



**banana (GM):** The old man and the old woman drink cordial infused with stardust, served in thin crystal vials, reclining in the room between the worlds.

At least she looks old. She has the same long beard as the man, and the same wizened sage’s shawl-robe. Sage she may be, but look closer: the woman is two full heads taller, and the wrinkles on her skin are the mark of her people, not age.

The old man levitates grumpily into a nest of pillows and tass. “He won’t listen. He’s gone mad, or been mad all along.”

**Woman:** “It’s obviously, definitely the second one.”

**Man:** “You lack perspective. Not even V could- keeping up that kind of facade for three hundred years?”

**Woman:** “You deal with pure evil every day out there.” She gestures to the otherward door, with the clamps. “It’s harder to recognise with a human face.”

**Man:** The old man’s cordial is too sweet to bear. He sets it down in a galaxy of floating dust, continues to complain. “He actually said.. ‘not until enough have died’. Eremitia save us from practical lunatics.”

**Woman:** The tall woman gathers herself for a moment, preparing to repeat the old argument. “And you didn’t think, \*ser\*, that maybe someone should- that, that this has to be stopped? That it might be okay to take \*sides\*?”

**Man:** The old man is floating flat on his back now, arms wide. Little serpents of prophecy encircle them, sparking into existence and then expiring in the unprimal atmosphere.

“He beat me with one eye tied behind his back.”

**Woman:** “Ffffudge.”

For emphasis: “All gods’ damn.”

**Man:** “It’s no surprise. I’ve been on borrowed life for most of yours. Dealing with the High tends to atrophy your practical skills after a couple hundred years; also, your organs.”

**Woman:** “So give.. me.. the.. books. I didn’t realise- but I’m strong like you were. Roland and I can beat this monster; you’ve done enough.”

**Man:** “Not quite. I have a few diplomatic cantrips left to cast; let’s not jump straight to the apocalypse!”

**Woman:** “What if you fail? Why won’t you \*listen\*? Why won’t you let me help?”

**Man:** As if idly musing: “Could it be that I haven’t given you the power because I fear what you’ll do with it..?”

**Woman:** “No.” Well, maybe, but: “It’s because you still think of me as the scared little girl trying to get all the enchanted brooms back in the cupboard before Master comes home.”

**Man:** Rest period over, the old man steps from the air to the ground, and in further measured steps to the silver-clamped door. He shakes his robe, verifying its thaumaturgical signature, and reaches for The Staff. “The first High Tome is on your dresser downstairs. Its keyphrase should be obvious. Please deal with the hedge-arcanists’ delegation arriving at second glass.”

**Woman:** She’s stunned, and for a moment afraid. This is what she needed- but everything is going to change. “Thank you.”

The bearded woman hurries to leave by the worldward door, ducking below its human-sized frame.

Routine is routine, and nobody but the old man can go out the other way. The unlight of the Abyss is already beginning to turn the the room’s glass and velvet into silhouettes as she descends the tower stair.