

LAMENTATIONS

RIELLE AND THE OWL HUNTER

PART II

Written by
Daniel Prillaman

3/21/24

1315 S Lake Wilmer Dr. Apt 202
Sandusky, OH. 44870
434-981-0043

*The following play is copyrighted material, the sole owner of which is the author, Daniel Prillaman. If you enjoy it, please feel free to share it with whomever you like or leave a recommendation on NPX.

For performance/royalty rights, please contact me at danielprillaman@gmail.com, through the New Play Exchange, or through www.danielprillaman.com.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(in order of appearance)

QUEEN WINFRID: Queen of Rivka.

LORENZ: Secondborn son of Aymon and Winfrid. Heir to the Throne.

ROCQUELLION: A knight of Her Majesty's Court.

OTHSRYD: A servant of the royal family. (Portrayed by Moon.)

CAPITAL CITIZENS: Gathered throughout. A lesser noble, an artisan, an innkeeper, a whore, and a rebel.

BARNABAS: High Owl Hunter. Perhaps a sage.

MOON: A sage. Perhaps a god.

SUN: A sage. Perhaps a god.

FRIEDE: Youngest child and only daughter of Aymon and Winfrid. Counterfeiting Rielle, an innkeeper's daughter.

MÆRWYNN: An Owl Hunter.

KIRIK: A guard of Mithun. (Portrayed by Sun.)

PEVERIL: A citizen of Mithun. Son of Iosefka.

WRULFE: A citizen of the Capital. Blacksmith.

CORINE: A citizen of Mithun. Formerly a nurse. (Portrayed by Moon.)

KING AYMON: King of Rivka. Upon his deathbed.

ATTICUS: Firstborn son of Aymon and Winfrid. Dead.

MITHUN CITIZENS: Gathered throughout. A priest, a cobbler, an innkeeper, a farmer, and a player.

VERMILLA: A common whore. (Portrayed by Sun.)

IOSEFKA: An apothecary of Mithun. (Portrayed by Sun.)

DODD: An Owl Hunter.

MARSHALL: Marshall of the joust.

OSOTRI: A joust competitor.

OTHER CHARACTER NOTES:

DOUBLING: With regard to doubling, SUN and MOON portray the roles noted above.

The rest of the cast may be doubled as is reasonable to serve the producing company's needs, but some suggestions are:

- The same actor may portray WRULFE and DODD
- The same actors may portray CAPITAL CITIZENS and MITHUN CITIZENS
- CAPITAL CITIZEN (REBEL) may portray MARSHALL
- CAPITAL CITIZEN (WHORE) may portray OSOTRI

THE HORSES: The horses, LÆNDIRIL and those unnamed, may be created by actors, puppets/puppeteers, or any chosen means of the producing company.

THE JOUST: If desired, it should be reasonable for FRIEDE, MÆRWYNN, PEVERIL, and WRULFE and/or DODD'S actor(s) to change dress, acting as additional CAPITAL CITIZENS.

SETTING:

- *Wolcairn - The Ægenwulf Castle
- *The Capital of Rivka
- *Mithun – A village in Gonærík (and surrounding countryside)

The scenes of this story should flow together
As seamlessly as possible

Regarding that goal
The sets should probably be more suggestive
Rather than constructed in painstaking detail
Having said that
Chart what territory thou wishest

TIME:

Spring.

CONTENT WARNING:

Graphic violence, false imprisonment, brief description of sexual assault.

THE STORY SO FAR – THE KING’S PLAGUE

King Aymon Ægenwulf of Rivka lies upon his deathbed, stricken by an unknown illness.

Under direction of Queen Winfrid, the Princess Friede volunteers and embarks on a journey west to Mithun in search of Iosefka, an apothecary that might know of a cure. Shortly after setting out, a man’s violence causes the loss of her horse and more, as she takes the man’s life in order to defend herself. She crosses the path of Mærwynn, an Owl Hunter, who puts others in their graves in exchange for coin. Horseless and in need of aid, Friede convinces the Hunter she is an innkeeper’s daughter named Rielle. Under the guise of hiring her for her unique services, the duo set out for Mithun.

In the Capital, Prince Lorenz frets that his older brother and heir to the throne, Atticus, has designs to murder him and Friede once he becomes King. Since their father’s demise seems all too near, Lorenz takes bold action and bribes Atticus’ lover, a whore named Vermilla, to slip him poison in his sleep. Vermilla balks at this gambit, as does Lorenz’ servant, Othsryd, that he has brought along to assist him.

Friede and Mærwynn encounter a grisly totem of human remains, constructed by the Beast Countess, Ankaret, a mad woman said to torture all who trespass upon her claimed land. They argue about going around her territory, but Friede, unable to admit the truth behind her desire for haste, pushes Mærwynn from her own horse and runs off. Friede is captured and wounded.

Lorenz’ rash decision turns itself upon him. Having been told of his brother’s machinations by Vermilla, an aghast Atticus corners Lorenz and threatens him, declaring that he shall taste of his own medicine. At dinner, Lorenz’s cup will contain the poison he intended for him. Atticus expects Lorenz to drink it. If not, he shall hurt Othsryd. Gravely.

An injured Friede, although treated as a guest, struggles in the clutches of Countess Ankaret and her company. In desperate effort to demand fealty, she reveals herself to be the Princess, but to no avail. The Countess places Friede in a device that deprives her of her senses. Inside, she envisions and confronts not only the man she killed, but a mysterious woman dressed in the light of the moon who has followed her the duration of her journey.

A bloodied Mærwynn fights her way to Friede in rescue. The Countess allows them to leave, but not without inadvertently revealing Friede’s heritage. She sends her “guest,” Neerabosi, after them in pursuit. In the following fight, Friede kills Neerabosi, not in defense of her life, but in willing desire to escape. Mærwynn rages at Friede’s lies, furious at the deception. But recognizing that the King is dying and her own actions, admits hers and Friede’s “fates are twined together now.” The two head for Mithun, ruminating on the goodness of King Aymon.

Lorenz waffles and frets but accepts the consequences of his actions. He apologizes to Othsryd without betraying his brother’s treachery. At dinner, he drinks of his own poisoned cup, welcoming his death.

The next morning, Lorenz awakens, shocked, as the Queen informs him that she had switched her children's cups before they did eat.

Atticus Ægenwulf is dead.

Killed by his own mother, for his reign would bring the Crown and their family to ruin.

"Grief is in two parts.

The first is loss.

The second is the remaking of life."

-Anne Roiphe

*"Of all the gods only death
does not desire gifts."*

-Aeschylus

Darkness.

Thunder.

Rain.

A dirge begins.

Lights slowly rise on a massive gathering of people, illuminating what night they can with torches.

It is a funeral.

In memory of Prince Atticus Ægenwulf.

Present, dressed in mourning, QUEEN WINFRID, LORENZ, ROCQUELLION, OTHSRYD, CAPITAL CITIZENS, and BARNABAS.

The dirge continues.

OTHSRYD steps away from the throng.

She removes or unwraps a piece of clothing, revealing silvery light and becoming the MOON, a sage.

The dirge continues.

MOON

What is death
To those of us left behind?

Grief
Sorrow and wailing
They are our customary attendants
Only uniform in their visitations

But I invite thee
Consider the other end
Of that weighted scale

What if the demise of one
Is one that bringeth thee delight?
Freedom?
The sweet taste of justice at long last realized?

If a man's designs are to cause a death
What could be more delicious than the very fruits of that labor?
Wherefore should he weep for that which is his goal?
There is no shame in this

The world would tell thee so
The world would shun thee
Proclaim a sinner

That is fear
A cowardice in those who would prevent thee
In seeing thy desires
To their finish

*SUN, another sage, dressed in golden fire,
enters.*

She shares a moment with MOON.

MOON

You see
In these realms we share
There are those who mourn
And those who eat
The ravenous possess pow'r
And the bereft their meat.

*SUN raises a hand, casting a rising daylight
upon the gathering.*

MOON makes no objection.

*She eyes SUN as the funeral procession
disperses.*

The dirge finishes.

MOON

But enough philosophy.

Everything shifts.

SUN

A girl's father is dying

FRIEDE appears.

*As SUN and MOON recount the story, it
happens in dumbshow to some degree.*

MOON

A princess' father
Which maketh the man dying the King

And a princess will move the earth to save Her King

SUN

He is afflicted

With a malady none can discern
For love
For duty
She setteth out
Leaving her home for a foreign land
In search of one who might cure her father's ailment
A woman she hath ne'er met

MOON

And because her Queen commandeth it
The princess hideth her name
Her heritage

As one doth change their dress
Or putteth on a new face

SUN

The princess becometh a girl
She nameth herself Rielle
And she doth fool all whom she doth encounter

But e'en a ruse triumphant
Protecteth us not from Fate's grand design

MOON

Rielle is attacked
For a man wisheth her ill
She killeth the assailant to save herself

She mourneth

And so meeteth the Owl Hunter

MÆRWYNN appears.

MOON

She who killeth to serve herself

The story continues.

SUN

Rielle doth require the aid of Mærwynn
Who killeth for coin

MOON

And believeth she, the girl's half-truths

SUN

Together
They head for Mithun
To the apothecary, Iosefka

Their path is before them

MOON	
Their path is blocked By an aberrant	
SUN	
A monstrous Countess Who behind her smiles doth revel in violence	
MOON	
The girl is wounded And tortured first in the mind And will	
SUN	
And in her suffering, she confronteth a truth Mayhap one she hath known all her life But ne'er wanted to admit	
COMPANY	
The King is not a good man.	
SUN	
But what man is?	
Mærwynn liberateth Rielle	
MOON	
In their escape Rielle maketh a choice	
SUN	
Where before she killed to defend	
MOON	
She killeth now with purpose	
SUN	
To save?	
MOON	
Or for vengeance? Either way	
SUN/MOON	
The deed is done	
MOON	
To the Hunter The Princess' secret is betrayed	
SUN	
And the Countess still alive	

All their fates are now intertwined
Sewn together

MOON

But how?

SUN

How?

MOON

How?

COMPANY

Beat.

For what shall next occur

SUN

We must watch o'er them once more.

MOON exits.

MÆRWYNN and FRIEDE, the latter now walking with assistance from a crutch(es), traverse forward, away from the SUN.

SUN watches them.

MÆRWYNN and FRIEDE stop.

Just over this next ridge.

MÆRWYNN

...

FRIEDE

What?

MÆRWYNN

We've made it.

FRIEDE

...

MÆRWYNN

Aye.

But far still from the end. Let's go.

MÆRWYNN and FRIEDE continue forward, exiting.

I. MITHUN. THE GATE – DAY VII.

SUN covers her light, becoming KIRIK.

*PEVERIL enters, a cloth over his face,
pulling a wheelbarrow.*

All night again? You should sleep. KIRIK

As should you. PEVERIL

Someone's got to guard the gate. KIRIK

And someone has to burn the bodies. PEVERIL

Doesn't have to be you. KIRIK

I could offer the same retort. PEVERIL

... KIRIK

Chosen or no, our professions are all we've left, aren't they? PEVERIL

... KIRIK
(Grunting)

... (Stiffening)
Stand behind. Two approaching.

*PEVERIL looks behind him, then pulls the
wheelbarrow past KIRIK.*

MÆRWYNN and FRIEDE enter.

Halt! KIRIK

MÆRWYNN and FRIEDE do.

Thou standst before the gate of Mithun. Be thy purpose hither business, pleasure, or something betwixt, thou wilt find it closed. KIRIK

Aye, we can see that. MÆRWYNN

FRIEDE

You do not mean it shall remain so? We are but humble travelers.

KIRIK

I do. And it shall. Particularly to humble travelers. Who most oft deign to presume they are not afflicted with plague.

Beat.

FRIEDE

We are not sick.

KIRIK

And I shall just take thee at thy word?

Go now, and hie thyselfes back to whither thou camest.

MÆRWYNN

We cannot.

KIRIK

No? And why is that?

MÆRWYNN

Her father is sick.

KIRIK

This whole fucking village is sick. There is no more quarter here. For the living or the damned.

FRIEDE

He is not afflicted with plague. Or with us.

We have come from afar.

KIRIK

And how far is afar?

FRIEDE

Several days.

KIRIK

You Rivkans?

Beat.

FRIEDE

No. We have come from the South.

KIRIK

Hunh. Would've explained the thickness of thy pates. Seeing as thou failest to understand the phrase "go away."

MÆRWYNN

And thee the phrase “we cannot.”

KIRIK does not draw her weapon, but she readies herself to do so.

KIRIK

Go on. Give us a reason.

FRIEDE

There is no need for bloodshed. Aye?

Will a little coin help you look the other way?

KIRIK

Money means nothing in a dying village. What, thou wilt make me the richest in the devils’ hells? O thank thee, Southern coinwomen, shouldst thou like me to lick thy feet next?

MÆRWYNN

Then tell us what it would take. We must gain passage and the attendance of your apothecary.

KIRIK

Well. Why didn’t thou sayest as much?

Maybe some luck due thee after all. Apothecary’s right hither.

Beat.

PEVERIL

I suppose I am.

(Removing his mask)

...

Pay Kirik no ill, friends. She is doing her job. But forgive me, I do not know how much help I shall be if the afflicted is not present.

MÆRWYNN

(To FRIEDE)

You said it was a woman, aye?

FRIEDE

(Nodding)

...

Our apologies, are you not Iosefka? We were instructed to seek a woman.

PEVERIL

By whom?

FRIEDE

An old companion. Of hers.

And their name?
PEVERIL

Beat.

Doth it matter?
MÆRWYNN

Beat.

I suppose not. Just curious.
PEVERIL

I'll take you to her.

Peveril.
KIRIK

They're not sick. You can open the gate.
PEVERIL

How can you tell?
KIRIK

Because they haven't coughed up blood since they got here.
PEVERIL

That's all you can ever do.

Thank you.
FRIEDE

O don't thank me yet. Haven't done anything for you yet.
PEVERIL

Leave your weapons with Kirik.

FRIEDE looks to MÆRWYNN for the lead on that, but MÆRWYNN removes her sword and hands it over. Then her bow and quiver.

FRIEDE follows suit and gives KIRIK her dagger.

These look like shit. But it's good iron.
KIRIK

Maybe I'll sell them back to thee cheap.

Enough.
PEVERIL

Come.

PEVERIL exits, and MÆRWYNN and FRIEDE follow.

KIRIK
(Calling off)

Open the gate!

Off, the gate opens.

II. WOLCAIRN. THRONE ROOM – DAY VII.

*QUEEN WINFRID, LORENZ,
ROCQUELLION, OTHSRYD, WRULFE,
and CAPITAL CITIZENS.*

QUEEN WINFRID holds court.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (INNKEEPER)

All's I'm askin' is why did the funeral have to be at night?

CAPITAL CITIZEN (ARTISAN)

The Royals love their aesthetics.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (INNKEEPER)

I had to close me inn. Lost a whole night's business, I did.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (WHORE)

I didn't.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (INNKEEPER)

Hold thy tongue! At least my business is honest.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (WHORE)

Mine is not? I'd wager we share a few clientele between us. I see all manner of folk. Seen the dead prince, too.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (ARTISAN)

Nay. In sooth?

CAPITAL CITIZEN (WHORE)

Oh, aye. Vermilla were his favorite. Several nights a week.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (INNKEEPER)

Tall tales!

CAPITAL CITIZEN (LESSER NOBLE)

She is like correct. The late prince's promiscuous proclivities are a poorly kept secret.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (INNKEEPER)

Well I've never heard of such a thing.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (WHORE)
Just because you haven't heard something doth not make it false.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (INNKEEPER)
I know every spot of gossip in this whole city.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (ARTISAN)
Except for one, it would seem.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (INNKEEPER)
Hold thy tongue!

CAPITAL CITIZEN (LESSER NOBLE)
Would that you all. Some of us are trying to listen to the proceedings.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (ARTISAN)
I hope they will hear me today.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (LESSER NOBLE)
Time shall tell.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (INNKEEPER)
If not, I know a place you might take your repose.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (WHORE)
As do I.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (INNKEEPER & WHORE)
Hold thy tongue!

CAPITAL CITIZEN (WHORE) laughs.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (INNKEEPER)
How darest thou! I shall...

CAPITAL CITIZEN (WHORE)
You'll what? Tell the King?

CAPITAL CITIZEN (INNKEEPER)
Perhaps!

