
Pearl

“Pearls before Swine”

Beauty and Power. Those wonderful, tempting, wretched things. Beauty and Power have defined your entire life. They are liberation and confinement, the bait and trap, a gilded cage you couldn't resist.

You are the paragon of beauty, and have been for almost 60 years. As a young mermaid, you were the belle of your town. From the time you began to flower into womanhood, until your 18th birthday, you were elevated as the most beautiful mermaid anyone had ever seen. Every year at the midsummer festival, you were crowned as Queen of the festival. You loved the attention and the flattery, and your ego grew uncontrollably.

On your 18th birthday, the day of the midsummer festival, everything started to go wrong. You decided to get a reading from a tarot reader tucked away in a corner of the fair. You'd seen him in previous years, but had never worked up the courage to approach him. Your curiosity finally mastered your fear though, and you darted into the tent. Scents in the water, contained by the fabric of the tent and a fair bit of magic, assailed you. You felt light headed, and almost backed out, but you couldn't figure out where the door was. Actually, you couldn't remember why you were there at all until the old man asked you if you wanted a reading.

You nodded and sunk shakily into a chair. Then the old merman cast your cards – The High Priestess, The Hanged Man, and Judgment – and spoke the words you feared the most.

You were devastated. The future predicted for you was terrible. Fade into anonymity? You think not! When the old man slyly mentioned a way to avoid this fate, you jumped at the chance. Perhaps the fumes in the tent were really getting to you, because you would later regret this decision bitterly. The old merman offered you A large, wooden amulet, telling you that the amulet was a communication device – with it you could contact powerful spirits that could grant any wish. You immediately grabbed the amulet, donned it, and demanded eternal youth and beauty - then cursed your competition for the pageant, just for good measure. Then you swam away from the quarent's tent, amulet around your neck, flushed with victory.

It wasn't until a few weeks later that the dreams started. Terrible *things* invaded your dreams. The spirits whispered in your ear, screamed in your face, and tormented your every sleeping moment. You slept for days, trapped in the dark, horrid twilight. The spirits demanded payment for the favors they had granted you. After impressing upon you the terrible fate awaiting you, should you fail to repay your debt, the spirits released you back to the living world. Your task – to acquire as many souls as possible for the spirits – would be aided by your ability to call upon the spirits' power. But you had to be careful. You were working to get *out* of their debt. so you always had to get a good deal.

You quickly abandoned your home town, traveling Atlantica. It was your only real chance to trick people into giving up their souls for as little as possible. You learned to read people quickly, and to be a high stakes gambler. It usually paid off handsomely. Despite this, it was slow going. The anti-age wish you had made had an upkeep cost, and there was no un-doing it. For 50 years, you struggled to repay your debt to the spirits. In the process, you gained a reputation as a powerful sorceress, and rose through the ranks of the Magician's Guild. Unfortunately you aren't a *real* magician. All of your power comes from the spirits, and any time you had to prove your magical ability, you fell deeper into debt. It is expensive to be thought of as a powerful magician. And yet, the thrill of being feared, worshiped, looked up to and consulted was addictive. You could never find the right time to step down from your position in the Guild.

To your great surprise and pleasure, about 17 years ago the seemingly perfect solution swam into your cave. Princess Ariel came to you, asking to be turned into a human. Contact with the human world was forbidden, even at that time, so Ariel was understandably nervous. You took your time consulting with the spirits and finally came to a decision. For such a dangerous and powerful spell, you would accept only the eternal soul of someone of royal blood. The spirits promised you that the soul of a royal child, willingly given, would be enough to erase your debts completely. Despite the risks to yourself – the spell would cost

you dearly – you took it. The chance to be free forever was too tempting to pass up. You offered Ariel this deal: If she found true love within a month (a laughably short window) her soul would be safe. If Ariel failed to find true love, her soul would be forfeit to you. Just for security, you slipped in one other clause: should Ariel manage to find true love, the soul of her second-born child would be forfeit instead. Ariel, out of her mind with desire to experience the human world, signed the contract with barely any hesitation. You were confident you would be free and clean of the spirits in a month.

