

The Kingdom

By  
Wilson Castro

Wilson Castro  
Wilsoncastroj1998@gmail.com  
631-339-5684

CHARACTER NAME

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

THE HERO

An optimistic, virtuous and overtold archetype.

THE HEALER

Bandaged and blunt. A person who carries their past.

THE KNIGHT

Pulled between two sides. A heart of gold.

THE MERCENARY

Only loves money and women. But is rude towards women.

THE JESTER

As ambitious as any snake could be. Not very funny.

THE QUEEN

Grandiose and charming. Fears being forgotten.

THE WITCH

Poetic and mystical. Bitter with the cards life gave her, she's now cheating.

THE ROGUE

A humorous disposition that covers a dangerous mindset

SCENE 1

It is dark. .Several SPRAYING SOUNDS are heard. A light shines to reveal a bloody sculpture made of dead bodies. THE MERCENARY and THE JESTER speak but are not seen.

THE MERCENARY

Well that was a nasty piece of work. Can't say I'm not impressed though. Look at the scope of that thing.

THE JESTER

Are you going to keep blabbering or are you going to finish the job?

THE MERCENARY

Ha! You're cold. Just a bit of the spray left.

THE JESTER

Then hurry up already. We shouldn't delay, The Queen awaits us.

Spraying commences. The light goes down. Fog emits. Loud COUGHING is heard. Light on THE HEALER as they run out of the fog, arms shielding their face. Waving the fog away, they are brought to a crawl in the middle of the stage. The Healer looks at their hands and then touches their face. It burns. They scream. Light off.

Full lights up. THE HERO jumps unto the now empty stage, he looks out at the vast space before him. His face straightens and he takes out a map. Looking over it, he brightens.

THE HERO

Brightly colored flowers, these clusters of trees, and the-

He sneezes.

THE HERO

-thick air of pollen. There is no mistake, I have arrived in The Garden. The Hero is here!

His hand goes to his sword.

## THE HERO

It will not be long now. You people will be saved.

The Hero sings “*The Hero’s Journey*”

The Healer takes a tent shoves it unto The Hero.

## THE HEALER

Witch says we camp here tonight.

The Hero smiles and sets up the tent. The Witch pours her ingredients in front of her as The Healer makes a camp fire. The Hero turns to The Witch.

## THE HERO

Are we close to the castle?

## THE WITCH

It’ll be but a day’s journey more.

## THE HERO

Oh splendid. I cannot wait. To end this evil I mean.

## THE WITCH

Saving a land is quite the reason to get up in the morning, a very noble one at that. I’m sure the promise of great fame doesn’t cross your virtuous mind at all.

## THE HERO

It most certainly does! But a hero must earn his renown, this I am aware of. However, I do find myself nervous. It is my first time you see. Saving a kingdom.

## THE WITCH

They do say the first time hurts the most.

The Healer stands up.

## THE HEALER

People are dead yet you two chatter on like we’re on vacation. I thought we hired a guide, not a distraction.

The Hero goes back to working on the tent.

## THE WITCH

Would you prefer my absence, so you two could go walk in circles around the flowers searching for the castle? Might I remind you I've never seen this wicked human statue you speak of.

## THE HEALER

Then try to imagine this, innocent people dead. The way they died wasn't natural, someone did it to them. I know it. Skin burned and mouths agape. Quite the chilling sight. The sad look on their faces. Their bodies manipulated so they'd all be reaching outward.

## THE WITCH

Yes we all get it, I'm sure it's all very unfortunate for them.

## THE HEALER

Are you even listening?

## THE WITCH

Of course!

She mocks The Healer.

## THE WITCH

Bodies reaching out almost as if reaching out to me!

The Healer turns to The Hero.

## THE HEALER

Are you sure she's even a guide? Who's to say she's not leading us to our deaths? She obviously has no concern for the dead.

## THE HERO

She took our coin for this service. I doubt she would betray a bond of commerce.

## THE WITCH

Do not let suspicion overtake you, dear Healer. I happen to need coin to purchase materials inland so I thought why not guide a hero and his ugly friend?

## THE HEALER

I don't trust you. Witches. Magic is a shortcut and always ends in suffering. Following you we'll likely end up in a stew.

THE WITCH

Oh please, as if I'd want the taste of your boil ridden face.

THE HEALER

Who's to say if I have boils?

THE WITCH

Why else would one hide their face like so unless to hide their unfortunate appearance.

THE HEALER

Hope you don't catch a cold. I doubt I'd have a potion to spare for you.

THE WITCH

Your skills as a healer mean little to me. I can make a health potion in my sleep. You however can't turn someone into a toad. I can. Tell me, do you like flies?

The Witch steps up to The Healer.

THE HEALER

If she really is a witch, you think she'd burn like one?

The Healer gets closer to The Witch.

THE HERO

My companions! Calm yourselves.

The Hero intervenes. He turns to The Witch.

THE HERO

The Healer knew those people. Their raw emotion is what led me to asking them to join me in this fight.

The Healer turns away from the group, picking at the ashes of the camp fire.

THE HEALER

I'd stop by that village time to time to chat and sell medicine. They were having a plague and I didn't have enough herbs to make vaccine. I left to gather some and-

The Healer takes out a bundle of herbs from their pack.

## THE HERO

And when you returned, that's when I saw you?

## THE HEALER

Yes. It was only days ago but it feels like minutes. These seem so meaningless now.

The Healer attempts to throw them into the fire. The Hero stops them by putting a hand on The Healer's shoulder. The Healer brushes him off and stores the herbs.

## THE HERO

Have no worry. The Queen will soon be taken down for her crime.

## THE WITCH

For lacking a motive, the two of you seem very confident in your culprit.

## THE HEALER

We have no need to hear your opinion, Witch.

## THE WITCH

I'm simply saying for your sake, I hope she did kill those people.

## THE HEALER

It is her. She holds no love for the people. Never did. You know that.

## THE WITCH

But is she so sadistic by nature, I wonder? Last I heard, in recent years she became a social pariah. Her favorite activity being sequestering herself in her room.

## THE HERO

Do you believe me mistaken?

## THE WITCH

What I believe is that any who approach a Queen with accusations are more likely to find themselves without their heads.

## THE HERO

As The Queen, she bears a responsibility to the people. If she did not do this, then she must be alerted to take action. If she refuses then I shall deliver justice to her.

The Witch lays her eyes on The Hero's sword.

THE WITCH

And if her men were to attack you, that is your justice? Many men fight under her banner. Do you intend to take them all on?

THE HERO

Absolutely not. I shall demand one and one combat with her. Upon slaying her, the guards will come to see the justice done.

THE WITCH

It's becoming more and more obvious that you've never faced a foe before. Think. You expect her to agree.

The Hero gives a deep and hearty laugh, brandishing his sword.

THE HERO

Then perhaps I shall take them all on! My blade shall embody courage as it cuts a path to her.

He swings at the air, The Witch snickers.

THE WITCH

Quite the plan.

She looks to The Healer.

THE WITCH

Shall your blade embody courage too? Or are you some other virtue? Temperance perhaps.

THE HERO

If you are truly as concerned with our cause as your words say, then you should consider my past offer.

THE HEALER

Leave her, she's said before she has no intention of helping us fight. I have barely enough healing potions as it is.



## THE HERO

We could use your spells if the situation turns for the worst.

## THE WITCH

Self proclaimed black & white ideas of justice do not thrill me as it does you. But I have given it thought and I believe we can come to an agreement regarding my incentive.

## THE HERO

Let us begin a dialogue then.

## THE HEALER

Or cut to the chase. You want money. How else would she fund her spells?

## THE WITCH

On the contrary, I seek something else. A promise.

The Witch approaches The Hero.

## THE WITCH

I see a future, The Queen on her knees, your sword impaling her. You stand above her, a crown on your head. Quite the splendid sight. But alas, a solitary one.

## THE HEALER

Speak clearly, Witch.

## THE WITCH

I shall join you in your fight if you could make me your Queen. When you usurp her.

## THE HERO

W-what? Oh-uh-I must see her role in all this first- and you see we have only just met and I am a man of virtue-

## THE HEALER

What he means is that only Princesses become Queens, not swamp witches.

## THE WITCH

Ah, is that your label for me? How very transparent of you.

## THE HERO

Do not fret, many heroes have come from swamps. I once heard of a ogre who lived in a swamp and became a Princess. Or was she a Princess and she became an ogre. Did she end up in the swamp? Hmm.

## THE HEALER

Maybe she should join us. The thought of her head on a spike does make me smile.

## THE WITCH

If my fate lies between the swamp and the pike, perhaps I shall go back home now.

The Witch feigns an exit but The Hero steps in.

## THE HERO

Not at all! Our fates are not so narrow!

The Hero takes The Witch's hands and smiles.

## THE HERO

I was born a farmer, and I looked up to heroes all my life. Swords drawn and armor shining, riding through town on their horses. I would run out of breath trying to keep up with them. I started my quest for heroism because my parents died. Bandits attacked and before I knew it they were gone.

The Healer places a hand on his shoulder.

## THE HERO

But I knew it was a sign. See all great heroes come from tragic backstories so this must be mine. It must be! So I left and never looked back. I suppose what I'm saying is that we can surpass our origins. This could be your opportunity to rise above that swamp. Let us grasp at our futures together!

She smiles, genuinely.

## THE WITCH

You truly believe I can be more than this?

## THE HERO

I do.

## THE WITCH

I suppose I can too then. I shall join you.

## THE HERO

Thank you!

THE HEALER

And yet I feel no safer.

She escapes his hands.

THE WITCH

Night falls quickly. My body and mind grow tired. Let us rest.

THE HERO

Aye. We leave for the castle at dawn!

The three take their equipment and exit.

SCENE 2

The Mercenary walks in carrying a throne, he places it and takes a seat.

THE MERCENARY

Very nice.

He knocks on the chair's golden surface. He chuckles.

THE MERCENARY

And it's real. Who would've thought. This would be a good gig, being king.