CAPITAL CITIZEN (REBEL)
Good luck.

Beat.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (INNKEEPER)
Excuse me?

CAPITAL CITIZEN (REBEL)
Look you. The King is absent. Again.

He hath missed the last several courts.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (ARTISAN)

You can skip whatever you like when you're the King.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (REBEL)

E'en your firstborn son's funeral?

Beat.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (INNKEEPER)

He wasn't there, was he?

CAPITAL CITIZEN (ARTISAN)

Nay, he was not.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (LESSER NOBLE)

I should think he was too besieged by his grief.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (REBEL)

Mayhap. Or mayhap something else.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (WHORE)

What?

Beat.

ROCQUELLION

The Crown calleth forward Wrulfe Heimgarden.

WRULFE approaches the throne.

WRULFE

(Kneeling)

Your Grace.

QUEEN WINFRID

Rise.

WRULFE does.

QUEEN WINFRID

Our Champion Knight,
Fiery and lethal Rocquellion, yet blessed with temperance, and wisdom so as to make thy
fortunes bold in battle and in court
Tell us how stand the charges against this man
And how is it he hath come to be before us now.

ROCQUELLION

My Queen.

Before your Majesty standeth Wrulfe Heimgarden, blacksmith of the Lower Walls and
Stone Markets. There is but one charge against him. The murder of citizen Gilburn
Uthbar on the eve of the 14th. There were no witnesses to the act. But onlookers
discovered him in his attempts to dispose of the remains.

QUEEN WINFRID

We thank thee.

Master Heimgarden
Murder is an accusation most grave
No sin is greater
To kill another is to mark fore'er thy hands
The stains left upon us in the spilling of blood may be cleansed
But still sleep do they beneath the skin
As maggots, biding amidst our purity
Slowly consuming us from within

Dost thou admit guilt to this act or proclaimest thou thy innocence?

WRULFE

Your Grace, I did kill the man. But I would ask of you the opportunity, if only your kindness would grant it, to explain to you and all gathered wherefore.

ROCQUELLION

All that is sought is confession of the deed. The Queen will now render sentence.

QUEEN WINFRID

Hold, loyal knight

A Queen as we would ne'er deny such a request
It is for no man to prohibit the speech of another
If explanation for this crime is offered, then we shall lend to it our ears

Tell us, goodman
What is it that drives a blacksmith to snuff out the life of his fellow man?
And in craven aspect seek erasure of his evidence from the earth?

WRULFE

By your leave, your Grace.

My means are by no means scant. But I am not a rich man. I humbly sell my weapons and craft to earn my keep and make my way in this life. On the eve in question, I was asleep until a noise from my storeroom did awaken me. I left my bed and caught Master Uthbar in the act of stealing from me. My wares become directly the food that I provide for my family. Without that coin to take to market, we will all starve.

For this reason, I confronted him, and for desperations I know not, he attacked me. I but defended myself. And struck him a vital wound before he could land one in kind upon me. Truly, I did not mean to take his life. Fain would I had not. My family will not survive without me.

With all my humility, I ask your mercy, my Queen.

Beat.

QUEEN WINFRID

Our son.

What sayest thou?

LORENZ

Me?

QUEEN WINFRID

Aye. Bestow upon us thy thoughts. Thou hast heard this man's account. What is the just punishment?

LORENZ

...

Aye, Mother. Your Grace.

...

Forgive me. My head, I am still somewhat distraught. Given our recent misfortunes.

Wilt thou repeat thy words, good Master?

QUEEN WINFRID

If we may sum them, he claimeth it was an accident. Aye? He possessed no designs on killing the deceased, but his hand was forced in protection of his family.

WRULFE

Aye. Your Majesty.

QUEEN WINFRID

So
What is to be done?
In what manner will he atone?
For intent aside
A sword may be reforged
A life cannot.

Beat.

LORENZ

You are right, your Grace. A life cannot.

QUEEN WINFRID

...

LORENZ

I believe intent should mark some importance.

QUEEN WINFRID

Thou dost?

LORENZ

Aye.

QUEEN WINFRID

Wherefore?

LORENZ

I do not believe that I could condemn a murderer with intention and a murderer stricken by Chance's malice to the same fate.

QUEEN WINFRID

...

Well spoken.

Master Wrulfe Heimgarden. It is, then, a most blessed day for thee. Remember our son's words, for he hath spoken in thy favor.

WRULFE

Thank you, my Prince. Bless you.

QUEEN WINFRID

Knight Rocquellion.

Escort him to your guard. Upon his arrival to the prisons he will remain for four and twenty months.

*ROCQUELLION moves and grabs
WRULFE by the arm.*

WRULFE

What? No!

LORENZ

...

*ROCQUELLION begins pulling WRULFE
off.*

WRULFE

You said he spoke in my favor!

QUEEN WINFRID

And he did, Master Heimgarden. Had he not, the price would have been thine own head. For blood spilled, all men must pay the price.

WRULFE

My family!

QUEEN WINFRID

Will be looked after. We are most understanding. And we shall not leave them to the ravages of hunger.

WRULFE

Your Grace! Please! Your Grace!

*ROCQUELLION exits, pulling WRULFE
off, as he continues to scream.*

Beat.

QUEEN WINFRID

With that, we adjourn for this day

But first
An announcement
To all gathered hither

Our late son
Prince Atticus

He shall be missed
These halls, our very streets
Have lost much of their gaiety
And laughter
Their smile

A tragedy hath befallen our great city
Our family
And

Ne'er shall we be complete again

But it is our belief steadfast
Knowing his fondness of pleasures secular
That to mourn in sorrow and lamentations would displease him
In our grief shall we laugh as he
In our grief shall we seek merriment
We shall celebrate and honor his memory
With a joust!
Five days hence!

CAPITAL CITIZEN (LESSER NOBLE)

A joust?!

CAPITAL CITIZEN (INNKEEPER & WHORE)

That'll be good business.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (ARTISAN)

A joust will pack the city!

CAPITAL CITIZEN (REBEL)

God's name.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (INNKEEPER)

And only five days away?

QUEEN WINFRID

Upon the fifth sun
Champions young and old
Mettle unproven and battle-hardened alike
Rivkan or otherwise
All are welcome

And all shall valorous take themselves to the tiltyard and meet one another upon horse
with lance in hand!

Go now!
Make what preparations thou dost require
And spread word
For a joyous occasion shall we make in tribute!

Applause. Roaring.

CAPITAL CITIZENS bow/curtsy and exit.

*QUEEN WINFRID turns to OTHSRYD and
nods.*

OTHSRYD curtsies and exits.

Beat.

QUEEN WINFRID

We have ordered the formation of a commission. For this event there is much which we
must needs prepare. Its first meeting will be at sunfall. Thy attendance will be expected.

LORENZ

Is a joust truly the best course of action?

QUEEN WINFRID

It is paramount. The people crave distraction, and it shall serve us as well. All this thou
wilt come to see.

LORENZ

...

QUEEN WINFRID

We have, too, instructed Knight Rocquellion. Thou art to resume daily practice of thy
riding.

LORENZ

Wherefore?

QUEEN WINFRID

Wherefore? Thou shalt ride in the joust. In place of honor and tribute to thy brother.

LORENZ

...

Friede took my horse.

QUEEN WINFRID

We have others.

This will not be negotiated.

LORENZ

...

QUEEN WINFRID

There is something thou wishest to say. Do so.

LORENZ

...

Mother, I understand thy words and shall not waver from them.

QUEEN WINFRID

But?

LORENZ

I cannot reconcile them with my mind. I feel shunted. In the daze of a dreamer, I stare at our walls and furnishings as if from the other side of the looking glass. Or part of some unseen fog that stretcheth its hand beneath the awnings, inside our most secure chambers.

QUEEN WINFRID

We understand that thou feelest much.

LORENZ

Do you not feel remorse?

Beat.

QUEEN WINFRID

At what, dear child?

LORENZ

...

Thou speakest with solemnity of murder and the depths from whence there is no return, do thine own words not weigh upon--

QUEEN WINFRID holds out her hand. A command, stop speaking.

LORENZ does so.

QUEEN WINFRID

What is thy greatest fear?

LORENZ

What has that to do with--

QUEEN WINFRID

Lorenz.

LORENZ

...

Until some days ago, I would have said death. I believe now those tides have turned to judgment.

QUEEN WINFRID

Thy natural demeanor, Lorenz, is as the rabbit. So oft art thou fretful, restless, ill at ease. But this is only a fault to those who let it be so. The rabbit, too, is mighty. With strong legs to carry him far, with robust seed to spread his influence. He succeedeth for he doth trust in his own instincts. He doth not question himself.

What thou fearest most is the future, my son.

It hath always proved a pointless and empty comfort to tell thee not to worry for it. We understand wherefore. But knowest thou, the future may be molded to suit thy whims. Thou canst control it. But only if thou givest not the past dominion o'er thee. Alter it as thou needst and banish hesitation from thy mind. Fear not what is to pass, make thy desires the things that do. When the predator is near, the rabbit acteth. And he feeleth no guilt for those caught behind.

Thy brother died in his sleep. His heart failed him.

Repeat this in thine own if thou must.

But no more of this shall we speak, and no more shall be spoken.

Beat.

QUEEN WINFRID opens her arms.

QUEEN WINFRID

Come.

LORENZ slowly crosses and accepts his mother's embrace.

He does return the hug, but it is...a most awkward comfort.

QUEEN WINFRID

Thou art mighty, Lorenz Ægenwulf. Thy blood is strong. And it will not fail thee.

LORENZ

Aye, Mother.

QUEEN WINFRID

Good.

ROCQUELLION enters.

The embrace breaks.

QUEEN WINFRID

We shall leave the two of you then. Until tonight.

QUEEN WINFRID moves to exit.

LORENZ

Mother.

“For blood spilled, all men must pay the price.”

QUEEN WINFRID

...

All men, dear.

Beat.

QUEEN WINFRID exits.

LORENZ

...

ROCQUELLION

Your Highness.

III. MITHUN. PEVERIL'S HOUSE – DAY VII.

CORINE.

She sits at a table.

PEVERIL enters, followed by FRIEDE and MÆRWYNN.

PEVERIL

Through here.

CORINE
(Standing)

Peveril.

PEVERIL

What now?

CORINE

Two more during the night.

PEVERIL

Gods.

CORINE

Seems thou hast found two to make up for them.

PEVERIL

Aye. This is--

I know not, to think of it.

Mærwynn. MÆRWYNN

My name is Rielle. FRIEDE

There you have it. Mærwynn and Rielle. PEVERIL

Iosefka? FRIEDE

Iosefka? Me? Nay. CORINE

This is Corine. She used to be a nurse. She's been helping. PEVERIL

Generous of thee to call it that. CORINE

Just...start a new pile. I'll burn more tonight. PEVERIL

Let me. Thou needst must sleep. CORINE

If my dreams were fonder of me, I would. PEVERIL

You need to try. CORINE

... PEVERIL

We'll figure that out later. Wouldst thou give us the room?

Certainly. CORINE

Should I worry for thy well-being in the company of such strangers?

They're not sick. PEVERIL

There's more sickness in the world than plague. Much more insidious, at that. CORINE

If I may, we but seek the aid of Iosefka. We bear no one here ill will or malicious intent. FRIEDE

CORINE chuckles.

What's funny? MÆRWYNN

Nothing. CORINE

Best of fortunes in your search.

Corine. PEVERIL

I'm leaving. CORINE

Before exiting, CORINE embraces PEVERIL and kisses him.

PEVERIL accepts both.

Anon. CORINE

CORINE exits.

Beat.

Well? MÆRWYNN

Have a seat. PEVERIL

I'll stand, thank you. MÆRWYNN

FRIEDE
(Be polite, Mærwynn)

No. Thank you for the respite.

FRIEDE and MÆRWYNN sit at the table.

Is she far? FRIEDE

... PEVERIL

I do not understand. Whither is she? FRIEDE

... PEVERIL

Well...

MÆRWYNN
(A realization)

She's dead.

FRIEDE

...

MÆRWYNN

Isn't she? She's dead.

PEVERIL

...

(Nodding)

...

FRIEDE

Nay.

MÆRWYNN can't help but laugh.

FRIEDE

Nay, she
She cannot be dead

She cannot be dead!

That's not fair, that's
We have come too far to

All that I have

Stop laughing

STOP LAUGHING!!

MÆRWYNN manages this.

Beat.

FRIEDE

This cannot be.

PEVERIL

I buried her myself.

FRIEDE

God above.

PEVERIL

I am sorry to bear you such news.

Greive not all your hopes yet. My mother was a kind woman. She instilled the importance of generosity in me, I promise you. I will help to the utmost of my meager ability.

But I cannot and I will not if you lie to me.

FRIEDE

We have told no falsehoods.

PEVERIL

A necessary lie is the same beast.

I give you no fault, it'd be foolish to admit in this place you two are Rivkan. But I concern myself with what men say to my face, not where they were born. My mother had more dealings in Rivka than anyone in this village, she was from there. To hells if you came from there too, but it was a Rivkan who told you to come. So what I want to know is who that was. And who are you? Really?

FRIEDE

...

My name is Rielle. I run an inn in the Capital with my father.

PEVERIL

The one who's sick?

FRIEDE

Aye.

PEVERIL

...

(To MÆRWYNN)

You the mother?

FRIEDE

Nay.

MÆRWYNN

(Overlapping)

No! No. I am not her mother.

FRIEDE

(Overlapping)

She is not my mother!

PEVERIL

...

No offense meant.

MÆRWYNN

I'm her escort.

PEVERIL

And your trade?

Owl hunting.

MÆRWYNN

Are you here for anyone?

PEVERIL

No.

MÆRWYNN

Escorting isn't typical faire for an owl hunter.

PEVERIL

These are not typical times.

FRIEDE

No. They are not.

PEVERIL

Call it chance, fate, whatever your faith, it hath brought us together. And kept us so. A most unconventional pairing, indeed, but her wishes are mine.

MÆRWYNN

And hers mine own.

FRIEDE

Fair enough, then.

PEVERIL

One question remains. Who told Rielle and the owl hunter that my mother could help?

Beat.

FRIEDE

The Queen.

PEVERIL

Of Rivka?

FRIEDE

I sought her aid to help my father. In her grace, she granted me audience, but her physicians and experts were confounded by his malady. She then told me of your mother. That she was wise unlike any others she had met. Though she did not say how her knowledge of her was born, or how they first made acquaintance.

PEVERIL

...

She confessed it once to me. As a child. Never spoke of it, but let it slip and I pestered her over and over again for the story until she finally gave in. On the condition I never repeat it.

FRIEDE

They knew each other?

PEVERIL

At least the once.

First things first. If I can help, I shall. I won't betray your heritage, but you'd do well to not let us see through you.

Have you a list of your father's symptoms?

FRIEDE removes a glass vial with parchment inside from her pack/clothes and hands it to PEVERIL.

PEVERIL

Any of his urine?

FRIEDE

No.

PEVERIL

Aye, it would be a long way to carry that.

It will take me some hours to look over this. In the meantime, I would--

MÆRWYNN noisily stands from the table and heads for the door.

PEVERIL

I would not wander far.

FRIEDE

Mærwynn. Where are you going?

MÆRWYNN

My horse is slain. You and I both have killed people to get here. And we've arrived only to find the woman we sought is deader than my horse. Our best immediate course is dealing with her kid. Who, in turn, is offering little hope towards a happy ending.

(To PEVERIL)

Meaning no offense.

PEVERIL

None taken.

FRIEDE

...

MÆRWYNN

I'm going to find ale.

MÆRWYNN exits.

Beat.

FRIEDE

I should like keep eye upon her. But if it is well, I should rather remain just a moment or some more.

PEVERIL

Take what time you need.

There is not much left of the public house, but it still stands. I shall come find you once I have considered this.

FRIEDE

Thank you.

PEVERIL

(Chuckling)

...

Don't thank me yet.

Haven't done anything yet.

A moment.

PEVERIL exits, holding the glass vial.

Silence.

The sound of horses on the tiltyard.

The crash of lance against armor.

A body crashing to the ground.

Pain.

FRIEDE hears none of this.

IV. WOLCAIRN. AYMON'S CHAMBERS –
NIGHT VII.

KING AYMON ÆGENWULF rests on his deathbed, sickly and frail.

OTHSRYD silently prays over him.