However, this time your luck betrayed you. Your high stakes gamble was quickly put in jeopardy as Eric fell in love with Ariel, and within a few short weeks, began planning their wedding. You had to consult the spirits to be sure, but it was in fact true love. Ariel had upheld her end of the bargain and the prospect of waiting for her to have two children, which might take years, or even never happen, infuriated you. This was not supposed to be a gamble. A month to find true love? It was nearly impossible. This was supposed to be easy. Why could things never be easy?

You had a bad feeling about this now, and went to the surface to remind Ariel about the fine print. You disguised yourself as a servant and slipped into the castle. You worked your way into Eric's private chambers, and revealed to Ariel and Eric that in order to become human, Ariel had signed a magical, binding contract that bound their first born daughter's soul to you. Eric reacted as one might expect an unhappy monarch to react. He summoned his guards to drag you off to the dungeons. Well, you weren't having any of that. You attacked the first guards to arrive on the scene. The delay was unfortunate however, and you ended up having to fight dozens of guards to escape. In the process, you expended a tremendous amount of magical power. You could feel the spirits lurking – lending you power and laughing as they did. As you fought to escape the castle, your mind scrambled for an escape from this crushing, new debt. A solution appeared in the princeling's, sister. You could tell at a glance that she was a font of magical power, even on land, where magic is rare. You lunged across the battle, which had extended out onto the balcony, and knocked the girl over the edge, into the water below. You dove after her, vanishing from sight under the waves, and dragging your quarry with you.

You cast a spell to keep the girl, Morgan, alive underwater, and then reached for the power to heal your wounds. To your consternation, when you reached into the aether, there was nothing there. The spirits had cut you off. You begged and pleaded with them, but they claimed that they would not extend you any more credit on the magic until you started to make payments on your existing debt. The spirits threw you off the astral plane, back into your gravely wounded body. Through the haze of pain, you realized you had to reach Sebastian. Sebastian was a powerful advisor in Triton's court, but he wouldn't ask too many questions. He had his own secrets to protect.

You don't entirely remember how you managed to stave the sharks off long enough to reach the Magician's Guild Hall, but you did. Sebastian was indeed of great help. He brewed potions to close your wounds, although he could do little to reverse the blood loss. Under your direction, which you gave in between bouts of fainting, Sebastian also brewed a potion that would allow you to control the human princess you had just stolen. While it hurt your pride tremendously to reveal how to brew such a powerful potion, you simply had to do so. While busy over the cauldron, Sebastian offered you some sage, if unsolicited advice: "Play the long game." He didn't know exactly what you were up to, but the wounds you sustained certainly didn't come from any merperson weapon. As a last service before Sebastian had to return to the castle– he couldn't afford to be missed– Sebastian sent a sealed missive to Hermes.

This whole wretched plan was cursed. You were calling in so many favors just to stay alive. Owing your life to Sebastian was bad enough, but Hermes came from a very powerful, very old mafia family. Fortunately, you had in the past helped them out by providing magical solutions to a few trickier problems - they owed you one. With his help, you disappeared from Atlantica, with a few victims who wouldn't be missed much. You extracted their souls to begin paying back the spirits, and regained your access to magic. Then you began to slowly siphon Morgan's soul to pay off the interest on your remaining debt.

You kept a tight lid on your magic for the next 15 years, relying on Hermes and his mafia connections to raise Morgan up through the ranks of the Merchant's Guild. You had Morgan take on the name Pandora, just in case word should somehow get back to Ariel and Eric. Aside from giving you the legitimacy you needed to re-enter polite Atlantean society under the guise

of “Pearl”, Morgan’s elegant, attractive, and powerfully magical sister. A useful benefit of this was your eventual discovery that Pandora possessed the ability to read the tarot. Her talent bloomed rapidly under the sea, and she was soon a full fledged reader. This is the main reason you haven’t simply extracted her soul for the spirits after regaining your place in society – she is simply too useful, despite the crushing debt you’ve accrued.

