
The LINER Notes
VOLUME 1
Hot GHOUL SUMMER
PARENTAL
ADVISORY
EXPLICIT CONTENT

Album Credits

HOT GHOUL SUMMER
Book, Lyrics, & Music by Danny Lott

PERFORMERS AND MUSICIANS
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Lead vocals (Split-Ends) & Backing Vocals (Hot Ghoul Summer & Touching Stars): Nickole Hannah
Backing Vocals (Garden Party): Anubis Drew
Backing Vocals (Cost of Kindness): Dani Hoover
Voiceover (Garden Party): Anonymous & Amazing Humans

PRODUCTION
Recording: Danny Lott
Editing, Mixing, Mastering, Production, Promotion, Distribution: AtOddsWithGod Productions

Mixed and Mastered on analog tape at Studio Starshine in Ann Arbor, MI.

THE LINER NOTES, VOL. 1 ZINE
Layout, design, composition: AtOddsWithGod Productions
Contents: Danny Lott and Jazzie

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dannylott.bandcamp.com
AtOddsWithGod.com

Thank you to the amazing partners and loved ones who encouraged me, listened to every version of every track, and watched this project come to life.

Thank you to Jazzie, the greatest producer anyone could ever work with.

Thank you to that 15-year-old who heard 2112 for the first time and dreamed of telling a story just as compelling someday. Ya did it, kid.

Thank you, the person reading this... The person listening to this wild and weird thing. There is no art without you, and I am profoundly grateful for you giving your time and thoughts.



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Foreword

When Danny came to me with the first demos for this project I was taken by how much thought and intention had gone into each lyric, chord, and character. I knew upon my initial listen that something special had graced my inbox and that I wanted to be the producer for this unique project. *Badly*.

Hot Ghoul Summer is the result of over a year of hard work from a cast of talented musicians and a truly inspired artist leading the project. During that time we each pushed each other to get this music polished into what it is today and it was an honour to be invited onto the project.

There were multiple instances where my skills as a producer were tested given the unique composition and instrumentation of this record, and it served as a delightful break from my day-to-day duldrums of cookie-cutter metal bands and podcast editing.

Danny, I hope you're proud of what you've made and I can't wait to do it all over again <3

~JS, Executive Producer @ AtOddsWithGod

Opening Production Notes

Ethos

Everything was done as DIY and in-house as possible, down to creating physical collages for the album art and this zine with scizzors and scotch tape. In a world being increasingly saturated with AI slop, we felt it important to make something *really* real.



The Media



For the nerds, each copy of *Hot Ghoul Summer* is printed on on RTM 900 tape made in France. Recording The Masters purchased the chemical formulas for their tapes from Ampex. Since then, they've improved upon the formula year-over-year!

Pictured: reel-to-reel spool, not cassette width.

Opening Production Notes

Why Cassette Tapes?

The choice to target cassettes as the "primary" format was intentional and decided at the onset of the project. This was a practical choice and not just for the cool factor (even though it is pretty fucking cool).

The internet has been proven to NOT be forever, like we all thought in decades past. Digitally released music can just disappear at the behest of labels and streaming platforms.

CDs, DVDs, and Blu-Rays are all vulnerable to disc rot and will eventually become unusable. Taylor Swift (derogatory) has a stranglehold over the world's last remaining vinyl lathes and production facilities, creating truckloads of extraneous color-variants and environmentally toxic discs that will never even be opened by the consumer.

Tape made the most sense for physical media and also allowed us to make a unique product that can be enjoyed for years. Being able to mend your own tape by respooling, splicing it back together, and even moving it into a new shell is a huge win for the preservation-minded fans and for those who care about the right to repair their property.

Setting, Characters, Lore

Hot Ghoul Summer takes place in the bay city of San Fran-Tampa, Florifornia.

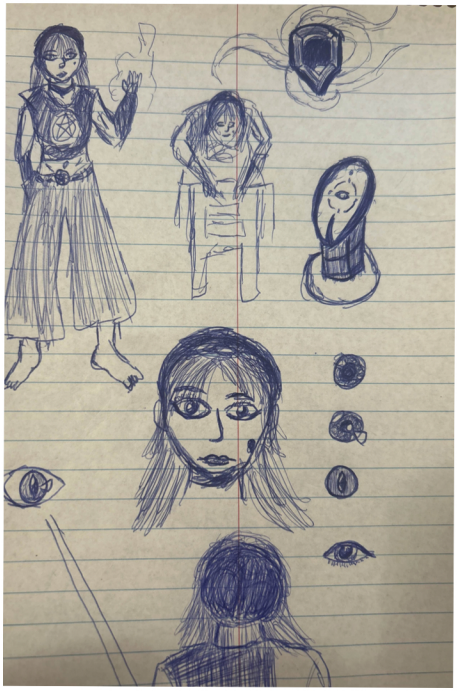
A place where beach life & industry toil meet, in a world where magick & imagination are part of post-internet life.
The world's largest energy company is run by Zeus, the king of the Greek Pantheon. Valkyries enjoy roller derby when not seeking the souls of fallen warriors. Witchcraft is an alternative medical practice with dwindling practitioners. Most fantastic of all, someone can scrape by as a freelance musician.