LORENZ enters, battered from the day's riding.

OTHSRYD looks up at him.

A moment. They have not been alone together since.

OTHSRYD

I have been praying.

Since that morning, I have asked the Lord how is it that Atticus should pass in his sleep just a day after your attempt to coerce his courtesan? God worketh His will through the most unlikely of events, but this? There are miracles and then there are machinations.

LORENZ

I did not do it.

OTHSRYD

At first, I was convinced you had. Know you, it was I who discovered him?

LORENZ

...

OTHSRYD

I went to wake him. And he would not. I shook his frame. I yelled. But I knew the instant I saw him.

It is a requisite of my duty to keep confidence. But you know my heart, Your Highness. And you know that I speak it. I was so angry with you.

Yet speaking to the Queen, she insisted that it was not you. That indeed he did die in his sleep. His heart gave him up. For fear of his father passing, for tragedy's cruel whims. Whatever the cause, it was not you.

LORENZ

No.

OTHSRYD

Which means that neither of you lie. Or you both do.

LORENZ

...

OTHSRYD

Which is it?

LORENZ

What wilt thou do?

OTHSRYD

That depends upon your answer, prithe. Which is it?

Beat.

LORENZ

It is complicated.

OTHSRYD

Lies are not complicated. They are or they are not.

LORENZ

The situation. In which we now find ourselves.

I shall answer plain, I--

(Perhaps looking around first)

My mother killed him. I did not.

OTHSRYD

...

LORENZ

My cup was poisoned. Vermilla did reveal to me Atticus. He placed the poison I intended for him in my cup. And I drank of it.

Upon the morning, Mother told me she had switched our cups. And so he passed. I had no knowledge, in sooth, I thought I ended my life.

OTHSRYD

You what?

LORENZ

I am so sorry.

OTHSRYD

You drank to end your life? Instead of telling someone?

LORENZ

...

He threatened thee.

Beat.

OTHSRYD

I see.

LORENZ

I know not what to do.

OTHSRYD

Aye.

Thank you for telling me. For myself, this night, I think I must take what repose I can. And continue my prayers.

I suggest you do the same. By your leave.

OTHSRYD goes to exit.

But she stops.

OTHSRYD

Vermilla. She is below. In the dungeons.

If you did not know.

OTHSRYD exits.

LORENZ is left alone.

Beat.

ATTICUS (O.S.)

Now that is peculiar.

LORENZ crumbles a little.

ATTICUS (O.S.)

Be that our dear Othsryd spilling secrets and demanding answers?

From behind KING AYMUN, ATTICUS stands, looking quite not dead.

ATTICUS

Perhaps I misjudged her
There may be some fire inside her after all.

LORENZ

I beg thee. Leave me alone.

ATTICUS

Oh, brother, but I have!
I am dead and gone
Look
I am naught but a self-inflicted visage
An afterbirth of thy mind
Spawned in guilt and worry
If thou desirest me leave thee alone then say the words
Send me away
Banish me

LORENZ

...

ATTICUS

That's right, little rabbit
Think of it this way
At least now I'm on thy side
Not going to wish thee ill, then mayhap I would truly die, hahahaha.

LORENZ

...

ATTICUS

So!
What first?

LORENZ

What dost thou mean?

ATTICUS

I am in your head, man
I go whither thou goest
So what first?
We always knew Mother could be a heartless bitch
But upon this occasion I believe she hath outdone herself

Whether you meant to or no
You've stolen my place

When father doth breath his last
Which, let us not deny it
Might as well be tomorrow
The day next
'Tis a miracle he's lasted as long as he hath

I waited so fucking long
For what was owed to me
And thou likely hast the week
Before the throne is yours

So
What are we going to do with it?

LORENZ

I do not want it! I have never wanted it.

ATTICUS

Thou didst try to have me killed!

LORENZ

Because I feared you'd do the same to me! Not because I wanted the throne.

ATTICUS

Oh so sad
Too bad
Matters not anymore

Fool, thou hast power now, thou must use it
Or more than this castle shall call thee coward
All of history shall know thee weak
And useless
The choices are thine, but for the love of God
Make some choice

Avenge me
Keep me buried
But stand not idle in tears and indecision as is thy custom
Or I shall wrench my bones through this earth and tear thee apart

LORENZ
(A laugh or a cry?)

...

What?
ATTICUS

I thought I had.
LORENZ

Made a choice.

During dinner, thy prayer. I thought to switch our cups myself. Roamest thou my thoughts, thou knowest it true. I decided against it. I chose to not.

And in so doing accept thy death.
ATTICUS

Except mother had already done it.
LORENZ

Made that decision for the both of us.
ATTICUS

Aye.
LORENZ

Would that thou hadst
Ridden thyself of the chaos to come.
ATTICUS

I still could.
LORENZ

Aye, thou couldst. Take the entire line down with thee.
ATTICUS

Friede.
LORENZ

Could be dead for all we know.
ATTICUS

...
LORENZ

I want not these responsibilities.

The great rulers never do.
ATTICUS

Our mother is a murderer.
LORENZ

ATTICUS

So able to kill her own son
Imagine what she hath done to strangers

Or Vermilla.

LORENZ

Vermilla?

ATTICUS

She knoweth too much
Wherefore else would she be below?
She'll have to kill her too.

LORENZ

Othsryd knoweth too much.

ATTICUS

Thou knowest too much.

LORENZ

She would not kill me?

ATTICUS

She killed me.

LORENZ

She needeth me.

ATTICUS

Until she doesn't

Until thou art more trouble than thou art worth

Thou becomest a man today, little brother
The time is nigh

Wilt thou follow the rules or make them?

Beat.

LORENZ

I know not.

ATTICUS slaps LORENZ.

LORENZ

Ah!

ATTICUS

Make a decision!!

LORENZ

I HAVE!

ATTICUS

...

LORENZ

I have. I know not how to go about it.

ATTICUS

Oh.

Sorry.

LORENZ

That hurt. How did that hurt?

ATTICUS

Strain not thy mind.

My advice?

Go about it as thou wouldst anything
Start small
Use the information offered thee
And be less obvious than the last time.

LORENZ

Right.

ATTICUS

Now go.

We've a meeting to attend.

LORENZ

Right.

Beat.

LORENZ exits.

ATTICUS watches him go, chuckles.

Looks at KING AYMUN.

Beat.

ATTICUS exits after LORENZ.

V. MITHUN. PUBLIC HOUSE – NIGHT VII.

BARNABAS, KIRIK, MITHUN CITIZENS.

BARNABAS stands behind the bar.

*In a corner, MITHUN CITIZEN (PLAYER)
plays upon a lute or lyre.*

*MITHUN CITIZEN (FARMER) slams an
empty glass upon the bar.*

Another. MITHUN CITIZEN (FARMER)

I think you've had enough, Gregor. MITHUN CITIZEN (PRIEST)

I think fuck you. MITHUN CITIZEN (FARMER)

Another.

BARNABAS
I am in accord, my friend. Forgive me. But I must decline you.

MITHUN CITIZEN (FARMER)
Aye? Decline me?

MITHUN CITIZEN (PRIEST)
Thou art in thy cups, man.

MITHUN CITIZEN (FARMER)
And where else should I be?

One month ago I had a wife and children! Fields to plow. Crops. What have I now?
Plague? Tariffs and corpses?

What good is anything to me but the gift of ale and her numbing, jocular caress?

MITHUN CITIZEN (PRIEST)
Thou makest thyself the fool, Gregor.

MITHUN CITIZEN (FARMER)
Nay, it is thy god who maketh me so!

I have made nothing. What I once made is now lost. Forever. And that be thy god's
doing. Is it not? Dost thou not teach that He is behind all that we do encounter on this
earthly plane? Who placeth kings upon their thrones?

MITHUN CITIZEN (PRIEST)
The devil is--

MITHUN CITIZEN (FARMER)
Fuck your devils. And fuck you.

(To BARNABAS)
I wish but to drown my sorrows. But if thou declinest me again, then I shall see fit to rage
with them.

KIRIK has quietly approached behind MITHUN CITIZEN (FARMER).

She lays a hand upon his shoulder.

KIRIK

Rage them, Gregor. I shall see fit to spend my respite beating them out of thee.

Beat.

MITHUN CITIZEN (FARMER)

Unhand me, you bitch.

KIRIK throws MITHUN CITIZEN (FARMER) across the room.

MITHUN CITIZEN (PLAYER) stops playing as all react to the sudden outburst of violence.

Beat.

KIRIK

I'm not the one who needs their leash.

KIRIK snaps at MITHUN CITIZEN (PRIEST) and motions for them to get MITHUN CITIZEN (FARMER) out.

They do so, the two of them exiting.

MITHUN CITIZEN (PLAYER) resumes the music.

KIRIK returns to the bar and finishes her drink.

KIRIK

I'll have another.

BARNABAS

Last one, mayhap.

I would not have done that.

KIRIK

No. You're welcome.

MÆRWYNN enters.

She scans the room.

She sees BARNABAS giving KIRIK another pint of ale and crosses to the bar.

Do mine eyes lie?
MÆRWYNN

Never have I known them to.
BARNABAS

Barnabas!
MÆRWYNN

Good eve, my friend.
BARNABAS

An eve. Good? Remaineth to be seen.
MÆRWYNN

Beat.

MÆRWYNN removes a coin purse from her clothes, pulls out a gold coin, and sets it on the bar next to KIRIK.

We are old companions. Some privacy? If it would not trouble you?
MÆRWYNN

...
KIRIK

KIRIK slides the coin back across the bar towards MÆRWYNN, but acquiesces to the request, giving them space.

Beat.

I've never known you to leave the Capital and show your face in places unexpected unless the news is dire. How bad is it?
MÆRWYNN

In the immediate term? A moderate difficulty.
BARNABAS

And beyond?
MÆRWYNN

That, we shall find alongside the other, shan't we? Thy new charge included.
BARNABAS

Don't--
MÆRWYNN

Fie, I suppose she is.

About that--

BARNABAS

Pay no apology, my dear Mærwynn. None are needed. Our lives are but threads in a great weave, coming together, pulling apart, thither and hither, all the way back to the first pass. No man nor woman, none control the entirety of it. Least of all whither and with whom thou makest thine entrances and exits.

Besides, the quarry intended for thee. The patron declined our services in the matter.

MÆRWYNN

Aye?

BARNABAS

Oh, aye.

MÆRWYNN

Well, then.

Give us a goddammed ale before thou sayest more, aye?

BARNABAS

Might I join thee?

MÆRWYNN

Not a chance.

They chuckle.

BARNABAS pours ales for the two of them.

BARNABAS

(Holding up his drink)

Rule of the House?

MÆRWYNN

(Holding hers)

Keep order where you can.

BARNABAS/MÆRWYNN

Don't get dead from the rest.

They clink glasses and drink.

MÆRWYNN really savors it.

BARNABAS obtains a bottle of red wine and pours a glass.

MÆRWYNN

...

That's terrible.

BARNABAS

Aye, 'tis poorly. But better than nothing.

Mmm. What's that? MÆRWYNN

For the lady. BARNABAS

FRIEDE enters.

She scans the room.

She sees MÆRWYNN and crosses to the bar.

There you are. FRIEDE

Here I am. MÆRWYNN

For you, good lady. BARNABAS
(Offering the glass of wine)

Oh. My coin is not upon my person. FRIEDE

On the house. BARNABAS

Thank you. FRIEDE

Thank you. The pleasure is mine. BARNABAS

Do I know you? FRIEDE

No. But I you. BARNABAS

Aye? FRIEDE

... BARNABAS

Rielle.

Aye. FRIEDE

Mærwynn hath told me much of you. BARNABAS

MÆRWYNN

Rielle, this is Barnabas. He is my mentor. And the head of our order.

FRIEDE

The High Owl Hunter?

BARNABAS

At your service, my lady. Shouldst thou need anyone disposed of.

Although I suppose, more oft of late, the opposite quandary hath shown many its face.

FRIEDE

Which would be what, precisely? The deaths of those I want not disposed?

BARNABAS

Aye, one way to phrase it. Far too many of us in want of unwanted death.

FRIEDE

The High Owl Hunter cannot bring people back to life?

BARNABAS

E'en if I could, should I? 'Twould be a world of vast difference in which we should find ourselves.

FRIEDE

But a better one?

BARNABAS

Who's to say?

MÆRWYNN

For the love of God. Enough waxing, both of you. Are you going to make me go drink with the guard?

Let's hear your news.

BARNABAS

Not a moment more of fellowship?

MÆRWYNN half stands.

FRIEDE

You bear news?

BARNABAS

Aye.

...

(Pulling a piece of parchment from
his clothes)

There is an Active Quarry. That I think you both will find of interest.

BARNABAS hands MÆRWYNN the parchment and FRIEDE and MÆRWYNN both peer over it, taking in it.

BARNABAS

I regret to say, I think you will find the description matches yours, Rielle.

Beat.

FRIEDE

There is a bounty upon us?

MÆRWYNN

Just you.

It's prohibited to hunt other hunters.

BARNABAS

But aye. A largesome bounty. Open to anyone.

FRIEDE

...

BARNABAS

The patron hath maintained anonymity, but I hazard to suggest--

FRIEDE

Ankaret.

MÆRWYNN

It can be no other.

This is the last thing we need.

BARNABAS

Thought you ought to know.

MÆRWYNN

Is that all?

BARNABAS

For the both of you, aye.

MÆRWYNN

...

FRIEDE

What is to be done?

BARNABAS

As Mærwynn would inform thee, a contract terminates one of two ways. The patron's quarry is slain.

MÆRWYNN

Or the bounty's withdrawn.

FRIEDE

And under what circumstances doth a patron withdraw their bounty?

BARNABAS

Rare ones. But should they change their mind...

MÆRWYNN

Or die.

FRIEDE

...

BARNABAS

Aye, upon the patron's death or requested addendum stating such, their contract immediately ceaseth.

Beat.

FRIEDE

Our suspect's mind is difficult to parse. I should imagine it would be an e'en harder one to change.

MÆRWYNN

Which means in order for your safety she has to die. Somehow.

FRIEDE

Aye.

Dost thou--how soon do you think it will be? Before those who seek my head begin their attempts?

BARNABAS

I cannot say. Amongst our company we have a healthy array of technique and skill. But I would expect before long.

FRIEDE

...

Then we shall be ready.

MÆRWYNN

Rielle. This is bad.

FRIEDE

We have faced the odds before.

MÆRWYNN

No, thou needst understand. Hunters cannot harm other Hunters. It is a cardinal command.

I can fight them off, but I can't kill anyone. I can't even wound them. If I do...

BARNABAS

Then it is exile.

Beat.

FRIEDE

It shall not come to that.

I am only familiar with so much your profession. But if thou art any indication of the talent and skill Barnabas speaks of, then I could not be in better hands. I have seen in practice thy ability and thy character. And I would not be sat amongst the two of you now, nor alive, without thee.

I shall not let it come to that.

MÆRWYNN

...

FRIEDE

We have met much. And will, it seemeth.

So whilst I can...I should now like to rest.

BARNABAS

There is a free room above. Take it.

FRIEDE

Thank you.

FRIEDE stands.

She finishes her glass and sets it on the bar.

Beat.

FRIEDE

Thank you for the glass.

A pleasure to make your acquaintance.

BARNABAS

It is mine, good lady.

FRIEDE

Good evening.

FRIEDE exits.

Beat.

MÆRWYNN

God be damned, Barnabas, are you trying to get me killed?

BARNABAS

Me, personally, no. Why else would I be hither?

MÆRWYNN scans the room, ensuring no one is eavesdropping.

KIRIK is. And a good actor.

MÆRWYNN

(Leaning in, quieter)

No more coyness.

You know who she is.

BARNABAS

I do.

MÆRWYNN

...

No thoughts on that?

BARNABAS

I am with thee. And just as in the dark. I know not the parts the two of you will play before these tides settle. But play them, you will.

MÆRWYNN

The bounty is on Rielle. Does that mean...if she came forward--

BARNABAS

I think it would change nothing for the better. Her identity defeateth not her description. The Countess seeketh her body dead, not her name.

But an interesting choice, to keep her knowledge to herself.

MÆRWYNN

Aye.

BARNABAS

Which means what?

MÆRWYNN

...

A challenge. To lure us back.

BARNABAS

Aye.

Beat.

MÆRWYNN

This bit's the girl's fault, you know. Told her we were going around. She pushed me off Surthaar and took off.