He straightens up and stares down imaginary servants.

THE MERCENARY

As your new King my first decree is no more taxes. No cheering yet loves, from now on just full direct payments.

He pretends to hear the servants' plead.

THE MERCENARY

No money? Just leave your daughters then.

The Mercenary bursts into laughter.

Hmm something's missing. Some muscle. Maybe a beast or dumb dog by my side.

The Knight's heavy footsteps can be heard.

THE MERCENARY

Ah The Knight! Perfect.

The Mercenary opens his arms to gesture out to The Knight.

THE KNIGHT

I could hear you from down the hall! What are you doing?

THE MERCENARY

Getting comfortable! What's it look like? Lucky for me, The Queen's fat arse leaves a lot of wiggle room on this chair.

He wiggles.

THE KNIGHT

You're the arse. Get off that throne now!

THE MERCENARY

Why? Scared The Queen's going to realize I look better on it?

The Knight drags The Mercenary off the throne.

THE KNIGHT

Hardly. But you'll be scared when she calls for your execution.

THE MERCENARY

I don't get scared. And I won't die, I haven't been paid yet.

THE KNIGHT

Keep it up and you won't be.

THE MERCENARY

If The Queen don't pay me, maybe I'll kill her next.

THE KNIGHT

Is that a threat?

## THE MERCENARY

Not a threat. Just considering future jobs.

## THE KNIGHT

Well focus on this job, like The Mercenary you are. Try to act professional, however hard the task may be for you.

## THE MERCENARY

Harsh words for such a pretty face. All bark. I know your type. What're you 3rd generation knight or something?

He gets close to The Knight checking him out. He lifts The Knight's sword and he recoils.

## THE MERCENARY

Nice sword, bet you mine's bigger.

The Knight ignores him.

## THE MERCENARY

And polished armor. Your parents buy you that? Have you even been in a war? Even a battle? Shed blood?

## THE KNIGHT

I serve The Queen. As my family always has served the ruler of The Garden.

The Mercenary takes his sword out and makes an incision on his palm.

## THE KNIGHT

By The Queen! What are you doing?

He squeezes, blood drips in front of The Knight.

## THE MERCENARY

Showing you what blood looks like.

He chuckles. The Knight slaps his hand away. THE JESTER rushes in. The bells on his costume ring as they move. The Mercenary laughs.

## THE MERCENARY

Aw! The Jester runs like a cat with a bell around its little neck.

He looks to The Knight who does not laugh.

## THE JESTER

The Queen shall be here soon. Glad to see you are already all here.

## THE KNIGHT

Who hired The Mercenary? Or better yet who can keep a leash on him?

The Mercenary purrs at The Knight.

## THE JESTER

It was at the behest of The Queen. Would you oppose her?

## THE KNIGHT

Of course not.

## THE JESTER

Good! Then our discussion has finally ended.

The Mercenary looks to The Knight

## THE MERCENARY

Seem you aren't very popular here, love.

The Queen coughs loudly offstage. The Jester perks up and claps.

## THE JESTER

Places everyone!

The Knight stands at one side of the entrance, The Jester the other. The Mercenary does not move till he is yanked by The Knight. The Jester gestures to the pianist and they play a tune similar to a fanfare. THE QUEEN appears at the entrance. She struts down the throne room like a runway, stopping at the end to pose. All clap.

## THE JESTER

The Queen, our Majesty has arrived.

THE QUEEN

Yes she has!

She flourishes, taking in the moment. She turns to her minions.

THE QUEEN

You like? Specialty made. You peasants could never! Jester !

THE JESTER

Yes, your Majesty?

THE QUEEN

Where is that handmaiden of mine? She's always trying to outstage me. She's going to gag when she sees this.

THE JESTER

She already has, your Majesty.

THE QUEEN

Explain.

THE JESTER

You had her tied , gagged, and thrown into the river just last week. Something about her always trying to outstage you.

THE QUEEN

Oh.

The Queen takes her place on the throne. The Knight approaches her.

THE KNIGHT

Your Majesty, I am so glad to finally see you out of your room, and in such a good mood.

THE QUEEN

Oh that ol'rut of mine? We don't know her anymore!

THE KNIGHT

I'm afraid that may change. I have grave news to report.

THE QUEEN

Was there an issue with the tax collection?

THE KNIGHT

The most horrific thing happened.. As I entered to tax collect one of the villages, I found all of it's people...dead. Bodies moved into odd positions. Organized piles toward the sky, it was a spine chilling sight.

The Queen rolls her eyes.

THE QUEEN

I thought you had tea.

The Knight shudders and gets one knee.

THE KNIGHT

There must be some mysterious force at work here. I humbly ask to investigate it in order to prevent more innocent lives being lost.

The Queen takes a moment to think. She stands.

THE QUEEN

Very well. I grant you the permission to-

She chuckles.

THE QUEEN

The permission to-

Her shoulder rise and fall as she tries not to laugh. She looks over to The Jester and The Mercenary.

THE QUEEN

The permission-

She bursts out in laughter.

THE KNIGHT

My Queen?



THE QUEEN  
It's me, girl!

She bops The Knight on the head.

THE KNIGHT  
What?

The Knight stands back up.

THE QUEEN  
A mysterious force? Please! What a joke.

THE JESTER  
Quite the jest, your Majesty! It seems I am not the only fool here!

THE MERCENARY  
Looks like someone is out of the loop.

THE KNIGHT  
I don't understand. How does everyone know?

THE QUEEN  
I mean you aren't like my handmaiden y'know? You don't have to know everything.

THE KNIGHT  
But The Mercenary knows!

THE QUEEN  
I mean, it was like a "had to be there" kind of thing. You were busy. Enough! Now that we're all in the know.

She throws a look at The Knight.

THE QUEEN  
Let us discuss the results.

The Jester steps forward.

THE JESTER  
Your Majesty, it seems that our Garden has bore fruit.

THE MERCENARY

Speaking of which, I deserve more money out of this deal. Getting near that old, abandoned kingdom was dangerous work. Tons of nasty gases surrounding the joint, burns anything that goes near it. Jester there got some of it in a bottle.

He claps The Jester in the back, he almost drops the bottle.

THE KNIGHT

The Lost Kingdom? I thought we gave up on solving their mystery long ago.

THE QUEEN

We may not never how that kingdom came to be lost but the gas surrounding it however can prove useful to me.

THE JESTER

With the sample, our mages were able to reproduce the vile gas. Attached with a nozzle it will now be fit for kingdom purposes.

THE MERCENARY

Them bushy bearded mages made the gas travel sized!

THE JESTER

It proved rather effective against that village.

THE KNIGHT

The village? What did you do to them with that spray?

THE JESTER

I killed them, keep up! Of course, it was to test the effectiveness. All under our Queen's orders. And I'd never disobey The Queen. If she ordered it, I'd kill you too.

The Knight approaches The Queen.

THE KNIGHT

My Queen, please explain your intentions. Did those people wrong you? To kill innocents-

THE MERCENARY

Shut it, love. Do you know who you're talking to? The Queen's not exactly known for kissing babies.

## THE QUEEN

If it satisfies you Knight, I asked The Jester to find subjects no one will miss.

## THE JESTER

A village with a breakout of plague were the perfect test subjects. Most of them would have died from fever. Or illiteracy.

## THE KNIGHT

But to kill them? A rather huge stunt to reinforce fealty.

## THE MERCENARY

Too much yapping from you. Making my head hurt.

## THE QUEEN

Stand down, Mercenary. The Knight, you've always stood by my side, correct?

## THE KNIGHT

Of course, I swore an oath as my parents swore an oath to yours.

## THE QUEEN

Right now you may think "oh she's such a bitch, killing all those potato eaters like that". But you want to see me happy right?

## THE KNIGHT

Of course, your royal rut affected us all. The village was the cause of this then. Some threat to castle security. I too would feel relieved then at their dismantling.

The Queen rolls her eyes.

## THE QUEEN

All you speak of is work! Years you've served here and it's as if you barely know me. That is exactly how I got into the rut!

She takes a deep breath.

## THE QUEEN

Let us state the obvious. As we can all tell-

She does an elaborate spin.

## THE QUEEN

I'm an artist and all artists must grow. Experiment, push boundaries. For so long I've been in a rut about my life, my artistry. My paintings for example! Ugly, uninspired, every night I burn them.

## THE JESTER

The castle heating is provided by our Majesty's contempt for her art.

## THE QUEEN

But no more! I've found the most thrilling medium for my art. It'll elevate me and really seal my legacy. It inspires me to get out of bed, day after day.

## THE KNIGHT

That still doesn't explain the spray.

## THE QUEEN

Ugh! This topic is obviously lost on you. This explanation is over.

## THE KNIGHT

Why would art lead you to kill subjects?

## THE QUEEN

Enough. I don't want to have to explain everything again!

## THE KNIGHT

But those people-

## THE QUEEN

Stand down, Knight. That's an order.

## THE KNIGHT

I'm sorry but-

The Queen sings "*Flowers and Bodies*". She sits back down on the throne. The Knight clutches their fist in restraint.

## THE QUEEN

Whew that wore me out. Jester!

## THE JESTER

Yes, my Queen?

## THE QUEEN

Wrap this up! I'm off to go play with some of the new "material" you brought in.

The Queen sashays offstage. The Jester's physical posture falls as she exits. He turns to the remaining two.

## THE JESTER

Now listen up, you two! The Queen's expecting resistance in the incoming days from the peasants. It's your job now to make sure those farmers don't come climbing up the castle walls.

## THE MERCENARY

Finally an opportunity for carnage. My blade's thirsty.

## THE JESTER

Feel free. More and more I find that the peasants need to be reminded of their place.

## THE KNIGHT

"Reminded of their place"? What I'm reminded of is you being down there with them just a few years ago.

## THE JESTER

That person is dead. Now focus on your task.

## THE KNIGHT

Why? Worried another peasant might come replace you? Thank goodness that won't happen, since you're helping our queen kill innocents.

