

The tradition of the Beta Omega Omega Harvest Night party can be traced back around three decades to a semi-private movie screening held on a whim by one of its founding sorors.

Nicole Bacchus, a Junior at the time, felt the sorority's core identity as a drama-based house had not yet been properly established. Beta house had found its focus on acting overshadowed by Alpha Kappa Alpha house, a dramatic sorority more focused on stage theater. Nicole eventually decided to try and push an emphasis on cinema. To that end, she got a few sheets, hung them from the house's balcony, and rented a "Super" 8mm film projector, along with a few B-movie horror films to play on it.

Though Nicole expected only Beta house members to attend, the screening managed to attract a few viewers from several other sororities and fraternities.

In the years to follow, the scope of the party increased steadily until Beta house submitted a request to the school's Greek Council to have the then-unused basement of their house converted into a small movie theater to facilitate the academic study of film.

For whatever reason, this transparent attempt at accommodating yet-wilder Harvest Night parties was approved, and the Beta house Harvest Night film festival has become a cultural mainstay of Lorem Ipsum University.

"Fuck this," Jean muttered, straining to pin a cardboard bat on the wall. "This fucking- We should just get the pledges to do this." She huffed, turned to Charlotte, and waved her arms. "Why aren't we getting the pledges to do this?!"

Charlotte just shrugged, hovering in place and using a single fingertip to scroll down a list of prospective films. "That'd be against tradition. Stop bitching. Hey." She looked up, clicking her tongue. "Did they show 'Killer Catmen from the Moon' last year?"

"I don't fucking know." Jean growled, finally resorting to hopping up and down in an attempt to slap the damn thing to the wall. "You think I actually watch the movies? Do you-" Her scowl turned to a pointed smirk as she turned once more to her spectral companion. "Do you actually watch the movies?"

Charlotte blinked. "Do you *not*?"

"*Ha!*" Jean leaned forward, eyes incredulously wide. "Oh, my God! You fucking *virgin!* No, I'm too busy gettin' that *dick* to watch some black-and-white jackass in a gorilla suit bumble around. What the *fuck!*"

"Shut up!" Charlotte was nearly transparent now, even if she was laughing along with Jean. "Not everyone can just zap some guy and have his tongue down their throat whenever they want!"

"I can't just *zap* them."

Francine's fingers curled into claws, and she stuck out her tongue. "Bluh! You are now my slave! I want to suck your cock!"

"That's *racist!*" Jean faux-snapped, rolling her eyes and placing the bat at eye-level. "And so is making me put up all these bullshit bat thingies."

"You know what's bullshit?" Charlotte finally floated down to affect sitting on the couch. She was still hovering around an inch or so above it, though. "What's bullshit is putting them halfway up the wall."

"Fuck you. If anyone knows where they'd be, it's *me*. I'm pulling vampire fiat."

"That's such a cop-out! Amira didn't just throw toilet paper around and call it a day when *she* was setting stuff up." Charlotte glanced up from her phone for a moment to glare at Jean...before she turned her attention downwards once more, scrolling through the list.

"That's because Amira doesn't have any idea what a party is like in this country," Jean replied, flopping back onto the couch. She looked around the den. "Spider webs" hung in gossamer veils over the doorways. Crosses hung from the ceiling, looking pretty genuinely freaky for the sheer number of them. Fake boards covered the windows.

And a single cardboard bat menaced above the snacks table.

Jean gave herself a mental pat on the back.

She turned her head to Charlotte. "What're parties even *like* where she's from?"

"What, the East Coast?"

"No, like. Khemet."

"Oh." Charlotte tapped her phone. It pinged. "Dunno, but they probably suck."

It wasn't like Amira had never been to a party in Libertas before. She'd done her tenure in high school, and, sure, her *first* party had been culture shock bad enough to leave her shivering in her bedroom when she got home, but by now, she'd grown accustomed to it. The blaring music, the shouting over said blaring music, the garbage cans filled with booze-

OK, that last one still kind of threw her off, but all that meant was that she didn't drink from *that* particular font.