BARNABAS
(Chuckling)

...

Despite her aptitudes, she is still young. Strong-headed. I know a girl who, at those same years, would likely have done the same.

MÆRWYNN
At least I've aged better. You look a dying boar.

BARNABAS snorts.

They laugh.

Beat.

MÆRWYNN
What else is there?

BARNABAS
The last, I have weighed upon the scales as to whether I should inform thee or no. And truth be told, I find them balanced enough that still my uncertainty doth reign. Which is why I am telling thee, and not the girl.

MÆRWYNN
Her father?

BARNABAS
Nay, her brother. Given your time together, I trust thou wilt find the most auspicious course with this information.

A shift.

The sounds of the public house cease.

Discordant notes/chimes.

KIRIK stands.

*She removes or unwraps a piece of clothing,
revealing golden light and becoming the
SUN.*

SUN
Doth exist there a practice best
For delivering the message
That changeth its receiver fore'er more?

It is easier than thou thinkest
Destroying a girl's world with words

She will blame someone
We all do
Ourselves

God
Or mayhap the messenger?

Thou must mark thy words carefully
For grief is not constant still
It is a wave
Keepst thou not thy vigilance?
It will pull thee under
Consume thee
Rabid
Before thou didst e'en know the tide did approach

I have seen the demise
Of so many
Good
Evil
Unremarkable
Words of death did render all them the same
Understand
In the end, the ghost ne'er matters
Not when thou hast been stolen from

WRULFE appears, behind bars.

SUN

For who amongst us
Maketh no move against a thief in the night?

SUN crosses behind the bars.

She dances with WRULFE.

VI. WOLCAIRN. A DUNGEON – NIGHT VII.

LORENZ enters.

He watches the dance.

SUN lays WRULFE down upon the floor.

SUN

He is asleep.

Stirred he so upon his arrival it did take from him all his strength. Say what thou needst,
Lorenz. He will not hear what thy soul bareth.

LORENZ

You know me?

SUN

I know you all.

My heart.

It reaches out to thee. More than the rest.

LORENZ

...

ATTICUS enters.

ATTICUS

God, so filthy down here. Canst thou imagine the poor bastards stuck for years?

During the above, SUN covers her light, becoming a haggard VERMILLA.

ATTICUS sees her.

ATTICUS

And to keep my chosen amongst them.

LORENZ turns and sees VERMILLA.

VERMILLA sees LORENZ.

Just LORENZ.

ATTICUS

My goddess. What have they done to thee?

VERMILLA

...

LORENZ

Vermilla?

Beat.

VERMILLA rushes at LORENZ, murder in her eyes and rage in her heart, but is stopped by the bars.

ATTICUS

What have they done?

VERMILLA

(Shaking the bars, but releasing herself from them, accepting confinement)

...

LORENZ

I did not mean for this.

VERMILLA

Nay?

(Laughing)

...

From my vantage, thou hast thy exact desires.

My beloved Atticus lieth in the ground. And standing in his place, Lorenz Ægenwulf, the throne his.

LORENZ

I have never wanted the throne.

VERMILLA/ATTICUS

Doesn't matter now.

LORENZ

I did not kill Atticus. Nor did I intend your imprisonment. I claim no part in any of this.

VERMILLA

Thou didst set in motion the wheels, Prince.

LORENZ

No. I broke them. And my Mother used my gambit for her own pursuits.

I regret it.

VERMILLA

O thou hast regret? As do I. That I did not send thee away the second thou didst reveal thy face. That I did not choke the life from thy conniving throat. Thy regret means shit.

Will it e'er return him to my arms?

ATTICUS

No.

VERMILLA

Will it free me from these bonds?

LORENZ

...

ATTICUS

Say it.

LORENZ

No.

VERMILLA

So why dost thou torment me?

LORENZ

Not yet.

VERMILLA

...

LORENZ

I cannot just let you go. T'would be too conspicuous, aye? We must be more cunning.

VERMILLA

...

And what cunning didst thou have in mind?

LORENZ

Whatever happens to my father, the day will come that I rise to his station. As we have spoken, the throne is mine.

But it will not change me. I am a man of my word. I promised you a title. And a crown.

As VERMILLA speaks, ATTICUS eventually goes to her.

VERMILLA

Of course!

(Chuckling)

...

The answer to everything. Your damned crown. Not e'eryone wants to be thee.

I have ne'er wanted to be queen. Ne'er have I wished it. Atticus? He only wanted that fucking throne because he thought it would finally earn him your love. His kin. Shame upon all of ye that I should know him better than his kin.

Dost thou know why I loved Atticus?

Because he loved me.

Aye, he was an excellent fuck. Aye, he was pleasant to look upon. But betwixt our own vanities? He listened to me and heard me and loved me. And I him. Happiness is simple. Any dream I had? I outgrew it. Because we found one another.

His only failure was in outgrowing you. And now he is gone.

Taken

By ye who ne'er deserved him.

And now thou deignst to think I would embrace his only mad ambition for me along the side of his lesser? E'en if my blood was demanded by law, I would throw myself first from the highest peak on this earth.

ATTICUS is just on the other side of the bars from VERMILLA.

They are so close, they could touch.

But VERMILLA does not see him.

LORENZ

It would keep you alive.

VERMILLA

And why would I want that? Now?

LORENZ

I want to make amends. I will have power, let me use it.

You are wiser than me. Tell me. What might I do? How might I aid you?

VERMILLA

...

Sit on a butter churn. And fuck thyself.

Let me suffer my torture in peace.

LORENZ

...

ATTICUS

I will save thee, my love.

*Through the bars, ATTICUS kisses
VERMILLA.*

She feels nothing.

Because he isn't there.

She turns and walks away.

ATTICUS

Brother.

(Turning to LORENZ)

Perhaps I led thee astray. Thy decision-making hath left many in desire.

Desirest thou someone to tell thee what to do?

LORENZ

Aye. Please.

ATTICUS

Then hie we to the streets. Now.

VII. MITHUN. PUBLIC HOUSE BEDROOM –
NIGHT VII.

FRIEDE.

*She sits, her crutch(es) against the wall,
praying softly.*

Her words are audible, but whispers, not loud enough to discern.

After some moments, MÆRWYNN opens the door.

She stops at the sight of FRIEDE, who breaks from her prayers and looks at MÆRWYNN.

FRIEDE finishes her prayers.

As she does, MÆRWYNN enters, closing the door behind her.

She locks the door.

Amen.

FRIEDE

MÆRWYNN
Probably ought to start locking the door.

FRIEDE
I surmised you would not be far behind.

MÆRWYNN
And I thought you'd be resting.

FRIEDE
Could you?

Besides. You're the Hunter, you tell me. Would a locked door keep you out?

MÆRWYNN
(Chuckling)
...

Might slow me down a wit.

Beat.

FRIEDE
I should thank thee.

MÆRWYNN
For?

FRIEDE
Everything. All of this.
All that I shall still ask.
Well-hidden beneath thy exterior there is a generosity.

MÆRWYNN

Is there? Am I mistaken? I was still under the impression I'm getting paid.

FRIEDE

Aye. Aye.

But thou didst say thine own self at the start. Thou lackest not for coin. Thou couldst have abandoned me at any stage. Left me to my burdens. And I could have most easily crossed paths with someone who would have.

That thou remainst. That I am not alone in this journey. I owe thee more than my gratitude.

MÆRWYNN

...

Let's put our wits to ensuring we're both still alive at the end, first, aye? Then thou canst worry thyself with how thou art going to repay me.

Moreover, my motivations could be purely selfish. The Princess may be a bull-pated, mirthless, thorn in the ass, but it's not every day you're a guard for her. We both live, I could ask the Crown for anything.

FRIEDE

Mirthless?

MÆRWYNN

...

FRIEDE

Dear God, if I am mirthless, what are you?

They laugh.

It subsides.

FRIEDE

That Quarry did not reveal my identity. Which means Ankaret is keeping that fact to herself.

MÆRWYNN

A trap, I think. Lure us back where some ambush lieth in wait.

FRIEDE

I agree. I should think it odd that she would want me dead. After our escape.

MÆRWYNN

One cannot predict madness.

FRIEDE

She is not mad.

I do not know what madness is. But that woman...she was deadly sound.

MÆRWYNN

What did she do to you?

When I found you, you were sat, locked into a pillory, that...helm...over your head.
What in God's name was that?

Beat.

FRIEDE

It was the dark.

She spoke to me of the dark. That time within it freed her, enabled her ambitions. And that that was all she wanted of me. She was explicit. She wanted nothing of me but mine own decisions. Ones from me, not clouded by my family or title. What did I want? As a person?

Since the dark gave that to her, she gave it me.

In a way I suppose it worked. I do not know how much time passed. But consider I did my life. My deeds. My father and blood. I saw the man I killed. I saw stars--

I saw thee.

MÆRWYNN

You saw me?

FRIEDE

Aye.

MÆRWYNN

Even though I wasn't there?

FRIEDE

Nay.

MÆRWYNN

Think you not that madness?

FRIEDE

That's the rub. E'en though it did feel as much at the time. Thinking upon it now, my thoughts are nothing if not more lucid.

MÆRWYNN

...

FRIEDE

Before anything else. First we need our weapons back from that guard.

MÆRWYNN

You do.

FRIEDE

...

MÆRWYNN

Please. Think you I'd leave myself without any defense?

FRIEDE

(Chuckling)

...

I inquired once, but we were interrupted.

If I might ask of thee now, I should like to know in sooth. How didst thou become a Hunter?

Beat.

MÆRWYNN

Before that story...there is something I must tell thee.

Interrupting, a knock at the door.

Beat.

PEVERIL (O.S.)

Rielle?

FRIEDE

Aye?

PEVERIL (O.S.)

It's Peveril.

May I come in?

FRIEDE

A moment.

FRIEDE nods to MÆRWYNN, who crosses, unlocks, and opens the door.

PEVERIL enters.

FRIEDE

Good e'en.

PEVERIL

To you as well.

FRIEDE

Have you determined my father's malady?

PEVERIL

I have.

FRIEDE

And?

PEVERIL
(Hesitating, looking to
MÆRWYNN)

...

FRIEDE
Whate'er you have to say, you may say it in front of her.

PEVERIL
All right. Your father is going to die.

If he has not already.

I'm sorry.

Beat.

FRIEDE
What is it that afflicteth him?

PEVERIL
Would that help?

FRIEDE
Nay.

But I should like to know.

PEVERIL
It's plague.

FRIEDE
There is no plague in the Capital.

PEVERIL
There is. The symptoms on your list are its exact nature.

Again. I am sorry.

FRIEDE
He--...

...

So that's it?

PEVERIL
Perhaps gods could save him. But no man I know can.

Beat.

MÆRWYNN
Fuck.

The mournful chime of a bell, marking the time.

Midnight.

VIII. THE CAPITAL. CITY STREETS – NIGHT VII.

MOON.

She looks over the Capital streets, as CAPITAL CITIZENS spread and receive gossip.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (INNKEEPER)

Know ye, I heard that his heart didn't stop. I heard he killed himself instead.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (REBEL)

Why?

CAPITAL CITIZEN (INNKEEPER)

I know not, do I? Just telling you what I heard.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (LESSER NOBLE)

Atticus would ne'er kill himself. Hast thou e'er seen him? He wanted that throne more than anyone I've met.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (ARTISAN)

Whatever happened, 'tis for the best. He would have made a terrible King.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (WHORE)

Don't bet on that.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (ARTISAN)

What? Think you different?

CAPITAL CITIZEN (WHORE)

I do. But it matters nothing now. He shan't be.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (LESSER NOBLE)

Aye, the wide-eyed one. Skittish. Like a doe.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (ARTISAN)

That's right. I thought not of that. He shan't fair much better, shall he?

Shadowed by ATTICUS, LORENZ enters, dressed in garb to dissuade recognition.

Over the following, he discreetly gains the attention of CAPITAL CITIZEN (WHORE) and whispers to her.

*Perhaps from time to time, ATTICUS
whispers in LORENZ' ear.*

CAPITAL CITIZEN (INNKEEPER)

It is queer that the King hath made no appearance since.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (REBEL)

Or some time before.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (LESSER NOBLE)

Thinkest thou something is wrong with him?

CAPITAL CITIZEN (REBEL)

I didn't say that.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (ARTISAN)

No, you've left it unsaid. So speak it plainly.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (REBEL)

I have nothing to say. Anything would be rumor and conjecture, unproven belief, the same things we all do share amongst one another now.

I am simply noting the King's apparent absence. And surmising what it might mean.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (LESSER NOBLE)

It would mean something is wrong with him.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (REBEL)

Plague?

Beat.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (INNKEEPER)

Nonsense. There be no plague in the Capital.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (ARTISAN)

Should He wish to enter, no man keepeth God at the door

CAPITAL CITIZEN (LESSER NOBLE)

The plague be the work of devils. Not the Lord.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (WHORE)

It could be plague.

Beat.

LORENZ and ATTICUS have vanished.

*And ROCQUELLION has appeared, unseen
by all.*

CAPITAL CITIZEN (WHORE)

I heard the King is sick.

On his deathbed.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (REBEL)

What?

CAPITAL CITIZEN (INNKEEPER)

What?

CAPITAL CITIZEN (LESSER NOBLE)

Nay.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (WHORE)

I'm just saying what I heard.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (REBEL)

Who told you that?

CAPITAL CITIZEN (WHORE)

Well, I cannot betray a confidant.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (INNKEEPER)

She's lying.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (WHORE)

Nay, I've heard more.

I heard Atticus' heart did stop. But it wasn't natural. I heard he was poisoned.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (ARTISAN)

Poisoned?! By whom?

CAPITAL CITIZEN (WHORE)

I cannot say.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (INNKEEPER)

Pay her no heed. She just wants the attention, she does.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (REBEL)

You trust who told you all that?

CAPITAL CITIZEN (WHORE)

I don't trust anyone.

But I'll tell you what I know. No one hath seen sign of Vermilla since, either. I'm worried for her.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (LESSER NOBLE)

Only whores worry for whores.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (REBEL)

Mayhap in your circles.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (WHORE)

To think of it...I'm worried for all of us.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (INNKEEPER)

O hold thy tongue.

Discordant notes/chimes.

SUN enters.

MOON greets SUN.

Music.

Together, they dance the song of their eternal chase, never touching.

IX. ??? – ???

At the close of the dance, SUN and MOON separate a vast length.

FRIEDE enters, walking perfectly, without crutch(es).

MOON engages.

SUN stands back.

Is it I who follow you? Or you me? FRIEDE

Hello, Friede. MOON

I knew I would see you again. FRIEDE

And I thee. MOON

Both of you. FRIEDE

She won't speak to thee whilst I am here. MOON

Why? FRIEDE

She's shy. MOON

... FRIEDE

Am I awake?
Or do I dream?

MOON

Child, thou knowest as well as we that maketh no matter.

Beat.

FRIEDE

I am not afraid of you.

MOON

Good. Thou shouldst not be.

FRIEDE

You are not God.

MOON

(Shaking her head)

...

FRIEDE

Be you His equals? Do devils own such pow'r?

MOON

Devils are humans, Friede Ægenwulf.

And we are not that.

*SUN pulses with light, flaring, then calming
once more.*

FRIEDE must shield her eyes.

FRIEDE

You glow

Shine the light of stars
In their celestial majesty

SUN exits.

FRIEDE

Stay you!!

You beset me for what purpose?
I am battered and worn
Spent in full
Let me not ask of you again

What is it that you want from me?

Beat.

MOON

Fealty.

*Off, a blood-curdling scream of pain from
SUN.*

FRIEDE looks off towards the sound.

MOON covers her light, becoming CORINE.

A shift.

X. MITHUN. A FIELD – DAY VIII.

CORINE and FRIEDE.

FRIEDE stares at CORINE in a daze.

CORINE

The fuck're you looking at me like that for?

FRIEDE

...

What?

CORINE

You're staring at me, stranger.

What was it, Rielle?

FRIEDE

Aye.

...

(Looking around)

...where--

CORINE

Are you? Not far. Just outside the gate.

Your dreams carry you away?

FRIEDE

They must have. Forgive me. I will let you alone.

*FRIEDE turns to leave, but her leg pains
her.*

CORINE

Powerful dreams. Take you this far without that crutch you carried.

You oft wake up in places you don't fall asleep?

