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The Witch's Princess

A comedic adventure in two acts

By Don Zolidis

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Cast of Characters

The Narrators:
NARRATOR 1, a rather traditional narrator
NARRATOR 2, a rather untraditional narrator

The Royal Court:
KING ELDEGAARDE, the very noble king of Artemisia
QUEEN VIOLETTA, the first queen
QUEEN SELYSE, his second wife
ALESSANDRA, a headstrong princess, close to marriageable age
GABRIELLA, Alessandra's lady-in-waiting and closest friend
COURIER, also known as Jeff

The Knights:
THE KNIGHT OF FEATHERS, the first knight
THE KNIGHT OF BLOSSOMS, the second knight, very dreamy
THE KNIGHT OF HAMMERS, the third knight, less-than-dreamy
THE KNIGHT OF ORANGES, a rather strange knight

The Monsters:
BOG WITCH, a hideous and powerful witch
GRENDEL'S MOTHER, a ferocious maternal terror
THE JABBERWOCK, high-spirited and slithery, but mostly fun
MEGOOSA, a woman cursed with geese for hair; terrifying
VITA, a fairy enchantress, big into essential oils
SCRUD, her son – bit of an underachiever, fairy-wise.

The Others:
MENFOLK
BEOWULF, a hearty and powerful Dane,
DANES 1-3, warriors who have not showered in a long time
HARALD, a young boy, destined to be a warrior
JUBJUB BIRD, a large, very annoying bird
MAIDENS 1-3, a group of local maidens
THE SQUIRE OF ORANGES
THE PAIGE OF ORANGES
THE ASSISTANT KNIGHT OF ORANGES
GUARDS 1-3

On Casting: Most of the roles could be played by someone of any gender. Please feel free to adjust pronouns and/or names accordingly. It's fairly important that the Princess and the monsters are female-identifying, however, and should be played that way. The knights should probably be male-identifying, but any of the other Danes, guards, assistants, etc… could be any gender.

Double Casting: Many of the smaller roles could be easily doublecast. The knights, Danes, Maidens, Guards, and "Oranges" could also play other parts.

Scene Changes: Keep them as quick as possible. This play ought to move quickly, and allow the audience to use their imagination (guided by the narrators) as much as possible.

Journeying/battle/travel scenes: This play has a number of places where distance or scope can be shown through puppetry or lighting effects like shadow puppetry. The narrators can control this imagery, and feel free to use any number of other actors to create the special effects.

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Act One

Artemisia. A fairy tale kingdom somewhere in time. A bright and sunny place.
NARRATOR 1 enters, grandly.

NARRATOR 1

Once upon a time, in the bright and sunny kingdom of Artemisia, which cannot be found on any map, there lived a beautiful king and a powerful queen.

ELDEGAARDE AND VIOLETTA enter, very happy.

They were much beloved by their people, who regarded them as the most noble, most virtuous, and most wise of rulers.

Eldegaarde and Violetta wave to their subjects.

And all was well with the kingdom. The land was fertile, the weather was neither too hot nor too cold, and even the cows in the field seemed content and happy. And life only improved when the queen gave birth to a daughter, the princess Alessandra, who was not quite as beautiful as her father, and not quite as powerful and gifted as her mother, but the people loved her anyway.

ALESSANDRA enters, away from the king and queen.

And though she was somewhat more headstrong than a girl ought to be, and perhaps a quite a bit more outspoken, and spent a little more time learning to duel with a sword than was advisable for a girl, the people remained quite high on her. But what the people wanted more than anything… was a prince.

Alessandra begins training with a sword.

So they waited.
And they waited.
And no prince came.
And maybe the cows weren't quite as content as they had been, and perhaps the weather got a shade too cold in the wintertime, and a little hot in the summer, and not everyone woke every day with a song in their heart.
Until one moonless night, there appeared in Artemisia… a witch.

The BOG WITCH slinks in dramatically.
The lights grow dark.

BOG WITCH

Beautiful King! Powerful Queen! I am the Witch of Bogs. And I propose a bargain, black as this night. You shall have a son, for a small price, for what could be worth more than a prince?

NARRATOR 1

And the witch meant trick them, as witches always do, but she had made a mistake.

VIOLETTA

No bargains. No deals. I see now that you are responsible for this blight, bog witch. And I will see you dead.

NARRATOR 1

For the queen was no ordinary woman, but rather an enchantress of terrible power.

Violetta and the Bog Witch square off.

Lightning flashes.
A storm begins.

NARRATOR 1

And every citizen of Artemisia woke that night to hear the terrible storm. Many would swear afterwards that they saw two figures, cloaked in light, flying through the air.

Two figures fly through the sky.

Lightning rent the sky. Fire split the ground. The dead shook in their graves. Until finally…

The Bog Witch and Violetta stab each other at the same time.
Both are dying.

VIOLETTA

I banish you back to the swamp.

BOG WITCH

Hear me, king! I curse you and your line! No son shall be born to you as long as I live!

She escapes.
Violetta drops to the ground.

NARRATOR 1

When the morning came, the witch had vanished, never to be seen again, and the queen was dead. Never was any man as broken-hearted as good king Eldegaarde. No man ever mourned his wife. No kingdom ever cried for their queen as they did. And though he had a daughter, the king shut himself up in his castle, and refused to see her, for the memory of his beloved was too painful to bear.

Eldegaarde sinks into despair.

Then, one day, many years later…

Bright music begins.

A wedding.

SELYSE enters, and joins hands with the king.

And though the new queen, Selyse, was perhaps not quite as powerful or as wise as the dead queen, the people loved her anyway. As for the princess, on the verge of her eighteenth birthday, she was the happiest person in the entire kingdom.

Alessandra and GABRIELLA, (her lady in waiting) enter. Gabriella holds a punching bag in her arms.

Alessandra attacks it with force, grunting and sweating.

ALESSANDRA

Ah! Take that! And that!

She stabs again. Stabs it another time. Then stops.

GABRIELLA

I think it's dead.

ALESSANDRA

Again.

GABRIELLA

Ally – you've been at this for hours.

ALESSANDRA

I need to train.

GABRIELLA

For what? I know I know – if an army of punching bags attacks the castle, you'll be ready. But otherwise, that's what we have guards for.

ALESSANDRA

The guards weren't there when that witch killed my mother.

GABRIELLA

You have a point. But that was ages ago. But I think that all this violence that you practice on a regular basis is… um… you know I'm your best friend, and you know I love you like a super huge amount, but…

ALESSANDRA

But what?

GABRIELLA

You're terrifying.

ALESSANDRA

Good.

GABRIELLA

Which scares away the boys.

ALESSANDRA

Even better.

GABRIELLA

But don't you want to fall in love? Think of it – he arrives in his carriage… his footman opens the door for you – he's gorgeous – you know what I'm talking about. The kind of looks where you stare at him and you're like…

(growls slightly)

Yes. You know what I'm saying? He's got like dimples and those shoulders, you just want to bite his shoulders, know what I'm saying? Like yum…

ALESSANDRA

And then he snores or is boring or smells terrible or has bad hygiene –

GABIELLA

Which is all fixable!

ALESSANDRA

I don't care, Gabriella. Not interested. And your brain is full of worms. Or boys. Which are basically the same thing.

GABRIELLA *(conspiratorially)*

Actually… I have a new crush –

ALESSANDRA

I don't want to hear it.

GABRIELLA

No no no this one is better than the last one!

ALESSANDRA

The last one couldn't spell his own name.

GABRIELLA

Way better. This one can *read*!

A horn blows off-stage.

What's that?

They go to look.

The COURIER (Jeff) enters in a different space, holding a proclamation.

COURIER

Hear ye, hear ye! Nobles Citizens of Artemesia! By order of King Eldegaarde and Queen Selyse, it is announced that a great tournament shall be held in the kingdom in order to determine the bravest, strongest, most glorious warrior! He who wins the tournament shall be charged with the most dangerous, most noblest, and most glorious of all quests! To slay the foul Bog Witch whose wicked curse our kingdom suffers under to this day! And he that shall slay the Bog Witch shall receive the most noblest, most glorious, most wondrous of all prizes!

He pauses for dramatic effect.

ALESSANDRA

Which is what.

COURIER

Here I pause for dramatic effect.

GABRIELLA

Ooh.

COURIER *(continuing)*

The hand in marriage of the delightful and not at all terrifying Princess Alessandra!

He exits with a flourish.

ALESSANDRA

Wha-a-at?!