She shifted from one foot to the other in her Pharaoh costume, making sure not to spill anything on it. Still had to use it in her act, after all, but it looked *way* too good to not wear on Harvest Night. The two-piece white silk ensemble looked incredible, especially against her

mocha-brown skin. A gold coins hung from her belt, jangling with every shift of her hips, and the top criss-crossed over her breasts, making them look, in Jean's words, "fucking fantastic." Add some kohl around her eyes and a circlet of dubiously foreign appearance, and she looked straight out of some ancient Khemet pharaoh's tomb.

And if her outfit were to have a positive impact on her projected chat with the cute guy in the lifeguard costume, so be it. She sipped her drink and narrowed her eyes at him. Was it really a costume if he was just kind of wearing swim trunks? He had a lifesaver, though. And a whistle.

Amira downed her drunk, set her now-empty cup down on the table beside her, and made her way over. It proved remarkably easy to quiet the internal debate of outfit v. costume, especially as she considered how best to get his attention. Preparing to just about bellow in his ear, Amira-

Oh, well, he'd glanced over and was currently gawking at her hardcore. That settled that. Amira raised a hand in anticipatory greeting, and smiled toothily.

"Hey!" She had to shout to hold a conversation, but that was fine. "I was wondering-" Amira settled in beside him, leaning against the wall and lowering her volume to a more intimate roar. "Obviously you're a lifeguard, but are we looking more at a Jaws sort of beach or Creature From the Black Lagoon?"

He'd leaned in to hear her better, but when she finished, he pulled away and laughed. Wasn't loud enough for her to hear over the music and the other conversation, but there was no hiding the way his shoulders shook. He leaned in once more, and this time it was her turn to listen.

"None of the above."

"Really!"

"Yeah, I'm mixing it up." He pinched his forefinger and thumb together, bringing them up for emphasis. "'Beach Blanket Bloodbath.' See?" He held up his lifesaver, and just as the name implied, it was splattered with red.

Amira quirked an eyebrow, and her lips followed suit in a grin. "Oh, what, is that an actual movie?"

"No." He lowered the lifesaver. "But it sure sounds like one, doesn't it?" He extended his hand. "Luis."

"Amira."

"Nice to meet you. Hey, I fucking *love* your costume, Amira! Like, holy *shit!*" He took a step back to look her up and down, and Amira...

Well, Amira may or may not have cocked her hip and raised a hand in the air to complete the pose. "Oh, *this* old thing?" She asked airily, flipping her hair over her shoulder. "If you're gonna do something, do it right. And, like-" She leaned in a bit closer, tucking an errant strand of hair behind her ear. "I'm not an apophis -- obviously -- but, like, I actually grew up in Khemet-"

"Really!"

"Yeah, it was super cool! Well, hot. You know. Anyway! I grew up around all this kind of stuff. It wasn't, like-" She rolled her eyes, waved her hand in the air as she thought. "*This* ostentatious normally, you know, but it was totally the sort of fancy stuff people would wear."

"If you'd like," she began casually, "you could come up to my room and I could show you some of the pieces that didn't make the cut. What you're seeing is the final iteration, but I actually went through a few different concepts."

"Oh?" Luis smiled toothily, and for a moment, Amira wanted to pounce on him then and there. God, he was cute. Fucking bare-chested, Mediterranean tan, fit. She was gonna leave him seeing stars and whimpering and-

Oh, he was talking. She blinked and pretended she'd been listening.

"...hour or two, so yeah, I think I can spare some time. Lemme just text my friend to let him know not to wait up."

A few taps to his phone, and soon Luis was following behind Amira, smiling the whole way through the crowd, up the stairs, and down the hall.

"So you're actually a member of Beta, huh?" He hadn't taken his eyes off of her for more than a second, she noted with a grin, and it was with a sway of her hips that Amira stepped into her room proper.

"Yeah," she called over her shoulder. "I'm more interested in stage acting, but I don't really fit the whole Alpha image. They really only let in doppelgangers, and." She gestured to herself. "Ghoul. Didn't work out. But it's fine! They're more interested in serious theater, and I'm more a fan of stuff like burlesque."