FRIEDE

...

Nay.

Beat.

CORINE

Peveril must've given you bad news. He told me your father was sick. Is it something incurable?

Beat.

FRIEDE

What is this?

CORINE

Excuse me?

FRIEDE

This masque you wear.

CORINE (MOON)
(Perhaps a grin)

...

I wear no masque.

FRIEDE

Thou dost

You play with me, still
As a nipperkin their doll.

CORINE (MOON)

Are you not merry?

FRIEDE

Nay, I am not.

CORINE (MOON)

...

FRIEDE

You desire my fealty? Wherefore dost thou deserve it?

CORINE (MOON)

That in due time, Princess.

At this moment, the rest of you busy themselves.

So take you some repose. Rest thy weary mind. And mark, let not thy dreams carry thee away this time. Some folk out here might mean thee harm.

And thou dost not?
FRIEDE

Nay.
CORINE (MOON)

Thou art to be my champion.

Beat.

Off, another blood-curdling scream of pain from SUN.

FRIEDE does not look towards the sound.

She watches CORINE become OTHSRYD.

XI. WOLCAIRN. THRONE ROOM – DAY VIII.

*QUEEN WINFRID, LORENZ, ATTICUS
(only seen and heard by LORENZ),
ROCQUELLION, OTHSRYD, and CAPITAL
CITIZENS.*

QUEEN WINFRID holds court.

Look you.
CAPITAL CITIZEN (WHORE)

I see.
CAPITAL CITIZEN (REBEL)

King Aymon ain't here, again, he isn't.
CAPITAL CITIZEN (INNKEEPER)

He grieves for his son, there are plenty of explanations for his absence other than disease.
CAPITAL CITIZEN (LESSER NOBLE)

CAPITAL CITIZEN (INNKEEPER) coughs.

But you must acquiesce it peculiar, howe'er, no one's seen him.
CAPITAL CITIZEN (ARTISAN)

Aye.
CAPITAL CITIZEN (REBEL)

If I must. But 'twere it my son, I should shun the world.
CAPITAL CITIZEN (LESSER NOBLE)

CAPITAL CITIZEN (WHORE)

I feel a trepidation. In my gut.

*QUEEN WINFRID raises her arm, calling
for silence.*

She gets it.

*As QUEEN WINFRID speaks, it slowly
grows difficult for LORENZ to keep his
composure.*

QUEEN WINFRID

Our subjects
Endeavor we
To know thy thoughts
In order that we might care for them
And see fit to thy needs

Such is the precise duty of the Crown
To rule
That all may flourish

Know we this pristine and populous city
And understand we that words
Be they rooted in truth
Or fancy
Do travel faster than our own Orb circleth the Great Star above

But
The thoughts and beliefs that have been made known to our ears
They displease us

Some of you remark
Mayhap some staunchly
Give credence to a notion
As the orator speaketh with authority on his learned subject
That you fathom these worries and fears marketh our sympathies
And it doth gladden us
That it is within our pow'r to put them to rest

But first, before doing
We must beg thy forgiveness
Indeed we have lied to you
Not in transmogrification of the truth
But by omission of it
The nature of these two are one
We did believe it for your protection
But as these rumors and suspicions threaten to become
Colossal
We shall bear this truth naked before you now

The King Aymon
As many amongst you have made note

Is, indeed, absent

But wherefore this truancy?

The King is sick.

*The CAPITAL CITIZENS murmur as
ROCQUELLION exits.*

*QUEEN WINFRID raises her arm, calling
for silence.*

She gets it.

QUEEN WINFRID

But the King's malady is not of plague!
As many of you dread
Let terror of his loss striketh not upon thy humours

The King's plague doth anchor itself in grief!
That his son, firstborn, was not sent from this world by the fault in his own heart
But by murder
Most foul

Our son Atticus was murdered
Slain in villainous ambition
By one whom he trusted with his life
Advantage of his weaknesses, she did take
And preyed upon him as the serpent
In the dead of night she poisoned our Prince as she lay with him
But the Lord in His goodness and mercy
Let not her wickedness go unbeknownst to us

We bring her before you now.

*The crowd gasps in shock and makes way as
ROCQUELLION and VERMILLA enter, the
former pulling the latter into the room via a
chain and iron collar round her neck.*

*Additionally, the latter is bloodied, naked or
in rags, her tongue cut out and hands cut
off.*

*In light of this horrid visage LORENZ stirs
in anguish, but ATTICUS (his eyes
watering) lays a hand upon his shoulder to
restrain him.*

OTHSRYD looks on in absolute horror.

QUEEN WINFRID

Gaze you upon the fate for those who mean this city ill
This filth
The very paragon of evil

Punishment for her treachery shall be lost not to the histories
But writ fore'er
Chiseled in stone

For the deeds she hath committed with her hands
We have removed them
For the lies she hath spoken from her mouth
We have removed the offender
Left, have we, her eyes
And her ears
So that she might see your faces agape at her shame
And hear your voices swell in their righteous fury

Fain would I end her life myself

But we are a generous Queen
We give her unto you
To do with as you wish.

OTHSRYD

STOP!

No one looks at OTHSRYD'S outburst.

Instead, everyone stops, frozen in time.

Except VERMILLA.

She picks herself up as OTHSRYD crosses to her.

VERMILLA and OTHSRYD do not change their clothes to become SUN and MOON, but their light and personas shine through.

OTHSRYD (MOON)

...

I will admit

This
This giveth me pause
I must take the moment to note it

To allow this to thyself?
By the likes of them?
I do not understand.

VERMILLA (SUN)

Then we are in kind.

It is strange to me
For one so willing in the causation of death

And revelry of violence
To see thee in a form most committed in opposition to it.

OTHSRYD (MOON)

At least we confound one another, then.

VERMILLA (SUN)

I would name it amusement. Whate'er thy machinations, thy schemes shall lead to the same end as is our custom.

OTHSRYD (MOON)

Come now
Wherefore this rancor?
Perhaps I am simply

Exploring the feeling
Trying on peace
For once.

VERMILLA (SUN)

If thou wert doing as much with sincerity, then I would be more surprised.

OTHSRYD (MOON)

I might be genuine.

Thou art presumptuous of me.

VERMILLA (SUN)

And thou art insufferable.

OTHSRYD (MOON)

Doth enough of Time's embrace not heal all wounds?

VERMILLA (SUN)

Thou wouldst think. Yet my sight endureth thee still.

Beat.

OTHSRYD (MOON)

If thou wouldst rid thine eyes of my form
I could remove those, as well.

VERMILLA (SUN)

...

OTHSRYD (MOON)

(A sudden whine, almost
uncharacteristically so)

O let me just kill thee!
Why must thou put me through such effort?
Such effort, thou ancient cunt
Thou wantest so much to be left alone
If thou wouldst lower thy defenses and cease this squabble

We both of us shall receive what we do most desire.

VERMILLA (SUN)

There is she
E'er petulant.

If I die, child?
All that is shall follow me.

OTHSRYD (MOON)

And?

Already I would kill e'erything thou lookest upon 'twould it lead me to thee.

VERMILLA (SUN)

E'en now
Thy anger be so great?

OTHSRYD (MOON)

It hath only grown since its conception.

My hatred of thee is a leviathan.

VERMILLA (SUN)

...

It is ne'er too late to let go.

OTHSRYD (MOON)

Nay?

Knowest thou my path. Thou hast seen it as much as I.

It may be grief that moveth one to vengeance, but it doth vanish in its pursuit.
Any mercy that I once possessed?
It is gone
And withered away
I am hollow but for my wrath
Whose sole purpose is thy destruction

The instant of thy transgression
Marked the lateness of the hour.

Beat.

VERMILLA (SUN)

So be it.

Let us resume the play.

Beat.

OTHSRYD returns to her place.

She snaps her fingers, and everyone snaps back into motion.

QUEEN WINFRID

Remove now this creature from our sight
And punish her as you see fit!!

Most of the citizens accept the queen's explanation.

*CAPITAL CITIZENS (REBEL & WHORE)
do not betray their suspicion.*

CAPITAL CITIZEN (INNKEEPER) coughs.

They all ad-lib in anger and concern as they grab VERMILLA and drag her out of the throne room.

LORENZ, ATTICUS, and OTHSRYD look on in horror.

QUEEN WINFRID

Othsryd.

We thirst. Fetch us some wine.

OTHSRYD

Aye, Your Majesty.

OTHSRYD curtsies and exits.

Beat.

LORENZ

Mother--

QUEEN WINFRID

I will not hear thy words.

LORENZ

...

QUEEN WINFRID

It is thy fault that whore is no longer in one piece.

How darest thou, to tell the rabble of the streets of thy brother's demise? Of thy father's condition?! Until his health faileth him, he is still thy Lord!

Thou knowest us a loving and caring mother. But we are also thy Queen. And as Queen, we demand loyalty. Whate'er the thoughts are in thy head, eradicate them. And do as we instruct thee.

Thou shalt behave thyself. If thou dost not, thou shalt receive thine own punishment.

Is that understood?

LORENZ

Aye, Mother.

QUEEN WINFRID

Aye, Your Majesty.

LORENZ

...

Aye, Your Majesty.

Beat.

QUEEN WINFRID

Knight Rocquellion, see our son to his chambers. And do ensure that he doth not wander off.

ROCQUELLION steps forward.

As bidden, LORENZ follows them out and they exit.

ATTICUS stares at QUEEN WINFRID.

But she does not see him.

Because he isn't there.

ATTICUS exits.

OTHSTRYD enters with a glass of wine and hands it to QUEEN WINFRID.

QUEEN WINFRID sips from the glass, savoring the taste.

SUGGESTED INTERVAL

An interval is strongly suggested at this juncture.

XII. THE CAPITAL. APOTHECARY'S SHOP – YEARS BEFORE – NIGHT.

IOSEFKA.

Her shop is empty, and she works to place some final items in a bag for travel.

She is visibly pregnant.

QUEEN WINFRID enters, dressed in garb to dissuade recognition.

IOSEFKA

Good e'en, lady.

You will forgive me, but I am closing my shop. If you--

QUEEN WINFRID reveals herself.

IOSEFKA stiffens, then with some difficulty, curtsies.

QUEEN WINFRID

Nay. Rise.

IOSEFKA does so.

Beat.

IOSEFKA

Your Majesty.

QUEEN WINFRID

Iosefka. Please.

Thyself and I, by now we have traversed beyond formalities.

IOSEFKA

...

Art thou here to kill me, Winfrid?

QUEEN WINFRID

I should.

I should kill Aymon, too.

But nay, I shall not abandon mine own word. I have promised him that I will bring no harm against thee. And I shall not. Whether it true or no, I will find some way to forgiveness in my heart.

IOSEFKA

Just here to see me off, then?

QUEEN WINFRID

I would not let thee go without a last farewell.

Whither art thou bound?

IOSEFKA

Dost thou wish to know in earnest? Or to just keep marks upon me?

QUEEN WINFRID
(Smiling)

...

I am to Mithun.
IOSEFKA

Gonærik?
QUEEN WINFRID

Aye. Out of thy new domain. Thou shalt ne'er have to see me again.
IOSEFKA

Or thee I.
QUEEN WINFRID

Beat.

Thou didst not come just to bid me thy goodbyes.
IOSEFKA

I did have a final weight upon my mind.
QUEEN WINFRID

Only one?
IOSEFKA

...
QUEEN WINFRID

(Re: her pregnancy)
Thou are showing more. Than I.

Congratulations.
IOSEFKA

Mistakest thou, my meaning.
QUEEN WINFRID

Nay. I do not.
IOSEFKA

QUEEN WINFRID
Good. Thou wouldst then understand my fears. Rivka, Gonærik, Igrath, the Southern Hills. Where'er thou dost find thyself, thy child will remain by blood, Aymon's firstborn.

Thou wouldst understand wherefore such a thing cannot come to pass.

IOSEFKA
A bastard hath no claim to the throne. His life will mean nothing.

QUEEN WINFRID
If Gonærik e'er riseth against the Crown of Rivka, e'en the claim of a bastard is enough to stir the people.

IOSEFKA

Thinkest thou I would tell him the truth of his father? Anyone? I want no part of your heritage.

QUEEN WINFRID

That may be. But mothers and fathers do shape their children to their will. The lack of one doth not prevent this. Who is to say thou mightst ne'er change thy mind?

His life will only mean nothing if he is deprived of it.

IOSEFKA

...

Thou didst say thou wouldst bring no harm against me.

QUEEN WINFRID

And I shall not. Thou art the wise woman.

Miscarry him. Induce whate'er thou needst.

But birth him still or not at all.

IOSEFKA

And if I do not?

Beat.

QUEEN WINFRID

E'en now, after all I would still call thee my companion. It is a shame true to lose thee.

But thou art the most gifted apothecary I have known, as well, the smartest.

'Twould be a greater and most bizarre shame, wert thou to be foolish now.

Beat.

QUEEN WINFRID redresses her garb as before and exits.

IOSEFKA watches her leave.

Places a hand upon her belly.

Looks to her unborn child.

PEVERIL enters, a cloth over his face, pulling a wheelbarrow of corpses.

He stops, briefly, out of breath.

IOSEFKA becomes SUN.

She slowly brings day into life.

She watches PEVERIL.

XIII. MITHUN. A FIELD – DAY IX.

*FRIEDE (her crutch(es) returned),
MÆRWYNN, and CORINE.*

They sit on a blanket in the field.

They drink from a waterskin filled with wine.

*Over the following, separate from the
others, SUN watches PEVERIL as he
empties the wheelbarrow.*

He lights a fire and burns the bodies.

He watches them turn to ash.

CORINE

Nay, you mustn't let yourself grieve to inaction. You seem an intelligent girl. There are things you must now do, aye? You said he ran an inn? You and your mother must take his place in the business. Or decide whether to keep his business. Mayhap you could sell it, I know not.

MÆRWYNN

There will be time for that anon. Let her sit as she needeth.

CORINE

Aye, of course. But tarry not, that's my meaning.

FRIEDE

It would be well with me, if we could speak on subjects other than my father's imminent death.

CORINE

As you wish. No more on it.

What is the exact nature of your companionship?

FRIEDE

Nay, I--

It is kind of you, Corine, to share this drink with us. But Mærwynn and I have matters many we must needs speak on.

CORINE

Discuss them hence. We've only now after morning last gotten you two out of that cramped room. Let my company do some more of its work first.

FRIEDE

Thank you. But some privacy, prithee.

CORINE

If thy many matters be anything concerning thy loss, I fear to leave the two of you alone.

FRIEDE

They are not.

CORINE

Then, surely, they are not something a new friend cannot help mend. Let me lend thee mine ears.

*FRIEDE and MÆRWYNN share a glance,
speaking without words.*

FRIEDE

Very well.

Mærwynn.

*In one swift and practiced movement,
MÆRWYNN draws a hidden dagger from
her person, grabs CORINE, and holds the
blade to her throat.*

CORINE (MOON)

...

I suppose thou didst ask nicely first.

FRIEDE

I seem an intelligent girl? It should be no surprise, then, I kept not your identity to myself. At least not what I know of it.

CORINE (MOON)

There is so much thou dost not.

MÆRWYNN

(Tightening her grip)

Tell us then.

CORINE (MOON)

...

To begin with? This blade will do nothing if I do not allow it.

FRIEDE

As you did with the Countess' maiden?

CORINE (MOON)

...

FRIEDE

Neerabosi. That was you.

CORINE (MOON)

And thy servant. At thine own home. I have known thee all thy life, Friede Ægenwulf.

FRIEDE

...

Mine own angel.

*MÆRWYNN removes the blade from
CORINE'S throat.*

FRIEDE

What are you doing?

MÆRWYNN

We've made known our point. Whoever, whatever you are...

If her designs were our deaths in the short term, we would already be dead. Which doth mean she wanteth something from us.

CORINE (MOON)

From her. But shrewd, Hunter.

Nay, I wish no harm to either of thee.

FRIEDE

Only our fealty?

CORINE (MOON)

What good is a champion without her fealty?

Beat.

MÆRWYNN

I have seen firsthand, obedience blind is worth nothing. To whom would we pledge ourselves? What be you, spirit? Divinity? Devil? You are all the same. Whatever you claim to want, there is other motive hidden in it.

CORINE (MOON)

And how many devils hast thou known, Mærwynn of Hollith?

MÆRWYNN

None above my skill to slay.

