

FAMILIAR MAGIC

Run Time: 10 Minutes

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Cast of Characters

- CHARLENE EDWARDS: Female, early 30s, an HR Analyst who works from home. Compassionate but nearing her breaking point.
- JARED KATTS: Male, early 30s, unemployed, a recent amateur gardener. Down on his luck, looking for hope in all the wrong places.
- LIZ CLARKE: Female, late 60s, book club president. Caring, but set in her ways.

Place

Charlene and Jared's townhouse, deep in Suburbia.

Time

Summer.

Scene 1

At Rise:

(An economic kitchen in an affordable townhouse, featuring a sliding glass door that exits to the deck, a window to the deck, and an exit to the stairs, offstage. Mid-morning.

CHARLENE, early 30s, HR Analyst who works from home, is working on her laptop at the table in the kitchen.

JARED, early 30s, an amateur gardener, is dressed in a bathrobe and pajama pants, standing at the kitchen window, hunched over and ineffectively hiding behind the sheer window curtain. He is staring at something on the back deck.)

JARED

Charlene! Charlene!

CHARLENE

(Not looking up for her computer.)

What?

JARED

He's back!

CHARLENE

Let it go, Jared.

JARED

He's so brazen...like he's mocking me.

CHARLENE

Let it go, Jared.

JARED

I'm not going to take this anymore!

CHARLENE

Jared...

(JARED storms over to the sliding kitchen door and yanks it open.)

JARED

Hey! Hey you! Get out of here, you fluffy tailed rat!
(Clapping his hands.)

Leave my plants alone!

(Charlene turns around in her chair to look at JARED.)

JARED stares intensely out the open sliding glass door, then firmly closes it, still glaring outside.)

CHARLENE

How's the job hunt, honey? Have you put in any applications?

JARED

A few.

CHARLENE

This week?

JARED

(Gesturing to the deck.)

Charlene, do you see what I'm doing here?

CHARLENE

Stalking a scavenging squirrel who occasionally visits our deck?

JARED

Occasionally?! He doesn't *stop* terrorizing us! I've covered the deck in chicken wire—he chews through it. I've sunk pointed sticks into the soil, he navigates through them like a ninja. Our deck is his playground, Charlene!

CHARLENE

He's a small woodland creature, Jared, the whole world is his playground. No one's petunias are safe.

JARED

Strawberries. He's eating our strawberries, Charlene.

CHARLENE

Right, the strawberries, and the daffodils...and what are the new ones you planted yesterday? You've really cultivated quite a garden out there.

JARED

It's more like a graveyard...

CHARLENE

Jared, honey. I know it's been nearly two months since you were laid off, you're stressed and anxious, but you have got to stop taking it personally when nature does what it does.

JARED

There's something unnatural going on here.

(Pauses.)

Besides, you're the one who told me to get a hobby.

CHARLENE

And it's a great hobby... but it was supposed to help you *relax*.

JARED

Who can relax at a time like this? There's a marauding tree ferret pillaging our impatiens and laying siege to our strawberries!

CHARLENE

I have to get back to work.

JARED

I know.

(CHARLENE turns back to her computer.)

CHARLENE

(Not looking up.)

Can you put the laundry in?

JARED

Sure.

(JARED exits to the stairs.)

CHARLENE continues working for a few moments when she receives a video call on her computer.)

CHARLENE

Hey Liz!

LIZ (Off.)

Hi sis, how are you?

CHARLENE

Oh, you know, hanging in there. How are you doing?

LIZ (Off.)

Same old, I suppose. Listen, I wanted to touch base with you about the meeting tomorrow evening.

CHARLENE

(Looking towards the stairs.)

Sure, what's up?

LIZ (Off.)

I had asked Carla to lead but her husband is sick. Would you mind leading?

CHARLENE

Of course!

LIZ (Off.)

We have rules about this sort of thing, but--

CHARLENE (Off.)

(Interrupting.)

Well, they aren't technically rules...

LIZ (Off.)

Sure...but everyone generally knows--

CHARLENE (Off.)

(Interrupting.)

I'd be delighted to run services.

LIZ (Off.)

Thank you, Charlene. Oh —how is Jared's job search going?

CHARLENE

(Glancing offstage.)

Not great... He's applied everywhere, but no luck.

LIZ (Off.)

Poor thing, have you tried anything yet?

(JARED's footsteps are heard offstage.)

CHARLENE

Hey, I have to get back to work.

