

The Charm

Copy edit

I pressed the daisies he gave me at the end of the last spring semester in my art history book. That took care of the first ingredient – a gift from the target of the eternal love charm.

The second ingredient was “a single tear from thine own eye”. That evening I let a tear fall onto the dried daisies while I was dicing onions for a stew.

The third ingredient was a “lock of thy true love’s hair”. His long hair reached halfway down his back, and I might have been able to find a strand or two around my dorm if I looked hard enough, but it would not be enough to make a lock. I thought of keeping a hairbrush here for him and collecting it that way, but I remembered how thoroughly he cleaned his hairbrushes, and knew I would never be able to get more than a strand or two like that.

I could have asked him for a lock of hair, but then he would insist on knowing why I wanted it, and I would be too embarrassed to tell him it was for a magic spell. I was pretty sure I didn’t really believe in magic, and he certainly did not. But it was fun to try, just to see what would happen, even if I was fairly certain that what would happen was nothing.

My roommate had a shelf of books about potions and magic rituals and charms, and a hand-bound spellbook filled with recipes written in her well-practiced calligraphy. That night we sat down to a bowl of the stew I had made in front of the TV. Later, as she made tea with mint she grew on the windowsill, she swore again by the recipe for the eternal love charm, saying that if I kept it on me, it would repel many evil forces that sometimes drive lovers apart. Better safe than sorry, she told me. I couldn’t argue very well against that.

I saw him the next day for lunch. We brought sandwiches to the park and sat under a tree thick with leaves, and I felt very comfortable now that I was out of the worst of the heat. I put my head

on his shoulder, and ran my fingers through his hair while he told me about his part in a group project for a physics class. I listened to him tell me how he got along with everybody in his group and what interesting things he'd learned about the subject. A few of his hairs came loose in my hands, and I wound them around my fingers. I did this a few more times while I told him about the pottery I was working on for my class. I wondered, would this be enough to make a lock, once tied up with some red string, as the spellbook demanded?

Then I started to think—wouldn't it be a shame if the charm failed on a technicality? I don't properly believe in magic, but if I was going to give it a try, I might as well try for real, I thought. I put my head on his shoulder and asked, "Can I get a lock of your hair for a magic ritual? My roommate says it will bind our souls forever, and we'll spend our whole lives together if I do it right."

"Oh? But I thought you didn't think her spells really did anything."

"I still doubt they do anything really 'magical', but it wouldn't hurt to try, right?"

He agreed that it would at least be fun to try, and we wondered together just how many hairs were necessary to make a proper lock, so we would need to trim as little of his hair as possible. I showed him the strands I had already gathered secretly, and he agreed with me that these few alone probably would not pass muster.

The Charm

Copy edit (with changes)

~~I~~ pressed the daisies he gave me at the end of the last spring semester in my art history book. That took care of the first ingredient — a gift from the target of the eternal love charm.

The second ingredient was “a single tear from thine own eye”. That evening I let a tear fall onto the dried daisies while I was dicing onions for a stew.

The third ingredient was a “lock of thy true love’s hair”. His ~~hair was~~ long ~~enough to reach~~ ~~hair reached~~ halfway down his back, and I might have been able to find a strand or two around my dorm if I looked hard enough, but ~~it would~~ not ~~be~~ enough to make a lock. I thought of keeping a hairbrush here for him and collecting it that way, but I remembered how thoroughly he cleaned his hairbrushes ~~each time he used them~~, and knew ~~I would~~ never be able to get more than a strand or two like that.

I ~~would~~ ~~could~~ have asked him for a lock of hair, but then ~~he’d want to know~~ ~~he would insist on knowing~~ why I wanted it, and I would ~~have been~~ ~~be~~ too embarrassed to tell him it was for a ~~magic spell~~. I was pretty sure I didn’t ~~really~~ believe ~~in~~ magic ~~actually worked~~, and he certainly did not ~~think it did~~. But it was fun to try ~~it~~, just to see what would happen, even if I was fairly certain that ~~nothing was~~ what would happen ~~was~~ ~~nothing~~.

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Then I started to think, —wouldn't it be a shame if the charm ~~only~~ failed ~~because I didn't get on~~ a ~~proper amount of my true love's hair~~ technicality? I don't properly believe in magic, but if ~~I'm~~ I was going to give it a try, I might as well try for real, I thought. I put my head on his shoulder and asked, "~~can~~ Can I get a lock of your hair for a magic ritual? My roommate says it will bind our souls forever, and we'll spend our whole lives together if I do it right."

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He agreed that it would at least be fun to try, and we wondered together just how many hairs ~~you need~~ were necessary to make a proper lock, so ~~he could get away with trimming~~ we would need to trim as little ~~of his hair~~ as possible. I showed him the strands ~~I'd~~ I had already gathered secretly, and he agreed with me that these few alone probably ~~wouldn't be enough to make a proper lock~~ would not pass muster.