The Gatekeeper

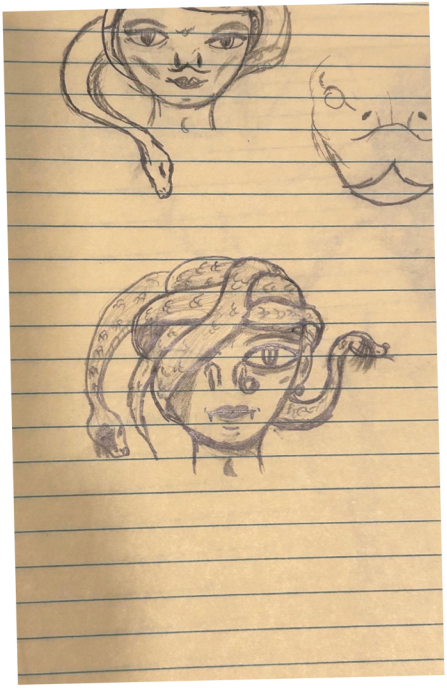
Masc-presenting human gig musician, touring performer, & occasional songwriter. He's never made it big, always making just enough money to afford rent & a pack of smokes.

Setting, Characters, Lore



Hagitha

Trans-femme human witch. She is The Gatekeeper's oldest friend & lover, an excellent chef, & has no patience for bullshit. She recently started a catering business called Hearth & Heart, named after her circle of magick.



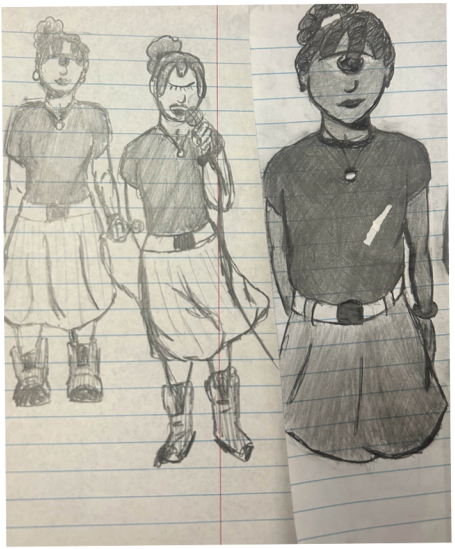
Medusa

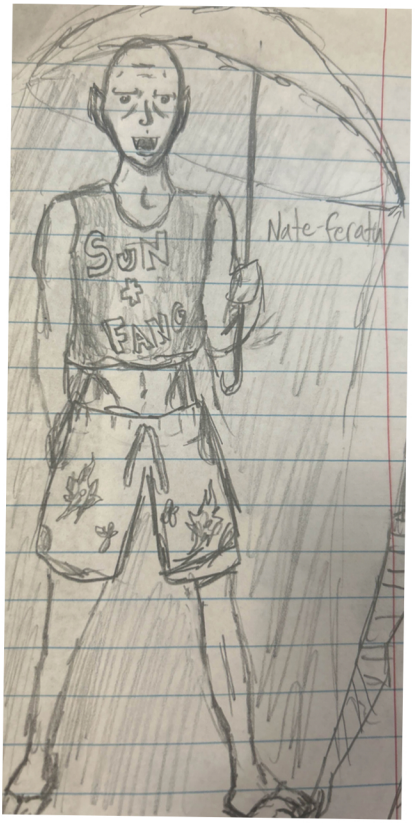
Gorgon multi-platinum recording artist. She's got more shiny records than snakes in her hair. She was allowed to leave the underworld as a Warden of Hell by Hades as a way of tormenting Zeus.

Setting, Characters, Lore

Eyelene

Short-stack cyclops. A Warden of Hell whose gaze peers into the very soul, finding truths & punishing tormentees with the very pain they inflicted while alive.