LIZ (Off.)

No problem, thanks sister!

(JARED enters from the stairs.)

JARED

Who was that?

CHARLENE

Oh, just Liz, calling about the meeting tomorrow.

JARED

You gals are so fanatical about book club.

CHARLENE

What can I say? Its spellbinding.

(JARED grabs his keys off the counter.)

JARED

Well, I think I found a solution to the squirrel issue. I'm going out to pick up a few things.

CHARLENE

The squirrel issue? What about the laundry issue?

JARED

I'll do it when I get back.

(JARED kisses CHARLENE on the cheek.)

JARED (cont'd)

I've got a long list of things to buy.

CHARLENE

Like what?

JARED

Oh, just some things I found online. Sort of a home remedy...

CHARLENE

A home remedy?

JARED

Sort of. Well, love ya! See you soon!

(JARED exits to the stairs.)

(CHARLENE watches him leave, suspiciously.)

Scene 2

At Rise:

(The kitchen of the townhouse. Night.

CHARLENE sits at the table, working.)

(JARED enters from the stairs carrying a brown grocery bag full of supplies.)

CHARLENE

Well, that was a long shopping trip!

JARED

Yea, it took me forever to find some of these things.

CHARLENE

You've been gone almost the whole day!

(JARED begins unloading the brown paper bag on the table. The supplies are mostly unlabeled, in homemade looking packaging.)

JARED

I had to go all the way down to Sherwood.

(CHARLENE stands up and walks around the table.)

CHARLENE

(Looking at the supplies on the table.)

Sherwood? That's practically all the way to Liz's house.

JARED

I know! I couldn't find my ingredients anywhere but this particular store. I can't believe you go all the way out there for book club every month.

CHARLENE

We like the peace and quiet. It's private, with a great view of the moon...

(Reading the bag.)

Bone meal?

(Concerned.)

Jared, are you dabbling in the occult?

JARED

Ha. Ha. Very funny.

(JARED takes the bone meal away from CHARLENE.)

JARED (cont'd)

It's not magic...

CHARLENE

I didn't say magic, I said the occult.

(Pauses.)

Jared, where did you find this remedy?

JARED

A forum online. Several people swore by this mixture.

(JARED pulls a large mixing bowl out of the cupboard and several measuring cups and teaspoons. HE begins dumping measurements of the ingredients into the mixing bowl.)

CHARLENE (Irritated.)

Don't use our cookware for this...

JARED

The instructions are very precise. I need to make sure I get it right. I'm finally going to rid us of that squirrel!

CHARLENE

Jared, I'm getting worried about you. Why are you so obsessed with the squirrel?

JARED

(Looking up from the mixing bowl.)

Because...because it's not fair.

CHARLENE

What's not fair, honey?

JARED

I did all the hard work. I toiled over those plants... watered them, re-potted them...he doesn't get to just come in and reap all the benefits. He can't cut me out!

CHARLENE

Cut you out? Jared, this isn't about the squirrel is it?

JARED

(Going back to his measuring and mixing.)

No, this is definitely about the squirrel.

CHARLENE

This is about you being laid off. It's OK to be upset, or angry--

JARED (Interjecting.)

I'm not upset!

(JARED goes over to the coffee pot and opens the top.)

JARED

Where are today's coffee grounds?!

CHARLENE

In the trash...why?

JARED

I need them.

(JARED retrieves the coffee grounds from the trashcan and dumps them into the mixing bowl.)

CHARLENE

That's disgusting!

JARED

It calls for them!

CHARLENE

You need to talk to me! Tell me what's going on with you.

JARED

Nothing, I'm just sick of that squirrel waltzing in and erasing all my hard work, and then laughing at me.

CHARLENE

I don't think it's laughing at you.

JARED

He is! He stands on the railing of the deck and tosses his little head back and cackles.

CHARLENE

I don't think squirrels cackle.

JARED

He cackles!

CHARLENE

Alright, fine. If you don't want to talk about it now that's fine. I'm going to take a shower and go to bed. Put all those measuring cups, spoons, and dishes in the dishwasher when you're done. I want them *sanitized*.

(CHARLENE exits to the stairs.

JARED looks up from his mixture, out the glass sliding door.)

JARED

I've got you now...

Scene 3

At Rise:

(Our faithful kitchen. Midnight.

JARED sits alone at the kitchen table, the mixing bowl, a cellphone, and a wooden spoon lay on the table before him.)