She swings her sword angrily.

GABRIELLA

Whoah. So cool!

ALESSANDRA

Are you kidding me?!

She stomps off.

Gabriella takes a moment, then follows the courier.

The throne room. Eldegaarde and Selyse enter.

SELYSE

I am so excited.

ELDEGAARDE

I thought it had just the right amount of suspense, you know? Perhaps I went a bit overboard with calling her "not at all terrifying", though. I think that gave away the game a bit.

SELYSE

She does have a reputation, my love. I think we lean into it. What if we said, "can you tame the ferocious wild princess?" We could make posters.

Alessandra barges in, sword still probably in hand.

ALESSANDRA

What is going on!

SELYSE

Ah!

ELDEGAARDE

There you are, daughter.

ALESSANDRA

My hand in marriage?!

ELDEGAARDE

Darling, you're almost eighteen, this is the perfect time to get you hitched.

ALESSANDRA

I have no interest in getting *hitched*.

SELYSE

Well, when I was your age I thought –

ALESSANDRA

When you were my age? What are you, like five years older than me?

ELDEGAARDE

Hold your tongue, daughter!

SELYSE

It's all right. I know this is a confusing time for you –

ALESSANDRA

I'm not confused. You're a usurper trying to claim the throne. I'm perfectly aware of what's going on here.

ELDEGAARDE

Enough! The tournament begins tomorrow. The winner must slay the bog witch before claiming the prize.

ALESSANDRA

This is utterly stupid, father! Why send a single knight to kill her? Why not send an entire army? Why not send everyone?

ELDEGAARDE

When I require your advice on how to rule a kingdom, I will ask for it. The knight will slay the witch –

ALESSANDRA

I gotta be honest with you, I'm rooting for the bog witch.

SELYSE

Husband, what if we allowed the winning knight a chance to woo her first? Like a test run?

ELDEGAARDE

Wonderful idea, my love.

Alessandra groans.

But my word is final: If skill with interpersonal violence isn't a good criteria for choosing a husband, I don't know what is.

NARRATOR 1

And so the tournament began with much rejoicing.

NARRATOR 2 enters.

NARRATOR 2

And it was a hot and miserable day, and everyone was cranky.

Narrator 1 looks at her.

What?

NARRATOR 1

I'm the one telling the story.

NARRATOR 2

I'm just adding color. Or truth, if you want to call it that. Because your version is -

NARRATOR 1 *(cutting her off)*

And so the tournament began with MUCH REJOICING. And from near and far, all across Artemisia, all of the menfolk -

NARRATOR 2

Most of whom were physically capable and quite a few who were in sound mental health, arrived.

Menfolk enter. Much cheering. Much chest-thumping.

Some of them strut back and forth to demonstrate their manliness.

Others are flexing.

MENFOLK *(overlapping)*

Woo! Boo ya! Gonna fight for my PRINCESS! Woop woop!

NARRATOR 1

And they were all defeated.

All the men fall over in unison.

By one man.

The KNIGHT OF FEATHERS struts in, stepping over his beaten foes. He wears a feather boa. He has a hat with a large feather plume as well.

He's devastatingly handsome. And a little fancy.

ELDEGAARDE

Are we sure about this one?

SELYSE

He's perfect!

KNIGHT OF FEATHERS

Your majesties, I am known only as the Knight of Feathers.

He shakes his boa.

ELDGAARDE

You're certain you can slay the bog witch?

KNIGHT OF FEATHERS

I could slay five bog witches. Line them up in a kickline like so.

He demonstrates hacking off the heads of five witches in a kickline, twirling as he does it.

Hi ya! Hi ya! Ah cha! Ka-blam!

SELYSE

He's so fancy!

The Knight of Feathers approaches Alessandra.

ALESSANDRA

This is the guy?

He gets down on one knee to kiss her hand.

KNIGHT OF FEATHERS

Be not frightened, princess. I know that a delicate lady like yourself must be overwhelmed by my beauty.

ALESSANDRA

Oh great.

KNIGHT OF FEATHERS

Yes it is only natural to sigh in my presence. On occasion, when I glimpse my reflection in the mirror, I sigh as well.

He demonstrates.

I'm sure you have questions. Like how did I get to be so handsome?

ALESSANDRA

That's not really what's on the top of my mind -

KNIGHT OF FEATHERS

Number one. I wake up at three am to prepare my beauty regimen. First there's a gentle dabbing process with a slightly moist handkerchief scented with rosewater. I touch it lightly to my skin – here and here – then I allow that –

ALESSANDRA

You know what? This has been fun, but good luck with the Bog Witch I guess. I hope she doesn't brutally murder you.

KNIGHT OF FEATHERS

I assure you, there is not a bog witch alive who frightens me. I am as deadly as I am handsome. Do not pine for me too long, my dear. I shall return anon.

He holds out his hand.

ALESSANDRA

Am I supposed to shake that?

KNIGHT OF FEATHERS

I am permitting you to kiss it.

ALESSANDRA

I don't kiss your hand.

KNIGHT OF FEATHERS

I already kissed yours once, I think it only fair that you kiss mine.

ALESSANDRA

That's not how this works.

KNIGHT OF FEATHERS

Look at my hand. Look at it. It's practically perfect. Of course you want to kiss it. It's almost luminescent.

ALESSANDRA

Just go already!

KNIGHT OF FEATHERS

Very well!

He throws his boa over his shoulder and begins to prance to the other side of the stage –

Do not ogle my calves overmuch as I walk, it unnerves me. Fear not, fair princess, your dashing and handsome knight shall dispatch this witch in barely a second –

He walks off-stage

A split-second later, a truncated shriek and two severed hands are tossed onto the stage.

Then a letter is tossed onto the stage.
The Courier fetches it.

COURIER

There appears to be a note. And hands. Which are extraordinary.

ELDEGAARDE

Just read the note please.

COURIER

Oh it's from the Bog Witch! Really lovely handwriting by the way. Cursive. You don't see that much anymore.
"I have slain your pathetic knight and eaten him. Ha ha ha ha"

He turns it over

"Ha ha ha ha."

NARRATOR 1

And so the word went out -

Skipping Forward

MENFOLK

Woo! I'm back at this again! Good thing I didn't win! I just like to share these moments with you! I cherish our friendship. I feel like we've grown so much.

NARRATOR 1

And they were all defeated.

They all fall over.

By one man.

The KNIGHT OF HAMMERS enters brutishly.

He holds a very large warhammer with two hands.

ELDEGAARDE

See now THIS is the kind of man I figured would win! Congratulations, noble knight! By what name are you called?

KNIGHT OF HAMMERS

I'm the Knight of Hammers.

Short pause

Because I have a hammer.

ELDEGAARDE

Ri-ight. Welp. He seems nice. My daughter is dying to meet you.

KNIGHT OF HAMMERS

Yes.

SELYSE

She's over there.

He steps clunkily in her direction.

KNIGHT OF HAMMERS

Hello.

ALESSANDRA

Hi.

Awkward silence.

SELYSE

Just make small talk! Ask him questions.

ALESSANDRA

We all know he's not making it through this, right? Fine. Tell me about your family.

KNIGHT OF HAMMERS

My family.

His eyes drift off stoically.

I can't talk about them. It hurts too much.

He stares off in a different direction, also stoically.

ALESSANDRA

Okay. What do you do for fun?

KNIGHT OF HAMMERS

Fun. I had fun once.

He stares into the distance, in so much pain.

That was before.

SELYSE

I don't know about you guys, but I'm *intrigued.*

ALESSANDRA

Okay I think we're done here.

He stares at her intensely.

What.

KNIGHT OF HAMMERS

There's so much I want to tell you. But I can't find the words.

ALESSANDRA

Uh-huh.

SEYLSE

Oh he's *intense*. I like it.

KNIGHT OF HAMMERS

I have to go. I'd rather fight a bog witch than explain my feelings.

He exits.

SELYSE

Oooh.

ALESSANDRA

You can't be serious.

SELYSE

He's the kind of emotionally stunted manchild every woman is dying to find! He can't deal with his feelings so he turns to smashing things with a hammer. And he's probably got dark secrets that have wrecked him. Just think: you could be the person to fix him!

NARRATOR

And then –

Another head is rolled back on to the stage.

SELYSE

Well I guess you're not fixing that.

ELDEGAARDE

Back to the drawing board. Let's get ready for the fourth tournament. Maybe we could open it up to criminals and vagabonds?