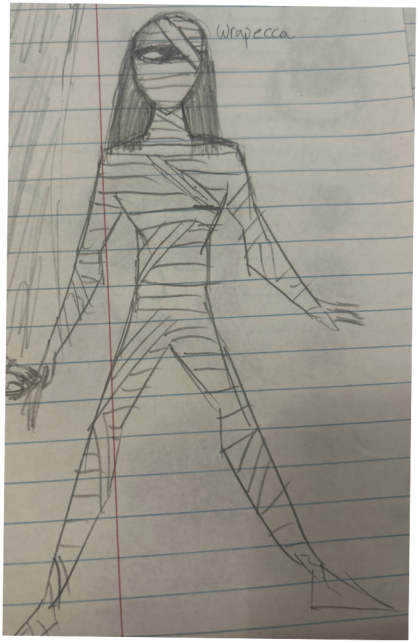




Nate-feratu

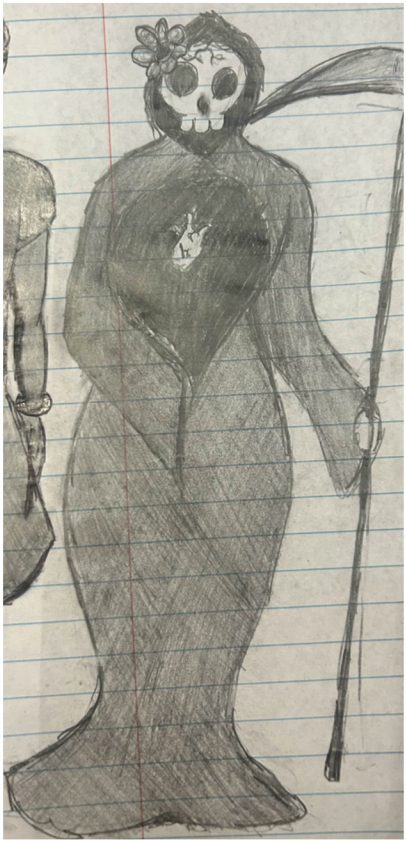
Fabulously ancient vampire. One of the oldest Wardens of Hell. When he isn't whispering their worst sins back into the ears of the vilest humans to ever live, he houses those damned to truly eternal torment in his abode.

Setting, Characters, Lore



Wrap-Becca

Slender & fidgety mummy. A Warden of Hell who binds those awaiting judgement & acts as a courier across departments of the underworld. She is married to Grimberly



Grimberly

Big-boned grim reaper. A Warden of Hell tasked with seeking the souls of those who died alone & bringing them to Anubis for judgement. She is married to Wrap-Becca

Setting, Characters, Lore



Guyst

Queer cowboy wandering an endless road. A Warden of Hell condemned to find souls who wish to escape judgement. A ghost hunting ghosts on an eternal trail.

Lyrics & Narrative...

Hot Ghoul Summer

The moon sits heavy in a starless sky. Eyelids of clouds, green in the light of their lunar pupil, trace the night's eye with the soft energy of the waves reflecting them.

The bay's tide is gentle, a barely swaying mirror of the motionless clouds.

The figure on the beach, the one staring into that salty, unblinking, eye, couldn't be motionless if there was a cash prize for it. The masculine form scrapes the hem of their bell-bottoms on the soft sand as they pace a trench deeper into the shore. They are unimpeded by the cool night wind rustling a palm nearby, the heavy bomber jacket on their shoulders only moving with beleaguered sighs. Their long hair wild from the thousandth time they'd run their shaking fingers through it. The salt & pepper of their beard fading from another anxious stroke. Tucked under their left armpit is a leather-bound book, with pages the color of dried sunflowers and the odor of a time before middle-management. In their hands a sealed envelope, creased from fitting into a pocket and weak from being unfolded often. On their shoulders the Atlas-level dread weight of an ultimatum. They read the envelope's red-letter message aloud

Unknown Figure

"Emergency Use Only!!!" Welp... I can officially say I've tried just about everything

They turn the envelope over. A slow, staggered, breath. Their hand shakes as they make to open it. Remorse wracks their face, it takes more effort to open this than it ever took to seal it. As their thumb slides to the flap...

A COLUMN OF FIRE ERUPTS BEHIND THE FIGURE

The flames roar into the night sky, adorned with green and purple streams among its orange form.

Unknown Figure

THE FUCK!?!

They stumble back from but turn swiftly to face the towering pillar of kaleidoscopic fire. The dull thud of the book falling into the sand below them unheard.

Mystery Voice

Greetings, Gatekeeper. How may we be of service?

Three shadowy forms step from within the fire. Humanoid eclipses in the flaming column behind them.

They stand patiently, giving the stunned figure a first-down's worth of distance.

The tallest figure is a curvy feminine one wearing a full-body robe and hood. The light of a galaxy cluster shimmers from within, a skull in shadows where a head's silhouette should be.

The middle individual is slender. Straight, fine, hair flowing in the updraft, chaotic helixes of ribbons dance around their form.

The smallest figure wears a flowing skirt with thick hair in an up-do. A single massive eye in the center of their face, a lighthouse, shines the moonlight.

Lyrics

Hot Ghoul Summer

[Intro]
Demon DJ
Straight from the gates of hell, we bring you the hottest hit of the ghoul-iest summer!!!

[Verse]
When devils run the world, & the sun keeps shinin'
Let chaos reign, 'cause there's no use fightin'.
With every day worse than the one before
Just abandon hope & grab your board.

The sky is burnin', & everyone is dyin'
Take a quick dip, before you start to cryin'
Everything is crashin', & jobs are disappearin'
So, let's go campin' in that empty clearin'

[Chorus a]
It's Hot Ghoul Summer, & we're gonna surf the grave
The earth has turned to hell, so let's all have a rave

Don't be a bummer & grab yourself a drink
Let's get a tan before the shore starts to sink.
Yeeeeeeeeeeeeeeah

It's Hot Ghoul Summer
It's Hot Ghoul
Suuuuuuuummer

The sky is burnin', & everyone is dyin'
Take a quick dip, before you start to cryin'
Everything is crashin', & jobs are disappearin'
So, let's go campin' in that empty clearin'

[Chorus a]

[Chorus b]
It's Hot Ghoul Summer with brimstone roasted smores
The earth turned to hell, so why care anymore?

Don't be a bummer, & grab your old guitar
Let's scream into the void until the last star.

