twins to speak.

HANSEL

She's back, sir.

GRETEL

Your wulfshund.

This gets his attention. Rumpelstiltskin pauses.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

My Beauregard? She is home?

Gretel holds up the clump of fur. Rumpelstiltskin gives it a deep sniff, then kisses it. The hairs turn into gold and wrap around his pinky finger. We see his rings aren't metal, but *human hair* turned to gold. His face twists with dark delight.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN (CONT'D)

I do love a housewarming party.

Hansel pops up holding streamers and party hats.

HANSEL

Me too! Do you think she'll want green balloons, or red?

INT. EVER AFTER BAR - NIGHT - LATER

Carmine rustles through the legal documents. Beau enters.

BEAU

Did you fuck a duck?!

CARMINE

We're not talking about it.

BEAU

Oh yes we are. After we talk about how you made a deal with Rumpel-

Carmine covers Beau's mouth.

CARMINE

Don't say it! He'll hear.

SLURP. Carmine yanks her hand away, covered in dog slobber.

CARMINE (CONT'D)
Are you seven years old?!

BEAU
In wolf years. What do you owe?

CARMINE
A lot. *Sign.*

She pushes the paperwork over to Beau. Beau ignores it.

BEAU
You know how bad he is. When I worked for him-- Don't do this. He probably has you on a contracted payment plan now, but it's a trap. His only "plan" is to milk you dry.

CARMINE
(sarcastic)
Hot.

BEAU
I'm being serious. You need a new contract. I can help you.

CARMINE
Help me? You're the reason I'm in this situation! Grandma Lupe left me here with a week's worth of groceries and a bus pass to go take care of YOU!

Carmine grabs Beau's hand and forces a pen into it.

CARMINE (CONT'D)
I don't need sorry. I need a signature.

Carmine pulls away. Beau catches her wrist.

BEAU
You don't know who you're dealing with.

Carmine shifts, bothered by the topic and their proximity.

CARMINE
He said the deal's temporary. I'm free once I'm paid up.

BEAU
Nothing's temporary with him.

Beau takes Carmine's hand. They share a look. Carmine abruptly pulls away and turns her back on Beau.

CARMINE
I cut my own bangs in the sixth grade. He can't be worse than that.

Beau rubs her own wrists. OLD MAGIC SYMBOLS are burned into them. They gleam, then fade. She pulls her sleeves over them.

BEAU
Rumpelstiltskin wants to own you.

CARMINE
Stop it! Stop saying his name!

<p>BEAU He's a mobster, not Bloody Mary. Watch! Rumpelstiltskin, Rumpelstiltskin, Rumpelstiltskin--</p>	<p>CARMINE (CONT'D) Shut up. I'm not hearing this. LA LA!</p>
---	--

RUMPELSTILTSKIN (O.S.)
You rang?

They turn. Sitting atop the grand piano... Flanked by Gretel's licorice-eating grin and Hansel's armfuls of party supplies and red-green balloons... is RUMPELSTILTSKIN. Hansel tosses confetti. Gretel blankly blows a noisemaker.

HANSEL
Surpriseeee!

BEAU
...Okay, that's a new trick.

Carmine punches Beau in the arm.

CARMINE
I *fucking* told you.

INT. THE EVER AFTER BAR - CONTINUOUS

Rumpelstiltskin hops down from the piano. He's a foot shorter than everyone else. Beau stands in front of Carmine. Hansel tries to put a party hat on Beau. She SNARLS. Hansel pouts.

HANSEL
Okay, gifts later. It's not like I got them for you. Whatever.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

Imagine my surprise when I heard my
Big Bad Wolfun had come home to me.

BEAU

I'm not here for you.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

Ah. This we have in common.

He turns to Carmine. His palm skin stretches and breaks into
rolled parchment. It unfurls all the way to Carmine's feet.

CARMINE

<GAGS> What is that? A skin tag?!

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

That is your contract. Upon
repayment of your loan, the
contract is voided. Miss Redd, do
you or do you not have my money?

CARMINE

I... I can get it, end of the week!

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

That is not what I asked.

BEAU

Of course she doesn't have it.

The contract refurls.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

Then I'm afraid Miss Redd is in my
power until restitution is made.

CARMINE

<NERVOUS LAUGH> That doesn't sound
that bad. I basically work for you
until my debt's paid off, right?

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

Something like that.

He rubs a ring. FLASH! Carmine turns into a GOLD STATUE.

GRETEL

I told her she'd pay tonight.

Beau rounds on Rumpelstiltskin.

BEAU

Turn her back, you monster!

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

Monster? <TUTS> Those in hay houses
should not huff and puff.