## THE JESTER

To obey her was a direct command from The Queen. Shall I inform her we have a rebel?

## THE KNIGHT

No need. Excuse me, I have duties to attend to.

The Knight pushes The Jester out of the way, leaving in a huff. The Mercenary sits there, shifting his pants.

## THE MERCENARY

That got pretty hot. Wouldn't mind Queenie stepping on me either. With the two of you, who do you suppose would be the sword and whose the sheathe?

The Jester stares him down.

THE MERCENARY

What? Are there workplace romance rules around here?

THE JESTER

Enough out of you! Now go follow him, I fear his loyalty wavers.

All exit, The Mercenary takes the throne with him. The Jester sets up the bridge for the next scene.

### SCENE 3

The Witch walks up to a bridge, the two follow behind her, she stops.

THE WITCH

Just beyond this bridge is the castle. You see it? Just beyond the foliage.

THE HERO

Quite the sight! A shame it is a danger to stay idle. I could stand here for days.

THE HEALER

The drawbridge is taken in, they're not taking visitors. Must be expecting resistance from the townspeople. If we can find the servants tunnels, we can still reach her.

The two turn to The Healer. The Witch smiles.

THE WITCH

Seems our Healer knows more than they let on.

THE HEALER

Drop it.

THE WITCH

One might think you have experience in this circumstance.

THE HEALER

Well "one" should keep her thoughts to herself.

The Witch goes to The Hero.

## THE WITCH

In any case, I want to thank you. I'm going to make a name for myself on this mission. I'm not going back to that swamp.

He smiles.

## THE KNIGHT

Who goes there? State your purpose.

The Knight goes onstage. He approaches them from the other side of the bridge.

## THE HERO

Someone approaches. Allow me to take the lead. I possess the most charisma.

The Hero turns to The Knight

## THE KNIGHT

Please disperse from the area, The Queen will not be taking visitors today.

The Healer jumps The Hero's words.

## THE HEALER

On account of what?

## THE KNIGHT

Healer? I didn't know your route took you inland. We've no need of your potions I'm afraid.

The Knight spots The Healer's sword. He puts his hand on his own.

## THE KNIGHT

State your purpose!

## THE HERO

Justice!

The Hero unsheathes his sword.

THE KNIGHT

As I feared.

The Knight unsheathes his own. The Witch turns to The Healer.

THE WITCH

Men sure do love to pull their swords out rather quickly.

THE KNIGHT

Please rethink this. We do not need to fight.

THE HERO

Then present your Queen so that she may answer justice!

THE HEALER

Does The Queen know about what happened to that village? She did it. I can see it in your face. No one else could kill them like that. I need to see The Queen, she's making a big mistake using that spray.

The Witch is blindsided by what she hears. The Hero ignores it.

THE HERO

The Queen shall answer for her crimes or face my blade! I am The Hero and I am here to save The Garden!

The Mercenary creeps onto the stage, he lands near The Knight, watching the scene unfold. The Witch sighs.

THE WITCH

Give it a rest. This knight is obviously exhibiting odd behavior and I for one would like to question him, not a corpse.

THE HERO

My companion is offering you a moment. Speak then.

THE KNIGHT

Thank you, my lady.

The Witch lights up.



## THE WITCH

My lady? So generous. Some here may disagree with you. Queens kill people all the time, and I care not for that. What puzzles me is the configuration of the corpses. Was there an intention?

## THE KNIGHT

Please I can't answer your questions. Just leave the premises, I don't wish for more innocents to die.

## THE WITCH

We have no intention of returning from whence we came. But to avoid your death answer the question.

## THE KNIGHT

I can't tell you what I know!

The Healer closes into The Knight.

## THE HEALER

So you do know something. We'll sooner strike you down than leave!

The Healer unsheathes their sword. The Healer closes in on The Knight.

## THE MERCENARY

Oh no you don't, love.

The Mercenary steps in and deflects the sword with his own. He restrains The Healer, who drops their sword. The Knight turns to face The Mercenary. The Witch's eyes grow wide.

## THE MERCENARY

Your welcome.

## THE KNIGHT

What are you doing here? I have the situation under control.

## THE MERCENARY

Ungrateful prick. You told me you never fought so I came to save your ass. Last time I get nice. Got myself a nice little prisoner though. Little mummy bitch.

THE HERO

Unhand them!

The Hero rushes forward with his sword at The Mercenary, The Knight deflects the blow. The Witch hyperventilates. The Witch speaks in between breaths.

THE WITCH

Take The Healer. But let The Hero and I pass.

THE HEALER

Witch!

THE WITCH

I will see this dream through!

The Hero turns to The Witch.

THE HERO

Companion? We will not leave anyone behind!

As he turns, The Knight knocks him out with the pommel of his sword.

THE KNIGHT

I'm sorry.

THE MERCENARY

You do got some bite to ya!

THE KNIGHT

Do not kill that prisoner, allow me to take The Healer to the dungeon.

THE MERCENARY

Are you joking?

THE KNIGHT

Do it and I'll tell The Jester you defiled the throne. He'll cut your pay.

The Mercenary grunts and shoves The Healer to The Knight.

## THE MERCENARY

Take em to the dungeon, I don't care. Go on get out of here!

The Knight hesitates and leaves with The Healer. The Mercenary goes to cut the throat of The Hero.

## THE WITCH

We made a deal!

## THE MERCENARY

Why should I listen to you?

## THE WITCH

Because I am a friend of The Jester. You will hear what I say and benefit greatly from it. Let us begin a dialogue.

## THE MERCENARY

Just what are you up to?

## THE WITCH

Taking my own future into my hands. I'm going to become Queen. That knight would never listen but you seem like a man who speaks coin. Allow me to pass and aid me when I challenge The Queen.

She approaches her and grabs her, pulling her head back.

## THE MERCENARY

You're asking for a lot for a lady I ain't slept with. Tell me why I shouldn't slit your throat right now.

## THE WITCH

Because blood is free. Let me through and you will find yourself with a quarter of the castle's coffers. More even!

He lets her go.

## THE MERCENARY

I'll take your word for now. I'll even ask The Jester about you. But screw me over and I'll do way worse than kill ya.

He exits, leaving The Witch and The Hero. She removes a root from her bag. Crushing it, she mutters something under her breath. She sprinkles the root on him. He shifts for a moment, then jolts awake.

THE HERO

Unhand them!

He searches for his sword and arms himself to face imaginary opponents. The Witch puts a hand on him.

THE WITCH

Settle down.

THE HERO

And you. You said you would help us.

THE WITCH

The fight was doomed from the start, what I did was avoid all our deaths. I'm not immune to impalement you know.

The Hero falls to his knees.

THE HERO

I failed. I couldn't protect my companion.

THE WITCH

Oh hush The Healer is being brought to the dungeons. You may still see them yet. We must now search for the servant's tunnels they mentioned.

THE HERO

Mom. Dad.

THE WITCH

My hero?

THE HERO

Go on without me. I will only slow you down.

She frowns.

## THE WITCH

What's slowing us is this sudden hesitation. Stand we must defeat The Queen.

## THE HERO

They all struck so fast, I couldn't even help. Just like those bandits.

## THE WITCH

No! You will stand and finish this mission. I will see this vision come true.

He curls into a ball.

## THE HERO

What's going on? Who are those men!? Someone help me!

## THE WITCH

Bastard. I will not be lead astray. Not now.

She goes to her bag and take out several ingredients.  
Mixing them together, she smiles and looks to The Hero.

The Witch sings "*The Witch Waltz*".

## THE WITCH

Now dear, let's go find the servant tunnels. I have a throne to claim.

The Hero takes out the bridge set up and follows The  
Witch's exit.

## SCENE 4

The ROGUE pushes a dungeon cell onstage and sits alone  
in it, filing her nails. She attempts to file the cell bars but  
then shrugs and resumes on the nails. The Knight enters  
leading The Healer to the cell. The Rogue perks up.

## THE ROGUE

Hey wait, hold on. They're not coming in here right?

## THE KNIGHT

The two of you are sharing.

The Knight opens the cell up. The Healer sighs and enters the cell, The Knight closes it. The Rogue rushes to the bars to meet The Knight.

THE ROGUE

Come on, it's me! How many times have you arrested me now? Where's the loyalty? Don't you think I deserve my own cell, minus a bandaged roomie? Maybe some nice pillows too and a pot to piss in but those are negotiable!

THE KNIGHT

There's no space. Perhaps if you hadn't stuck to your name and lived life as The Rogue then you wouldn't keep ending up in here. And you're safe, The Healer is good folk.

THE HEALER

You have to let me out then. Whatever The Queen plans to do with that spray will end up killing everyone here. This kingdom will also become lost!

THE KNIGHT

I have to figure out more information. I can't sit by while she kills innocents but-

THE HEALER

But what? Strike her down!

THE KNIGHT

My family has served The Garden's monarchy for generations. I can't just throw all of that away.

THE ROGUE

He's probably just scared of losing his retirement plan. Trust me, I get it.

THE HEALER

Who are the nobility to play with the lives of the people? You're just like her, then.

THE KNIGHT

I need time to think. I haven't made any decisions yet!

THE HEALER

You already made one when you arrested me. Get away from me.

The Healer slithers to a corner of the cage.

## THE KNIGHT

Take it from me, these days the dungeons may very well be the safest place here. I'll be back soon.

The Rogue ears perk up hearing that. The Knight exits.  
The Rogue turns to The Healer.

## THE ROGUE

I snore.

## THE HEALER

What?

## THE ROGUE

Pretty bad actually, I think it's got to do with my nose shape. I figured you'd find out sooner or later so I'd rather be honest about it now.

## THE HEALER

I'm not sure if we'll even make it to nightfall. She could put my head on a spike any minute now. Or even yours.

## THE ROGUE

That's a fun thought though isn't it? I mean what else would we amount to if not intimidating castle décor? And with your bandages it might even be a little more spooky. Like Halloween themed.

Silence.

## THE HEALER

Well I don't know about you but people need my help out there.