She tried not to smile wider when she saw Luis gulp. He stood just a step past the doorframe, just kind of looking around. Funny how that little gem took his attention elsewhere, but Amira knew he'd be circling back to her any second now.

"Ah," he finally managed. Bronzed skin betrayed just a hint of blush on his cheeks, and when he worked up the nerve to look back to her, Amira gave him an oh-so-innocent smile. "Burlesque? Like the, uh."

"Dancing, yeah. Technically burlesque more refers to kind of...satirical works?" She sat back on her bed and patted the spot next to her. Luis hesitated...but not for more than a second or two. "It's kind of 'low,' but it's super fun. It can be high-energy, but most of the time it's got this kind of *subdued* feel to it, you know?"

"Can't say that I do, actually."

"Well-" She rose to her feet, smoothing the skirt of her costume. "Lemme give you an example. I actually made this all fancy because I'm gonna use it in my act." She pressed her palms together, moving them to the left...and moving her hips to the right to complement the sudden

movement. "Me and a friend are part of a revue that's coming up in November. Still looking for a guy to help out, but we still gotta rehearse our dances."

He gulped again. "Dances?"

"Oh!" She laughed to herself, rolling her eyes. She pulled her hands apart, held her arms out at her sides...and began to slither in place, one arm up, one arm down, her every motion given sensuous emphasis. "Yeah, we're going to be dancing. 'The Snake and the Charmer.'"

"The basic story is that there's a dashing rogue come to rob a mummy's tomb," she continued, swaying her shoulders, her hips, fluttering her fingers as her hands suddenly came forward. Amira couldn't help but giggle to herself when she saw Luis almost rise from his seat at her implicit invitation. "It's guarded by her loyal servant, an asp-naga."

She leaned forward, eyes half-lidded...before she opened them *wide*, right in front of his face. Her captive audience shuddered, but didn't move much beyond that. He didn't even lift a finger to hide the bulge in his trunks, and Amira saw fit to reward his candor with a flutter of her fingertips ghosting over the front of his swimsuit. "She *zaps* him with her mesmerizing gaze," she purred. "And brings him before her queen."

Amira took a step back, her dance pausing for a moment. Hip pushed out to the side, breasts pushed forward, every delicious curve she had put on sensuous display. She winked at Luis.

"Me."

"Then he's helpless to resist my dance. Because, y'know." She smiled toothily, the glittering white of her smile mirrored by his lazy, lop-sided grin. "A pharaoh-mummy's gotta have a few tricks up her sleeve."

"Then," she murmured, turning away from him and peeking over her shoulder. "I perform the Rite of Isis. You know what that is, right, Luis?"

He shook his head. Couldn't even manage words. He looked better like this, she decided: slack-jawed, gawking, sporting a nice, stiff erection in his trunks. Hell, Amira herself had to suppress a shiver at the sight of him. He'd started to lean forward, subconsciously or otherwise, and was inches away from flopping forward.

"Well." She gave her hips a coin-rattling shake to the left. To the right. And then wiggled them right back into his lap, grinding down against him. "I'm not surprised you haven't heard of it. It's not really a thing. But in the show, it's going to be the way I steal his heart and make him my slave *forever*."

"It's gonna be behind this veil so the audience can't see that it's all just a bunch of dry-humping, but basically." Amira turned around in Luis' lap, shifting to straddle him...and push him gently back. "He's going to get the sexiest, *steamiest* lapdance he's ever gotten in his life, and assuming he doesn't *cum* in his *pants* by the end of it."

She brought a single fingertip to her lips, relishing in the glazed passivity in his eyes.

"I'll give him a little *kiss*." She leaned down. Took his wrists in her hands and held them gently to

the bed. He wasn't going to budge, but she had an inkling that even as mesmerized as he was, Luis would appreciate his helplessness.

"And he'll be my loyal." She leaned closer. "Loving." Closer still. "*Slave*."

Their lips met, and his hips bucked upwards instinctively.