JARED

This has got to work.

(Looks at his phone.)

This has *got* to work. There are no more excuses. If I can't get rid of this squirrel, how can I ever hope to land another job...

(JARED picks up the bowl and begins mixing while walking around the kitchen.)

JARED

This doesn't look right. This doesn't look like the picture...

(JARED puts the bowl down.)

JARED (cont'd)

Who am I kidding? I don't know what it's supposed to look like. I don't know what I'm doing...

(Pauses.)

Another failure.

(JARED sulks for a few moments, then looks at the microwave.)

JARED

12:30! I have *got* to go to bed.

(JARED picks up the mixing bowl and exits to the deck.)

(While he is outside, CHARLENE enters from the stairs.)

CHARLENE

(Looking outside.)

My poor, Jared. My poor, mixed up, Jared. He must be desperate.

(CHARLENE exits to the stairs.)

JARED enters from the back deck.)

JARED

Well, for right or for wrong, the deed is done.

(JARED puts the mixing bowl in the sink and exits to the stairs.)

A moment later, CHARLENE enters from the stairs.)

CHARLENE

I can't believe it's come to this. My own husband is dabbling in homeopathic remedies...in our kitchen! The coven would excommunicate me if they found out.

(CHARLENE looks out the kitchen window to the deck.)

CHARLENE

Looks like I'll have to take matters into my own hands.

(Searching the deck with her eyes.)

Ah, there you are!

(CHARLENE points out the window and an eerie green light begins to pour through the kitchen window and sliding glass door from the deck.)

CHARLENE

There we go!

(The green light fades away.)

CHARLENE (cont'd)

A pity, I was just starting to like that one.

(CHARLENE picks up the mixing bowl and puts it in the dish washer then goes to the refrigerator and pours a glass of milk.)

Charlene? JARED (Off.)

Yes, dear? CHARLENE

Did you see the huge beam of green light on the back deck? JARED (Off.)

No, dear. You must have dreamt it. CHARLENE

Oh, ok. JARED (Off.)

(Pauses.)
What are you doing down there?

Just getting a warm glass of milk to help me sleep. CHARLENE

Ok, well come to bed when you're done. JARED (Off.)

I will, honey. CHARLENE

(CHARLENE places both hands on her glass of milk and a green LIGHT illuminates her. SHE takes a sip.)

Ah! Perfect. CHARLENE

(CHARLENE exits to the stairs.)

Scene 4

At Rise:

(The loving kitchen of our favorite townhouse. Mid-morning.)

CHARLENE works on her laptop at the table.

JARED stands at the kitchen window, looking at the back deck.)

JARED

Charlene! Charlene!

CHARLENE

(Not looking up for her computer.)

What?

JARED

(Continuing to look out the window.)

I haven't seen that squirrel all morning. I think he's gone!

(A raven caws, offstage.)

CHARLENE

(Not looking up.)

That's wonderful, honey.

JARED

Not once!

CHARLENE

Yes, honey.

JARED

I wonder if...

(Beat.)

Well, maybe...

CHARLENE

(Standing up and walking over to JARED.)

Jared, darling, finish a sentence, please!

JARED

It's just, I know you don't believe in homeopathic remedies, but I really think my mixture worked.

CHARLENE

Yea?

JARED

I know you think it's silly.

CHARLENE

No, no honey. If you think it worked that good enough for me.

(JARED looks out the window and smiles.)

JARED

I'm going to go check the job postings, maybe put a few applications in today.

CHARLENE

I think that's a wonderful idea!

(JARED exits to the stairs.

CHARLENE looks out the window again and smiles.)

CHARLENE

I swear I go through more familiars than any of the other girls.

(The raven caws again, offstage.

CHARLENE walks back to her desk.)

JARED (Off.)

Charlene?

CHARLENE

Yes, Jared?

JARED (Off.)

I forgot to put the laundry in.

CHARLENE

No problem dear, I got it.

JARED (Off.)

Thank you, darling!

(CHARLENE snaps her fingers and there is a glow of green light from the stairs offstage.)

JARED (Off.)

One more, thing. I promise I won't tell Liz and the coven about my homeopathic remedy, I know how uptight they can be.

(CHARLENE is shocked.)

CHARLENE

Oh, um. Thank you darling...

(The raven caws as if laughing, offstage.)

CHARLENE

(Towards the deck.)

Oh, shut up!

(End of Play.)