## THE ROGUE

You a rebel? Is there a rebellion going on? I swear I miss everything. That's what The Knight meant by it's safer here. Bet he thinks he's doing me a favor, putting me right on The Queen's lap. Idiot.

The Healer slinks back to the ground.

## THE ROGUE

No no! Not the time to be defeated. I still need you to be chatty. If something big is happening in The Garden I want to know about it. Call it pure curiosity, or a need to be as far from the danger as possible.

## THE HEALER

I'm not interested in helping you, I need to help The Hero. He's stuck with that Witch.

## THE ROGUE

So you are rebels!

## THE HEALER

Leave me alone.

The Rogue saunter about the cell for a moment, letting nail file hit each bar. She lands in front of The Healer.

## THE ROGUE

What if I got you back to them? In exchange for the info. You see, some may call me a dastardly lockpicker, I call it a talent.

## THE HEALER

You'll get me out?

## THE ROGUE

We can pinkie swear if it makes you feel better.

The Healer lets out a deep sigh. The Rogue cozies up to them as if being told a story.

## THE HEALER

Do you remember The Lost Kingdom?

## THE ROGUE

A bunch of blokes turned up dead and no one knew why.

## THE HEALER

Their own people kill them, using a spray. Peasants spraying knights who sprayed nobles. An airborne nerve damaging gas that to this day still surrounds that kingdom. The Queen is remaking it for some reason but will only remake the past. She's already wiped a village out.



## THE ROGUE

And they teach you this in rebel academy? Or is that some backstory I'm seeing?

## THE HEALER

We don't have time for that! What matters is that I'm part of a group. One of them calls himself, The Hero. They're coming here to confront and stop The Queen. I can't sit by while the same thing happens to a kingdom all over again!

## THE ROGUE

Okay, okay. I'll join already, you don't have to beg.

## THE HEALER

You'll face The Queen?

## THE ROGUE

I'll get you to your friends. After that, all bets are off.

The Rogue takes out a hand to shake but The Healer hesitates.

## THE HEALER

The Knight mentioned you being a thief.

## THE ROGUE

He said a rogue. Totally different lifestyles.

## THE HEALER

I just need to know if you can truly be trusted.

## THE ROGUE

How about I show you that you can trust me?

She picks up a rock.

## THE ROGUE

Knight! Oh please, someone fetch The Knight. Come quick! Please help us! The Healer is hurt!

## THE HEALER

What?

The Rogue chucks the rock at The Healer's head with deadly precision.

THE HEALER

By the- ow!

THE ROGUE

They're hurt!

The Knight comes rushing in.

THE KNIGHT

Who's hurt?

THE ROGUE

They're hurt!

The Knight turns to The Healer.

THE KNIGHT

Are you hurt?

The Healer speaks through gritted teeth.

THE HEALER

Very hurt.

THE ROGUE

You must do something! If they die on your watch, I'll never forgive you!

THE KNIGHT

I rarely see you so spirited.

The Knight get closer to The Healer. The Rogue goes to the edge of the cage.

THE KNIGHT

I'm sorry about before. I hope you're alright. Let me see your wounds.

He takes The Healer's hands and brings them close inspecting their head wound. The Rogue grabs The Knight by the neck, pulling him away.

THE ROGUE

Round 2!

The Knight grabs at his neck to try to remove The Rogue's grip.

THE ROGUE

Stop squirming. You're making a scene! You're making a scene! You're making a scene!

He flails around until he drops to the ground. The Rogue bends down and picks up his keys.

THE ROGUE

What a drama queen.

THE HEALER

Did you kill him?!

The Rogue opens the cage.

THE ROGUE

Nah we go way back so I wouldn't do him dirty like that. He's asleep but now we have our way out.

She jingles the keys. The Healer hits her upside the head.

THE ROGUE

Ow!

THE HEALER

Why didn't you warn me that you were going to hurt me?

THE ROGUE

Well I needed your performance to be believable. And you don't look like the type that can catch. You know, too many blows to the face. That's why you got them bandages right?

## THE HEALER

I'm already regretting escaping with you.

## THE ROGUE

Come on, we got a deal. We have a hero to meet.

The Rogue rushes ahead, The Healer follows. The Knight wakes up and moves the set.

## SCENE 5

The Mercenary brings the throne onto the stage and sits on it after a job well done. He gets comfortable and falls asleep. The Witch enters with The Hero carrying all her possessions.

## THE WITCH

The castle walls. Feels like home. Would you believe that this isn't my first time in a castle? And it feels the same as before. Natural stone turned to human use. Walls built to protect those inside, leaving the worst to stay outside. But a mistake was made and someone better was left outside, for so long. Oh, but I'm inside now.

## THE HERO

The home of great evil! Soon they shall fall on my blade!

She holds his face.

## THE WITCH

Patience, my sweet. And silence. Before a great king arises, the subjects must fall in line.

Her words make The Hero lose his sense of personality and stand at attention. She gestures to The Mercenary. The Hero takes his sword out and walks over, he holds it by his throat. The Hero grabs The Mercenary's hair, waking him up.

## THE MERCENARY

What the- what's the big idea? Don't do anything funny now or you'll regret it.

The Witch perks up and gets close to The Mercenary.

THE WITCH

Greetings! What a pleasure to see you again. I didn't quite catch your name before.

She leans in for a whisper.

THE WITCH

I'm The Witch.

THE MERCENARY

I'm just The Mercenary. What happened to our deal?

THE WITCH

Nothing at all! Just wanted to make an impression.

The Witch looks at The Hero who lets go of The Mercenary. The Mercenary holds back a chuckle.

THE WITCH

Now keep up the rest of the deal and see the same results.

THE MERCENARY

Heard you loud and clear, my lady!

THE WITCH

Such formalities! I feel like a royal already.

THE HERO

Where have you taken The Healer?

THE WITCH

My hero! That is not our current concern.

He once again drops his personality.

THE HERO

Of course, what does my beauty suggest?

THE MERCENARY

Ah, you got him whipped. Aha!

She turns to The Mercenary.

## THE WITCH

The Queen will never meet with rebels. Tell her she is now entertaining guests.

## THE MERCENARY

On it!

The Mercenary rushes offstage. The Queen enters and stops him.

## THE QUEEN

Damn, big ass castle and I'm still bumping into people.

She sees The Witch and The Hero.

## THE QUEEN

Ugh peasants. Tell them to come by later, I thought we closed off the castle.

## THE WITCH

Like many monarchs, you forget about your servants. And rats use tunnels.

The Queen approaches them.

## THE QUEEN

Do you know who you speak to, girl?

The Witch curtsseys and bows to her knees.

## THE WITCH

Of course. The Queen of The Garden, in all her splendor! I've dreamt of this moment for quite some time actually.

She approaches The Queen and takes her hand.

## THE WITCH

To witness you so close is quite the marvel. So beautiful and elegant. Like a bird perched on her nest, watching over the rest. She seems so far from the worms, but break her wings and watch how quick she falls to meet them.

## THE QUEEN

What? You speak nonsense! Get away from me!

The Queen pulls away but The Witch grabs onto her sleeve. She rips The Queen's sleeve. The Queen recoils, The Mercenary steps in between them, as does The Hero.

THE WITCH

And a wing breaks.

THE QUEEN

He has a sword! They're rebels!

The Hero breaks through the spell for a moment. He tries to speak, gritting to say the words.

THE HERO

We saw what you did to that village--can not stand by while you kill innocents! I am The Hero-defeating you!

THE MERCENARY

Cut the hero speech, chump.

THE QUEEN

So you're here. Congratulations. That doesn't mean you are going to stop my art project!

THE WITCH

Art? You were doomed from the start then. Our queen, the social pariah or the artistic undertaker.

THE QUEEN

Hush! You speak like you know me but you know nothing! To be surrounded by the beautiful flowers of The Garden, only to see that your art doesn't even get close. I tried painting the sun, I sculpted the stars, even drew the flowers themselves. None of it measured up. A peasant got mouthy with me, he laid dead on the floor in seconds. Don't drag him away, I want this one. I touched his mouth, so easy to manipulate, limbs moving wherever I pleased. Like a doll. When he started rotting, I loved it. The fleeting nature of it. I found it, beauty.

THE MERCENARY

Yeesh. Yikes.

## THE HERO

Smelly sculptures?

## THE WITCH

As riveting as your grandeur ideas are, I've never quite been the artistic type. I propose that we skip The Queen's ideas for gregarious art pieces and end her life here. Her legacy being just that, here.

## THE QUEEN

You want to kill me? I'd like to see you try.

The Queen turns to The Mercenary

## THE QUEEN

If she tries anything, kill her, and The Hero too.

## THE MERCENARY

Let's have a bit of fun.

He winks to The Witch. The Witch puts her hands on The Hero's face.

## THE WITCH

Remember our dance? There's just a few more steps now.

The Hero stands at attention, entranced. The Witch and The Queen turn to face each other. Both the men draw their swords. They engage in a battle.

## THE QUEEN

You fools don't know who you pit yourself against. I carry the power of the Lost Kingdom with me!

She takes out the spray bottle full of the Lost Kingdom's gas. She attempts to spray the fighters.

## THE MERCENARY

Watch it! You almost got me!

The Hero goes to The Queen and knocks the spray bottle from her hands. The Mercenary trips The Hero, disarming him. The Hero appears dazed.



## THE MERCENARY

This is your hero? Pathetic. You can't play by the rules if you want to win.

The Mercenary turns his blade to The Witch.

## THE QUEEN

And I believe that's checkmate. Now you girl, you will burn for ripping my sleeve!

## THE MERCENARY

Not so fast love.

He turns his blade against The Queen.

## THE MERCENARY

Speaking of rule breaking.

## THE QUEEN

Are you thick-headed? Finish the girl off! Is there an issue?

## THE MERCENARY

Oh trust me, I have no issues finishing girls off. But I think it's about time we discuss our payment.

He turns to The Witch.

## THE MERCENARY

I've talked to your "friend". It's a promising plan.