"Fucking *magnificent*. Look!" Eliza nudged Harold's shoulder, taking his attention from her cheek and towards the screen...if only for a second. "Goddess, fucking *look* at those *squibs* pop off! It's like fucking *firecrackers*!" She leaned forward, eyes wide and hands clasped tight together as she watched the poor sap on the movie screen convulse on the ground, peppered with "gunfire."

"Babe."

"Not now! Oh, this is fucking *amazing*!"

"Babe!"

Eliza shook her head, eyes shut, before she turned to her date. The unspoken demand of "Well! What is it!" smoldered in her glare.

Only to fade to cinders when Harold pressed a kiss to her lips. Impish, he pulled back and smiled at her as monochrome monsters fell like paper dolls on the screen.

"Have I ever told you how *cute* you are when you get all dorky like this?" He slid the arm-rest between them up and snuggled against her. "OK. Get me up to speed. Who's doing what. What's going on in the movie."

"You haven't been paying attention?!" Actress or not, there was no way Eliza was faking the horror in her voice. Aghast, she stared with wide-eyed terror at her boyfriend...before shaking her head to clear it and pointing at the figures on-screen. "OK. OK! Here, you see that big guy with the gun?"

"I see that big guy with the gun."

"That's Vincent Van Helsing." She wagged her finger at him. "Total no-goodnik. Hates monsters. Commissioned by--"

"Oh, hold on." Harold looked down at his outfit. The skimpy costume didn't do much more than show off his midriff and the attractive tone of his body, but it at least had the implication of...monster hunting? That was a stake on his belt, and if it wasn't, it sure looked like one. "Is that me? Is that who I'm dressed as?"

"No," Eliza answered. "You're just a regular Van Helsing. Vincent Van Helsing is named after Van Helsing."

"That's confusing."

"It really isn't. Anyway, he was commissioned by the mayor of Metropolis City to 'clean it up.' Basically, it means that he's gunning down every monster that isn't on this one gang's take."

"Ooh." Harold wrapped his arms around one of Eliza's and leaned against her, finally watching the movie. "Sounds like a badass."

"Yeah, it's kind of taken on a new life as an example of strong male figures in films recently. I don't really know how deserved that is, considering he ends up head-over-heels for this one scylla-type that he meets on one of his hits, but. Eh. I'm not in gender studies."

"So when do *you* show up?"

She blinked. Turned to Harold. "Huh?"

"I'm in the movie." He looked up at Eliza, eyes innocently wide. "When do *you* show up?"

She looked down at her costume. Deep green corset to contrast with her own light-green skin. A poofy red dress, modeled impressively after rose petals. Standing, she looked like some kind of fairy tale princess with a penchant for botany. Sitting, she looked like a girl wearing a ballroom gown that could not possibly fit in any seat conceivable by man.

She looked back up to Harold.

"I'm not *in* this movie, babe." She paused. "I'm Audrey Two. From-" She looked to the screen, then back to Harold. "You know this isn't Little Shop of Horrors, right?"

"Oh." Harold laid his head against her shoulder. "I thought this was Little Shop of Horrors."

"It's not." Eliza turned her attention once more to the movie, wherein Vincent Van Helsing had just finished shaking down a now-terrified imp.

"It'd be better if it was, though."

God, he was doing wonders to make sure she didn't watch a goddamn second of this film. Eliza quirked an eyebrow, glanced at Harold once more, and smiled. "Yeah? Why's that?"

"Because then you'd be in it." He looked at her, rolled his eyes, and fanned himself. "And then I'd have a leading lady to *fantasize* about while I was watching it."

Eliza bit her lower lip, giggled to herself, and tried once more to watch the movie. She didn't get too far before she felt Harold's lips against her cheek. "Harry!" She laughed -- out loud, this time -- and swatted him on the arm. "We are in a *movie theater!*"

"And?" He smirked at her, shifting in his seat to face her directly. "You may not *know* this, but..."

He looked to the left. Then to the right. Crooking a finger, he beckoned Eliza closer.

She leaned in-

-only to shrink back, laughing giddily when he thrust his hands in the air and shouted.