It's Hot Ghoul Summer
It's Hot Ghoul
Suuuuuuuummer

Themes

- Confronting nihilism with whimsy
- Finding joy despite darkness
- These are harrowing times outside of our control, so we should come together & find what light we can.

Lore

This song is the emergence of the *Wardens of Hell* as a result of *The Gatekeeper* reading “the book” & performing the ritual. The *Hellgate* has opened. *Grimberly, Eyelene,* & *Wrap-Becca* greet *The Gatekeeper.*

Producer’s Note

This was the first track Danny sent me when initially pitching the project, and I offered to produce this album based on the strength of this track alone.

This was also the simplest track in terms of effects and processing. It really didn’t need much!

Gatekeeper's Saga

[Verse I]
I've kissed a god & I've tamed a valkyrie
I even learned to suspend my disbelief

I've grieved a joy that I've just discovered
I even crossed a bridge with my mother

I saved an addict…
Just to watch 'em go right back at it.

I've watched a bunny slaaaaay a dragon.

And I helped the night to find its name…

Themes

- This is a world of myth & symbolism
- Quiet confidence

Lore

This is the song that started the whole saga. Stressed about the premiere of a massive piece, an unnamed musician stares at the moon rising over the beaches of *San Fran-Tampa*.
He wants a cigarette more than he's ever craved a smoke in his gods-damned life.
Instead of busting out & lighting up his last cigarette (kept in an envelope that reads "Breathe Before Opening"), he consults a grimoire left to him by his best friend with benefits.
The book opens on a spell simply called "The Bard's Triumph."
The spell states: *When moon shines full, & these pages glisten crimson, & the Bard sings of their own deeds, then music ever powerful shall flow from within them.*
If Hell & Life be mirror's twin, then hope the bard dost heed, for the two shall be one until the barrier again has need.
From this moment forth that musician shall be known as *The Gatekeeper*. While he breathes, the *Hellgate* shall be open. To aid & protect him, the seven *Wardens of Hell* will convene. They are his valet, attendants, & guards.

Producer's Note

This was the first of a couple tracks to have a phaser on the bass to make the foundation of the song sound "unstable" and to give a sense of depth and space. I wanted the "drift" to match the lyrical content of what the character is going through.

The executive decision was also made during the editing phase to cut the drums during the "I saved an addict" line to let the vocal delay hang in the air.

Sandcastles of the Undead
[Intro]
I rise once more upon the mortal coil, and I must confront my greatest enemy again.

[Verse I]
I've breathed sulfur so long, my lungs are achin'.
Strolled the lake of fire 'til my feet are bacon/bakin'
Devil's whisper my name when I am near
Tremble world! Nate-feratu is HERE!
An open gate, a quick escape, now stars *shiver* above me.
My new domain --HAHAHA-- she's quite lovely
Yet, to see the sunrise after all these years…
My destiny, tempted by a shadow's fear!

[Chorus]
Hate pulls down. Our dreams fall, grains in the hourglass.
Ooooooooooo
So, let us die gloriously, building castles of their shame.
The very light of day would see me perish
See him perish
Time & nature wish he passed
Ooo-wish him passed
When I crumble, I will smile just the
Saaaaaaaaaame.

[Verse II]
This sea of diamonds shines too bright to be unseen
I shall not lose it to that **wretched** glowing thing!
These mortals kept this place all this time…
Are those no longer monsters?
Have I lost my mind!?
If they have this, was I amiss where I placed my ire?
Perhaps I won't slay them all…
Will this vampire
Learn to drink not blood, but tea instead?
Perhaps I will, in my sandcastle of the undead!

[Chorus]

[Outro]
"Yes! My magnanimous castle of sand stands in defiance of the sun's glowing hatred!
(sigh) The perfect abode.
Oh, a guest! Hello, mister crab.
May I offer you a cup of tea?
Where are you going? Don't be rude. Come back! I just want to serve you tea!"

Themes

- Taking a stand
- Being your truest self, even when the world is designed to stop you.
- Coming out
- Big ole double-gun birds to social norms & structures that keep us from embracing who we truely are (not just on the sexuality & gender spectrum. This one's for my neurodivergent homies or folks who don't completely subscribe to groupthink, too.)

Lore

The first focus song for a *Warden of Hell*. *Nate-feratu* didn't get to jump out of the *Hellgate* when it first opened. He had to finish his shift of tormenting the most vile souls. He steps onto the beach of *San Fran-Tampa* & is awestruck by the beauty of the moon over the ocean. He builds a gigantic sandcastle on the beach, as in literal castle size, with the aid of his personal assistants (a pair of cute bats named *Ray-th* & *Sin-thia*). Just as they finish, the sun rises & *Nate-feratu* spends his day welcoming passersby & beach-goers to his abode.

Producer's Note

Sandcastles was the track that went through one of the most dramatic overhauls from its demo form.

The lyrics, melody, vibe, and story beats were all updated over the length of the production, making it nearly a different song. Overall, it serves the record much better now.

The original cut holds a place in my ears and I annoyed Danny multiple times about releasing it as a bonus track. Maybe one day!

Split Ends
[Intro]
Event Host
Comin' to our stage, fresh off her most recent heartbreak, is my favorite gorgon. Put your hands together for MEDUSAAAA!

