

(ELIZABETH's country cottage. Shabby, poor.)

(SCRATCH has just arrived.)

ELIZABETH. The devil?

SCRATCH. Blah blah blah your soul etc.

ELIZABETH. My soul?

SCRATCH. Ripe for the picking.

ELIZABETH. Why mine?

SCRATCH. Everybody says you're a witch.

You're not, of course. But! would you like to be?

ELIZABETH. I was warned about you.

SCRATCH. Everybody is warned about me, it doesn't seem to make much of a difference.

Mind if I sit down?

ELIZABETH. As a matter of fact, Yes.

SCRATCH. (*Coaxing.*) Offer me a drink. Common courtesy!  
Can't hurt, can it?

ELIZABETH. Nobody sits in my cabin but me.

(*A moment. SCRATCH elaborately leans but doesn't sit.*)

SCRATCH. How would you like me to fuck up some people for you.

How would you like...revenge.

ELIZABETH. You want me to sell you my soul.

Men make it sound like they're doing you a favor when what they really want is a favor done for them.

SCRATCH. Astute! That's very astute, and I hear you. But I would say - think of it as more an exchange between friends.

Think of it kind of like a pot-luck.

ELIZABETH. (*Despite herself.*) ...A "pot-luck"?

SCRATCH. A pot-luck is what happens in the future, when people don't worry about food.

And instead of everybody just eating their own food as fast as they can find it, people get together, usually outside, usually somewhere uncomfortable and on a patio and with too many bugs, and everybody pretends not to notice how many bugs there are, they talk about the sunset, and they eat each other's food. Slowly. Over a great deal of time. And everybody wants to go home long before they actually do.

ELIZABETH. Oh.

SCRATCH. Something to look forward to!

You could practice, with me.

I bring power and reckless lack of consequence. You bring your soul.

(*A beat.*)

ELIZABETH. If I "pot-luck" my soul...

SCRATCH. Yes?

ELIZABETH. - And that's a big *if* -

SCRATCH. - Pure hypotheticals, I understand -

ELIZABETH. What do I get?

SCRATCH. Oh! Well that's an easy one. That's where it gets easy.

ELIZABETH. Okay...

SCRATCH. You tell me. The villagers who are cruel to you?  
Make a list. Their cows get pox. The girls who giggle

behind their hands? Warts on the hands. I mean, it all sort of depends on you, at that point.

ELIZABETH. And what would you do with it? My soul?

SCRATCH. What have *you* done with it so far?

ELIZABETH. Nothing much, I guess.

SCRATCH. Then you won't miss it.

ELIZABETH. Nobody wakes up in the middle of the night? Nobody gets an earache or a toothache or a weird uncanny ache-ache that won't seem to go away?

SCRATCH. Nobody's reported those kinds of symptoms.

ELIZABETH. Oh.

SCRATCH. So, what do you think?

ELIZABETH. Can I change my mind? If I say Yes, can I change it back?

SCRATCH. Oh! no. No no. No take-backs.

ELIZABETH. And what if I say No?

SCRATCH. You know, people ask me this sometimes. And my sort of standard – the answer I like to give – I mean, I can get dramatic, I can be like: *I tear you apart, I rip you limb from – you know? – I burn your entire – like, I can do that, but honestly, the answer I like to give is: I leave. I just leave. And your entire life continues on, exactly as it was, zero change, as if I were never here. And one day, maybe next week or maybe ten years from now...or maybe on your death-bed... One day you ask yourself why is it that you have been so relentlessly miserable, why is it that you never ever, not even once, had the chance to make yourself less unhappy. And then at that moment, whenever it comes, you think of this. You think of this conversation. And you think: Oh. I did have the chance. I did have it. I just said No.*

*(A long beat. And then:)*

ELIZABETH. No thank you.

*end*

---