The Witch walks to The Queen.

## THE WITCH

It seems you've miscalculated.

The Queen backs away from them all.

## THE QUEEN

Speak clearly, or I shall call upon my knights!

## THE WITCH

Feel free. I for one, could watch a bit more swordplay.

THE QUEEN

The Knight! Jester!

THE MERCENARY

Finally I can get some blood in.

The Mercenary grabs The Queen, restraining her. The Hero's head clears up, breaking the spell. He observes the scene.

THE HERO

What the- how did I get here?

He walks to The Witch but spots The Mercenary.

THE HERO

The Mercenary! Where did you take The Healer?

The Hero grabs his sword and faces The Mercenary.

THE WITCH

My hero, now is not the-oh. It seems the effects have worn off.

THE HERO

You did something. We kissed and I do not remember anything!

THE WITCH

I promised you victory and here it is.

THE HERO

By controlling me? And allying with him? These are not the actions of heroes!

THE MERCENARY

Oh shut it!

THE HERO

I will not!

THE WITCH

Such a harsh tone doesn't fit you. Look The Queen sits, defeated.

The Witch goes over to The Queen. She bends down to grab the spray bottle.

THE WITCH

Our destination reached, must we argue over the path?

THE HERO

This is unacceptable! What happened to that girl from the swamp, who sought to save this land and earn noble status? Heroic status?

THE WITCH

She's dead and you will be too if you don't fall in line.

The Hero takes his sword and faces The Witch.

THE HERO

I will strike you and The Queen down. I will bring justice to The Garden!

THE WITCH

You should have died with your parents.

The Hero looks at her as she sprays him in the face. He screams, grabbing his wounds. She keeps spraying him as he convulses. The Queen tries to move away but The Mercenary pulls her back. The Hero then curls upward like a cockroach, his face frozen in pain. The Witch turns to The Queen who faces away from her.

THE WITCH

Quite the tool, I never got to see it in person! The Lost Kingdom, those sadists.

THE QUEEN

I don't fear dying so do your worst.

THE WITCH

For a woman who dreamed of shaping dead bodies into art, I find you rather lackluster.

The Witch takes off her cloak and covers The Hero with it.

THE WITCH

What a mess. Where is a handmaiden when you need her?

THE JESTER

My Queen. You called?

The Jester enters, the sound of his bells come to a halt when he witnesses the scene.

THE JESTER

What- My Queen- and you!

THE WITCH

And me!

THE QUEEN

It's the rebels. Or rather the rebel.

The Witch approaches The Jester.

THE WITCH

It's so nice to see you again. The Jester, is that what they call you now?

She laughs to herself. The Jester looks at The Queen and into The Mercenary's eyes.

THE JESTER

I am The Jester. And I see you do not intend to stay The Witch.

THE WITCH

Speaking of attaining my new label. You may think me bold but I already have a request.

She goes over to The Mercenary and unsheathes his sword, carrying it to The Jester. He hesitates before taking it.

THE JESTER

I am no warrior.

THE WITCH

And I am no fool. I need to know if your commitment to this plan is true. Slay The Queen.

THE QUEEN

He would never!

THE JESTER

I thought I was only supposed to help you get in-

THE WITCH

And I thought the warrior I brought would have defeated her, but we must all adapt. Kill your queen.

The Mercenary perks up.

THE MERCENARY

This is so gnarly! Is anyone else hard?

THE WITCH

Why do you hesitate?

THE JESTER

A moment more is all I need. I'm simply caught off guard.

THE QUEEN

Where is The Knight? Guardsman!

THE JESTER

Your majesty, please calm-

THE QUEEN

Oh shut up.

THE JESTER

Your majesty please do not yell.

THE QUEEN

Why are you even listening to her? Fetch The Knight! You're really considering this.

The Jester turns to The Witch.

## THE JESTER

Will a strike through the heart suffice?

The Witch nods. The Jester turns to The Queen.

## THE QUEEN

When I was in my room I used to dream of ways to bring my art to life. I see now that it wasn't my art that was the problem, but my audience. What do you think you stand to gain? That you'll one day rise above this station? Then this is your greatest joke yet! Do whatever you want to me, but you'll always be just a jester, a fool. My only regret being that I never painted with your blood!

The Jester stabs The Queen with the sword. She exhales and looks down to her wound. She turns her head to take a last look at The Mercenary, the throne and then The Jester. She smiles and closes her eyes, turning motionless. The Mercenary releases her, she slumps to the ground.

## THE WITCH

Lovely work. I'd shed a tear if I wasn't so full of adrenaline.

## THE JESTER

I humbly offer my services to you, My Queen.

The Mercenary takes his sword back and inspects the blood.

## THE MERCENARY

Very nice! A plan to usurp, who would've thought. How do you two know each other?

## THE JESTER

We grew up together, in the swamp.

## THE ROGUE

I heard the swords from over here!

The Healer and The Rogue come running in. The Rogue reads the room and turns to The Healer.

## SCENE 6

THE ROGUE

Yeah I think I found them.

THE HEALER

It's The Witch!

THE WITCH

Ah The Healer. Your ability to be wrong continues. I am the ruler of The Garden.

THE ROGUE

You're the queen? And that woman in the dress bleeding out over there is who? The Jester?

The Jester throws a pointed look at The Rogue.

THE HEALER

What are you talking about? That is The Queen! You beat her? Is she-

The Witch pulls out the torn sleeve from The Queen's dress and approaches The Healer.

THE WITCH

Normally I wouldn't come to you for advice but what do you think of this dress color for me?

THE JESTER

Quite in fashion this season, which is spring. Cause it's always spring here, since it's a garden.

The Healer ignores them both and inspects The Queen. They sniff the air.

THE HEALER

Burning? The spray! This room has the spray!

THE WITCH

That was ages ago, I'm certain the gas has dissipated by now.

The Healer spots The Hero's corpse. They walk over to body and lift the cloak, falling back after seeing The Hero.

## THE ROGUE

You know what? Call me crazy, but the last time I was here I recall a lot less dead bodies.

## THE MERCENARY

Better get a better memory.

## THE ROGUE

“Better get a better”? Ugh, are you a mercenary? It shows.

## THE MERCENARY

Watch what you say to me!

The Mercenary turns his sword on The Rogue who is unfazed.

## THE ROGUE

Jokes on you, I'd love to die.

## THE HEALER

Dead.

## THE ROGUE

Not yet, but toxic masculinity over here may kill me.

The Healer shoots up.

## THE HEALER

The Hero is dead. That idiot! He just wanted to save us. But The Queen's dead too. What's your role in this?

## THE WITCH

Heroes fall when they come up short. Queens die when they lose all support.

The Healer looks at The Mercenary

## THE HEALER

And him. He saw what his queen's spray does then he decides he want to be good? You're disgusting.

## THE MERCENARY

Ah, you're still so behind, love!



## THE WITCH

Not quite. It was I who ended our hero's life. I admit the spray gave us quite the spectacle.

## THE HEALER

You sprayed him?

The Healer looks at The Witch and backs up. The Rogue sees this and eyes the room, looking for a way out. He spots The Jester's hat. He calls to The Mercenary.

## THE ROGUE

Hey small dick, come on and kill me already!

## THE MERCENARY

Bitch! Get over here!

The Mercenary swings at The Rogue who dodges with grace. She kicks him in the nuts and he drops his sword. The Rogue grabs The Healer's hand and runs, snatching The Jester's hat and throwing it at The Witch's face. She recoils. The two run offstage. The Witch chases them but stops.

## THE WITCH

Damn it all! I want them dead!

She throws The Jester's hat at The Mercenary, who is still recovering from his grave injury.

## THE JESTER

Your majesty but we don't know where they'll hide. They could choose anywhere in The Garden.

The Witch looks at the spray bottle. The Knight walks in but hides.

## THE WITCH

The former queen wanted to spray The Garden. I say, why waste a perfectly good plan? We'll spray the outermost regions and work our way in.

## THE JESTER

But your majesty, you can't rule a kingdom of corpses.

## THE WITCH

My plan isn't to kill, it's to draw those rats out. I can't truly be The Queen until everyone falls in line.

## THE MERCENARY

See she's got hotness and brains. But uh, how do you know they'll come back?

## THE WITCH

The Lost Kingdom perished in a similar way. The Healer won't allow themselves to watch history repeat itself.

The Witch gestures to the throne. The Mercenary takes it offstage. The Jester grabs their hat and follows The Witch offstage. The Knight observes the bodies and makes a decision.

## SCENE 7

The Rogue runs unto the stage holding The Healer's hand. The Healer throws their hand back, escaping her hold. The Healer's bandaged hand unravels revealing scars. They hide it quickly.

## THE ROGUE

What are you doing? Look, can't you be a liability later? We're barely outside the castle.

## THE HEALER

It's over. Don't you know what happened back there? The Hero died.

## THE ROGUE

Uh yeah and then I very skillfully got us out. That's two escapes now, and not one thank you. You're not a very grateful person are you? Not to mention, The Queen died too so it's like one point for the good guys.

## THE HEALER

All you've done since I've met you is be an ass. We're out of the castle, our deal's over.

## THE ROGUE

Our deal ended in that throne room. Call this, community service.

## THE HEALER

Then why did you even come with me if this is all a joke to you?

## THE ROGUE

Well you don't see it as a joke so it's not funny if you die.

## THE HEALER

We should have stayed in those dungeons.

## THE KNIGHT

I told you they were the safest place.

The Rogue perks up.

## THE ROGUE

Enjoy your cat nap? I'm just kidding, are you here to arrest us cause I will kill you this time.

## THE KNIGHT

When I woke up, I rushed to the throne room and I saw her there. My queen, dead. Your hero, gone. I know what I have to do now. I want to save The Garden. Please allow me to join your rebel cause.

The Knight gets on one knee and presents his sword.

## THE HEALER

You killed him. You knocked The Hero out, allowed me to be taken hostage. Now you want to join the cause you've crippled? I told you, you made your decision when you locked me in that cell!