ALESSANDRA

I'm done!

ELDEGAARDE

Young lady you will not -

Alessandra storms off.

She gets it from her mother.

Lights change.

Alessandra is back in her training room, practicing.
She stops.
Gabriella enters.

GABRIELLA

Don't let me stop you. You can still murder that practice dummy if you like.

ALESSANDRA

This wouldn't have happened if my mother was alive.

GABRIELLA

Well, yes, there would have been no curse –

ALESSANDRA

No I mean – she would've listened to me. I wouldn't have been passed off to whichever idiot can beat up the other idiots. But my father doesn't care – I'm just a burden to be relieved of –

GABRIELLA

You don't believe that.

ALESSANDRA

How many times did he visit me? You were the only person I had.

Gabriella nods.

GABRIELLA

It was kinda my job.

ALESSANDRA

And now I'm going to be thrown to the first doofus who can kill the witch.

GABRIELLA
On the bright side, she is proving very difficult to kill.

ALESSANDRA
Because my father is sending one moron at a time. How hard is it to – ?
She stops, realizing something.

GABRIELLA
What's that look? I don't like that look. That's a problematic look.

ALESSANDRA
I have an idea.

GABRIELLA
Is it about staying safe and not doing anything ridiculous?

ALESSANDRA
Nope.

GABRIELLA
Ally.

ALESSANDRA
I'm going to kill the bog witch.

GABRIELLA
Um –

ALESSANDRA
Think about it! I'm very dangerous!

GABRIELLA
You're not that dangerous!

ALESSANDRA
Then I get to marry myself. It's perfect. I slay the witch. I lift the curse. I marry me.

GABRIELLA
You marry yourself?

ALESSANDRA
I love me! I get along great with myself! All of my problems will be solved!

GABRIELLA

Except for the killing of the extremely dangerous witch who has brutally slain every single knight who –

ALESSANDRA

Every *single* knight.

GABRIELLA

You're going to bring an army, aren't you?

ALESSANDRA

Better. I'm going to bring a crew. And I need you for it. Are you in?

GABRIELLA

Impossible odds? Evil witch in a swamp? Certain death?

ALESSANDRA

Best friends?

GABRIELLA

Of course I'm in.

They get to work.

NARRATOR 2

And the princess laid out her plan –

GABRIELLA

That is *insane.*

NARRATOR 2

Which even Gabriella was forced to admit had its merits –

GABRIELLA

We're all gonna die. This is crazy-talk. You have gone mad.

ALESSANDRA

You know your role.

GABRIELLA

You'll never convince them. They'll probably eat you. In fact it's fairly certain you're going be eaten long before you ever get to the bog witch.

ALESSANDRA

We'll see about that.

Scene change during this next part.

NARRATOR 1

And so, under cover of night, as the palace guards slept, Princess Alessandra and her best friend escaped from the castle –

NARRATOR 2

They used a grappling hook, tossed it out the window, rappelled down the side of the tower – it was crazy awesome.

GABRIELLA *(off-stage)*

Are you kidding me?!

ALESSANDRA *(off-stage)*

It's cooler this way. Shhhh!

Two figures journey through the landscape. Over hills and mountains.

NARRATOR 1

And from the gentle rolling hills of Artemisia, our two heroines traveled northward – It was a long and arduous journey – across the foothills of looming mountains, fording freezing rivers - to a harsh land of ice and rock – a bleak and bitter place.

NARRATOR 2

Scandinavia. Very pleasant actually. Lots of green energy.

NARRATOR 1

A *bleak* and *bitter* place where barely a scrap of life existed.

Lights up on Heorat, a Drinking Hall. A bunch of sweaty DANES, wearing furs and/or rugby jerseys, are partying.

A land so grim and deadly that the inhabitants -

DANES

CHUG CHUG CHUG CHUG CHUG

NARRATOR 1

So *Grim,* so *Silent,* so miserable that its citizens were stoic and sad every single day.

DANES

CHUG CHUG CHUG CHUG WOOOOOO!

NARRATOR 2

Um… pause. We've been informed by the district that there are certain restrictions regarding depicting partying activity um… so…

BEOWULF, dressed in furs, and a horned helmet, and probably also a rugby jersey, strides in, holding a mug.

BEOWULF

BEHOLD MY JUG OF APPLE JUICE!

DANES

JUICE JUICE JUICE JUICE!

NARRATOR 2

I guess that works.

BEOWULF

Drink my warriors!

The Danes chug their apple juice.

DANE 1

Oh man my tummy.

DANE 2

Tell the story again, my lord!

DANE 3

Tell us of your mighty deeds!

BEOWULF

Oh man I've already told it once do I need to –

DANES

TELL IT!

BEOWULF

OF COURSE I'LL TELL IT!

He leaps onto the table like Gaston.

There I was, facing the half-beast, half-demon, Grendel. Eight feet tall. Covered in slime and scales and fur. He stank like the grave. His jaws dripped venom. And the blood of his victims still dripped from his stinking jaws.

The Danes hang on every word like small children, gathering close.

DANE 1

Were you scared?

BEOWULF

No. Because I knew that no matter how mighty the evil monster was, BEOWULF WAS MIGHTIER! I leapt upon the great brute – he tore at my arms, but I have been doing a lot of crossfit so I was ready. And I grabbed his arm with my hands – AND I RIPPED IT OFF HIS BODY!

He reaches down below the table and finds a severed arm, lifting it aloft like a trophy.

DANES

WOOOO!

DANE 2

I love this part! I love this part so much!

BEOWULF

And then, as blood spurted from his shoulder socket like a fire hydrant, I smacked the monster in the head with his own hand.

He mimes this with the arm.

And I growled, "Why are you hitting yourself?! Why are you hitting yourself?"
And now… my warriors – APPLE JUICE FOR EVERYONE!

DANES

WOOOOO!

They toast with their juice cups.

BEOWULF

And let's hang his severed arm from the ceiling like a gory trophy because we are not sensitive to others' emotional needs at all!

DANES

WOOOO!

Beowulf lifts the severed arm into the air and hangs it from something as the Danes chug apple juice.

NARRATOR 1

Meanwhile, someone watched… and waited…

Lights down on the Danes.

GRENDEL'S MOTHER enters on another part of the stage, huddled in a cloak.

Old she was, as ancient as the stones beneath her feet – she lived when the world was young, and had seen all manner of men live and die – her eyes burned with wickedness, her jagged teeth longed to rip out the throats of the men who had killed her son, and though she was hideous to behold, her –

Alessandra, wearing furs, approaches her. Gabriella creeps in, very cautiously.

ALESSANDRA

Hey psst! Are you Grendel's Mother?

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

Oh my golly you startled me.

She takes off her cloak. She seems nice and not at all hideous.

GABRIELLA *(not looking)*

Don't kill us please. This was a terrible idea, Ally –

ALESSANDRA

Quiet! Hi. I'm Princess Alessandra, this is my BFF Gabriella –

GABRIELLA *(still terrified)*

What up?

ALESSANDRA

And how would you like a job?

Grendel's Mother rises up, growling and fearsome.

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

You dare approach me? Do you know who I am?

ALESSANDRA

You're the baddest mother in the world. And I could sure use somebody like you.

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

I could snap your bones like twigs – I could feast on your eyeballs - I could cook your entrails into a soup, I could…

She stops. Suddenly sad.

My boy used to love my entrail soup.

She sits down.

He can't eat it now.

GABRIELLA

Why not?

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

Because he's dead!

She sobs.

I can still hear his little voice – well he wasn't little, he was an eight-foot tall mountain of muscle, but still, you're always mama's little boy – "Mommy, can we have entrail soup again tonight? Of course, baby! Of course….

She breaks into tears again.

ALESSANDRA

There, there.

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

And now they've hung his arm like a trophy! I'll kill them all! I'll burn their village to the ground! I'll eat their brains and make a really nice casserole out of them and take it to the old folks home cause I'm really invested in helping my community! Rarrrrghgh.

ALESSANDRA

Wait wait wait wait. I know how this works. You go in there – you kill a bunch of them, then they hunt you down and kill you. It's a cycle of violence. If you help me, I'll help you.

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

You'll get his arm back?

ALESSANDRA
And I'll make sure they feel bad about what they did.

GRENDEL'S MOTHER
What is it you want me to do?

ALESSANDRA
We'll get to that later. Is it a deal?
Lights change back to the Drinking Hall.
The Danes are still carousing with their apple juice.

