

(1924: A yet again smaller hotel room. Mamie enters with tea and cookies. Doorbell rings, Jerry answers. Nella enters with a flourish.)

NELLA

Me voici!

MAMIE

Thank you so much for coming! We didn't know what else to do.

NELLA

(Looks around) How the mighty have fallen! But never fear, I'm here now and all will be well. "The turbulence of the present dances in oblivion." (Beat) Where's Marie?

MAMIE

At the moment, she's down in the hotel personnel office, asking if she can clean rooms in exchange for rent.

NELLA

No, no, no, no! (Beat) I knew it was slim pickings, but—

MAMIE

I'm afraid it's no pickings at all. She spent too much time at the farm, I think. It's gone now, of course. Then with all the months selling war bonds and entertaining the troops—

JERRY

They kinda forgot about her.

MAMIE

(Pours tea as she talks) But the straw that broke the camel's back was her union organizing. They didn't like that one little bit.

NELLA

Yes. I read about the blackballing. Shameful! Such a cutthroat business. It's why I quit performing myself and made astrology my career. Ever so much more predictable! (Beat) She should never have stayed away from the stage for so long. If she had just listened to me... But that woman has a stubborn streak as long as the Eerie Canal! She only listens to the advice that suits her, and—

MAMIE

Well, she's at an all time low now, so I think there's a good chance she'll listen this time.

NELLA

I certainly hope so. She simply cannot afford to waste a Pluto in transit, so the move is imperative! "In the nexus of fulfillment, vibration rules."

MAMIE

Yes, well... (Beat) It *is* imperative because Frances can get parts for her. Maybe not big ones, at first, but—

NELLA

Frances is a Pisces with Virgo rising so I'm not surprised she's become such a success. Have you seen any of her movies?

MAMIE

We saw "The Song of Love" and enjoyed it very much. Jerry was swooning over Norma Talmadge, weren't you, Jerry?

JERRY

C'mon, Mamie. I only swoon over you.

(There's a knock on the door.)

NELLA

My apprentices, right on time. I thought they'd help us make the case.

(Jerry goes to door, bows as three women and three men enter. All are dressed in flowing robes.)

NELLA

Mamie and Jerry, meet Etheria, Mysteria, Esoterica, Daksanila, Daksapati and Bob. I am attempting to share my vast store of knowledge with them, in anticipation of the day when I am no longer present in this dimension