[Verse I]
You can brush it all & they can be so sweet
And, y'all can be your very best at the time.
You can shine & bounce, & you can tease it right.
But there'll always be a test at the end of the line.
No conversation will stop your roots from breaking.
Nothin' will stop your hearts from aching.

[Chorus]
Things go too long, they grow so long, & they even start to bend.
With every pair & every hair, it always comes to split-ends.

[Verse II]
A thousand eyes have stared & smiled, but I'm still alone.
Some took their time & they gave me hope, but they always turn to stone.

[Chorus]

[Bridge]
I've lost more lovers than broken locks down the shower drain, oh yeah.
The only constant is the gorgon, so I know who's to blame.

[Chorus]

[Chorus]

Themes

- Heartbreak
- Self-loathing
- That depressive "know-it-all" mindset that coats us in moments of hurt & pain
- Persistence despite hardship

Lore
Medusa's focus song shows us a day in her life. She is one of the *Wardens of Hell* who walks about the living & has been a multi-platinum recording artist for decades. She was allowed to leave Hell by *Hades* as a way of tormenting *Zeus,* provided *Medusa* take on the duties of a *Warden of Hell.*

Since looking her fans directly in the eyes would turn them into stone, several venues have asked Medusa to stop providing them with new human-statue decor; she only plays smaller venues to always packed crowds.
Medusa is compelled to visit *San Fran-Tampa* beach as soon as her set ends. Fortunately, she was just a town over in *Los Appolis*, so she finds our crew while *The Gatekeeper* is showing *Grimberly, Wrap-Becca, & Eyelene* the fine dining a gig musician can afford… The in-universe equivalent to 5 am waffle-house.

Producer's Note

Split Ends may have been the track Danny was most excited to send over based on the strength of Nickole's performance. Not only was her raw take incredible, but a fantastic rasp on her belted notes was brought out with my "sauce"; feeding the signal through an 1176 compressor and into an LA-2A compressor.

My focus for this track was nailing the live venue sound. The vocals do the heavy lifting for this vibe and the big, dry snare drum helps sell it.

Nearly Six Minutes in Heaven
[Verse I]
The taste of whiskey has never been stronger than when it's on your tongue
Your beard against my face gives me a comfort that makes me feel so young.
I want to be here forever.
My hand is home on the back of your head, my breath at peace on the nape of your neck.
When you trace the lines of me, the thoughts inside go dead.
I wanna be here forever.

[Chorus]
I'm gonna hold your hand until I feel the flow of time again.
You are the greatest sight I've ever held, until this moment ends.
I can't make out tomorrow; I can not make out what is right.
But I know for certain, I'm gonna make out with you all night.

[Verse II]
Cigarettes taste better when I taste them from your prying lips.
I've never been as desperate as I am beneath your hips.
I wanna be here forever.
My grip was made to complement your soft & gentle neck.
Your moans, they call me, like a siren 'til I wreck.
I wanna stay here forever.

[Chorus]

[Bridge]
Laying on your chest, in the silence of embrace, the world melts away.
Holding you within my strength gives me purpose again.
I don't care about tomorrow, & yesterday is all gone.
Now is all there is. Only you & me.
Only you & me.

[Chorus]

I can't make out tomorrow; I can not make out what is right.
But I know for certain, I'm gonna make out with you all night.

Themes

- Making out, Mackin' it Up, Smoochin'
- That moment when someone is your whole experience
- The wholeness you experience in that moment with ***your*** someone.

Lore

Wrap-Becca's focus song outlines a series of side adventures she embarks on as *The Gatekeeper* shows her, *Eyelene*, & *Grimberly* around *San Fran-Tampa.*
After checking in with *Grimberly*, *Wrap-Becca* slips off & scurries about the city. She flits around using her bandages like an arachnid-themed comics-man might use webs. Everywhere she goes, she finds people that she'd like to smooch. So, she's swinging around this beach city smoochin' folks while *The Gatekeeper* is explaining the world of the living to the others. He's convinced he's kept all three *Wardens of Hell* wrangled, because *Wrap-Becca* is always landing next to *Grimberly* to give her lil cheek-kisses & hand-squeezes before she darts to her next encounter with a rando.

Producer's Note

Being track number 5 and having the word "Six" in the title constantly had me mixed up.

Danny expressed hesitation over the five-and-a-half minute runtime on this song, but I honestly believe every note serves the music here.

I am also selfish insofar as I want more personal time with those sweet boy-band harmonies.

Saddle Up!!
[Verse I]
Fuck this town, I'm leavin'.
I'll be chewin' graveyard dirt
before I see this hell again.
But every place I haunt has the
same shadows.
And your blood starts running
down my walls again.

[Chorus]
The dust from my trail can
keep you company.
I hope it cuts your eye.
I'm not leavin' you, I'm findin'
me… and all the joy I left
behind.
SADDLE-UP!
whip crack!!!
And hit that healing road.
It's long and hard and ain't no
fun.
Got no prize, only road, and
we've just begun.

[Verse II]
I'll sashay to my grave with this
shithole at my back.
I hope you find the gold you're
pannin' for, or the lovin' that
you lack.
Time's a wastin', I got days to
save.
This road ain't gonna walk
itself.
Either saddle up or sit back
down, 'cause this ghost is
ridin'.