DANES
JUICE JUICE JUICE JUICE!

BEOWULF
High-fives for everyone!
He pulls the arm down and runs around high-fiving Danes with it.

DANES
Woooo!

BEOWULF
Oh man this is never gonna get old!

DANE 3
If I know one thing, it's that humanity is always going to hang severed body parts from walls.
Alessandra enters, looking a bit severe.

ALESSANDRA
GREETINGS, SWEATY DANES.
They all stop. Look at her.

BEOWULF
The new juice maiden is here!

DANES
WOOOO!

ALESSANDRA
Actually I'm not a juice maiden.

DANE 1
Boo! Bring juice anyway!
The other Danes cheer.

ALESSANDRA

Hi there. Ellen Thorsdottir. I'm a representative from Bergomat, the drinking hall on the other side of the fjord.

Confusion.

BEOWULF

I have never heard of this Bergomat.

ALESSANDRA

Yeah it's pretty exclusive. You kinda gotta know somebody.

BEOWULF

I know many people.

ALESSANDRA

I'm sure you think you do. I'm just here to scout this hall to see if there's any potential members for our club – are there are noble deeds or glorious victories you've earned lately that could be regaled in song or epic poem?

She takes out a notepad.

BEOWULF

Ooh!

Beowulf gets back up on the table.

There I was, facing the half-beast, half-demon, Grendel. Eight feet tall!

ALESSANDRA

Just one Grendel?

BEOWULF

Yes just one Grendel.

ALESSANDRA

Eight feet tall you say?

She writes it down.

BEOWULF

He was immense –

ALESSANDRA

Actually that's kind of small for a Grendel. Must have been an adolescent.

BEOWULF

What?! He stank like the grave – his teeth were –

ALESSANDRA

Yeah the grave smell is a sure indication of childhood. Okay is that his arm there?

BEOWULF

Yes, I ripped it from his body with a mighty tug and –

ALESSANDRA

Oh sure that happens. Easy to do. Their juvenile arms detach super easy. Kind of like a baby tooth. Sometimes all you gotta do is tie a little string around it and pull.

The other Danes begin to grumble.

BEOWULF

Blood spurted from the socket like –

ALESSANDRA

Yeah yeah yeah of course. That's how it works with the little ones. So it's just this one baby arm specimen you've got here?

BEOWULF

Well I still think it's pretty cool.

ALESSANDRA

We've got like four Grendel arms at Bergomat. Twice the size of that one. Adult arms.

She turns to the others.

Does anyone else have any mighty deeds they could regale in song or epic poem form?

Turns back to Beowulf.

You can get down, sir.

Beowulf sheepishly gets down from the table.

DANE 2

Um… I drank a mighty amount of juice once.

DANE 3

I can spell my name! H R O -

ALESSANDRA *(cutting him off)*

Ri-ight. Okay then. Well I'll head back to the noble and glorious warriors at Bergomat and see if they think any of you got the right stuff. Um… To be real with you, it doesn't look good.

BEOWULF

Wait! What can we do?

ALESSANDRA

First you need a real trophy. Maybe a dragon's skull or something? Possibly two. Certainly you can't have the baby Grendel arm, that's not going to look good.

BEOWULF

Oh.

Skipping Forward

spritzed your hands. That basically just tickles bacteria. You're just saying, "hey would you like a bit of water on you? And they're like `sure we love water."

ALESSANDRA

Okay fine I'll wash my hands again.

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

Now I packed some healthy snacks – Apple slices? Does anyone want apple slices?

GABRIELLA

Do you have any cookies?

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

If you eat the apple slices I have cookies for you.

NARRATOR 1

Until they reached the shore of a vast sea.

The figures stop at the water's edge.

Alessandra, Gabriella, and Grendel's Mother sit around a fire.

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

I still can't believe he's gone. They grow up so fast. One minute they're a baby and the next minute they're raiding a drinking hall and murdering a whole bunch of warriors with their bare hands. I miss him so much.

ALESSANDRA

It's gonna be all right.

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

You know I spent my whole life living for him. Everything I did, I did it for my boy – Heck, nobody even knows my name. They just call me Grendel's Mother like it's my twitter handle or something.

GABRIELLA

What's your name?

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

Barb.

ALESSANDRA

Nice to meet you, Barb.

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

It's just so hard to lose someone you love. Even if they're… maybe not the best person.

ALESSANDRA

My mother died when I was about four. I barely remember her.

She takes out her necklace –

And my Dad… he didn't want to be reminded of her – he got rid of practically everything she touched.

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

Sometimes people do weird things in grief. Some people hold on forever – some people need to let go.

ALESSANDRA

Yeah. He never even talked about her. This locket is all I have left, really. She inscribed the back –

Reads it

`To my little monster'

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

Aww. That's what I called my son! Course he was a literal monster. She had lovely handwriting by the way.

GABRIELLA

It's all a matter of perspective maybe.

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

Maybe without Grendel around I can finally live for myself. No more PTA meetings, or meeting with the school about discipline issues, or meetings with shepherds about how he ate a dozen of their sheep…

ALESSANDRA

Maybe.

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

I can finally be free.

NARRATOR 2

The next morning they sailed for Sarpedon –

A figure sails a ship

SIRI'S VOICE

You are still on the fastest route.

NARRATOR 1

An island that was cursed with the presence of a terrible monster – the doomed souls who lived there trembled in fear every night for the –

Three MAIDENS enter, setting up a picnic.

MAIDEN 1

Sometimes it's nice to just get out of the village and stretch, you know?

MAIDEN 2

I hear you. The village is killing me right now.

MAIDEN 1

It is so gross.

MAIDEN 3

What's wrong with it?

MAIDEN 2

Ugh. Where to start? Okay so you remember that Jeanie is like on my butt about doing some overtime at the restaurant, right? Like I have nothing else to do with my time. Like my whole life is just waiting on lazy people who can't cook their own food, right?

MAIDEN 3

I hear you.

MAIDEN 2

And then there's like all these plague rumors.

MAIDEN 1

I can't even with the plague.

MAIDEN 2

I *know*. I am so *over* the plague. Like, do we *need* a plague right now? Who thought this was a good idea? I am done with it. I am cutting out that noise.

MAIDEN 1

So important.

MAIDEN 2

I'm really getting into like radical simplicity right now.

MAIDEN 1

Uh-huh.

MAIDEN 2

So you know I have like four possessions, right?

MAIDEN 3

Yeah cause we're peasants and we don't have much.

MAIDEN 2

But like what if I had three possessions? Is my life really gonna change? Like, the other day one of my sheep – I got sheep – just like fell over dead, right? Just sheeping along and then boom dead.

MAIDEN 1

Yeah I had that happen too.

MAIDEN 2

It's like, oh this is great, now I've got a dead sheep. What am I gonna do with a dead sheep?

MAIDEN 1

Eat it.

MAIDEN 2

THANK YOU. Yes. People are like – `you should share that with the other villagers', and I'm like, uh no thank you.

MAIDEN 1

You gotta respect your own needs.

MAIDEN 2

Absolutely. But I would totally share with you because you are my best friends and we are gonna stick together always.

Alessandra, Gabriella, and Grendel's Mother enter.

AAAAH IT'S A MONSTER EVERYONE FOR YOURSELVES!

She runs off.

GABRIELLA

Everybody chill!

The two Peasant girls freak out at Grendel's Mother.

ALESSANDRA

We're not here to fight anybody.

MAIDEN 1

I have taken self defense classes and I will defend myself and I bite and I am really really mean when it gets down to it - you won't take me alive!

MAIDEN 3

I've seen it. She is a beast. She is like crazy, y'all. She will fight you, she doesn't care.

MAIDEN 1

Take all my money!

She throws 2 coins onto the ground.

ALESSANDRA

We're just hunting for a being that lives near here.

MAIDEN 3

You mean the monster?

GABRIELLA

We're not using the word monster because it's hurtful.

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

It's okay. I'm a big girl, I can take it.

MAIDEN 1

Oh you mean *her.* Ohhhh.

MAIDEN 3

Oh yeah. Oh. That's what you're doing here? You're going to kill her?

MAIDEN 1

She is legit terrifying.

ALESSANDRA

We're not here to kill her.

MAIDEN 3

I know this one guy – he was like my boyfriend or whatever –

MAIDEN 1

Was this Henri? Because he was so cringe.

MAIDEN 3

It was Henri but at this point –

MAIDEN 1

Cringe.

