

Elizabeth - Aria

CHARACTERS

- ELIZABETH SAWYER - (female, forties/fifties/sixties) An outcast.
SCRATCH - (male, twenties/early thirties) The devil.
SIR ARTHUR BANKS - (male, fifties/sixties) A wealthy and powerful man.
CUDDY BANKS - (male, twenties/early thirties) Sir Arthur's son, painfully shy, a Morris dancer. He is secretly in love with Frank (and also in hate).
FRANK THORNEY - (male, twenties/early thirties) A confident and successful young man, charming and ruthless. His ambition knows no bounds.
WINNIFRED - (female, twenties/early thirties) Sir Arthur's servant, resigned and pragmatic, secretly married to Frank.

SETTING

The Village of Edmonton: a semi-rural small town lost in the country.

TIME

Then-ish. But equally of our moment. No faux-period accents, please.

AUTHOR'S NOTES

The spacing is a gesture toward indicating rhythm and how thoughts change, morph, contradict each other, escalate, or get supplanted by other thoughts as we talk. The line breaks often signal either an intensification of, or a shift away, from something. It does not indicate a beat or pause except where written.

- [] is unspoken, although the character is thinking it.
() is spoken out loud, but is a side-thought.
/ signifies an interruption, where the / occurs.

Each of the characters has what is referred to as an "aria." This is not about increased "lyricism" or a heightened style. In these arias, an urgency takes hold, a spilling out of deeply buried things - a churning engine of truth.

Casting

These characters can be played by actors of any ethnicity. Sir Arthur and his son Cuddy do not have to be played by actors of the same ethnicity.

1.

(ELIZABETH SAWYER. Alone. A light tight on her face. Her aria. A moment out of time.)

ELIZABETH. I'm not arguing for the end of the world but then again maybe I am.

This one, anyway.

I imagine you're not sure about this, you might think I'm jumping the gun.

Fair enough, full disclosure - wherever I go, people are like:

"Oh there's the witch of Edmonton."

They're like: "You made my cow sick, you made my thatch burn."

I'm like a disease that only I seem to have caught.

I'm like a plague of locusts that's just one locust.

And the whispering!

Say I'm in line at the well.

If I turn around, the whispering stops. Dead silence.

But somehow it always starts up again.

I can't say I don't have a grudge, because

I do, clearly, I do have a grudge.

But does that detract from my argument, or is it just added texture?

I understand - you're hesitating right now, you're like: *Is she kidding, is she serious, is she crazy,*

- and those are questions, they are valid questions,

but they are not the *right* questions.

Here is the single thing you should be asking yourself:

Do I have hope that things can get better?

And if you do, then ignore me. You're fine.
 But if you don't...
 then maybe this is where we start.

end

Cuddy /
 Scratch ³

(A bar. SCRATCH and CUDDY BANKS.)

(Back in the flow of time.)

CUDDY. The devil?

SCRATCH. Your soul, blood-pact, endless riches.

CUDDY. Endless?

SCRATCH. Power: reckless, abusable. Fame!

CUDDY. Fame?

SCRATCH. Have to pick, can't have it all, but sure, fame.

CUDDY. Huh.

(Pause.)

I don't know why you're coming to me. I've never even gotten in trouble with the law.

SCRATCH. But you want to.

CUDDY. But I haven't.

SCRATCH. (*Shrugs, easy.*) I'm just as interested in what you *want* as what you *do*.

CUDDY. You been to my father's place?

SCRATCH. Nah.

CUDDY. Sir Arthur, he owns the castle.

SCRATCH. Nope.

CUDDY. He's super important, everybody knows him.

SCRATCH. No.

CUDDY. My dad is a real son-of-a-bitch, you haven't been to his place?

SCRATCH. He lacks imagination.