The Healer pushes him down.

## THE ROGUE

Let's hear him out.

The Healer turns to The Knight.

## THE HEALER

If you wish to help, leave me be.

## THE KNIGHT

You must know that The Witch is going to spray the whole Garden looking for you.

## THE HEALER

She won't be looking long. I'll bring the fight to her, I have to.

## THE KNIGHT

That is also what she is anticipating.

## THE ROGUE

Then you gotta start getting creative, be one step ahead of her. He's a warrior, I'm a... multi-talented individual. You got a sword on you but I can tell you're no pro. What do you do?

## THE HEALER

I'm a healer. The Healer. But not a good one it seems.

They take their bag off and drop it. The Rogue picks it up.

## THE ROGUE

No time for moping, come on I bet you have a ton of goodies in here.

She takes out the bundle of herbs.

## THE ROGUE

Ah I see you like to have a bit of fun! Don't worry I get it, it's all medicinal.

The Healer takes the herbs back.

## THE HEALER

Don't joke! Those were for the sick! To ease them, the herbs have a numbing agent. It can be an anesthetic.

## THE ROGUE

Numbing? Like the person can't move?

## THE HEALER

It's so they don't squirm when you operate. It's for surgery.

THE ROGUE

But does it have to be?

THE KNIGHT

To what degree does the numbing agent work?

THE HEALER

It's not enough to kill her if that's what you're asking.

THE KNIGHT

Can you make it able to stick to a sword?

THE HEALER

If I congeal it.

THE ROGUE

Mix some poison powder in there and bam! You got yourself a slow killer. Your welcome.

THE HEALER

I'd have to go back to my hut for the ingredients but that is something we can use.

THE KNIGHT

It is a plan. Or at least the beginning of one.

The Healer turns to The Rogue.

THE HEALER

Then I have to go immediately! I can't have her start spraying the villages. And you're coming with me.

THE ROGUE

Me? Can't I just stay here and smoke those herbs?

THE HEALER

If you come to my hut with me, I'll give you something that'll really knock you out.

THE ROGUE

Consider me on board.

THE KNIGHT

Then we're off.

THE HEALER

The Rogue and I are.

THE KNIGHT

Do you still not trust me?

THE HEALER

You served under The Queen for years. Complicit in what she did to everyone and you called it duty. You took taxes in coin and blood. You proved that to me when you locked me up.

THE KNIGHT

I may have made the wrong decision but can't I make a new one?

THE HEALER

You didn't make a decision. The Queen died, so your duty to her was over. You're just switching jobs. Now excuse me, I have a land to save.

The Healer exits.

THE KNIGHT

I should have left The Queen's service as soon as I discovered her plan.

THE ROGUE

Don't be so hard on yourself. The Healer will change their mind.

THE KNIGHT

You think so?

THE ROGUE

I hope so. If we get attacked, we'd need a meat shield.

The Knight laughs and punches The Rogue on the arm.

THE KNIGHT

Sorry for arresting you all those times.

THE ROGUE

It's okay. Choking you out was pretty fun.

THE KNIGHT

Ah, yes. That.

## THE ROGUE

I should follow them, gotta make sure no witches nab em y'know?

The Rogue exits but turns back around.

## THE ROGUE.

Sometimes life makes the decision for us. Don't knock yourself out over it.

## THE KNIGHT

Thank you.

## THE ROGUE

Get it? Knock yourself out. Cause I- nevermind.

The Rogue chuckles and exits. The Knight stares in their direction and looks down at his sword. He follows.

## SCENE 8

The Jester jingles as they lug a desk unto the stage. They are in The Queen's bedroom. They look through her things. The Witch enters, wearing royal attire.

## THE WITCH

What do you search for I wonder? Given the chance to have free reign over an old master's room, I bet any servant would be filled with glee.

## THE JESTER

I search for nothing, your majesty. I simply am reminiscing. Looking through these old objects to remember her, but do not doubt I am loyal to you.

## THE WITCH

Do we still need to talk with such flavor? Can't you let your guard down around me?

## THE JESTER

It's been many years since I've seen you last, forgive me for being cautious.

## THE WITCH

That's what I always enjoyed about you, The Peasant.

## THE JESTER

That name is dead to me!

## THE WITCH

Is The Jester any better? I recall us, knee deep in dirt wishing for luxurious meals in the castle. Plotting our way in.

## THE JESTER

You were to find help outside, I was to infiltrate inside.

## THE WITCH

Yet you hesitated when the time came. Tell me, did you love The Queen.

## THE JESTER

I supposed I enjoyed the responsibility.

## THE WITCH

You killed her because you'd never rise above being a jester with her. You're hoping to gain more from me, from this plan. The new issue however is that you fear me way more than her.

## THE JESTER

I assure you, it's nothing of the sort! I 'm satisfied to continue as I am.

## THE WITCH

And yet, another issue. I do not want you to be a jester anymore.

## THE JESTER

Surely you jest.

## THE WITCH

Remember the swamp? One day, the carriage passed the roads and I spotted the most beautiful noblewoman heading for a visit to the castle. I called to you and we gawked at her together. Inside the carriage, she seemed so disgusted with what she saw, us. A question found itself in my head that day.

## THE JESTER

Why am I here and she there?

## THE JESTER

A matter of birth should not determine one's role.



## THE WITCH

Since then I wanted to be royalty, a poor girl crying in the mud hoping for things to change. But that girl is gone and I have to hold this role now.

## THE JESTER

The Jester. I do not want to live my whole life as a jester.

## THE WITCH

You won't. Just as I am no longer The Witch, but the ruler of The Garden. Must you live as a jester?

## THE JESTER

You are the ruler of The Garden and not a witch. And I am not a jester. A horrible label.

The Witch takes The Jester's hands.

## THE WITCH

If we are to give you a label wouldn't you prefer The Advisor?

## THE JESTER

Is that what I am?

## THE WITCH

It's what you could be.

## THE JESTER

It's what I want!

She takes her hands back. And motions towards his hat.  
He takes it off and gives it to her.

## THE WITCH

Then so be it.

## THE JESTER

Thank you.

## THE WITCH

You must also know that I've appointed The Mercenary to be captain of the guard. It seems like The Knight didn't like his label either.

## THE JESTER

His decision will be his undoing.

## THE WITCH

That does however mean that the rebels have muscle so do not underestimate them. It'd be a shame if you were to lose your position after so many years of dedicated service.

## THE JESTER

I shall do my very best!

## THE WITCH

Good cause you do know what happens if a ruler falls again right? Those rebels will never trust you. So don't get any funny ideas. You and I despise those labels of our past but the rebels will give you a new one. Traitor, killer, jester.

She approaches him, he backs up.

## THE WITCH

They'll strike you down so fast you'll miss your jingling days at court.

He crashes into the desk. She hands them back their hat.

## THE WITCH

So you remember what's at stake.

She exits. The Jester throws his hat at the ground. He rushes to pick it back up after hearing the noise. He then takes the desk off the stage.

## SCENE 9

The Witch chases The Mercenary through a horizontal path to mimic a hallway.

## THE WITCH

Do you know what's at stake? You can't leave now. The situation is precarious. I forbid it.

The Mercenary turns around.

## THE MERCENARY

You can use all the big words ya want but my contract's up.

The Witch holds his face.

## THE WITCH

Is there anything I can do to convince you?

## THE MERCENARY

You're not as hot as you think, love. Plus we can't talk till you pay me for getting you this queen gig.

## THE WITCH

Why would I pay you when you haven't finished the job?

## THE MERCENARY

Don't get all technicality shit with me.

## THE WITCH

I gave you the captain of the guard position-

## THE MERCENARY

And I told you, I didn't want it! Are you so afraid of a few chickees who escaped the farm?

## THE WITCH

I'm absolutely not! But I have to eliminate any threat then I can rest easy. You dispatched The Hero before and I need the best sword on my side for whatever idiot they decide to throw in my path. I refuse to be blindsided by some bandaged runaway who thinks they can change history.

## THE MERCENARY

You're more than capable of handling all of this. This kingdom's gotten way too messy. I don't care for drama.

## THE WITCH

You will stay and you will listen to your queen.

## THE MERCENARY

Far as I'm concerned, I'm not paid and you're not my queen. Besides missives came in this morning, got a new job lined up. Kingdom's a bit far from here so I'll have to leave tonight.

## THE WITCH

And how much are they paying you? I'll top it.

## THE MERCENARY

Love, you won't even pay what you owe me now. I'm not an idiot. Look you got the rest of the guards. Who needs a captain? I get along just fine leading myself around.

## THE WITCH

How about a reward that goes beyond coin? Ever thought of settling down?

## THE MERCENARY

Here? I know you're the ruler and all and I don't mean to insult ya love but it's not the most hospitable place.

## THE WITCH

Serve the crown now and I will give you land and all the peasants that come with it. They'll work for you and bring you endless coin.

## THE MERCENARY

You serious?

## THE WITCH

Their daughters will cheer at their first blood because they'll know that means they stand a chance to bear your child.

## THE MERCENARY

Interesting offer.

## THE WITCH

So you'll take it-

## THE MERCENARY

Hush love, let a man finish. If you're so desperate to keep me here, I'll go big money. I want to be king.

## THE WITCH

What? Are you mad? Why would I give up any power I've gained?

## THE MERCENARY

Think about it, love. Does your royal status matter when you're dead? You seem the type of woman who makes plans, so make the plan.

She gets close to The Mercenary's face.

THE WITCH

You'll rally the guards and kill every last one of them when they get here. When their eyeballs lie in my ingredient basket only then will I consider this offer.

She storms offstage. The Mercenary fixes his erection and looks outward. He sings "\$\$\$ & PWR" The Witch reenters.

THE WITCH

Come on now! We don't have time to waste!

He nods and exits along with her.

SCENE 10

The Healer and The Rogue traverse through the woods.  
The Rogue stops.

THE ROGUE

Are close to your hut? I swear I can already smell the mud walls.