Speaking of magic, the Magician’s Guild, is another place you have been consolidating power. Little by little, you have started to collect followers – magicians who think that the most powerful magician (you) should be in charge of the Guild. You and Sebastian are almost perfectly matched in the number of followers, so at this point, every magician counts. Control of the Magicians Guild would give you a lot of options. . . You salivate at the thought of a whole host of magicians to do magic for you, adore you, and help you capture souls for the spirits.

While you don’t appreciate people lecturing you, about anything, Sebastian did make a valid point while he was treating your wounds. It was time to enter the long game. These “get rich quick” or to be more accurate “get out of debt quick” plans seem to be nothing but trouble. Your latest plan involves King Triton. The spells you cast on Pandora worked out so well, it was high time you put them to grander use. If you could slip Triton a love potion, Triton would become enamored of you, and you would be able to extract his soul willingly. Triton’s willing soul would be a huge payment for the spirits, and would go a long way toward clearing your debts. You therefore began to leverage your connections through Pandora’s role in the Merchant’s Guild and managed to secure tickets to tonight’s gala for yourself.

To your surprise, once you secured the tickets you realized that Queen Ariel would be in attendance tonight. What. . . luck. Rather than wait forever for the chance at a Ariel’s daughter, you could have the mother’s soul now. You began to build a new amulet, this one from a shell. It needs only a few finishing touches tonight and tricking her into accepting it would be an ideal solution. If that doesn’t work, you could instead get her to help you with a Soul Sacrifice Ritual instead.

When you arrived at the palace, there was an old man sitting at the base of the stairs, spinning a tale about the wishing stone. At first you were just going to brush past him, but you tasted magic in the water around him. The old man was more than he appeared to be. In fact, he was not at all the crazy old coot he appeared. He was a projection from the Wishing Stone itself. It was here, in the palace! If you could get your hands on the stone, you could wish for magical powers of your own, and forever free yourself from the spirits – you would still owe them though. Alternately, you could wish away your debts to the spirits, and forfeit your access to magical power in exchange for a clean slate. A tempting proposition indeed. . .

Goals

- Ensoresell King Triton via a love potion. If that doesn’t work, find a different way to expand your influence as much as possible
- Finish the second amulet and then trick Ariel into using it to wish to spare her son.
- If you can’t manage that, at least make Ariel assist you in a Soul Sacrifice ritual to repay her debt.
- Siphon motes of soul from as many people as possible to make payments on your debt. This is a convenient way to make people pay for potions.
- Keep an eye on Morgan and make use of her abilities.
- Find the Wishing Stonr and use it either to wish for magic of your own or wish away your debt (either use consumes the stone - destroy the item card).
- Avoid anyone, especially Triton, discovering that you are actually Ursula.

Notes

- You must be wearing your “A large, wooden amulet (440)” in order to do magic. If you lose the amulet, you may not use any of your abilities, or brew any potions until you regain it.
- You are *Level 7*, one of the most powerful magicians under the sea.

Contacts

- King Triton (Chris Weil): The current King of Atlantica target of your love potion. Once he is in love with you, he will

willingly give up him soul.

- Sebastian (Sean Shirato Almon): A powerful magician in Triton's court, and your chief rival for control of the Magicians Guild. A powerful potential ally, but a more likely obstacle in your bid for power.
- Pandora: Secretly Princess Morgan, your slave masquerading as your sister, and the representative from the Merchant's Guild at the conference.
- Hermes Aquilino (Brian Richburg): A useful contact in the mafia. You've done business in the past and he has earned your respect.

Memory/Event Packets

- Open if you see a purple headband
- Open at 3:00
- M Envelope

Bluesheets

- History and Structure of Atlantican Society
- The Magician's Guild

Greensheets

- Picking Locks
- Love Potion
- Spells and Potions
- Soul Sacrifice
- Ariel's Amulet

Abilities

- Sense Magic
- Lesser Dispel
- Greater Dispel
- Monster Transformation
- Siphon Soul

Items

- Black Pearl (288)
- A large, wooden amulet (440)
- An amulet carved from shell (640)

Stats

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|------------------|---|--------------|---------|
| - Combat Rating: | 2 | - α : | 2 |
| - γ : | 0 | - Tarot: | Justice |
| - β : | 0 | | |