"We are the *on-ly* ones in the *entire theater!*" He bellowed, waving his arms and going so far as to rise from his seat. She shushed him -- or attempted to between sputtering laughter -- and squeaked when he planted his rear in her lap. "So that *means...*"

"What's it mean, babe?"

"...that it is time to indulge in one of the sacred traditions of watching a movie in a movie theater." He straddled her hips, hands on her shoulders, and smirked at the sudden flush on her cheeks. He pressed his forehead to hers and bared his teeth in a near-predatory smile.

"Making out in the back."

"Oho." Eliza settled her hands on his hips, biting her lower lip and mirroring his smile. "Ohoho, so *that's* where your mind is. You know-" She pressed a kiss to his pursed lips...and tried not to smirk when he sighed. "-I could very easily get a boyfriend who was more supportive in my study of cinematic works. I'm trying to be an *actress*, you know."

"I know!" Harold said just a bit too eagerly, leaning in to kiss her neck. "I know. And I'm being super supportive right now! Like-" Another kiss, this time to her cheek. "You can watch a movie like this any old time. But! Hear me out."

He motioned to the otherwise empty theater. "A romantic moment, shared intimately by two lovers." He kissed the corner of her mouth, careful to avoid those dark-green lips, plump and glossy. "It's very romantic. The kind of thing guys like me go weak in the knees for. And if you're going to be an *actress*, the kind of scene you're going to have to do one day. So really..."

He kissed her right on the mouth this time, eyes rolling back as his hands went once more to her shoulders. "I'm helping-" His voice had that telltale breathlessness to it now.

Her hands slid to his rear.

"I'm helping you *practice*."

She rolled her eyes in consideration, giving him one, two, three pecks on the lips as she feigned thought. "Mm." Her hum was more luxuriant than anything else, but if he was going to play coy, so was she. "You know, you've got a point."

He squeaked with something halfway between dizzy pleasure and piqued interest.

"Yeah, I could see it. A suave, charming leading lady -- such as myself -- finally alone with the boy she's been after for a few weeks." She reached up to cup his cheek, and Harold swooned into it happily. His eyes shut, and it took everything she had not to pock his skin with kissmarks and take him then and there. "He's a little bit shy. Maybe a bit bolder than your average male

lead. Teasing me. But in the end."

She pressed her hand to the back of his head and pulled him in for a deep, intimate kiss. Her tongue forced its way into his mouth just a little bit faster than he could open it to allow her to, and it wasn't long after that his jaw just went slack. His tongue managed to curl and tangle with hers for a little bit longer, but soon it was uselessly still in his mouth. His humming turned to whimpering in seconds, and Harold *squirmed* in Eliza's lap.

She was the one that managed to pull away, finally, and it took no small amount of effort on her part to do so.

"In the end," she panted, rasping with hunger. "He wants me to take control."

"Oh-" He gasped. He gulped. He buried his face in the crook of her neck. "Fuck, baby, tuh-take control."

She could feel him getting harder, and it gave her such a thrill that she could barely, *barely* stop herself from commanding him to go to his knees, and-

Her nostrils flared. Her eyes widened. Oh, this was *naughty*. Eliza looked over her shoulder. No one had come in yet. She smiled, turned back to Harold, and kissed him deeper still. She only stopped once he'd begun to grind against her, needy, servile, horny out of his *mind*.

But she needed him further gone than that. So that's why she pressed a single fingertip to his chest, pushed him ge-e-ently back. Pursed her lips.

And blew a puff of shimmering pollen into his face.

His eyelids fluttered, and his nostrils flared as he subconsciously inhaled a lungful of it. His eyes rolled back, and Harold, her *darling* Harold slumped forward. She guided his face to her cleavage, stroked the back of his head, and whispered to him.

"Harold. Baby." She purred. He mumbled against her breasts. "Your brain feels all sleepy, doesn't it?" He nodded. "That's OK." Eliza licked her lips. "That's *perfect*, actually." She grabbed a handful of his hair, pulled his head out from her cleavage, and kissed him again. That sent Harold shivering, but it guided him away from the mind-numbing fugue of her scent. She needed him pliable, not insensate. Their lips parted, and she continued.