Rustles can be heard nearby. The Healer takes their sword out. The Rogue looks around for a weapon and then shrugs.

THE HEALER

We've been followed! Reveal yourself.

The Knight enters.

THE KNIGHT

It's just me, please do not be afraid.

THE HEALER

I told you to stay away and you follow us? I knew I couldn't trust you!

THE KNIGHT

I've followed you for quite some time, yes. I've even observed, I'll admit. When you went to change your bandages-

THE HEALER

You watched us- me?

THE KNIGHT

It looks like The Hero's body. You're from The Lost Kingdom.

THE ROGUE

It was backstory!

THE HEALER

Get away from me.

THE KNIGHT

What happened to them? You know how they fell! No wonder you're trying to stop this.

THE ROGUE

I will admit, this doesn't look good on your part, Healer. Just be honest with us.

THE HEALER

I...

The Healer is quiet. The Knight to approach them. The Healer allows it. He goes to remove the bandages from The Healer. Scarring is apparent all throughout their face.

THE HEALER

I have to stop her. The Garden can't get lost too. I don't want to run anymore.

The Healer turns to the two.

THE HEALER

I was more than a citizen. I won't hide it anymore. Not if I'm going to die anyway.

The Healer sings "**Pretend**". The Healer falls to their knees. The Knight bends down to them.

THE KNIGHT

You may have made a decision before that wasn't great but you're making the right one now. As am I. And we shall atone together.

The Knight stands and lends a hand to The Healer. The Rogue goes to The Healer.

THE ROGUE

Charming.

THE HEALER

Charm is an odd word for it. Before I was The Healer, I was The Advisor. I was different then. I sought the most logical solutions and I ended up losing the whole kingdom. Charming indeed.

THE ROGUE

Having such a cause to fight for. You got people you're avenging, people you wanna save, atonement. There's charm to that. And I want in.

THE KNIGHT

This isn't some heist you know?

THE ROGUE

It may not be but who says I can't be a hero too right?

The Healer smiles and takes his hand. The Healer looks at The Knight.

THE HEALER

We can all be heroes. We'll create what we need at the hut then we're off to the castle. The drawbridge will be closed but I think I know a way in.

The Healer smiles. They all exit.

## SCENE 11

The Mercenary walks out holding the throne, The Witch follows him. He places it down and she sits. He smiles at her and she turns her attention somewhere else. The Jester enters wearing new clothes, those fitting a new role and holding a ye old clipboard and feather pen.

THE JESTER

My queen.

They bow to her.

THE MERCENARY

Aww I'm going to miss those little bells.

THE JESTER

I don't need them anymore. I've taken to new pastures.

THE MERCENARY

Huh?

THE JESTER

I'm not a jester anymore.

THE WITCH

His attire is hardly the subject of this meeting. Have you finished preparations?

THE JESTER

Why yes my queen, the townspeople have been suffering and they know exactly who to blame. The rebels are being put as the face of their punishment.

THE WITCH

Wonderful. Attack the hive or be swallowed by the worms.

THE MERCENARY

Yeah, let them play in the mud! Little pigs!

The Witch clears her throat.

THE WITCH

Guard captain!

THE MERCENARY

I suppose that'd be me. Perhaps call me future king or prince consort? I'll even settle for lover.

THE WITCH

Guard captain, have you completed your tasks?

THE MERCENARY

Why yes I have actually! The guards are posted all over the castle! There's no way they're cracking this vault, got her tighter than a virgin.

The Jester jots something down on their board.



THE MERCENARY

Hey! Whatcha writing there?

THE JESTER

Could be your update, or it could be every violation you did in the last 20 seconds.

THE MERCENARY

Violation? A king can't violate anything.

The Witch snaps to him.

THE WITCH

You're not king yet!

THE JESTER

And besides, even the king must uphold the new rules placed by our queen.

THE MERCENARY

Rules? What kinda new rules?

THE JESTER

Holding oneself to a royal standard at all times has become mandatory.

THE WITCH

You see my fantasy has become my reality. I am royal, blue bleeds from my blood and I refuse to have my surroundings any less than that.

THE JESTER

So unless you want to defy your queen?

THE MERCENARY

Don't you worry. I promise to be on my very best behavior. For today at least.

He laughs. The Witch rolls her eyes.

THE WITCH

Now back to the matter at hand. I have finished prepare my spell ingredients and erected a magical trap in case they try to get clever.

THE MERCENARY

Hehe erect.

The Mercenary catches himself and looks to The Jester who writes something down. The Witch rises from the throne.

THE WITCH

And this is for you.

She hands them the spray bottle containing The Lost Kingdom's spray.

THE WITCH

Ready to be free of our labels? To finally cement our positions.

THE JESTER

This is not how I dreamt of things in that swamp. I thought you and me would dine on pheasants and drink wine. But there really is only death, isn't there?

THE WITCH

This is the last step to our dream! We're so close!

THE JESTER

I suppose we have to be, there doesn't seem to be much choice.

The Witch's smile fades.

THE WITCH

Everyone as you were but stay on your toes. A garden gives, this one takes.

The Witch exits. The Mercenary watches her walk away, adjusting his erection. He looks to The Jester who writes something down. The Mercenary takes the throne and exits, The Jester follows.

## SCENE 12

The Healer, Knight, and Rogue all creep through a darkened stage. The Knight sneezes. The Rogue turns to him.

THE ROGUE

Uhhh what part of “be quiet as we sneak through the servant’s tunnels or The Witch will kill us” did you not get?

THE KNIGHT

Sorry, allergies.

THE ROGUE

Swell. I’ll tell that to the guards as they put our heads on spikes.

THE HEALER

You know now you’re the one making the most noise.

THE ROGUE

Yet your attitude is still the loudest thing here.

THE KNIGHT

You’ve hardly been a reliable guide down here. And I can barely see.

The Rogue flips The Knight off.

THE ROGUE

Good!

THE HEALER

Are we close?

THE ROGUE

I see a bit of light.

THE KNIGHT

Is it the castle back entrance?

THE ROGUE

That’s what I’m trying to figure out.

The three continue walking and the stage gains a small amount of light as they arrive at a huge door.

THE ROGUE

It’s a door.

THE KNIGHT

We can see that. Open it.

THE ROGUE

What if it's trapped? Yeah, didn't think about that right?

The Healer approaches the door.

THE HEALER

There is something different about this door. Look at it, has a sheen. Specks of something are on the door.

The Healer tries to open it. THE DOOR speaks.

THE DOOR

At least buy me dinner first!

THE HEALER

What?!

THE DOOR

None shall pass!

THE ROGUE

It's a talking door.

THE DOOR

That's a rather simplified statement. What if I said "oh look, it's a mediocre looking woman!"

THE ROGUE

Oh great, it's a sassy talking door.

The Knight steps forward.

THE KNIGHT

How do we pass?

THE DOOR

You don't! Weren't you listening? I said none shall pass.

THE KNIGHT

I can't accept that. Sorry.

THE HEALER

There must be a way for you to let us through!

THE ROGUE

I say we just grab your sword and slice through it.

THE DOOR

I'm right here you know?

THE HEALER

We can't just break through the door because it'd make too much noise. The guards would hear us.

THE DOOR

Lucky for you all, our queen has actually given me a way to open. Solve my riddle and you may pass.

THE ROGUE

This smells like a setup.

THE DOOR

I promise to open. Just solve this riddle. Red, blue, hot, cold, full, pure. A word after each, it's the feast of the leech and a figure of speech. Say them all once you know, the entrance will show.

THE KNIGHT

Why would The Witch even set up a riddle?

THE HEALER

She wants us to come.

THE ROGUE

Should we leave then? Find another way?

THE HEALER

No, she's bound to know every way in. We make our stand here. Can you repeat the riddle?

The door sighs heavily.

THE DOOR

Red, blue, hot, cold, full, pure. A word after each, it's the feast of the leech and a figure of speech. Say them all once you know, and the entrance will show.

THE HEALER

I still don't quite understand.

THE KNIGHT

Damnably riddles are meant to be unsolvable. People just ask you them so you can give up and they feel superior when they tell you the answer.

THE ROGUE

Red and blue, hot and cold? It's opposites.

THE KNIGHT

I don't recall full and pure being opposites though. The opposite of pure would be dirty, for full, empty.

THE ROGUE

Maybe she messed up? Can we get a hint?

THE DOOR

No!

The Knight approaches the door.

THE KNIGHT

We want to end the harm that The Queen began and The Witch seeks to continue. Please let us enter, do not let our story end here. I beg of you. Let us risk our lives fighting for our home, to save it!

The door imitates snoring.

THE DOOR

Did you say something?

The Knight pulls out his sword.

## THE KNIGHT

Maybe slicing through it isn't such a bad idea after all.

The Rogue pulls him back.

## THE HEALER

Maybe pure is empty, like a clean plate is empty of food. It could be considered pure, never touched.

## THE ROGUE

And full is like a plate with a load of slop on it.

## THE HEALER

Exactly! It's opposites in that sense.

## THE KNIGHT

The riddle said to say a word though. After each of those. Red, blue, hot, cold, full, pure.

## THE HEALER

And it's a figure of speech.

## THE ROGUE

I don't even know what that is.

The Healer laughs in disbelief.

## THE HEALER

I swear I can hear her laughing at us and calling us dumb. She lives for this, causing others torment. Typical of a witch.

## THE ROGUE

Ha don't forget, she's a royal now. Or so she'd claim. A real and true blue blood.

The Healer turns to The Rogue.

## THE HEALER

What did you say?

## THE ROGUE

That The Witch thinks of herself as a royal. You saw her whole act, asking you for dress colors while The Queen bled out.

THE HEALER

There again!

THE KNIGHT

What are you saying?

THE HEALER

Blue blood. Bled out? The riddle, it said the feast of the leech!

THE KNIGHT

Leeches consume blood, oh!

THE ROGUE

Can someone fill me in?

THE HEALER

Blood! It's blood!

THE KNIGHT

Figure of speech. Red blooded, blue blooded, hot blooded.