[Chorus]

SADDLE-UP!
whip crack!!!
And hit that healing road.
It's long and hard and ain't no
fun.
Got no prize, only road, and
we've just begun.

Themes

- Getting out of places that suck
- Leaving behind the past
- Just 'cause you're runnin' don't mean you're runnin' away… Movin' on to the next thing can lead you down just as many paths as fleeing the last thing.
- "Being gay and sashaying away," said with cunty snapping.

Lore
Guyst's focus song shows us his story—a man who never found a home after moving into the westward expanse. Fleeing

his home south of the Mason-Dixon line when he didn't want to fight on the side of slavers, he'd hoped to find like-minded company in those who'd travel toward the setting sun. He found company with a Navajo tribe that took him in… until the railways and government took their land. So he travelled town to town, robbin' coach and getting kicked out of brothels for taking more Johns than the staff. He died on the road to Phoenix, his steed collapsing with him, alone to rot in the sun until the moon cooled the souls from their corpses (yes, horses canonically have souls in this universe. We will not be unpacking the implications). *Guyst's* heart was not lighter than Ma'at's feather, but it was too hollow from loneliness for even Ammit to eat. So, *the Devil* allowed *Guyst* and his horse to wander the world of the living as ghosts, under the condition that *Guyst* become a *Warden of Hell*.

As he hitches his steed to a street light upon his arrival in *San Fran-Tampa,* some uptight so-and-so tries to tell *Guyst* he can't leave "his animal" tied up like that. *Guyst* phases through the person, flicking them off as he does, and his horse snorts hellfire in their direction.

Producer's Note

The original cut of this song featured the guitar channel fed through an amp, but during the mix I just used the raw acoustic sound to drive the western outlaw vibe.

The whip cracks received a note that read "[they] need to be louder! Raw-hide that bitch!!!"

In my personal opinion, Saddle Up!! has one of the album's most fun basslines; feels like the walking gate of a horse in a way.

Train Ride to the B-Side
[Instrumental]

Themes

- …

Lore

Nate-feratu has joined the crew, wearing a crop top that reads “Sun’s out, Fangs out,” & shielding himself from the deadly rays of the sun with a parasol.
After street tacos and introductions to *Guyst* & *Medusa*, the gang takes an elevated railway toward *The Gatekeeper’s* apartment. He needs to prepare for his song premiere at his friends’ wedding this evening.
Grimberly has a lovely conversation with an older woman & her grandchild.
Eyelene is enjoying a horchata while taking in all the sights and sounds of public transit.
Medusa scrolls through her phone, interjecting into *Grimberly’s* conversation, wearing “Manhattan” style sunglasses (those iconic ones Audrey Hepburn’s wearing on that poster you saw in so many dorm rooms in the 00’s).
Wrap-Becca keeps getting interrupted during her improvised gymnastics routine using the train’s support bars and handles. *Nate-feratu* is interrogating strangers who fascinate him with intrusive questions. *Guyst* is entertaining a group of social media influencers with tales of his days as a bandit.
The Gatekeeper is jumping between the *Wardens of Hell,* checking in on & redirecting them all, like an overworked Kindergarten teacher.
Shortly before they arrive at their stop, *Eyelene*’s drink spills on her shirt.
The Gatekeeper advises the gang they’ll make a quick stop at the laundromat under his apartment to get *Eyelene*’s clothes cleaned, saving the life of the person who caused the spill.

Producer's Note

Having an instrumental track allowed me to zero-in on just the tones of the instruments, whereas I would otherwise need to "carve" out a place in the mix for the vocals to "live", such that the other sound sources wouldn't bleed together and make the song sound muddy and too busy.

With each tape having a frequency range maxing out at 16kHz, I had a limited but focused canvas to place each of the elements of this song.

Monster in the Mirror

[Verse I]
Fangs of insecurity perched behind a swindler's smile
Self-loathing claws are ready to strike you.
Confidence an illusion, hiding a crocodile.
This mask is tucked so neatly, in everyone's view.

[Pre-Chorus a]
For someone who wants love, I sure hurt the ones who give it.
I keep on running from my past, only to relive it.
I wonder why I'm alone, but never care enough to change.
I keep on running from my past, but the future's still the same.

[Chorus]
My very presence is a curse; it harms those I hold dearest.
The chains of my love they bind you and draw you ever nearer.
Once you see the truth of me, it all becomes the clearest.
I'm the thing I fear the most, I'm the monster in the mirror.

[Verse II]
I feed this vile beast with daily affirmations.
Give it little treats to keep it calm.
It waits so patiently for any agitation.
Always knowing it won't be waiting very long.

[Pre-Chorus b]
My love is a plastic bag clinging to your breath.
My care is iron chains searching for your wrist.
A taste of your attention will save me from death.
This facade will start to fade, and you're right to abandon ship.

[Chorus] ; [**CHORUS**]; [Chorus]

…I'm the monster in… the monster in the mirror…

Themes

- Self-loathing
- Acknowledging cycles of destructive behavior and feeling they are inescapable.
- That disgust you can feel with yourself in the pits of a breakup, losing a job, or damaging a friendship.