He strokes Carmine's now-golden hair.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN (CONT'D)

I like the blonde. Thoughts?

BEAU

I think.. I think...

Beau gives in to the anger that's been building inside her. She ROARS. Wind BLASTS through the bar, knocking Hansel and Gretel back a few feet and popping Hansel's balloons. Hansel hangs his head. Rumpelstiltskin blinks, amused.

BEAU (ROARS) (CONT'D)

THAT I'M GOING TO FUCK YOU UP!

Crossbow bolts block her advance. Beau redirects toward the twins. Hansel and Gretel reload and rapid-fire. Beau ducks and weaves, gaining with murderous intent. She shoulder-checks Hansel toward Gretel and inhales. Gretel throws her licorice. Beau sucks it in, chokes on it.

BEAU (WHEEZING) (CONT'D)

Oh my god it tastes like skidmarks.
Why do they SELL THIS?! <VOMITS>

Gretel tic-tacs off the wall, lands on Hansel's head mid-air, and kicks off him. He crashes through a wall.

HANSEL

Ach, mein head-un!

Gretel plants a double-kick right in Beau's ribs. Beau chokes and stumbles back. She's gotten rusty, but Gretel is a well-oiled machine. Gretel follows with swift blows to the diaphragm, then delivers a devastating uppercut with the side of her crossbow. Beau hits the ground, winded.

Rumpelstiltskin TUTS and shakes his head, disappointed.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

That old woman neutered you.

Beau tries to stand. Gretel jams her crossbow against Beau's head, shoving her down. Gretel chews another licorice.

GRETEL

Any last words, puppy?

Beau MUMBLES SOMETHING. Gretel pulls the crossbow back.

GRETEL (CONT'D)

What was that?

Hansel stumbles back in through a Hansel-shaped hole.

HANSEL

You have... to... enunciate.

Beau sucks in slowly. Gretel doesn't notice.

BEAU

I. Said. Eat. SHIT!

Beau exhales into a kick up, loops her knee around Gretel's neck and slams her so hard she bounces. Beau grabs her head mid-air. With one swing she wipes the bar with Gretel's face - - funneling rat droppings in her mouth -- and slings her into Hansel. They both fly out the wall-hole.

HANSEL (O.S.)

Luckily we land on pavement and not street! Wait, has sidewalk always been black with yellow lines, or is that concussion talking?

CAR WHEELS PEEL. We hear the twins <SCREAM>. CRASH! Silence.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

Tsk. It's hard finding good help.

Beau pants. She stares at her bloody hands. Realizing.

BEAU

This isn't you. This is not you.

She falls to her knees beside Carmine's statue. Horrified and panicked, she tries calming herself down. It isn't working.

Rumpelstiltskin cups her cheek and makes her look at him.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

Yes it is. And you're *beautiful*.

He strokes her hair, sniffs it. She's too shaken to stop him.

BEAU

Turn her back. Now.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

You've forgotten how things work in *my* city. You want something, you make a deal for it. For example...

SNAP! A new parchment unfurls from his other hand.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN (CONT'D)
A new contract for Miss Redd.

BEAU
In exchange for what?

He looks at Beau with something too sharp to be love.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN
You know what I want, old friend.

Beau looks at Carmine's statue, fiery and beautiful. She sags against it, nods. Rumpelstiltskin smiles. He's won. A quill-pen appears. Beau signs. The pen and contract and vanish.

BEAU
I'm not your friend.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN
For now. Until then, I'll settle
for you being...

His pinky ring turns into a GOLD COLLAR. He puts it on her.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN (CONT'D)
My pet.

INT. THE EVER AFTER BAR - NIGHT - LATER

On Carmine's statue. She GASPS to life, human once more.

CARMINE
GAAAAAAAHH! <PRIMAL SCREAM>

On instinct she smashes a piano bench over Beau's head.

BEAU
OW! Come on, I'm already wounded!

CARMINE
I'm going to beat that little
toadstool until he crawls back to
the peat bog he slithered out of!

Beau takes the bench, sets it down, and guides Carmine to it.

BEAU
He's gone.

Carmine looks around. No Rumpelstiltskin.

CARMINE
Wait. He's like... gone gone?

BEAU

For now. I renegotiated your contract. You still have payments, but you have more time now, too.

Carmine slumps, head in her hands.

CARMINE

Then I'm still screwed. I didn't go into comedy for the money.

Beau gestures at herself and the bar.

BEAU

That's where we come in.

CARMINE

We? Hold up--

BEAU

It's hard to see past five years of rat droppings, but if we get the bar running, we can pay your debt. And maybe fund your comedy career? Your dressing room looked... rough.