"I need you," she purred, "to give me a kiss. Ah-ah-ah!" She had to hold him back, the poor boy swooning forward to oblige. "Not that kind. A *special* kind." She gave him a peck on the forehead. "The special kind that you *love* to give me. Because it feels *so good*, and you *love* helping me feel good." Another kiss to his cheek, this time as she smoothed his hair. "Don't you, baby?"

He nodded.

"*Good* boy. Now-"

Doors opened behind her. Eliza's eyes went wide, and she looked over her shoulder to see -- oh,

fuck -- three girls and two boys walk in-

She turned to Harold, and even if she was now pressed for time, she could still- She could still do this. She gulped, smiled, and tried to ignore the giddy heat on her cheeks.

"Get on your knees," she rasped, heart pounding in her chest. He obliged, sluggishly, and soon he was kneeling before her. He stared up at her with dazed eyes and parted lips. She reached down, cupped his cheek...

...before pulling away, grabbing the hem of her dress and pulling it up and over his head. Harold squeaked quietly, his body hidden under the skirt. Eliza's pulse quickened further as she leaned down. He'd already begun to nuzzle at her thighs. Lust-drunk or not, it wasn't like this was his first time.

But still. She wanted to *tell* him to start.

Nearly panting, Eliza found him in the voluminous fabric of her bustle, and hissed.

"*Lick.*"

The quintet finally found their seats after a bit of debate on where to sit. They were none the wiser to the shivering *alraune* three rows ahead of them, though they did wonder exactly where that high-pitched squeaking was coming from.

"That one," Jean finally declared, levelling a finger at a tow-headed young man dressed as a 50s jock. His cheeks dimpled as he laughed at an unheard joke, and Jean licked her lips. "Oh, my *Goddess*, that one. He's fucking *adorable*."

"Bloody adorable," Charlotte corrected.

"Fuck you," she replied, not giving Charlotte the satisfaction of a glare. Jean's gaze didn't budge from him once. She traced the rim of her glass idly -- almost nervously -- and licked her lips.

"How do I look?" OK, maybe it budged from him *once*, but that was only so she could fuss over her costume. She looked back over her shoulder at Charlotte.

Who returned the glance with an unimpressed stare. The ghost's arms were crossed, and she cocked her head before answering. "Your tits are practically hanging out, and-"

"It's part of the *costume*. Listen-" Jean smoothed the fabric of her dress out. "In vampire myth, Carmilla is commonly depicted in a dress of sheer, white silk-"

"That leaves her tits hanging out?"

"-that left men speechless and enchanted, so yes, that left her tits hanging out."

Charlotte rolled her eyes and pinched the bridge of her nose. "OK, correct me if I'm wrong, but I thought you did this every Harvest Night? I seem to recall you *bragging* about it earlier. Kind of rubbing it in my *face*, even."

Jean tugged her neckline down just a bit lower before looking back to her quarry. "Listen, just because I've knocked it out of the park a billion times before doesn't mean-" Her eyes went wide, venomously so. "Oh, you *whore!*"

"What?" Charlotte hovered a bit higher, head poking above the crowd. "I don't- Oh, *ha!*"

Before, it'd just been Mr. Long, Blond, and Handsome chatting with his friends by the snack table, but the trio became a quartet with the addition of a green-skinned goddess. Eyes went wide and jaws dropped shamelessly at her sudden presence, and from the smirk on her lips, it seemed that attention was appreciated.

"Eve strikes again!" Charlotte laughed, sinking down to pat Jean on the shoulder. "Don't despair; there's plenty of fish in the sea."

"Shut up! It's not *funny!* Oh, that thrice-damned *cunt!* I swear to Goddess," Jean snapped, whipping about to glare at Charlotte. "It's like she has a fucking *superpower* to tell *exactly* which guys I want to fuck."