CORINE (MOON)

(Laughing)

...

Serendipitous for me, then, for I am no devil. No angel, nor spirit.

FRIEDE

And you are not God.

CORINE (MOON)
(Shaking her head)

...

For the most part, you made Him up on your own. It matters not.

FRIEDE
Of course it doth. How shall we refer to you?

CORINE (MOON)
Oh, let us not invite complexities, Corine is fine enough. And I shall give thee my word. Here and now. No lies. Not from me. Whate'er you want to know. If I know the answer, so shall you.

Beat.

FRIEDE
What would you have us do?

CORINE (MOON)
My counterpart. Thou knowest her?

FRIEDE
Aye.

CORINE (MOON)
Knowest thou, too, one of her forms. Thy Countess problem.

MÆRWYNN
What of her?

CORINE (MOON)
(Re: FRIEDE)
I want her to help me kill her.
(To MÆRWYNN)
I will permit thee to help.

FRIEDE
Wherefore?

CORINE (MOON)
Everybody wants somebody dead.

FRIEDE
Wherefore dost thou?

CORINE (MOON)
...

She killed my mother.

Aye, e'en kind such as mine fall prey to petty revenge, I care not. Thou wilt help me.

MÆRWYNN

Why enlist us? We shall succeed in killing a god where you have not?

CORINE (MOON)

The final blow shall be mine. But I am not omnipotent. Merely all-powerful. I cannot attain vengeance against her alone.

FRIEDE

That doth not satisfy wherefore you need us. Or me.

CORINE (MOON)

Thou art the Princess.

All you little insects. You ask to be ruled o'er. You give each other the pow'r. And what do you wield with it? Chaos. Blood. Plague. Famine. Injustice. Death. O'er and o'er again. It is an endless circle. O you revolt now and again. But always, you welcome your downfalls with open arms. You are so predictable.

But thou art young. Malleable. Thou hast yet to inherit thy pow'r. Thy full pow'r. More than any other alive in these realms, thee, Friede Ægenwulf, thou art the most interesting to watch. We have lived a long, long time. When you do that, you bore easily.

And, somehow, thou art most capable of the unexpected surprise.

FRIEDE

...

MÆRWYNN

A distraction?

CORINE (MOON)

An assassin should know the most elementary tactics work for a reason.

FRIEDE

What will happen? If we help you?

CORINE (MOON)

She will die.

FRIEDE

And what domain doth she hold o'er the world? Will it fall apart?

CORINE (MOON)

It hath already. Look around thee. This city is death. Thy Capital is death. Thou well knowest that.

MÆRWYNN

That was no denial.

CORINE (MOON)

Whate'er hole she leaveth, I can fill.

Beat.

FRIEDE

Your proposal is not one for which I have precedent.

I hope you would appreciate any hesitance we might have in trusting you?

CORINE (MOON)

I would expect nothing less.

What might I do? To demonstrate to thee mine integrity?

FRIEDE

...

Heal my father.

CORINE (MOON)

Ha!

Seest thou what I mean?! Another surprise.

FRIEDE

It should be no issue for you. Aye? If you are what you say?

CORINE (MOON)

Nay. Art thou certain that that is what thou wishest?

He may be thy father, but he is not a good King.

FRIEDE

I have been told as much.

CORINE (MOON)

And seen so?

FRIEDE

I have stated our terms.

CORINE (MOON)

Aye. But soft, still there are things thou dost not know. Your Highness. The board looketh different than thou believest, the pieces of puzzle. Thou mightst not feel the same after learning of them.

FRIEDE

Aye?

CORINE (MOON)

Let us inform thee. And if after, thou wishest still, I shall see thy father lives.

FRIEDE

Go on.

CORINE (MOON)

O the first is not mine to tell.

Is it, Mærwynn?

MÆRWYNN

...

FRIEDE

What?

CORINE (MOON)

Thou knowest, aye? About her brother?

FRIEDE

Lorenz?

CORINE (MOON)

Nay, not Lorenz. But much hath occurred at home in thine absence, Friede.

FRIEDE

What?

MÆRWYNN

Damn you.

CORINE (MOON)

To the Hunter's defense, I imagine she intended to tell thee, but once Peveril bore the news of Aymon's demise, there was just no ideal moment.

MÆRWYNN

Wilt thou be quiet?!

CORINE (MOON)

...

FRIEDE

Tell me what?

CORINE (MOON)

Here. I shall give you that privacy now. I shall return anon.

CORINE stands and moves away.

Beat.

FRIEDE

What happened?

MÆRWYNN

Barnabas...

FRIEDE

Mærwynn, what's happened?

MÆRWYNN

...

*MÆRWYNN, unheard to us, tells FRIEDE
that ATTICUS is dead, his heart stopped.*

She reacts, confronted yet again with death.

CORINE approaches PEVERIL and SUN.

She stops, shares a brief glance with SUN.

Then ignores her.

CORINE

My love!

PEVERIL

...!

You startled me.

CORINE

Thy forgiveness.

*(Pulling down his mask and
kissing him)*

...

(Pulling away)

I have much news for thee. Thou must join us.

PEVERIL

In what?

CORINE

Rielle and her friend. We are mourning.

And soon shall we take some repast.

XIV. WOLCAIRN. LORENZ' CHAMBERS –
NIGHT IX.

LORENZ and ATTICUS.

They both brood.

*ROCQUELLION enters, holding a plate of
food.*

Beat.

ROCQUELLION

Her Majesty hath requested that you eat.

LORENZ

...

ATTICUS laughs to himself, tickled.

LORENZ

That is all she is ever concerned with, is it not? Lorenz is so excitable, do see he is kept to his feeding regimen.

ROCQUELLION

...

LORENZ

Leave it by the door.

ROCQUELLION

...

LORENZ crosses to ROCQUELLION, grabs the plate, then shoves something from it into his mouth.

Beat.

ROCQUELLION exits.

LORENZ lets the plate drop to the floor and returns to his previous perch.

ATTICUS

Oi! It shall get dirty, that.

LORENZ

So?

ATTICUS

What if I wanted some?

LORENZ

...

ATTICUS

If thou art not going to lighten the mood...

LORENZ

...

ATTICUS

Thou canst not simply sit here. Like a wart.

Knowest thou?

LORENZ

I know.

ATTICUS

Shall have to figure out something.

LORENZ

What? What can I do?

I am watched at every hour. I cannot--

She cut off her hands. She cut out her--

ATTICUS

Do not speak of what she did. I am well aware.

Beat.

ATTICUS

This is all thy fault, know thee. If thou hadst stayed quiet, if thou hadst not spread gossip in the streets--

LORENZ

You told me to! You wanted me to--

ATTICUS

AND I TOLD THEE TO NOT GET CAUGHT!

I AM YOU, YOU IMBECILE!

Thou lovest thyself, brother
Thou speakest to empty chambers
And stagnant air

Atticus is dead
His blood ate of its own home amid the witching hour
Because of you.

LORENZ

No.

ATTICUS

If you had any courage left, you'd join him. And save him from his lonely darkness.

Although you should botch that too, shouldn't you? Any time you try and do anything...you make everything worse.

LORENZ

(Tearing up)

...

ATTICUS

Are you going to cry now?

LORENZ

Please leave me alone. Peace.

ATTICUS

O. You don't get that, little brother.

(Wandering to the food
upon the floor, picking
a selection, and eating it)

Only one way to get that.

LORENZ weeps.

ATTICUS eats.

ATTICUS

Thinkest thou there is any wine?

XV. WOLCAIRN. AYMON'S CHAMBERS –
NIGHT IX.

KING AYMON on his deathbed.

OTHSRYD prays over him.

Silence.

*QUEEN WINFRID enters, drinking from
another glass of wine.*

QUEEN WINFRID

Thither she is!

OTHSRYD

(Curtsying)

Your Majesty.

QUEEN WINFRID

We have been searching for thee.

(Re: her glass)

Be there another casque?

This was the last.

OTHSRYD

Surely there is, Your Grace. I shall fetch another.

QUEEN WINFRID

In due time. In due time.

Recover.

OTHSRYD stands.

QUEEN WINFRID looks upon AYMON.

Silence.

QUEEN WINFRID

So weak

And yet
Clingeth he
To life.

OTHSRYD

He fighteth.

QUEEN WINFRID

He always hath. We both have. Him in his own way, myself in mine.

It is the ninth day since Friede's departure. If Fortune hath smiled upon her, then tomorrow might we see her return, with remedy in hand.

OTHSRYD

I will pray for her, Your Grace.

QUEEN WINFRID

As shall we.

Although we dread that she should return to such tumultuousness.

OTHSRYD

...

QUEEN WINFRID

Good Othsryd, thou hast always been a most loyal servant. Wise beyond thy years.

OTHSRYD

It is my honor, Your Grace.

QUEEN WINFRID

I am fore'er grateful for thy honest disposition. E'en if it is at odds with many of the measures my husband and I have underta'en, in order that we maintain stability in this kingdom.

OTHSRYD

It is not my place to question you, My Queen.

QUEEN WINFRID

Nay, always thou hast known thy place. If thou possessest dissents, thou markest thy voice with careful consideration. Or keepest them entire within.

It must be a torment for thee.

OTHSRYD

Only when words and deeds are counter to the commands of our Lord.

QUEEN WINFRID

That is the devil's trickery, is it not? And wherefore our Lord's Heaven yet eludeth us.

No earthly kingdom may be ruled as the Lord would have it. It is an impossible command. As Sisyphus' task with his boulder. Or to hold water still in the palm of thy hand.

OTHSRYD

In attempt to wash them clean?

QUEEN WINFRID

...

Be thankful thou art a queen of nothing.

OTHSRYD

...

QUEEN WINFRID

I would hear thee now speak the truth of thy heart. Freely.

I have always done what I have considered just. If not just, necessary. But the Lord and I, we place not the same meanings behind these words, do we?

Shall I be lost? Thinkest thou I have sinned too great?

The whore's delimiting is but a scratch upon the surface
The latest violence in the long and jingling chain
I maimed her such so she would not speak the truth
That I poisoned mine own son to keep the Crown upon my family's head
For his upstart demeanor would have brought to it its end

What mother does such a thing?
What am I now?

OTHSRYD

...

QUEEN WINFRID

Answer me!

What am I? Who so willingly gifts the ultimate sacrifice? Be there any place in the Lord's Kingdom for a woman who hath fallen so far?

OTHSRYD

Your Grace.

You have done monstrous things. But you are not alone. We are taught that salvation's only requisite is repentance.

QUEEN WINFRID

And thinkest thou my deeds repentable?

OTHSRYD

If the worst deeds are not repentable, then which are?

Beat.

*QUEEN WINFRID draws close to
OTHSRYD.*

QUEEN WINFRID
Thou still hast faith in me.

OTHSRYD
...

QUEEN WINFRID
Thou hast not told a soul what thou knowest, hast thou?

OTHSRYD
Nay.

And there need not be reason for me to do so.

QUEEN WINFRID
...

I concur.

*QUEEN WINFRID removes a dagger from
her clothes and plunges it into OTHSRYD.*

Blood.

*OTHSRYD gasps, struggling for breath, in
shock.*

QUEEN WINFRID
(Covering her mouth)
Forgive me, good Othsryd. Forgive me, good girl.

I am sorry.

Thou understandst, I know thou dost.

I know thou understandst.

Thou wouldst betray me now, I know. Ne'er have I given thee more motive. And too deep I have waded into the role which I did commit myself.

There are none whose patience is infinite.

Not e'en the Lord's.

...

It is my hope, thou wilt be free of this torment.

OTHSRYD is dead.

Beat.

*QUEEN WINFRID crosses to KING
AYMON.*

She caresses his head.

*She gently pours the rest of the wine down
KING AÝMON'S throat.*

He coughs, but gets it down.

Beat.

QUEEN WINFRID exits.

Silence.

SUN enters.

*She watches as OTHSRYD slowly returns to
her feet and becomes the MOON.*

MOON eyes SUN.

MOON

What?

SUN

I said nothing.

MOON

Ne'er dost thou have to.

Silence.

MOON becomes CORINE, but only in dress.

SUN becomes KIRIK.

XVI. MITHUN. PEVERIL'S HOUSE – NIGHT
IX.

FRIEDE, MÆRWYNN, PEVERIL, CORINE.

*KIRIK stands guard, separate from the
others, at the gate of Mithun.*

Nobody speaks.

CORINE (MOON)

So

Now we all know e'erything.

Still, nobody speaks.

CORINE (MOON)

Well?

MÆRWYNN

You propose more than simply killing a god.

You're toppling an empire.

FRIEDE

My family's.

CORINE (MOON)

Half of whom already lie in the dirt or have one foot in it.

All empires fall.

FRIEDE

My family's!

If Atticus' heart hath failed him, Lorenz standeth to inherit the throne. You would have me commit regicide and fratricide in one fell swoop? My mother, too, lives. What of her?

CORINE (MOON)

Thou needst not kill kings and queens to usurp them. Thou canst.

But thou mayest also purely present the people their alternative.

PEVERIL

...

CORINE (MOON)

The Crown would truly not be leaving thy family, would it?

PEVERIL

Hold. I--

You cannot--

...

CORINE (MOON)

Speak, my love.

PEVERIL

I am not--what are you?

You reveal yourself as deity and spirit and--claim my mother lied to me my whole life?
That the Rivkan throne is mine by birthright?

CORINE (MOON)

Thy mother was Aymon's mistress, Peveril. Thou art his firstborn son.

PEVERIL

But I was not raised as him! So I am not him.

Even if I believed your words, you advocate not just a rebellion against the strongest army in these lands, with no forces of our own aside sick men, women, and children, you ask me to claim a title I don't want! To pursue it would be the very death of mine own self.

CORINE (MOON)

Or the birth. Of the man thou wert meant to be.

Beat.

MÆRWYNN

Horse shit. Twist our words however you wish, you are still demanding we kill ourselves. As we are.

I can discern no reason we should help you. Corine. How doth this end with Fortune at our backs?

CORINE (MOON)

Hast thou no imagination? The two of you will want for nothing.

He will be King.

PEVERIL

And who will be Queen? You?

CORINE (MOON)

...

If thou wouldst have me.

FRIEDE

And if we refuse you aid in this?

Would still you meddle in my family's affairs?

CORINE (MOON)

If thou refusest, I suppose we would find that out together.

Beat.

PEVERIL exits.

Beat.

FRIEDE

(Following)

Wait!

FRIEDE exits.

MÆRWYNN doesn't budge.

Silence.

CORINE (MOON)

Not going after them?

MÆRWYNN

They're likely safer out there than in here.

We'll find out together is a poorly veiled way of saying "if thou dost not aid me, I'll kill thee."

CORINE (MOON)

Perhaps that is the intention.

Silence.

XVII. MITHUN. VILLAGE PATHS – NIGHT IX.

PEVERIL, hurrying away.

KIRIK, still separate, stands guard at the gate.

FRIEDE enters, following after PEVERIL.

FRIEDE

Hold!

Peveril!

Please!

PEVERIL

What?!

FRIEDE

...

PEVERIL

I want no part of this!

I am sorry for your family, but it--

I care not what she says, they are not mine. I cannot. Forgive me.

FRIEDE

It maketh sense.

PEVERIL

...

FRIEDE

Doth it not?

I thought my mother sent me and not one of our knights because it would be easier to hide. But to send a half-sister, instead?

PEVERIL

Did you know?

FRIEDE

Nay.

PEVERIL

You would like have still lied to me either way, aye?

FRIEDE

...

PEVERIL

I knew it. In my bones. I knew thy words did not hold their weight. That you twisted their meaning or did not share all. Yet I trusted you still.

FRIEDE

Peveril--

PEVERIL

No more, I do not wish to hear it.

I mean this, I cannot be a part of any this, I have--

FRIEDE

Think you I do?! Think you I desire the destruction of all I know?! My family, my city, my childhood? I want not to return home and cause more chaos than hath occurred heretofore.

This god, whate'er she be, her entrance hath changed e'erything. You and Mærwynn, you speak it would be self-death to follow her, we have, all of us, died already.

I lied to you, I have lied to myself! I am no longer Friede. I am a killer. I am half the girl I called myself, I am someone new with another relation. I cannot forget these things. Or wish them away.

(Sitting)

We cannot unhear. We can ne'er unsee. We can ne'er regain all that we have lost. All that we lose e'ery day by surviving. We can only mourn it and let it our memories keep.