The Healer approaches the door.

THE HEALER

Cold blooded, full blooded and pure blooded.

They hear a click, the door goes silent. The Healer puts their hand on the door and opens it.

THE HEALER

We did it!

THE KNIGHT

Damned riddles.

THE ROGUE

Everyone here is welcome, cause I definitely helped solved that.

The Rogue and the rest step through the doorway. They then hear guards coming.



THE KNIGHT

Do you hear that? Are those guards?

THE HEALER

No, it can't be!

The Rogue listens closely.

THE ROGUE

There a bit away but they're coming fast.

THE HEALER

We solved the riddle, The Witch must've felt it. It's a trap, she wants to push us further in.

THE ROGUE

They seemed armed. And honestly could probably outrun you two.

THE HEALER

Then we must go.

The Healer and The Knight start moving but The Rogue look back and doesn't move. The Healer turns back.

THE HEALER

What are you doing?

THE ROGUE

The guards are bound to catch the two of you, they won't if they got a distraction. Nice to meet you, my name is distraction.

THE HEALER

That won't be a distraction, you'll die.

THE KNIGHT

We don't have time for this. They're coming!

THE ROGUE

Then you two better get going.

THE KNIGHT

Is this what you wanted? Why you joined? To die?

THE ROGUE

Dying for a cause really is something right?

THE HEALER

No! No more death, I'm not leaving you behind.

THE ROGUE

If you don't leave soon, you'll die too.

THE HEALER

Then I will die, but I will not let you sacrifice yourself.

The Knight looks at The Healer.

THE KNIGHT

Many more will die if we waste this opportunity and die here. The Witch needs to be stopped for The Garden's sake!

THE HEALER

I can't allow it.

The Rogue rolls her eyes and gets close to The Healer.

THE ROGUE

Look I'll make this quick. Yes, this is what I wanted. You said something back in the forest, about me being a hero. I liked that, what you said. I felt hope, I feel hope. Now let me be a hero. I want you to go on and save this damn kingdom. Can I tell you a secret?

She whispers to The Healer.

THE ROGUE

I don't want to die anymore. I feel hope and fear. It's amazing.

She smiles. The Healer hugs her.

THE HEALER

I won't forget you.

THE KNIGHT

You weren't half bad for a thief. And you weren't bad at all for a hero.

THE ROGUE

Come on now, get out of here.

The guards' sound grows louder.

THE ROGUE

Now!

The two run off. The Rogue stands in front of the magic door, positioning herself for the first strike. She takes a deep breath and looks at the door.

THE ROGUE

Do you think they'll win? Be real shit if they didn't.

The sounds grows immensely loud and the stage goes black. A throne is set on the stage.

SCNEE 13

Lights back up. The Healer and The Knight run into the throne room. The Mercenary is hidden. He swings but misses the two.

THE MERCENARY

And here I thought this'd be quick.

THE HEALER

The Mercenary!

THE MERCENARY

Actually love, it's the king now. I gots me a promotion. Look at you Knight, guess you'll get some fighting experience after all.

THE KNIGHT

Scoundrel, I've been waiting for this.

He draws his sword. As does The Healer.

THE MERCENARY

Ah, little chickees want to play? Well, big cocks here so let's play.

The Mercenary fights the two of them with ease, deflecting their blows and pushing them out of his way.

THE KNIGHT

I can't get a hit in!

THE HEALER

We just need one!

THE MERCENARY

So you got tricks? I got some too.

He trips The Knight, disarming him.

THE MERCENARY

That's the difference between me and you, too stuck in playing by the rules. Let's fight dirty.

He tries to strike The Knight on the ground but The Healer stops it with their sword. The Mercenary overpowers The Healer and pushes them away. The Knight crawls away and bites The Mercenary's leg.

THE MERCENARY

Now you wanna play dirty? Bastard!

The Mercenary kicks The Knight's head, knocking him out. He laughs and faces the throne.

THE MERCENARY

This is just too easy. This throne is as good as mine. I can see it now. The mercenary king! And bet that witch thought I would die here. Well she was right about one thing. I am the best fighter in this land. Not one blow landed to me, that must be a new record.

THE HEALER

Is he...monologuing?

The Healer prepares their sword and slowly approaches their foe.

## THE MERCENARY

It's no fun though when I can even take two swords at once. I once knew a girl who could take two sword at once. I should send for her.

The Healer strikes The Mercenary but he turns around and catches the blade in his hands. He throws it across the room and grabs The Healer by the throat.

## THE MERCENARY

You think I'm that dumb love? Did you really think you were going to kill me with one swing of a sword?

## THE HEALER

No, but I was sure you'd be dumb enough to kill yourself.

## THE MERCENARY

What are you talking about?

The Mercenary's body stiffens. The Healer removes his hand from their throat. The Mercenary's body sags to the floor, The Healer helps him lay down.

## THE HEALER

Confused? The sword. It didn't need a deep cut, just enough to break skin. I never imagined using an anesthetic like this but dire times bring innovation right? And you're right, I can't kill you. Venom however, will. So just close your eyes and take it.

The Healer closes his eyes. They then move to the unconscious Knight. He wakes up, he spots The Mercenary's body.

## THE KNIGHT

You did it. You're amazing.

They both smile.

## THE HEALER

It's not over yet. Can you stand?

The Healer helps The Knight to his fight, he picks his sword back up.

THE KNIGHT

Be on your guard. She could be anywhere.

THE HEALER

No, this is the throne room, where it all happened before. She wouldn't be anywhere else.

The Healer moves about the room

THE HEALER

Isn't that right? Where are you? Show yourself!

The Witch enters, she is outfitted for combat. She slowly claps.

THE WITCH

I suppose I should thank you.

She walks over The Mercenary's still alive but frozen body.

THE WITCH

His days were numbered. Got a bit too ambitious, this one. Quite the loser isn't he? He couldn't even kill one of you before he went down.

THE HEALER

You just use people, like The Hero!

THE WITCH

Not very different from you I would think.

THE HEALER

I would never do that, everyone who stands with me wants to protect The Garden.

THE WITCH

I see you're missing a rogue. Still letting people die for you? Guess old habits die hard.

THE HEALER

What are you getting at?

## THE WITCH

I knew you would come back. You couldn't stand to watch another kingdom fall could you?

## THE HEALER

You were there. In The Lost Kingdom.

## THE WITCH

Only for a time when I was a young girl. Only meeting with liaisons cause no one wanted to be seen with a swamp witch. But they needed me, wanted my knowledge. I recall an Advisor needed it for a weapon of some sort.

## THE HEALER

You made the gas.

## THE WITCH

And it seems the time for talk is over. You came here to face me, correct? To close this story, the one caused by the great failure of The Advisor.

She looks to The Knight.

## THE HEALER

He already knows. You have no power here.

## THE WITCH

Quite the contrary, I have all the power. And I'm about to get a lot more!

The Witch takes out a potion and drinks it's contents. They all sing "**A Happy Ending**". The Jester enters, hidden.

The Witch shrieks in pain and falls to her knees. The music stops. The Jester has stricken her at her legs. She turns to see The Jester.

## THE WITCH

Coward!

## THE JESTER

You removed my bells. It seems you have miscalculated.

## THE WITCH

But I removed so much more, your old title! Our plan!

## THE JESTER

And I am grateful. But this is nothing like I thought. We are not noble, you'd kill me as soon as I spited you.

## THE WITCH

So you're killing me first? And you think yourself the wisest? The winner of this game? You parasite!

## THE JESTER

It's just that isn't it? That is my true label. A parasite. From one host to another. But no more. I have lost all my chess pieces and been put into check by both the rebels and by the queen. So I'm quitting the game.

The Jester turns to leave but The Witch grabs their ankle.

## THE WITCH

You're not going anywhere!

They struggle to get her off but she holds her grip as The Jester drags her about the room.

## THE KNIGHT

What the-

## THE HEALER

I have a plan, but I need your help.

The Knight nods. The Healer motions The Knight to move toward the throne. They both get behind it. When The Jester drags The Witch toward it, The Healer calls out.

## THE HEALER

Do it! Now!

The Knight realizes the plan and pushes the throne over. It lands on top of The Witch, crushing her.



## THE WITCH

Damn it! What? I can't lift it. I can't feel anything. No. No. No! This can't happen! I won't lose here. This is my story! My story!

The Knight walks over to The Witch but The Jester stops him.

## THE JESTER

Allow me.

The Witch screams the whole time as The Jester takes a dagger out and slits her throat.

## THE HEALER

You.

## THE JESTER

She warned me you know? That I wouldn't be able to switch again. When The Hero died I felt like I was on the right side. That was all me and her wanted, to be on the right side. Something different, better than what we were. You guys are the heroes. I'll see myself out.

## THE HEALER

Wait!

The Healer goes to them but The Jester pulls out the portable spray and aims it at The Healer.

## THE JESTER

There's very little left. Don't end your story like this.

The Healer backs off.

## THE JESTER

Thank you.

The Jester exits. The Rogue enters and stops at The Mercenary's body.

## THE ROGUE

Aw. I missed all the fun!

The Healer runs to The Rogue and hugs her.

THE HEALER

I thought you died.

THE ROGUE

And I thought I told you, I want to live. You did it!

THE KNIGHT

We did it. Welcome back.

The Knight comes over and hugs The Rogue but she winces.

THE ROGUE

Not too hard, they may have gotten a few hits in.

She lifts her shirt to reveal massive wounds.

THE HEALER

By the kingdom, sit down I have to start working on this right away!

The Healer sets The Rogue down and works on her wounds. The Rogue chuckles.

THE ROGUE

Who was that person I passed in the hall? I didn't recognize them.

THE KNIGHT

Settle down, thief. We'll have plenty of time to chat after.

The lights dim as all exit. But come back up shortly after. The Jester enters, spray in hand. They look back to make sure they weren't followed. Looking out into the audience, they tear up. They look down to the spray in their hands and breathe deep. The Jester aims the nozzle at their face. A spray is heard. Blackout.