MAIDEN 3

Can I tell my story? So anyways Henri went to like confront her? And now he's like… traumatized. Like he doesn't even talk about it. He just like cries in the corner.

MAIDEN 1

To be fair, he cried in the corner beforehand.

MAIDEN 3

That was *one* time.

MAIDEN 1

His whole personality is about crying, honestly. Constant with that dude.

ALESSANDRA
Can you just let us know which direction to find her?

MAIDEN 3
Oh fer sure yeah – she's in the abandoned temple just outside of town.

ALESSANDRA
Thanks.
Alessandra, Gabriella, and Grendel's Mother start to exit.

MAIDEN 1
But FYI she's probably just gonna kill you when you show up.
After they're gone
Total hostage situation.

MAIDEN 3
Oh fer sure yeah.
Lights change.

NARRATOR 1
On a high hill overlooking the island, the ancient temple lay in a crumbling, befouled ruin.

GABRIELLA *(off-stage)*
Ooh there's a pretty fountain!

NARRATOR 1
Within it – the monster waited.
MEGOOSA enters, hooded and shrouded.
Spurned by the world of men, she lived alone, sustained only by her venomous hatred for mankind –
Megoosa takes out a phone and thumbs through it.

NARRATOR 2
Also social media.

NARRATOR 1
Her heart blazed with rage and the sight of her was enough to freeze the blood of any man. She kept no mirrors, could not bear to –
Megoosa takes a selfie.
Posts it.
Gabriella, Alessandra, and Grendel's Mother enter cautiously, not looking in the direction of Megoosa.

GABRIELLA

All right let me handle this one.

ALESSANDRA

Are you sure? She could be trouble.

GABRIELLA

She was jilted in love – I get that. You guys hide here.

ALESSANDRA

Okay.

Gabriella starts to approach, not looking at Megoosa.

GABRIELLA

Um… Hey there.

No reaction.

NARRATOR 1

If the monster heard the distant sounds of humanity, she gave no indication. She was human once, but now an abomination – her hair slithered around her scalp, poisonous and deadly.

GABRIELLA *(waving, louder)*

Hello?

Megoosa takes out her earbuds.

MEGOOSA

Oh sorry had my earbuds in.

She turns to look at Gabriella.

GABRIELLA

No don't look at me!

Gabriella ducks.

Megoosa removes her hood.

She has geese for hair.

MEGOOSA

What. Ohhh you must have been talking to some of the guys in town. `Don't go near the monster – she's got snakes for hair – she turns you to stone if she looks at you!'

GABRIELLA

That's what they said.

MEGOOSA

No it's cool you can look. Go ahead.

Gabriella turns to look.

GABRIELLA

You're not what I expected.

MEGOOSA

Definitely. Basically what happened – this knight came to kill me or whatever? And my geese scared him – I mean, they won't kill you from a distance, but they can be straight-up *mean* –

She strokes her geese hair and talks to them

`Yes you can my little goosies yes you can. Mama loves you.'

And I guess it was a little embarrassing to admit you got beat up by a bunch of geese, so he invented this whole story about snakes and turning to stone and it's a whole *thing*. So what's up?

GABRIELLA *(she's got this prepared)*

Noble Medusa –

MEGOOSA *(correcting her)*

Megoosa –

GABRIELLA

Megoosa. We know that you've been hurt. We know that you've been shunned –

MEGOOSA

Which is ridiculous because I am *amazing* – not today, I'm having a bad goose day, but sometimes this is a killer look.

GABRIELLA

We know that you've been shunned, but what we are offering is a chance at redemption. We're putting together a crew for the deadliest job imaginable. Come with us and –

MEGOOSA

Done.

GABRIELLA

That's it?

MEGOOSA

Sure yeah I'm super bored up here. Nobody invites me to anything! Even though I am FUN AT PARTIES. Sometimes I need to remind the village that I am a total blast.

GABRIELLA

Which is why we need you – we need a demolitions expert -

MEGOOSA

Ooh that's me! I'm a bit of a mad scientist in my spare time. I mean if you're living alone you gotta have hobbies right? So I just love trying to make things blow up. Which is again – WHY I AM FUN AT PARTIES. You wanna see?

GABRIELLA

I trust you.

MEGOOSA

No no no it will just take me a minute. What do you want me to explode?

Alessandra and Grendel's Mother approach.

ALESSANDRA

The job requires stealth.

MEGOOSA

Oh my gosh I didn't even see you there! That was awesome! I am super stealthy.

GABRIELLA

This is Princess Alessandra and –

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

Barb.

MEGOOSA

Ooh a princess.

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

And Barb. My name's Barb. I'm known as Barb. Oh my gosh that feels good!

ALESSANDRA

This job is going to be dangerous.

MEGOOSA

Yes. You would not believe how bored I get up her. Every couple of weeks I try to sneak into town and go to a club, which is usually super fun, I'm just trying to get my dance on, know what I mean? But it's hard to keep these ladies quiet for too long –

GABRIELLA

The ladies?

MEGOOSA

My geese. They wake up and they're like honk honk honk which is super embarrassing if you're out on the dance floor getting down or on a date trying to kiss somebody, and then you start making honking noises all over the place. So that's a problem, definitely. What were we talking about?

ALESSANDRA

Stealth. And the need for being quiet.

MEGOOSA

Ri-ight. Well um… if you feed `em right before the job, they'll take a nap.

ALESSANDRA

We may need to do that.

MEGOOSA

So what's the job? Oh I don't care I'll do whatever.

She heads off-stage.

<HONK> <HONK> <HONK>

It's cool, they're fine. They're fine.

<HONK>

Relax.

She darts back in, holding a bag.

We're gonna need more snacks.

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

Don't worry, I packed a lot. Are sure you have everything you need?

MEGOOSA

No it's good I've got all my explosives right here.

Pats the bag.

Oh. Whoops. Shouldn't pat the explosives. Cause you know, BOOM. Probably not gonna happen. Don't worry. I'm really almost a pro at this.

GABRIELLA *(to Alessandra)*

Are you sure that she's the demolition expert we need?

MEGOOSA

What I lack in skill, I make up for in enthusiasm. I mean do you want someone who's all serious all the time blowing stuff up?

GABRIELLA

Probably.

MEGOOSA

No you want someone to do it with a sense of fun!

ALESSANDRA

You're gonna do great.

MEGOOSA

<HONK> <HONK> <HONK>

GABRIELLA

Sure.

ALESSANDRA

All right let's go we need one more on our crew.

MEGOOSA

Ooh – exciting!

ALESSANDRA

The muscle.

Lights change as they exit.

NARRATOR 1

The path ahead was as dangerous as any – across the sea, and to a new, strange and terrifying land.

Four figures now travel over the land.

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

Okay I want to make sure everyone washes their hands before we get there – and let me know if we need any bathroom breaks.

NARRATOR 2

It was basically like a really weird place.

NARRATOR 1

Where death lurked around every corner.

The figures enter a strange forest.

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

No looking in the corners!

Animal sounds. Birds. Shrieks.

A boglike place. Ferns.

A figure of a bird pops up.

NARRATOR 2

Until they reached a slithy tove.

The JUBJUB BIRD enters while the scene is being set up. It stalks back and forth like an exceptionally awkward emu.

JUBJUB BIRD

Jubjub! Jubjub!

Jubjub bird exits.

HARALD, a youngish looking man, enters, holding a sword nervously in front of him. He fears attack from all directions.

HARALD

I know you're out there!

He swings his sword around.

You won't get me!

The Jubjub Bird re-enters, strutting, spotting Harald. It begins a mating dance.

JUBJUB BIRD

Jubjub! Jub*jub!*

HARALD

Stop it! Shhh!

JUBJUB BIRD

Jubjubjubjubjubjubjubjub!

The Jubjub bird investigates him.

HARALD

Shoo!

JUBJUB BIRD *(curious)*

Jubjub?

It begins to peck at him.

HARALD

I mean it! I'm not afraid to use this!

JUBJUB BIRD *(even curiouser)*

Jubjub?

HARALD

Jubjub!

JUBJUB BIRD *(intrigued)*

Jub*juuuuub.*

It gets closer, seductive now.

*Jub*jub. *Juuub*jub. JUBjub.

Harald tries to slap at it, but the bird takes this to mean receptiveness to its mating dance.

HARALD

No I'm not interested stop it!

A ROAR from off-stage.

Now you've gone and done it. Oh no.

He readies his sword again.