Our choices forward alone honor the people we were.

The people we have lost.

PEVERIL

...

FRIEDE

I am not asking you to be King. Not e'en my brother.

But someone who would stand and face the trials given them, rather than shying away? I do ask for that. For what we now face, I know not if Mærwynn and I might o'ercome it alone.

Beat.

PEVERIL sits with FRIEDE.

PEVERIL

In the story my mother crafted me, of her encounter with yours, she said she helped the Queen with removing a child. I had many questions, but she only satisfied one. "Why?" Why you would help a woman whose actions, whose husband, has led to the bereavement and starvation, the death of so many we know?

She answered, "if someone asketh thee for aid, thou givest it them."

FRIEDE

...

For a moment, forget the god asking. And set thy gaze upon the girl in front of thee.

PEVERIL

The Princess. Who may be my sister?

FRIEDE

The girl.

Silence.

PEVERIL

Her, I can help. As much as I can.

But hear this, whether we share blood or no, I will not be King. I will not do what Aymon has done to others. I will not allow even the chance.

FRIEDE

And I have no intention to see more of my family fall.

So we go along with her until such a time cometh we cannot.

PEVERIL

...

One choice at a time, then.

FRIEDE

Aye. One choice at a time.

Thank you.

PEVERIL

...

Thou art welcome.

Silence.

DODD enters.

He approaches KIRIK.

Discordant notes/chimes.

Unheard, the two of them converse.

DODD exits, into Mithun.

KIRIK becomes SUN.

XVIII. THE CAPITAL. CITY STREETS – DAY
X.

*SUN looks over the Capital streets, as
CAPITAL CITIZENS spread and receive
gossip.*

Nay. Be it so?
CAPITAL CITIZEN (ARTISAN)

(Coughing)
CAPITAL CITIZEN (INNKEEPER)
All's I'm tellin' ye is what I did hear. And that was that the crowd ripped her apart, they did.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (LESSER NOBLE)
I saw blood, but limbs? Thou dost exaggerate.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (ARTISAN)
I heard she escaped the mob.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (INNKEEPER)
Hold thy tongue!

CAPITAL CITIZEN (LESSER NOBLE)
She certainly shall.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (INNKEEPER)
And precisely how, exactly, doth a cripple escape a mob?

CAPITAL CITIZEN (ARTISAN)
I am just saying what I have heard.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (LESSER NOBLE)

Doth it matter? No one hath seen her, if the mob did not kill her, the elements did.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (ARTISAN)

I suppose you are right.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (INNKEEPER)

Aye, and the joust approacheth. Two days and there's still so much to prepare. Art thou ready?

CAPITAL CITIZEN (ARTISAN)

Oh, I shall be! Making some special wares for the occasion.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (LESSER NOBLE)

I should like to see an unhorsing.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (INNKEEPER)

So much business to be had.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (LESSER NOBLE)

An unhorsing would like me quite well.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (ARTISAN)

I've never seen one.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (LESSER NOBLE)

Nay? 'Tis a sight to behold.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (INNKEEPER) coughs.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (ARTISAN)

Art thou well?

CAPITAL CITIZEN (INNKEEPER)

Aye. Just phlegm.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (LESSER NOBLE)

Ew.

Separate from them.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (REBEL)

News?

CAPITAL CITIZEN (WHORE)

Unchanged. No sight of her.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (REBEL)

We keep looking then.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (WHORE)

I know not how you still hope. If the mob hath not killed her surely the elements have.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (REBEL)

Until we find a body, living or dead, I will hope. Something is amiss.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (WHORE)

You need not convince me. I am with you. Vermilla would never kill Atticus. She loved him.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (REBEL)

It doth not make any sense.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (WHORE)

I must tell you. The one who told me the King were upon his last breaths? I think it was the Prince.

The younger one.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (REBEL)

...

Keep looking.

Whate'er her state. We need to find her.

The sound of horses on the tiltyard.

The crash of lance against armor.

A body crashing to the ground.

Pain.

XIX. WOLCAIRN. THE GROUNDS – DAY X.

SUN watches as LORENZ enters, in pain from an unhorsing.

ATTICUS follows behind him.

ATTICUS

Thou art flinching.

LORENZ

Of course I am flinching. I am not a jousting.

ATTICUS

Thou art going to be. So steel thyself.

LORENZ

Will you please be quiet?

ATTICUS

I can, I'm just saying thou needst must be prepared.

And I am saying be quiet. LORENZ

... ATTICUS

ROCQUELLION enters.

You are flinching. ROCQUELLION

I know. LORENZ

If you know, then stop. ROCQUELLION

Of course! Silly me. Why did I not think of that? LORENZ

... ROCQUELLION

Again.

No. I shall take some respite if it please thee. Or even if it doth not. LORENZ

As you wish, Your Highness. ROCQUELLION

Beat.

The knight is making thee angry. ATTICUS

He is not the only one. LORENZ

Good. It is well to finally see a little pluck in thee. Anger serveth thee better than self-misery. ATTICUS

Wilt thou be quiet?! LORENZ
(Snapping)

... ATTICUS

Your Grace? ROCQUELLION

LORENZ

...

ROCQUELLION

To whom do you speak?

Beat.

LORENZ

I thought thou didst say something, forgive me. Whither is Othsryd? I should like to speak with her.

ROCQUELLION

...

LORENZ

Knight.

ROCQUELLION

You do not know?

LORENZ

Know what?

ROCQUELLION

She hath left us, Your Highness.

LORENZ

...

ATTICUS

She hath what?

LORENZ

Excuse me? How so?

ROCQUELLION

The Queen released her from her post.

LORENZ

Wherefore?

ROCQUELLION

I did not ask. 'Tis not my place.

ATTICUS

God no. No no.

LORENZ

Whither is my mother?

ROCQUELLION

The day's lessons are not over.

Whither is my mother?!
LORENZ

QUEEN WINFRID enters.

My son! How goes thy riding?
QUEEN WINFRID

LORENZ storms towards her.

Whither is she?!
LORENZ

What didst thou do to her? Didst thou hurt her?

Rocquellion hath told thee?
QUEEN WINFRID

WHAT DIDST THOU DO TO HER?!
LORENZ

She killed her.
ATTICUS

You killed her, didn't you?
LORENZ

God in Heaven, you killed her.

...
QUEEN WINFRID

Her eyes betray her. The iniquitous beast.
ATTICUS

What have you done, Mother?
LORENZ

...
QUEEN WINFRID

Speak!
LORENZ

*ROCQUELLION steps closer to them both,
but QUEEN WINFRID holds up her hand.*

You cannot even defend yourself.
LORENZ

I thought my brother the monster. It was never supposed to be you.

...
QUEEN WINFRID

Lorenz--

Off, a whinny.

*All look as LÆNDIRIL enters, slowly
trotting onto the grounds.*

The horse slows and picks a spot to graze.

Lændiril?

ATTICUS

That is thy horse.

QUEEN WINFRID

*LORENZ wordlessly walks towards the
horse.*

But Friede took your horse.

ATTICUS

LORENZ
(Touching the horse)

...

She's wounded.

ATTICUS

Beat.

I see no rider.

ROCQUELLION

Beat.

LORENZ wails.

He wails.

Thunder.

*LORENZ continues to wail as clouds gather
and SUN exits, casting darkness over all.*

Thunder.

Wailing.

Rain.

XX. MITHUN. PUBLIC HOUSE – NIGHT X.

*FRIEDE, MÆRWYNN, MITHUN
CITIZENS.*

FRIEDE and MÆRWYNN drink at the bar.

*BARNABAS is not behind the bar, MITHUN
CITIZEN (INNKEEPER) stands in his place.*

*In their corner, MITHUN CITIZEN
(PLAYER) plays their instrument and sings
a dirge, underscoring the following.*

And outside the walls, the rain pours heavy.

MÆRWYNN

This is a poor decision.

FRIEDE

Believe me. I am trying to arrive upon its better. I cannot.

MÆRWYNN

...

(Finishing her drink)

Maketh two of us.

(Setting her glass upon the
bar)

Another.

MITHUN CITIZEN (INNKEEPER)

Right away, miss.

Beat.

FRIEDE

Hast thou e'er crossed swords with something of her ilk?

MÆRWYNN

Would you like me to lie to you?

FRIEDE

Please. Tell me thou art a hunter of devils, not owls.

MÆRWYNN

...

You know it's not a title we gave ourselves.

FRIEDE

No?

MÆRWYNN

Many of us work by cover of night. From the darkness of the shadows. When struck, the only word a quarry is ever able to eke out is, "who?"

Beat.

FRIEDE

Was that a jest?

MÆRWYNN

(Slowly breaking)

...

FRIEDE

(Laughing along)

...

*Their laughter subsides as MITHUN
CITIZEN (INNKEEPER) sets a full glass
back upon the bar.*

MÆRWYNN

Obliged.

...

No, it, um...ages back, before any of us. When the order started out, it killed solely nobles. Men of power. Royals who abused it.

FRIEDE

What changed?

MÆRWYNN

I wasn't alive, but if I had to guess? Nothing.

Man doth not change. But power changeth them. Maketh it easy to forget others are still men. No matter how many nobles you kill, you always wind up with another. I think we shifted because we looked to try something different. If you can't stop evil in totality, mayhap we might at least, occasionally, keep it in check.

Anyway. The nobles of old. They had a lot of owls.

Beat.

FRIEDE

My father was always good to me.

Perhaps still I suffer from my blindness as his daughter. But he was always good to me.

If it can be achieved, through tonic or miracle, I deserve the chance to demand of him wherefore he did not extend that goodness to others.

MÆRWYNN

It may not have been intention.

Even bad men love their children.

FRIEDE

...

MÆRWYNN

My father gambled. To a fault. Every night, cards, dice. Name it, he would bet his money upon it. What coin he did not game away he drank.

You have like never gone to bed hungry. It's painful. You don't rest. You catch portions, but you never truly sleep. Your belly stabs you awake with the sharpness of a blade. It's suffering. My mother would plead with him. Prithee. Do not go, gamble not our lives to our neighbors and friends. He would not hear her. Or me. Or on the days he did, he would beat us.

In his way, it came he owed much coin to many a people. And one night, one of them so wanted their debt paid that they resorted to the cruelest of means. He broke into our house. He assailed my father and tied him up. And bade him watch as he took my mother's life. And then her warm body atop the very bed I was hid beneath.

My father could see me. And I him. For all of it. His eyes wept, but he did nothing. He didn't struggle. He just watched. Useless. While this stranger destroyed everything.

My father loved me. But whatever his intentions were, that love did not absolve him of his failures. Or greed.

It's not a given when it doth occur. But it always doth. And it's a simple revelation. That your parents are human too. Not gods. And then you must make the decision. Will you follow their example? Or chart your own course?

I would not be useless. I crawled out from beneath that bed. Grabbed the man's knife, and stabbed him in the back. And then I slit my father's throat.

That, Rielle, is how I became an Owl Hunter.

FRIEDE

...

(She has no words)

...

(She grabs her friend's
hand and squeezes)

...

MÆRWYNN

...

Thou wilt forgive me. For not telling thee of Atticus immediately.

FRIEDE

I shall. I understand.

I understand.

...

(Staring at MÆRWYNN,
almost poring into her)

I...

MÆRWYNN

What?

FRIEDE
(Suddenly self-conscious)

...

...I do not know.

MÆRWYNN

...

*PEVERIL enters, bursting in, drenched from
the rain, causing many to turn, as well as
MITHUN CITIZEN (COBBLER) to spill
their drink.*

MITHUN CITIZEN (COBBLER)

Oi!

FRIEDE

What is it?

PEVERIL

You both need to come. Now.

FRIEDE, MÆRWYNN, and PEVERIL exit.

XXI. MITHUN. PEVERIL'S HOUSE – NIGHT X.

CORINE and DODD.

*DODD lies upon the floor, bound and
gagged.*

And struggling.

CORINE watches, breathing him in.

DODD struggles.

CORINE looks to us.

CORINE (MOON)

After all these years
Let it be not said I am not an excellent improviser.

DODD
(Muffled)

...

*PEVERIL, FRIEDE, and MÆRWYNN enter,
all now drenched.*

WELCOME, FRIENDS!
CORINE (MOON)

WHAT IS THIS?
FRIEDE

AS WE DISCUSSED. A SHOW OF MINE INTEGRITY.
CORINE (MOON)

...

DODD
(Muffled)

NOT THY FATHER, I KNOW. BUT--
CORINE (MOON)

DODD?
MÆRWYNN

...!
DODD
(Muffled)

YOU KNOW HIM?
FRIEDE

DAMNED--HIS NAME'S DODD. HE'S ANOTHER HUNTER.
MÆRWYNN

AYE. AND AS FRIEDE HATH AN ACTIVE QUARRY UPON HER, I THOUGHT IT PRUDENT FOR ALL OF US TO
SEE THAT HE BROUGHT HER NO HARM.
CORINE (MOON)

...

FRIEDE

THANK YOU?

THOU ART MOST WELCOME.
CORINE (MOON)

WHO SHOULD LIKE THE HONOR?

Beat.

HONOR?
PEVERIL

CORINE (MOON)

I captured him. 'Twould not be fair of me to kill him too.

Not when we have so many hands at the ready.

DODD

(Muffled)

...!

PEVERIL

Hold on. No one is killing anyone.

CORINE (MOON)

If we do not kill him. He will try and kill her.

DODD

(Muffled, shaking his head)

...!

PEVERIL

Are you certain?

FRIEDE

Mærwynn, thou knowest him. Would he?

MÆRWYNN

...

FRIEDE

Mærwynn?!

MÆRWYNN

I do not know. We are scoundrels here and then. To get to my quarry, I would lie if that's what it took.

DODD

(Muffled, shaking his head)

...! ...!

MÆRWYNN

We both have.

*PEVERIL steps forward and removes
DODD'S gag.*

DODD

Ah--!

I won't hurt her! I won't.

CORINE (MOON)

Of course he lieth.

DODD

I won't! I swear! I swear on my mother's grave, I won't touch her. Let me go, I'll just leave!

CORINE kicks DODD.

PEVERIL

Enough!

CORINE (MOON)

We have no other choice, my love.

PEVERIL

...

MÆRWYNN

(To CORINE (MOON))

Give us the room, would you?

CORINE (MOON)

Nay.

If we are to align ourselves, I should like contribution to our choices.

DODD

Please! I swear. I'll tell everyone to stay away. Just don't kill me.

Beat.

CORINE (MOON)

He is but the first of many.

To shift the world we cannot show mercy.

PEVERIL

That does not mean kill indiscriminately!

CORINE (MOON)

It is with purpose most! He came here to murder Friede!

DODD

Who the fuck is Friede?

PEVERIL

He has no notion what he's walked into.

CORINE (MOON)

To our advantage! But already we betray it. E'ery moment we hesitate.

PEVERIL

I will not kill this man.

CORINE (MOON)

My love...

PEVERIL

Do not call me your love! I do not know you! The woman who cared for others, the woman I loved? You wear her face, but you speak and act with malice and perfidy.

FRIEDE

Peveril.

She may be right.

PEVERIL

What?

FRIEDE

Not of the world or mercy. But this man. There is no way we can trust him. Not fully.

DODD

You can!! You can trust me! You--

CORINE returns the gag to DODD'S mouth.

He struggles.

PEVERIL

What are you saying?

MÆRWYNN

The bounty against her. Wherever we are, Hunters will try to collect it.

FRIEDE

If we let him go, there is always the chance he might try.

DODD

(Muffled)

...!

PEVERIL

Then do not let him go. Keep him here, restrained.

FRIEDE

Aye. That could work, aye?

CORINE (MOON)

He could escape. Truly, this is for all our benefit. Let this man serve as example to others who would collect.

PEVERIL

I will not kill this man.

CORINE (MOON)

Then we shall teach thee anon, but none of us leave this room until this man IS DEAD!

THIS IS FEALTY! I will be charitable and cordial with all, but lest you forget I am immortal, with pow'r inconceivable to you. My orders will be followed. Or with certainty you will meet your end.

Beat.

FRIEDE
(To MÆRWYNN)

Give me thy dagger.

CORINE (MOON)

Nay, Princess.

Mærwynn shall do it.

Beat.

MÆRWYNN

Why me?

CORINE (MOON)

Because I like you the least.