CARMINE

...Why are you doing this?

Beau sits beside her, keeping a few feet between them.

BEAU

You said I wanted to keep the Ever After so people would forgive me. You were right.

Carmine peeks between her fingers at Beau. Her face says "Now I feel like an asshole about that, but also, vindication."

BEAU (CONT'D)

I am selfish. And violent. Just like I was when I worked for Rum--

Carmine elbows her in the ribs.

BEAU (CONT'D)

OW! For him. Granny Lupe told me I can't change who I am, only who I become. I can't buy forgiveness, but I can earn it. Starting here, with you...r debt. Because I hurt you more than anyone else.

CARMINE

You know you hurt a lot of people,
right? Remember the McKellens?

Beau winces and scratches the back of her head.

BEAU

If we don't count them, you're at
the top of the list?

Beau's earnestness is too much. Carmine looks away.

CARMINE

I still don't like you.

BEAU

You still irritate me plenty.

Beau holds her hand out for a shake. Beat. Carmine pushes a broom and discarded party hat into it, then grabs a dustpan and hat for herself. This is a truce... for now.

CARMINE

Jim's gonna shit eggs when he hears-

She's cut off by <POUNDING DUBSTEP BASS>. Pinnocchio, clearly on ecstasy, moonwalks through the wall hole with Junebug Jim on his head, and a SPEAKER playing dubstep on his shoulder. Junebug Jim looks around, confident yet confused.

JUNEBUG JIM

Hears what?

INT. THE EVER AFTER BAR - NEXT MORNING

On Junebug Jim's horrified and dismayed face.

JUNEBUG JIM

You're making a huge mistake!

REVEAL: He's watching Beau and Carmine cleaning up the bar. Jim's ANGRY HISSES fade as Pinnocchio cupid-shuffles them out.

BEAU

What do you think the hisses mean?

Carmine holds up Pinnocchio's speaker.

CARMINE

Dunno. Wasn't listening. I was
grabbing a housewarming gift.

She snaps on her party hat and plugs her phone into the speakers. "HANG ME OUT TO DRY" BY THE COLD WAR KIDS slowly fades in. Beau smiles, puts her hat on too. As music builds:

Beau stands on a ladder and tapes bags over the ceiling hole.

BEAU

Maybe if we call it a sunroof no one will notice?

Carmine gestures to the holes in the walls.

CARMINE

Sure, and these are Venetian doors.

Carmine kicks the ladder. Beau falls off. Carmine pours two drinks. Beau declines hers. Carmine shrugs and slams both.

CARMINE (CONT'D)

Seriously, what'd you trade to make Rumpelbutt renegotiate?

Beau looks at glass shards on the floor. In their reflections, we see a collar around her neck. It GLEAMS GOLD.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. THE EVER AFTER BAR - LAST NIGHT

Rumpelstiltskin gently cradles Beau's face in his hands.

BEAU

What do you want from me.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

Be patient, my sweet little lapdog. I will be in contact. When I call--

His smile curdles. He grabs her collar and yanks it tight.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN (CONT'D)

You come to heel.

He vanishes. Beau gasps, touches her collar, conflicted.

INT. THE EVER AFTER BAR - PRESENT

Beau's collar dulls to black. She covers it with her fur.

BEAU

Nothing important.

Beau returns to cleaning. Carmine frowns, but gets to work.

INT. P.W. REALTY - OUTSIDE PRISSILLA'S OFFICE - LATER

Peony sits at her desk, scrolling feet pic websites on her laptop. Her desk phone RINGS. Peony shuts tabs and picks up.

PEONY
Prissilla Wimple Realty -- Oh, Jim!

Beat. Her face falls. She glances at Prissilla's office.

PEONY (CONT'D)
Oh *Jim*.

INT. P.W. REALTY - INSIDE PRISSILLA'S OFFICE

Prissilla sits in an all-pink office freshening her mascara. On her desk is the Village mini. Prissilla taps buildings.

PRISSILLA
This little building sold at market. This brownstone's tenants no longer own. And this local establishment...

Prissilla crushes the mini Ever After in her hand.

PRISSILLA (CONT'D)
Is getting bulldozed to the ground.
Oh, I can't wait to HGTV this city.

Her desk-phone RINGS. She answers sweetly. Her eyes are ice.

JUNEBUG JIM (OVER PHONE)
Hey, it's Jimbo! Listen, bad news--

As she listens, her fake-sweet smile turns murderous. She stabs the mascara wand into the tiny Ever After. Repeatedly.

PRISSILLA
No one takes my happily Ever After.

END OF PILOT.