I will not fail you, father.

He scatters something on the ground. Treats.

JUBJUB BIRD

Jubjub?

Skipping Forward

You're right. My Da's always telling me that I'll never amount to anything. I conceived of this whole plan to slay the Jabberwock just to win his favor. But why can't he just love me for me? I've been so blind –

GABRIELLA

Hey do you mind, you're not a main character?

JABBERWOCK

OOOH GIVE ME ALL THE TREATS. RAR RAR RAR. I AM SCARY MONSTER.

HARALD

I'm a hero – at least I thought I was, but maybe I'm just trying to live up to my father's dreams? You see, he was wounded many years ago –

GABRIELLA

I don't care. Go have your character development off-stage.

HARALD

You're not going to slay the beast?

JABBERWOCK

NUM NUMS. SCARY MONSTER EAT NUM NUMS.

ALESSANDRA

Is this guy still here? Shoo.

HARALD

But –

MEGOOSA

Honk honk honk!

HARALD

Ah!

He runs off.
The Jabberwock relaxes.

JABBERWOCK

Aw sad. Why'd he go?

ALESSANDRA

He was trying to kill you.

JABBERWOCK

What? Noooooooo. Wait. Wait. Hold on.

She's thinking about it.

Is that why he puts out the treats?

ALESSANDRA

He's trying to lure you in. So he can kill you.

JABBERWOCK

Ohhhhhh. You see I thought we were doing like a whole thing. Like, he puts out the treats, and then he expects me to be like a big scary monster, so I come out, and I'm just like – I channel Beyonce, you know?

She doe some Beyonce-type moves.

But also like a monster type Beyonce? Which she can totally pull off because she's multi-talented. And then I do my thing and he pretends to be a warrior and we do our fun dance and that's what I need to do to get the treats. I'm all about the treats.

Short pause.

Do y'all have treats?

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

We do.

JABBERWOCK

Oooh. What do I need to do to get them? You want tricks? You want to see some tricks? I can do all kinds of stuff? Shake? Shake for treats?

She puts out a claw.

How about roll over? That's a classic. You know what's fun – you can put it on my nose, and then I'll just wait, and I'll just look at you, like this – like my eyes –

She makes her eyes really wide.

I'm just gonna keep staring. I know the treat's on my nose, but I'm gonna keep staring. You don't know how much I want that treat but I am like a rock – I am your friend, I am dependable – just do it – put it on my nose put it on my nose put it on my nose

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

Okay.

Grendel's Mother puts a treat on the Jabberwock's nose.

JABBERWOCK

Check it. I'm not even eating it. I'm just staring. Look at me. Look at my eyes!

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

You are doing so good!

JABBERWOCK

I know!

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

Okay EAT IT!

JABBERWOCK

RARRR RAR RARR!

She eats the treats.

ALESSANDRA

So um… the reason we're here, is that I'm putting a crew together.

JABBERWOCK

Let's do it again!

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

Yes!

She's about to put another treat on her nose.

ALESSANDRA

Can we stop that?

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

Oh. Sorry.

The Jabberwock is disappointed. Grendel's Mother whispers to her loudly.

Later.

Her tail wags.

JABBERWOCK *(very loud whisper)*

Okay.

ALESSANDRA

I'm putting a crew together. For a job. I need muscle.

JABBERWOCK

Yeah that's important. What's a job?

GABRIELLA

Let me try. You want to come with us and be our friend and get more treats?

JABBERWOCK

YES!

GABRIELLA

See? She's a food-motivated monster.

MEGOOSA

Honk honk honk! My geese sense something! Look alive!

Everyone gets ready. Alessandra takes out a sword. Grendel's Mother readies a large spoon. The Jabberwock runs around in a circle.

JABBERWOCK
Oh boy! Oh boy! Rarrr! RAR! BEYONCE! RARRR!
The Courier stumbles in.

GABRIELLA
Jeff?!

COURIER
Ahhh!

GABRIELLA
It's okay!

ALESSANDRA
You know this guy?

GABRIELLA
He's the courier. For your father. The King. Remember him?

ALESSANDRA
Ohhh.

COURIER *(terrified)*
At last I've found you! Princess Alessandra –

GABRIELLA
Heyyy.

COURIER
Hi.
They have a moment.

ALESSANDRA
Do you mind?

COURIER
Oh right. I'm working, Gabby.

GABRIELLA
Later.

COURIER
You know it.
They have another moment.

ALESSANDRA

Dude.

COURIER

Right. Princess, I bring you news of the kingdom. There has been a fourth tournament – which has been won by the almost entirely mentally stable Knight of Oranges.

ALESSANDRA

I assume his head has already been deposited back in the castle by the Bog Witch?

COURIER

No, the Knight of Oranges lives! And he is already on his noble quest –

ALESSANDRA

Well great –

COURIER

To rescue *you*.

ALESSANDRA

Why would he need to rescue me?

COURIER

Because you've been kidnapped by a squad of monsters.

He gestures vaguely at the other companions.

Haven't you?

JABBERWOCK

Rarr I AM A FIERCE MONSTER RARR FEAR ME GIVE ME THE TREATS RARR.

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

Not now, sweetie.

JABBERWOCK

Okay.

MEGOOSA

I get that a lot actually. Oh no she's scary her hair is alive! Which I mean, okay, yes, my hair can be a little unruly, but that doesn't mean that I'm a monster. I'm on the monster spectrum I guess.

ALESSANDRA

I haven't been kidnapped. I'm employing these ladies. This is my team.

COURIER

That's not what the king believes. He declared he'd spare no expense in saving you. Even if you were killed in the process.

ALESSANDRA
Well, you can go back and tell my father that I am perfectly safe and have no need of protection.

COURIER
Of course, princess.
Gabriella takes him aside.

GABRIELLA
It was super brave of you to track us down.

COURIER
Well, you know… sometimes I can be super brave.

GABRIELLA
Ooh.

COURIER
Brought you something.
He takes out a flower. It's pretty crushed.
I had this in my pocket for a while – I mean it looked better when I picked it. But like –

ALESSANDRA *(catching on)*
Wait a minute – is this the guy who reads?

COURIER
I'm a professional reader, actually.

GABRIELLA
Yeah. This is Jeff. Jeff this is Ally. I guess you already know that since basically everyone knows who she is, but… yeah.

COURIER
Hi.
Awkward pause.

ALESSANDRA *(to Gabriella)*
Can I talk to you a minute?

GABRIELLA *(to Courier)*
One sec.
Alessandra takes Gabriella aside.
Super cute, right? You see those breeches on him? Yum.

ALESSANDRA
Gabby –

GABRIELLA

He can *read*, Ally. I'm big into readers.

ALESSANDRA

But how did he find us?

GABRIELLA

I don't know, maybe he just followed his heart.

COURIER

Uh… I think I need to be heading back.

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

Oh if you need some gum for the trip I –

The KNIGHT OF ORANGES leaps out from behind something, stabbing Grendel's Mother through the heart.

Urk.

She falls over, dead.

KNIGHT OF ORANGES

In the name of the king, you're all under arrest. Surrender or die.

Other KNIGHTS wearing orange emerge from off-stage, swords drawn.

Lights Fade.

End of Act One.

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Act Two

The exact same moment as the end of act one.
Grendel's Mother is lying on the ground.
The Knight of Oranges has his sword drawn.
The PAGE OF ORANGES, SQUIRE OF ORANGES, AND ASSISTANT KNIGHT OF ORANGES, have surrounded everyone else on stage.

KNIGHT OF ORANGES

Surrender or die.

ALESSANDRA

What did you do?!

JABBERWOCK

Alarm! Alarm! Alarm! Aaaaaaaah!

KNIGHT OF ORANGES

Step away from the Princess, monsters!
He waves his sword at Megoosa and the Jabberwock to drive them back.
Gabriella ignores them and runs over to Grendel's Mother.

GRENDEL'S MOTHER *(groaning)*

Ohhhhh…

GABRIELLA *(checking on her)*

She's still alive!

KNIGHT FOR ORANGES

The creature must be beheaded to be slain!
He raises his sword.

SQUIRE OF ORANGES

Quick, Princess, now is your chance to escape! Run from the monsters!

MEGOOSA *(attacking)*

HONK HONK HONK HONK
The Assistant Knight of Oranges tries to keep her at bay with his sword, but he's really scared.

ASSISTANT KNIGHT OF ORANGES

A little help over here! I'm sensing anger from the geese! Help! I'm only an assistant knight!