Lore

Eyelene's focus song takes place while she's at the laundromat waiting for her shirt to dry. *The Gatekeeper* lent her his bomber jacket.

While *The Gatekeeper* is wrangling the other *Wardens of Hell*, *Eyelene* sees her shirt swirling in the dryer & gets mesmerized by its swirling motions. As *The Gatekeeper* apologizes to the laundromat owner for *Guyst* stealing 20-year-old gum balls from a classic red bauble dispenser, *Eyelene*'s perspective shifts, & she catches her reflection. She learns that she is not immune to her tormentor's gaze & is forced to recognize the pain she has spread to others

The Gatekeeper notices something's off with *Eyelene* and runs over to check on her. Stimulus from outside her mind pulls her from torment. Turning quickly from the glass of the dryer, *Eyelene* forces a smile while wiping a massive tear on *The Gatekeeper's* jacket sleeve, & says everything is fine.

Producer's Note

Monster was the last song to be 100% recorded, with the last takes being submitted during the mix. I fully admit that was on me for asking for retakes so late in the process, but it one of my jobs as the producer to tell the artist "I know there's a better take in you."

Once Danny heard the final mix, it served as a major confidence boost and I'm ultimately happy I asked.

Also, the synth solo was actually played; not programmed. Rad!

Glamour

[Verse I]
Raven hair and moonlight skin,
you're temptin' me with magic,
& girl, I wanna hear the spell
you cast.

Your lips are movin', but I
cannot hear, or even start to
fathom, dear, what it is you are
tryin' to ask.

[Chorus]
'Cause your glamour is drawin'
out my words & throwin' them
away.
'Cause your glamour is movin'
me and I don't have a say.
Your glamour it tempts me like
the Devil never could.
And your glamour is hexin' all
my body into wood.

[Verse II]
Your eyes enchant me dear,
they draw me to the darkness
near your bed where you'll
drain all my cares away.

Your books are open &
cauldron brews, but I couldn't
care less 'cause I'm here for
you.
I never wanna see another
light of day.

[Chorus]

[Bridge]

[Chorus]
Your Glaaa-aa-aa-aamour!

Themes

- Sexy goth witches sure are sexy
- Lust is a spell we cast on one another; if performed correctly, the ritual can culminate in consensual good times for all involved.

Lore

Hagitha's focus song shows us how *The Gatekeeper* acquired the grimoire that started this whole thing.

It takes place during the ritual that bound *Hagitha* to *the Devil* & gave her immense power. She is a witch of *Hearth & Heart*; her spells are cast through cooking & sex.
The ritual was a multi-day affair that required *The Gatekeeper* to be *Hagitha*'s caretaker and witness as she endured the trials of *The Devil's Due*.

The final phase required *Hagitha* to invoke *the Devil's* powers through her medium, then pass the blasphemous spellbook she used onto another living soul.
So, she made an amazing meal & gave *The Gatekeeper* a headboard knocker of an evening. As he left, she gave him the book and told him to NEVER read it. She also looked him dead in the eyes and told him he must quit smoking.
The next morning, *The Gatekeeper* got the call his friends were getting married, & they commissioned him to write an anthem for polyamory to premiere at their wedding in six months. He also decided he was going to give up cigarettes.

Producer's Note

Glamour was sent to me in the first round of demo tapes and has been stuck in my head ever since.

It highlights Danny's ability to craft compelling melodies over chord progressions not often heard in modern contemporary music.

The vocalizations during the sitar solo were added right before the final edit began and I vocally exclaimed "yooooo" at my desk the first time I heard them.

The Cost of Kindness
[Verse I]
Some are born with the gift of violence, others bear the curse of silence, & a few are given a burden.

Some souls break & some hearts rage, but others never learn… Oh, how we never learn.

[Pre-Chorus]
Where hands & words strike &kill, the foolish take it all. The foolish take it all.

When love takes flight, running towards the hills, the foolish take it all. The foolish take it all.

[Chorus]
The cost of kindness isn't time or a broken heart; it's never learning to keep that kindness in.
I've paid this price a thousand times… it always hurts so deep.
It's a cost I'll always pay, until my bitter end.
The cost of kindness.

[Verse II]
Some can wall their hearts away with armor forged in pain.
Others simply hide away to never hurt again.
And a few… a few will never learn. Oh gods… we never learn.

[Pre-Chorus]

[Chorus]

Themes

- The pain of maturity, the ache of the peacekeeper
- Caregiver's lament
- The unsung wails of all those who've found the strength to be kind, to show the depths of compassion, even in the face of violence and abuse.

Lore

Grimberly's focus song takes place as the crew is headed to the wedding for the premiere of *The Gatekeeper*'s song.

On their walkover, *Grimberly* drops a mic stand she was holding as her scythe manifests in her hand. She apologizes profusely to *The Gatekeeper* & vanishes in a plume of sparkling grey vapor.

Everyone except *The Gatekeeper* & *Hagitha* get bummed out as soon as she's gone.

Wrap-beca explains *Grimberly*'s responsibility as a *Seeker* & the weight it puts on her heart.