MÆRWYNN

Feeling's mutual.

CORINE (MOON)

Kill him. Now. Or I will kill thee. Be that direct enough for thee?

FRIEDE

She cannot. It is against her code.

CORINE (MOON)

Precisely wherefore I want her to do it. Do not make me repeat myself again.

FRIEDE

If you harm her, I will not help you.

CORINE (MOON)

Aye, thou wilt, because she is going to do it.

MÆRWYNN

...

DODD

(Muffled)

...!

CORINE (MOON)

She is going to do it because of thee, Friede Ægenwulf. Were she alone, and my kind demanded of her such an act, she would stand firm. With spiteful grin as I wrenched the life from her for her defiance.

But she careth for thee, Friede. She will not leave thee alone to face me. Will she, Mærwynn?

MÆRWYNN

...fuck.

FRIEDE

Do it not.

CORINE (MOON)

Forget the reputation of exile, Hunter. Thou art strong. And keen. Thou couldst be so much more. I will give thee a grander life than e'er thou imaginest.

MÆRWYNN

(Not at all composed)

Oh, god.

FRIEDE

Mærwynn.

MÆRWYNN looks to FRIEDE, a fire, turmoil, and fear in her eyes we have ne'er before seen.

FRIEDE

Do it not.

MÆRWYNN

...

MÆRWYNN slowly removes her dagger.

DODD

(Muffled, screaming)

...! ...!

CORINE (MOON)

Only one little poke. A cut across a vein.

FRIEDE

Mærwynn!

MÆRWYNN

...

I see no other choice.

DODD

(Muffled, screaming)

...! ...! ...!

CORINE (MOON)

You have done it plenty of times.

MÆRWYNN

(Readying herself)

...

FRIEDE grabs the dagger from MÆRWYNN and slits DODD'S throat.

Blood.

FRIEDE lets drop or tosses the dagger upon the floor.

She backs away from the dying man, standing in front of MÆRWYNN.

Silence.

FRIEDE

If thou harmest her, I will ne'er aid thee.

CORINE (MOON)

...

...

Thou choosest her o'er thy own father?

So be it
Know the only reason I do not kill her now
Is because that would not bring thee enough pain

Thinkest thou art hunted?
Thou knowest nothing of pursuit
I will watch thee
I will stalk thee
I will torment thy thoughts waking and visions sleeping
I will spirit thee away
I will place thee in a realm whither no one can hear thee
I will peel apart thy flesh and feed it the other
I will keep thee alive for eons
Until thou art older than I

Your deaths will be a release.

One surprise too many, girl.

CORINE snaps her fingers and all goes pitch-black.

Instantaneously with the darkness, the overwhelming screeching and chittering of hundreds upon hundreds of rats.

Ratsound.

Ratsound.

Ratsound.

It slowly slowly fades.

Silence and darkness.

XXII. MITHUN. PEVERIL'S HOUSE – DAY XI.

*Outside, the SUN enters, slowly returning
light to the house.*

*FRIEDE, MÆRWYNN, and PEVERIL have
all found their way to the floor, the two
former close together.*

DODD's body still lies upon the ground.

*It is evident none of them have spoken for
quite some time.*

Silence.

FRIEDE

I can think of but one. With whom we might make alliance now.

Beat.

MÆRWYNN

Of all the people who could've stumbled into my camp that night. That it should be
you...

FRIEDE

I shall try to bring less burdens next time I disrupt thy sleep in bloodied visage.

MÆRWYNN

...

God help me.

At least it will give her some cause to remove the bounty.

PEVERIL

Who is this?

FRIEDE

Ankaret. The Beast Countess. Beneath her guise, it is whom Corine wants dead. Or at
least claimed.

PEVERIL

The enemy of my enemy is my friend?

MÆRWYNN

No god is a friend of man.

FRIEDE

But under her eye, in her domain? We might be safe. For time enough to think, at least.

Beat.

PEVERIL stands and makes to exit.

He pauses.

PEVERIL

I shall get your weapons back from Kirik.

FRIEDE

You will come with us? Aye?

PEVERIL

...

Give me the day to make arrangements.

We can set out at first light.

He exits.

Beat.

MÆRWYNN

Friede.

That was a poor decision. You make poor decisions. You're surprising in a bad way.

FRIEDE

(Smiling)

...

MÆRWYNN

Thank you.

Thou owest me no debt.

FRIEDE

...

Let us both ensure we are still alive at the end, first, aye?

MÆRWYNN

We shall find out together.

FRIEDE

I will choose to hope.

No god may be a friend of man. But as my mother would say...

(Reaching out to
MÆRWYNN'S face, turning
it so their eyes align)

It is well we are not men.

MÆRWYNN grins.

FRIEDE smiles.

Beat.

FRIEDE kisses MÆRWYNN.

MÆRWYNN is taken aback.

FRIEDE pulls away, having not felt reciprocation.

They stare at one another.

XXIII. WOLCAIRN. AYMÓN'S CHAMBERS –
DAY XI.

KING AYMÓN on his deathbed.

QUEEN WINFRID looks o'er him.

QUEEN WINFRID

Splintered is our House

The limb doth teeter as the pendulum
Back and forth in the wind
Threatening to unfasten itself from the body
And maketh widows of us all

We wane in lack of thy guidance
Both of us
Always we are reluctant in the admittance
That we are weaker without the other

There hath been no sign of Friede

I lose hope

...

God hath turned away His face
And abandoned us for our deeds
So pray shall we now to whome'er wilt listen

Devil, demon
Mad spirit
If any hear my words
Restore this branch
Grow our roots
Make strong our house
And thou shalt have our allegiance!

From now
Until the end of all that is
And shall be

Save this man
And thy servants we shall be fore'ermore

QUEEN WINFRID coughs.

It takes her a moment to recover.

Silence.

*Something about KING AYMUN catches her
eye.*

She examines him.

She shakes him.

QUEEN WINFRID

Nay

Nay, my love

Aymun

Aymun!

ROCQUELLION knocks.

ROCQUELLION (O.S.)

Is all well, Your Grace?

QUEEN WINFRID

DO NOT ENTER!

NO ONE MAKETH ENTRANCE IN THIS ROOM UNTIL WE SAY!

ROCQUELLION (O.S.)

Understood, Your Majesty.

QUEEN WINFRID

Nay

Nay nay nay nay nay

Wake

Wake.

KING AYMUN is dead.

QUEEN WINFRID weeps.

Despite the MOON'S absence, night falls.

XXIV. THE CAPITAL. CITY STREETS – NIGHT
XI.

*CAPITAL CITIZENS spread and receive
gossip.*

CAPITAL CITIZEN (INNKEEPER)

So much excitement in the air! I's can barely stand still!

CAPITAL CITIZEN (LESSER NOBLE)

Do you not have a business to run?

CAPITAL CITIZEN (INNKEEPER)

Nay, all the good folk shall be arriving upon the morning.

(After a cough)

In time for you all to see your unhorsing.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (LESSER NOBLE)

I should like to see an unhorsing.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (ARTISAN)

I wonder if the King will be present.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (LESSER NOBLE)

Who can say? Grief driveth the humours to lands unknown.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (INNKEEPER)

Aye. Me mother passed away when I was a wee girl. Ruined me for ages.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (ARTISAN)

And thou art better now?

CAPITAL CITIZEN (INNKEEPER)

Hold thy tongue!

CAPITAL CITIZEN (ARTISAN) coughs.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (INNKEEPER)

I didn't mean actually.

*Separate from them, CAPITAL CITIZEN
(WHORE) waits.*

CAPITAL CITIZEN (REBEL) enters.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (WHORE)

Did you find her?

CAPITAL CITIZEN (REBEL)

Nay. But I did come across someone else.

(Calling off)

Here!

BARNABAS enters.

This is she. CAPITAL CITIZEN (REBEL)

At last. Good e'en, lady. BARNABAS

God ye good e'en. Who are you? CAPITAL CITIZEN (WHORE)

My name is Barnabas. But a humble Guildmaster. BARNABAS

What do you want with me? CAPITAL CITIZEN (WHORE)

It hath come to mine attention thou hast spread of some particular rumors. Of plague. And the late Prince's passing. BARNABAS

I were only repeating what I heard. CAPITAL CITIZEN (WHORE)

And from whom didst thou hear these things? BARNABAS

... CAPITAL CITIZEN (WHORE)

Tell him what you told me. CAPITAL CITIZEN (REBEL)

... CAPITAL CITIZEN (WHORE)

Prince Lorenz.

He said the Queen killed her son.

... BARNABAS

You will both come with me. Now.

They move.

Despite the SUN'S absence, day rises.

XXV. WOLCAIRN/THE CAPITAL. VARIOUS –
DAY XII.

Music.

Perhaps a choir, haunted.

*In his chambers, LORENZ sits, utterly bereft
and broken.*

ATTICUS stands behind.

Neither say anything.

*Weaving through the city's alleyways and
tunnels, BARNABAS leads CAPITAL
CITIZENS (REBEL & WHORE) onward.*

LORENZ slowly stands.

Turns to face a window.

*BARNABAS and CAPITAL CITIZENS
(REBEL & WHORE) weave and dart.*

*ATTICUS watches as LORENZ slowly
crosses to the window.*

LORENZ opens it.

*BARNABAS and CAPITAL CITIZENS
(REBEL & WHORE) weave and dart.*

LORENZ goes to climb onto the ledge.

ATTICUS grabs him by the shoulder.

LORENZ turns.

The brothers look into one another's eyes.

*ATTICUS nods and kisses LORENZ'
forehead.*

CAPITAL CITIZEN (WHORE)

How much further?

BARNABAS

Not far. Almost there.

*LORENZ nods to ATTICUS, then turns back
to the window.*

He climbs onto the ledge.

*BARNABAS and CAPITAL CITIZENS
(REBEL & WHORE) stop.*

The music stops.

Discordant notes/chimes.

*SUN enters with harsh, flaring light,
causing all to shield their eyes.*

*She crosses to BARNABAS and CAPITAL
CITIZENS (REBEL & WHORE).*

The light softens.

*CAPITAL CITIZEN (WHORE) peeks, then
stares at SUN in awe.*

CAPITAL CITIZEN (WHORE)

Vermilla.

BARNABAS

Aye.

She is alive.

*SUN, BARNABAS, and CAPITAL CITIZENS
(REBEL & WHORE) vanish in darkness.*

LORENZ vision clears.

*From out of the darkness, OTHSRYD steps
into the room.*

OTHSRYD

Master Lorenz.

LORENZ
(Freezing)

...

ATTICUS

O God.

OTHSRYD

Step down, Your Grace.

Please.

LORENZ turns to face her.

LORENZ

...

Thou art not real.

OTHSRYD

I am.

LORENZ

No. Thou art in my head. Another conjuring of my woe.

OTHSRYD

I am not.

(Holding out her hand)

Feel the warmth of my hand.

Beat.

ATTICUS

She can't be.

LORENZ stumbles down from the ledge.

Crosses to OTHSRYD'S hand.

She cups his cheek.

And he falls to his knees in tears.

OTHSRYD

I am no mere vision. I stand before you now.

LORENZ

But my mother killed thee.

I know it.

OTHSRYD

She did.

And the Lord, in His goodness, hath brought me back to you.

LORENZ

...

OTHSRYD

He hath restored me. And made me whole again.

I have seen His Plan for all of us. And your path, Master, doth not end here. Together, you and I shall see that all your family knoweth His Justice. And payeth for their sins.

Wouldst thou like that?

Yes. LORENZ

Brother? ATTICUS

Yes. LORENZ

Then so it shall be. OTHSRYD

Prepare thyself for the joust. And fear nothing, Lorenz. Today, the Lord rideth with thee.

OTHSRYD turns to exit.

Do not leave me. LORENZ

I shall find you soon. OTHSRYD

A small thing I must first see to.

OTHSRYD exits.

XXVI. THE CAPITAL. THE TILTYARD – DAY
XII.

ROCQUELLION, CAPITAL CITIZENS, and
BARNABAS.

On horseback, MARSHALL enters to greet
the crowd.

Deafening roars.

GOOD DAY!! MARSHALL

Deafening roars.

MARSHALL
Citizens of our great city!
Vistors from far and wide!
Well we meet!
With vigor in our hearts
To watch knight and champion alike
Clash in fiery combat with lance and steel!

Deafening roars.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (INNKEEPER)

Look ye! Not e'en the Queen's hither.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (ARTISAN)

They shan't truly start without either of them here, shall they?

As both of the above cough:

CAPITAL CITIZEN (LESSER NOBLE)

(Chanting)

UN-HOR-SING! UN-HOR-SING!

The crowd picks this up.

The MARSHALL lets this go for a moment, relishing the sound, then holds up an arm for silence.

He gets it.

MARSHALL

You are eager!
We shall not, then, keep you wanting!

First to enter our lists!
Iragthi is she
With wind at her back
And fury at her side
Osotri Kaska

Riding in place of honor
In tribute to our lost Prince
For whom we meet today
In celebration of his memory
Lorenz Ægenwulf!

The crowd roars as OSOTRI, armored but helmless, enters upon horseback.

MARSHALL

Meeting her!
Riding in place of honor
In tribute to our lost Prince
For whom today we meet
In celebration of his memory
Lorenz Ægenwulf!

The crowd roars as LORENZ, armored but helmless, enters upon horseback.

MARSHALL

Champions
Ready yourselves for your first pass!
Watchers

Let them hear your voices!

The crowd roars.

ATTICUS enters, holding LORENZ' helmet.

ATTICUS

Remember, thou dost drift up and to the left.

LORENZ

Worry not, brother. The Lord rideth with me on this day.

OTHSRYD enters.

LORENZ sees her and smiles.

*ATTICUS looks from LORENZ to
OTHSRYD, concerned.*

*LORENZ puts on his helmet as OSOTRI
does the same.*

*They steer their horses to opposite ends of
the field.*

MARSHALL

Points shall be given as follows
For contact with thy lance
Upon thy opponent
1 point!

CITIZEN CAPITAL (INNKEEPER)

Aye, 1 point for a goodly hit.

MARSHALL

If a rider hath the strength
To shatter their lance
Upon their adversary's armor
3 points!

CITIZEN CAPITAL (ARTISAN)

Although none might win a joust with goodly hits alone.

MARSHALL

But if the blow of thy lance
Causes thy foe to topple
From the seat of their horse

VICTORY!!

The crowd roars.

Once again:

UN-HOR-SING!

UN-HOR-SING!

UN-HOR-SING!

SUN enters and everything stops.

Save OTHSRYD.

Beat.

Comest thou to spectate?

OTHSRYD (MOON)

...

SUN

I think we are in
For a most glorious day.

OTHSRYD (MOON)

This shall not end with thy victory, child.

SUN

O mayhap not

OTHSRYD (MOON)

But let us find out together
Shall we?

This next trick might e'en do more than amuse thee.

*Everything resumes motion and the sound of
the crowd returns.*

*ROCQUELLION looks off, sees those
approaching, and blows a horn for silence.*

They get it.

All stand and hail!

ROCQUELLION

Winfird Ægenwulf
The Matron of Prayers
Protector of Piety
And Queen of Rivka!

*QUEEN WINFIRD enters as the crowd
roars.*

ROCQUELLION, again, blows the horn.

Silence.

ROCQUELLION

And
Wielder of the Keeping Faith
The Stonebreaker
And the Uniter of Man.

CAPITAL CITIZEN (ARTISAN)

Is it?

CAPITAL CITIZEN (INNKEEPER)

Look ye, look ye!

ROCQUELLION

King of Rivka
Aymon Ægenwulf!

KING AYMON enters, alive and well, in perfect health.

The crowd roars.

Almost beyond deafening.

LORENZ looks on in awe.

ATTICUS in shock.

LORENZ turns to OTHSRYD.

She smiles.

ROCQUELLION, again, blows the horn.

Silence.

KING AYMON

Good, it doth our heart
To see gathered all of thee

Let this joust commence!

The crowd roars.

Drums.

LORENZ and OSOTRI are given lance.

They take aim and charge at one another.

In the middle of the field, they meet and lances shatter.

OSOTRI falls off her horse.

LORENZ stays seated.

*The crowd roars, harder than ever in their
lives.*

And a fair number of them cough.

Harder than ever in their lives.

MARSHALL

VICTORY!!!

VICTORY!!!

VICTORY!!!

Darkness and drums.

END OF PLAY.