KNIGHT OF ORANGES

Don't look directly at her! Her gaze will turn you to stone!

ASSISTANT KNIGHT OF ORANGES

Well now I can't see!

Megoosa presses the advantage.

ALESSANDRA

STOP! I'M NOT BEING ABDUCTED.

Everyone stops.

JABBERWOCK

RARR I AM A FIERCE BEAST PROTECTING MY FRIENDS!

KNIGHT OF ORANGES

KILL IT!

She leaps in front of his blade.

ALESSANDRA

NO! Everybody calm down!

PAGE OF ORANGES

I was calm the whole time. In case you were curious.

JABBERWOCK

Hey FYI my pronouns are she/her, not it.

ALESSANDRA

I'm not being kidnapped! These people are my friends…

GABRIELLA

She's still breathing but she needs help!

KNIGHT OF ORANGES

These aren't people, they're monsters.

ALESSANDRA

They're my friends. And you just stabbed one.

The Knight of Oranges is confused.

The Assistant Knight of Oranges raises his hand.

ASSISTANT KNIGHT OF ORANGES

Okay, did somebody in our group not mention the fact that she might not be kidnapped? Um, that was me. I'm only the assistant knight, but clearly, I was right on this one and all y'all were wrong.

KNIGHT OF ORANGES

Silence, Barry.

ASSISTANT KNIGHT OF ORANGES
It's Sir Barry, thank you. I didn't go through all the trouble of getting knighted to –

KNIGHT OF ORANGES
The princess is clearly under some kind of mind control.

ALESSANDRA
I am not!

KNIGHT OF ORANGES
The only way to free her is kill the rest of these beasts. Onward, warriors!

SQUIRE OF ORANGES
I just want to remind everyone that I'm just the squire, so I don't actually participate in the fighting. I'm more of like a helper. So if you're like `hey give me a sword' I can like throw the sword at you?

JABBERWOCK
GRRRR
<to herself>
Beyonce Beyonce Beyonce –

ALESSANDRA
Return to my father and tell him I'm fine.
She draws her sword.
Or you can see just how mind-controlled I am.

KNIGHT OF ORANGES
My quest is to return you, dead or alive, to the court.

ALESSANDRA
How are you going to do that if you're dead?
She signals to the Jabberwock and Megoosa, who stand next to her.

JABBERWOCK *(under her breath)*
Fierce fierce fierce fierce…

KNIGHT OF ORANGES
You're threatening me?

ALESSANDRA
Definitely.

KNIGHT OF ORANGES
After I slay the bog witch, I will teach you some manners as your husband.

ALESSANDRA

Good luck with that.

KNIGHT OF ORANGES

I look forward to our wedding.

SQUIRE OF ORANGES

I'm going to be best man!

KNIGHT OF ORANGES

No you're not.

SQUIRE OF ORANGES

Well I'm doing the wedding planning then. What about "Happily Ever After" as a theme?

KNIGHT OF ORANGES

Let's call it "Love, Honor, and Obey."

ALESSANDRA

Get out of here.

KNIGHT OF ORANGES

Next time I chop off that thing's head. Let's go!

PAGE OF ORANGES

Peace.

KNIGHT OF ORANGES

What did I tell you about saying that?

PAGE OF ORANGES

It's my thing. I didn't even get to do my thing. I need a thing.

They exit.

Alessandra rushes over to Grendel's Mother.

ALESSANDRA

Barb! Are you okay?

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

I'm fine… no need to worry about me. Y'all just go on about your business.

She tries to get up – is in pain.

GABRIELLA

I thought you were immune to swords?

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

Mostly. Usually I just say that so people don't worry about me… But I'm okay… I don't mean to trouble you…

She falls back over.

ALESSANDRA

We're going to get you to a healer.

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

Oh you don't have to do that… I'm… fine.

MEGOOSA

I know where there's a creepy fairy lady who's big into essential oils. She lives with a bunch of cats, I think.

She strokes her hair.

Yes, babies, I know you don't like kitties. I know. I know they're mean.

ALESSANDRA

Let's go find her.

Alessandra and Gabriella help Grendel's Mother to her feet.

They start walking.

JABBERWOCK

I'm gonna run ahead! Woo!

Jabberwock runs ahead.

COURIER

Wow that was pretty intense back there.

ALESSANDRA

You led them right to us.

COURIER

I wasn't trying to!

ALESSANDRA

Yeah, well you did, and look what happened.

GABRIELLA

How was he supposed to know?

ALESSANDRA

And how did you find us anyway?

COURIER

I – followed my heart.

ALESSANDRA
Well you can follow it right back to Artemisia.

COURIER
I was hoping to actually accompany you on your great quest. If there's any reading that needs to be done, I could do it.

GABRIELLA
What a great idea!

ALESSANDRA
No. Go home. We don't need you.

GABRIELLA *(to Courier)*
I'll talk to her.

COURIER
I'll just kinda drift to the back then. In case you need me.

ALESSANDRA
We won't.

COURIER
Cool, cool. Just gonna be back here…
He drifts away.

GABRIELLA
Ally.

ALESSANDRA
What?

GABRIELLA
He's just trying to be helpful.

ALESSANDRA
He's trying to stay with you because he's in love with you.

GABRIELLA
You think so?! That's *awesome.*

ALESSANDRA
That's a *problem*.

GABRIELLA
Why?

ALESSANDRA

Because love is weakness. You've got these stupid little fantasies running through your head all the time –

GABRIELLA

They're not stupid –

ALESSANDRA

And in the meantime, you're putting everyone else at risk. He works for the king! You think he wouldn't betray all of us? He probably already did!

GABRIELLA

You know you don't have to be so angry all the time.

ALESSANDRA

I don't? I've got a bunch of nitwits trying to decide my future – my father doesn't care about what I think, I don't have a mother to help me…

GABRIELLA

I'm sorry about your mom. But maybe try trusting someone for once.

ALESSANDRA

And Jeff the Courier is the guy to trust?

GABRIELLA

Maybe. He seems nice.

ALESSANDRA

Seems. They all *seem* nice at first. You're better off on your own. Hey Megoosa –

Megoosa comes over.

MEGOOSA

What's up?

ALESSANDRA

How did you get to… have geese for hair?

MEGOOSA

Oh yeah crazy story.

ALESSANDRA

Does it involve a boy?

MEGOOSA

Sort of.

Skipping Forward

NARRATOR 2

Her name's Barb, by the way.

NARRATOR 1

Until they reached a grove of mushrooms as tall as the highest trees – an ancient and forgotten place -

Large mushroom figures appear around them.

The very air around them crackled with fairy magic.

Magic happens. Maybe some lights. Maybe some weird noises.

Megoosa enters first.

MEGOOSA

HELLO?

The others follow, except for the Jabberwock. Grendel's Mother slumps to the ground.

GRENDEL'S MONSTER

Honestly… I'm… fine… go have fun…

ALESSANDRA *(Calling out)*

HELLO?

VITA THE GOOD FAIRY enters. She wears a tutu, maybe little fairy wings, and has a wand. She also wears a black leather jacket and has a terrible attitude.

VITA

WHO DARES DISTURB VITA THE GOOD FAIRY!!!?

ALESSANDRA

Oh. Hi um – my name is –

VITA

I DON'T CARE WHAT YOUR NAME IS! I WAS WATCHING MY STORIES! THIS BETTER BE GOOD!

GABRIELLA

Our friend was wounded and she's dying!

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

I don't think that I'm *dying.* I'm in a lot of pain... bleeding internally… but please don't worry about me.

VITA

Oh so you show up when you want something from me, is that it? Didn't feel like coming by earlier, didya?

MEGOOSA

Well we um –

VITA

Does anyone ever want to show up and have tea with me? NO! NO ONE WANTS TO HAVE TEA WITH ME. SO GO HOME LOSERS.

GABRIELLA

Maybe you're not too fun to have tea with, honestly.

VITA

THEN DON'T COME AROUND ASKING FOR MAGIC, WEENIES.

She's about to storm off as the Jabberwock enters, with a stick in her mouth.

JABBERWOCK

Hey look what I found! It's a stick! It's awesome! I've got it in my mouth!

Vita is smitten.

VITA

Ohhh… who is this? Who is this big monster?

JABBERWOCK

Me?

Vita approaches the Jabberwock to give her scratches.

VITA

Oh you're a very good monster, aren't you? Yes you are. Yes you are. Ohhhh ohhh that feels good, doesn't it?

