

A Witch's Aid in Romance

A girl receives a love potion from a witch to prevent  
her friend from leaving.

Dalong Hu

INT. INA'S DOMAIN - NIGHT

ALICIA's eyes flash open and she sits up. She is wearing a black dress and black gloves and looks around nervously. Before her is a reception desk, badly lit in the dark and otherwise empty space. The desk itself is cluttered and messy with paper, dolls, and strange pots filled with occult objects.

Soon, a head slowly rises and an arm haphazardly pushes the rubbish in the middle of the desk aside. INA is wearing yellow pyjamas with a triangular nightcap and yawning.

INA

Why does everyone always think that dark rituals should be held in the dead of night? Witches need sleep too~

ALICIA

Umm, I had an appointment. Could I please see the mighty witch Irre-Tiube-Ina?

Ina disappears under the reception desk again, before reappearing with a witch's robes. But she still has the yellow triangular nightcap.

INA (VEHEMENTLY)

Here in the flesh! Or rather, in the illusion. Appearing in your dreams with a twinkle, the beautiful witch of prophecy, love, and unqualified summoners, call me Ina! (winks) Now tell me what...(looks at paper on desk) little miss Alicia so desires, having paid the price for this visit.

Ina swooshes her arms wide magnanimously. Alicia is taken aback by the energetic introduction, and there is an awkward silence with Ina's arms still in position.

ALICIA (RESERVEDLY)

A love potion.

Ina stars at Alicia for a while before taking out a deck of cards. She waves them in front of Alicia's face and gestures with her chin. Alicia hesitantly takes a card, and shows it to Ina.

INA (LOOKING AMUSEDLY AT CARD)

Hmmmm, yes. I'll take this request.

Ina vanishes under her reception desk, and emerges again with an ancient looking gourd which has a sloppy heart drawn on and a tacky pink bunny-ear hairband.

INA

This (gesturing at gourd) has the  
potion inside. The drinker will fall  
in deep love with the first person  
with rabbit ears they see.

Ina thrusts the items to Alicia, stopping her from saying her doubts.

INA

Now, byebye and good luck! I'll be  
watching.

INT. ALICIA'S ROOM - DAY

Alicia opens her eyes. A pair of pink bunny ears are on her head, and beside her is the weathered heart-marked gourd. Books and papers of writing haphazardly litter the room, and only a few paintings are neatly organized and well cared for. Painted red on the ground around her is the remnant of magical circle she used to summon Ina.

She sits up, and slowly inhales while clenching her fist to her chest. She looks at the paintings in her room that are signed with 'Rose'.

ALICIA

She can't just leave so suddenly. No,  
I'll definitely make her stay... I  
will!

EXT. RIVER BANK HILL - DAY

Alicia's fist hits the ground angrily. She is sitting, hugging her legs, while sulkily looking at the river below. The gourd is beside her.

INA(O.S.)

Ahem, ahem mic test.

ALICIA(LOOKING AROUND)

What, Ina?!

INA(O.S.)

Hehee, don't underestimate a witch!  
Those bunny ears aren't only cute,  
they also act as a visual link for me,

and the gourd has resonance magic I'm using as my voice. I've seen everything! Now, as friendly customer support followup, why haven't you got your pretty friend drugged up?

ALICIA

Of course I haven't when you describe it that way!

INA(O.S.)

Well, isn't that what you asked for?

ALICIA

Things made a lot more sense on the spur of emotion.

Alicia buries her face in her knees. The bunny ears are drooping.

ALICIA

Rose is going to be leaving the village this week, with a strange man.

INA(O.S.)

Well, what a cute little sad sobstory. But continue if it makes you feel better. Gush it out, and then might as well just give up on this Rose girl.

ALICIA(SHAKING HER HEAD)

No! She's my precious best friend. The one who gave me the courage to share what I wrote. And she promised! That she would continue to paint the stories I write. I can't bear the thought of her gone.

INA(O.S.)

I see. As expected, your love is strong! Then drug her!

ALICIA

Huh?! What's with that response?

ROSE, wearing traveling clothes and an artist's cap, walks up behind Alicia curiously and lightly bends down.

ROSE

Were you talking to someone? You look down.

ALICIA(FLUSTERED)  
Huh?! Uhh, yes, erm no!

Rose laughs, and then sits down beside Alicia. She gently puts an arm around Alicia, but Alicia avoids her gaze.

ROSE (GIGGLING)  
Where did you get those ears from?  
They're cute.

Alicia gets a little embarrassed and turns her head away.

ROSE(WITH SNEAKY GRIN)  
Hey, remember when we were children  
and used to roll down this hill?

She abruptly lies down and extends her body straight, and rolls down the grassy hill.

INA(O.S.)  
Haha, this girl sure knows how to have  
fun. Is she trying to cheer you up?

ROSE  
Come on, Alicia!

Now smiling, Alicia does the same. When she reaches the bottom, she laughs along with Rose. She doesn't realize she left the gourd behind.

EXT. RIVERSIDE BENCH - DAY

Alicia and Rose sit side by side, watching the river, sharing a moment of peace. Rose takes her eyes off the river to look at Alicia, and briefly magical letters, written by Ina, flash on the water that only Alicia sees, "Go! Go! Go! A.Li.Ci.A!"

Alicia scowls.

ROSE  
I'm guessing you heard that I'm  
leaving.

ALICIA  
Ah, no, I wasn't frowning at you or  
anything.

ROSE  
It's alright, I understand.

Silence again. Uncomfortable with the silence, Alicia looks

up at the sky. Letters like clouds, magically appear, "You forgot the gourd. How are you gonna hook her now?"

Alicia reflexively looks back, and indeed sees the gourd still at her previous sitting place.

ROSE

It came to me pretty suddenly as well.  
My cousin from the city came to inform  
me that the master was taking  
students.

ALICIA

Wait, cousin? Student?

ROSE

I guess you didn't hear the details  
then? I'm going to study under a  
famous painter. And so...

Rose stands up, and stand in front of Alicia with her back facing the river.

ROSE

Wait for me, okay? You were my  
inspiration that let me reach this  
far.

Rose opens her arms wide.

ROSE(SMILING)

I'll come back. And by then, I'll be  
able to paint all the wonderful  
stories you've made with dazzling  
beauty!

Alicia slowly stands up, and then hugs Rose. Slowly, tears fall from her eyes.

ALICIA(CRYING)

I'll wait. So please come back. And...  
I love you.

ROSE

I love you too, also as more than a  
friend. I was wondering when you would  
finally work up the courage.

Alicia momentarily breaks from the hug.

ALICIA  
Huh? But the potion...

ROSE  
Potion?

ALICIA  
N-nothing! I'm so happy!

She embraces Rose again, this time with a big smile.

ZOOM OUT TO:

INT. INA'S DOMAIN - DAY

The previous scene is revealed to be shown in a mirror. Ina smiles gladly at the duo.

INA(O.S.)  
Yeaaahh! I knew this would happen and  
was waiting for this! Her fortune card  
in love was extremely high! It looks  
saving potion ingredients by giving  
Alicia plain ol'water in that gourd  
paid off after all.