Before they can respond, *Grimberly* returns in a glimmering poof.

With a quavering voice & shaking hand, *Grimberly* picks up the mic stand & tells everyone they're good to keep marching.

Producer's Note

This song takes my award for "most aurally interesting", alternating between 3/4 and 6/8 time.

The verses and choruses effortlessly weave between a waltz and mazurka, making the 3:43 runtime end far too quickly. This is my Repeat(1) track on this album and is one of the prime examples of Danny's command of music theory.

Garden Party
[Verse I]
White lacy cloth adorns the sunlit tables all among the verdant leaves of joy
Elegant sandwiches complement the gentle tones of string quartets
Guests arrive with dapper dress & gorgeous suit, with smiling wit, all playing coy
The ones we love are here
With open hearts & minds unfettered

[Chorus a]
It's a garden party, & everyone is here
My wife, my boyfriend, & my comet too
It's a garden party, to some it's pretty queer
My anchor partner & my meta are eating all the food.

[Verse II]
Our faces blue with breathless honesty, the games & japes abound us all as laughter rings
Hearts sigh with ecstasy, compersion conducts our souls as they sing.
The drinks have flowed & stories told, but still we linger here with sparkles in our eyes.
The glowbugs blink, & I do think it's time we took the fun inside.

[Bridge - Conversation Break]

[Chorus b]
It's a garden party, with all the ones we love
We're pruning hate & having dates, & standing next to you
It's a garden party, & to some it's much too much
Some anarchists just hit the floor & opened up the groove

[Chorus a]
[Chorus b]

Themes

- The joy of love, in all its many forms.
- A celebration of polyamory
- Elegance & refinement juxtaposed with honesty & joy.

Lore

This is the thing that pushed *The Gatekeeper* to open the grimoire in the first place. This is the premiere of a song he's been working on for six months. On the way to the wedding, *The Gatekeeper* checked his phone for the first time in about 18 hours. One of his singers is at the vet with her dog & can't make the performance.

Eyelene tells him not to worry about it; she can sing. Before he can say anything about the song, she reaches up, high as she can, & grabs his face. With surprising strength, she pulls him to her level and stares deeply into his mind.

The Gatekeeper feels every hour of rehearsal for this song relived by *Eyelene* in a matter of seconds.

When she releases him, both of them have bloodshot & teary eyes.

The Gatekeeper is grateful and impressed, but tells *Eyelene* she has to ask the living if she can just take a trip through their brains.

The premiere goes off without a hitch.

Producer's Note

Garden Party makes me want to be the "anarchist... open[ing] up the groove."

This delightful bookend to the first track features Danny's friends having real conversations and clapping along, no samples or stock clips.

I had a lot of fun placing each of these channels in the stereo-field you hear in your headphones, creating the effect of being surround by people at a party.

Touching Stars
[Verse I]
We didn't sign up to claw through Hell to beg for scraps.
We were given gift receipts for the promise of a golden path.
Well, I'm done hearing "someday," & I'm sick of loving nothing.
I'm fighting it some way.
I'm gonna be making something.

[Chorus a]
Even gravity can't keep me down; I'm touching stars someday.
Nobody gonna stop me now that I'm out of my own way.

[Verse II]
And I'm done hearing "someday," & I'm sick of loving nothing.
I'm fighting it some way.
I'm gonna be making something.

[Chorus a]

[Chorus b]
My past is my shadow, I'm running towards the light
I'm flying now, baby. I'm soaring… Soaring through the night

[Bridge]

[Chorus a & b]

Themes

- Making a better world
- Chasing your desires, instead of making excuses
- Fighting the dread of the world with the fire of a soul that burns for something better!

Lore
After the premiere, the couple asks *The Gatekeeper* to play his "almost hit," a song he wrote for the pilot of a TV show that never got picked up.
He has *Eyelene* do her soul-stare to learn the harmonies & he quickly outlines the song for *Medusa*.
After playing *Touching Stars*, the crew enjoy the rest of the wedding as someone hooks up their phone to the speaker system & just plays some playlist called "now that's what I call reception music!" (a playlist with no less than three

genre-bending adaptations of "Hava Nagila.")
Once the reception is over, *The Gatekeeper* & *the Wardens of Hell* make their way back to *Nate-feratu*'s abode to unwind. While unwinding with some flower (*Grimberly* & *Guyst* don't partake, as *Seekers* are not affected by libations), *Wrap-beca* asks *The Gatekeeper* what his greatest wish is. Without hesitation, he says, "I want to touch stars… I want to travel in space someday."
The next morning he wakes up on a couch made of sand to find *the Wardens of Hell* ready to travel. *Hagitha* has packed his bags. They inform *The Gatekeeper* they have a spaceship and will be taking a trip so they can all officially clock-in for their duties.

Producer's Note

I generally produce records in order, which meant each pass of the production process gave me another chance to listen to the narrative.

After spending time with these characters, it really started to hit me how beautiful this song is; not only in what they've overcome as a group, but literally coming together in the final chorus.

The two voices starting hard-panned left and right before drifting into the center channel was a stylistic note from Danny that adds so much to not only the track, but the narrative strength of the finale.

Notes & Doodle Space

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