"She probably *does*," Charlotte replied with a crooked smirk. "One of the perks of being a Frankenstein. Oh, sorry. A 'flesh-based composite golem.'" It was impossible to hide the amusement in her voice, but Charlotte wasn't really trying, either. "Better get over there before he's eating out of the palm of her oh-so-perfect hand."

"*Fuck you*, Jean hissed, stomping her way through the crowd and just barely managing a smile by the time she reached the now-spellbound boys and the mythic bitch that was all but *basking* in their gawking.

"Oh, hel*lo,* Jean!" Eve turned to greet the newcomer with her *stupid* melodious voice and her *stupid* dazzling smile. "How's your Harvest Night going?" She pursed her lips, watching Jean expectantly.

She opened her mouth to answer, and-

"I was just telling these three *handsome* young men," Eve continued, interrupting Jean right as she was *about* to speak, "about how Beta House's annual Harvest Night party came about! I know you're more focused on the *social* aspect of it, but this *darling* gentleman-" She reached out, trailed a fingertip under the blond's chin, and smiled. "What's your name again, dear?"

It took him nearly half a minute to answer, but finally he managed. "Derek," he croaked.

"*Derek* asked, and." She rolled her eyes and laughed. "Well, I figured the Head of House ought to be the one to *inform* him."

Jean clicked her tongue. Normally she wouldn't resort to this, but she didn't see any other way

out. Arms crossed under her bust, she rolled her eyes, heaved with a sigh, and held her breath for a moment. OK, no more avoiding it. Time to kiss ass.

"I mean, *obviously*," Jean agreed, shrugging and rolling her eyes once more, this time with a smile on her face. "One of us has been in three movies already, and it sure isn't *me*. Oh-" She touched a hand to her own chin, blinking. "You told them about that, right?"

"Whuh?" One of the otherwise spellbound boys finally stirred, blinking groggily and looking to Jean. "Abow whuh?"

"She's so modest!" Jean laughed, stepping up beside Eve and clapping a hand on her shoulder. "*Evelyn* here was in a few movies when she was younger. Ever hear of a movie called- Now, what was it?" She tapped her chin, eyes narrowed at the ceiling. "'Frankie's Big Break?'"

It took a moment, but one of them seemed to half-answer in the affirmative. The hockey mask made it a bit difficult to see through to his eyes, but he wasn't Derek, and that's what *really* mattered. Jean reached out, cupped his cheek, and stared deep into his eyes.

"Of course you have." She could see the pieces fall into place, dull adoration replaced by transfixed malleability. His body went rigid, and his eyes widened, if only to match hers. "You *loved* it. Watched it all the *time* when you were younger. And now the *star* is *right in front of you*."

Eve rolled her eyes and half-snorted with laughter. "Oh, this is too much. Jean, you *do* remember what happened the *last* time you tried to give someone memories they didn't have, don't you? As I seem to recall-"

"Evelyn-" He pulled his mask up and turned to Eve. "*Evelyn Shelley?*" His eyes glittered with newfound enthusiasm. He clasped his hands together and nearly squealed with delight. "Omigod! I didn't recognize you at *all!* You were- Frankie's Big Break was my *childhood!* I have it *memorized*, I bet! 'I dunno what's going on here...'"

Evelynn blinked at him. She glanced to the side, fought a smile, and failed. Suddenly, she pushed out one hip and wagged her finger at no one. "'But you guys better cut it out!'"

He giggled madly, half-clapping, half-stamping his feet in glee. "You did the line, you did the *line!*"

"Well, you know," Eve cooed. "*Anything* for a *fan*. Jean." She snapped her fingers before waving a hand dismissively away. "Why don't you give Dirk a tour or something while I entertain- I'm sorry, to *whom* am I speaking?"

"Julius," came the starstruck reply. "Can I have your autograph?"

"You can have a great deal more than *th-*"

And Jean got out of earshot *just* in time to keep from retching. Never before had she been so displeased that a plan had worked out, but if it meant Eve didn't get her claws in Jean's implicit claim, that's what really mattered.

The only problem, Jean realized with a sigh and a slump of her shoulders, was that now she had to snap him out of it.