

The Charm

Line 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 that would not suffice to make a proper 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 I knew I would never be able to get more than a strand or two that way.

I could have just 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. The recipe for the eternal love charm I was making came from one of those books. That night we sat down in front of the TV to a bowl of the stew I made. She’d made tea with mint she grew on the windowsill. She swore by the 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 he listened to me tell him about the pottery I was working on for my own class. I wondered—if I tied it up with some red string, as the spellbook called for, would that be enough for a lock?

Then I started to think—wouldn't it be a shame if the charm failed only because of a stupid 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 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 no harm in trying, right?”

He did agree that it would at least be fun to try, and we spent some time wondering together just how many hairs were needed for it to count as a “lock”, so we would not trim any more of his hair than was necessary. I showed him the strands I had already gathered secretly, and we both agreed that these few alone probably did not cut it.

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Line edit (with changes)

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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 ~~that would~~ not ~~enough~~suffice to make a ~~proper~~ 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 I knew ~~He~~I would never be able to get more than a strand or two~~like~~ that way.

I ~~would~~could have just 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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drive lovers apart. Better safe than sorry, she told me. I couldn't argue very well against that.

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Then I started to think, ~~—wouldn't it be a shame if the charm~~ only failed ~~only~~ because ~~I didn't get a proper amount of my true love's hair~~ a stupid 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, ~~;~~:

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

“I still doubt they do anything really 'magical', but ~~better safe than sorry~~ no harm in trying, right?”

He ~~agreed~~ did agree that it would at least be fun to try, and we ~~wondered~~ spent some time wondering together just how many hairs ~~you need~~ were needed for it to ~~make~~ count as a ~~proper~~ "lock," so ~~he could get away with trimming as little as possible~~ we would not trim any more of his hair than was necessary. I showed him the strands ~~I'd~~ I had already gathered secretly, and ~~he~~ we both agreed ~~with me~~ that these few alone probably ~~wouldn't be enough to make a proper lock~~ did not cut it.