The Jabberwock is very happy. Her tail wags.

ALESSANDRA

If you help us, we'll let you play with the monster more.

VITA

Done.

(To the Jabberwock)

I'm gonna see you later.

All right I'm assuming you need to produce a male heir. Drink this and –

ALESSANDRA

That's not what we're here for!

VITA

That's what most people see me for.

GABRIELLA

Our friend is bleeding to death. Like we already mentioned to you.

VITA

Wasn't listening earlier. All right then. Oh man.

Vita looks over Grendel's Mother.

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

…Would you like… some gum?

VITA

Sure.

Grendel's Mother fishes in her bag for some gum.

ALESSANDRA

You're going to chew gum right now?

VITA

Don't mess with my process, rude girl. I want gum, I'm gonna eat gum.

MEGOOSA

I don't think you're supposed to eat it.

VITA

Oh okay gum genius. Are there instructions written on it? Is there a list of do's and don't about gum on this?

MEGOOSA

You just chew it.

VITA *(still sarcastic)*

Oh that makes sense. I'll just chew it like a cow chewing cud! Is that what you think is going on here? Just me, chewing away on this gum –

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

Arrrrhghhgh…

ALESSANDRA

She's dying!

VITA

And you're arguing with me about gum! So what do you think is more important, establishing the proper ground rules for gum, or having me fix your friend? Huh? What do you think, gum genius?

MEGOOSA

All right fine eat it.

VITA

Thank you.

*She pops the gum in her mouth and eats it.**

**Don't actually have the actress eat the gum.*

Urk.

Oh no…

She's choking

GABRIELLA

She's choking!

MEGOOSA

What did I tell you?!

Grendel's Mother writhes in pain.

This is what happens when you don't listen to me. I have good ideas. Nobody thinks I have good ideas, but I do.

Alessandra grabs her and performs a quick Heimlich maneuver.

Vita coughs up the gum.

VITA

So I see you're all trying to kill me.

ALESSANDRA

Can you heal her or not?

VITA

Sure. Can I have some more gum?

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

…of course –

ALESSANDRA

No! Heal her first!

VITA

Fine.

VITA does a rather strange dance, possibly doing the funky chicken, and then takes out a small vial.

GABRIELLA

What's that?

VITA

Essential oils.

GABRIELLA

Will that work?

VITA

They're ESSENTIAL. It's in the name.

GABRIELLA

Oh.

Vita spritzes Grendel's Mother with a spray bottle of essential oils.

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

Oh my goodness. I feel so much better.

VITA

What did I tell you?

She takes an exaggerated bow.

Thank you. Uh thank you. Now, for saving her life, you owe me all of your first-born children. All of them. Gimme them babies.

ALESSANDRA

What?!

VITA

My prices were clearly listed on my website.

GABRIELLA

We offered you Jabberwock cuddles!

VITA

That was my consulting fee. For saving a life and other magic, it's all the first-born children.

ALESSANDRA

Well I saved your life.

VITA

So what do you want for it?

ALESSANDRA

Your first-born child.

They stare at each other.

VITA

You're gonna do me like that, huh?

ALESSANDRA

My prices are also on my website.

VITA

Fine.

She yells off-stage.

SCRUD! COME MEET YOUR NEW MOMMY!

ALESSANDRA

Aw crap.

SCRUD enters, shabbily. Scrud appears to be an annoyed teenage boy who hasn't showered in a while. He also has little fairy wings, which are kind of awkward.

SCRUD

What.

VITA

This is your new Mom.

SCRUD

Oh man. For reals?

VITA

Yes for reals. Run along, Scrud.

To Alessandra

You're going to need to get an unlimited data plan. He uses all the data.

SCRUD

I don't use all the data!

VITA

And you'll need to invest in a lot of food because he eats like a million pounds of fairy dust a day.

SCRUD

Mommm. You're embarrassing me. What else am I gonna do, talk to you?

VITA

HEY. I'm your mother! I enchanted a cabbage plant to grow you! The least you could do is be thankful!

SCRUD

I never asked you to enchant a cabbage! I'm glad you sold me to this wandering witch! I'm outta here!

ALESSANDRA

Witch?

SCRUD

I'm gonna live on her couch and she's not gonna care that I never shower or move! I bet she's gonna give me all the cheez-its I want!

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

Can I talk to you for a minute? You see, my son went through something similar when he was a teenager. He was so awkward at that age, eight feel tall, sprouting hair all over him, his teeth got larger, he was smelly and drooly all the time. They grow up so fast.

VITA

Does it get better?

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

Not at all. He used to eat the neighbor children. I always had to be apologizing – oh whoops Grendel ate that one – but that's why you have nine or ten children, in case a few get picked off.

VITA

He hasn't eaten any other people yet.

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

But mostly I think he was eating other children as a way to get my attention. Because he wanted to show me love, and he had a hard time expressing it. And I think Scrud loves you. He might have a hard time saying it sometimes, and maybe he feels a little awkward because you're so pretty and he's Scrud, so it's hard to live up to your legacy.

SCRUD

Yeah.

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

But if you have a little patience, you can get through this phase.

SCRUD

I'm sorry I eat all the food and never shower.

VITA

I'm sorry I haven't been listening to you.

SCRUD

Hug?

VITA

After a shower.

SCRUD

Okay.

He exits.

VITA

Thank you. All right I fine I release you – you don't have to give me all your firstborn children. To be honest, I don't know what I would do with them anyway.

JABBERWOCK

I have litters!

VITA *(patting her)*

Ooh but I want a little Jabberwock puppy!

Lights change.

Music.

NARRATOR 1

With her crew intact, the companions headed for the Bog Witch's swamp.

Figures appear again.

Over mountains –

The figures go up and down a mountain

Across a blistering desert –

The figures go across a flat plain.

GRENDEL'S MOTHER *(off-stage)*

Sunscreen! Everyone needs sunscreen!

NARRATOR 1

Into the foulest, darkest fen – where huge, buzzing insects bit and snapped – where the deep, pestilent mud threatened to suck the boots from their feet, where –

Jabberwock enters first.

JABBERWOCK

Ooh look mud I'm gonna roll in it and then I'm going to find a white carpet to walk across!

Grendel's Mother enters next, fishing in her bag.

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

Okay who needs bug spray?

MEGOOSA

Not me, my hair loves eating bugs.

GABRIELLA

Can you come stand next to me?

Grendel's Mother sprays down Alessandra and Gabriella.

NARRATOR 2

Where they camped for the night. And everyone fell into a deep and dreamless sleep.

Firelight.

Stars.

Maybe the sound of crickets or frogs.
Alessandra sits alone by the fire.
Grendel's Mother approaches.

GRENDEL'S MOTHER
You should get some sleep. Always important to get a good night's rest.

ALESSANDRA
I can't sleep.

GRENDEL'S MOTHER
Big day tomorrow, huh?

ALESSANDRA
Yeah.

GRENDEL'S MOTHER
It won't bring your mother back, you know. The cycle of violence. That's what you said to me when you met me.

ALESSANDRA
The Bog Witch has cursed the entire kingdom. She needs to die.

GRENDEL'S MOTHER
What's the curse?

ALESSANDRA
Hm?

GRENDEL'S MOTHER
You said the kingdom was cursed. What's the curse?

ALESSANDRA
People are unhappy. People get sick and die. The rich have all the money and the poor have nothing.

GRENDEL'S MOTHER
The witch caused that?

ALESSANDRA
Yeah. And once she's dead we'll be free – things will go back to the way they were. With everyone happy and…

GRENDEL'S MOTHER
Will you be happy?

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ALESSANDRA

I'll be happy because I won't be married.

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

Why is that so terrible?

ALESSANDRA

Because love is a lie. The only person I can count on is myself.

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

Ah. Because you think you can't get hurt that way.

Alessandra doesn't say anything.

Right?

ALESSANDRA

I've been hurt plenty.

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

And you don't want to get hurt again.

ALESSANDRA

After my mother died, it was like the world ended. I couldn't even breathe – everywhere I looked I could see her, and I could feel that she wasn't there. It was like being suffocated in a black fog that never lifted. Every night I had a nurse or handmaid or some other person try to comfort me, but all I wanted was my father. He never showed up. He didn't talk to me for a year. That's what happens when you love someone too much.

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

My son was my whole life. My whole identity before I met you. And I used to think that if he died, I might as well die too. But being on this trip with you… I think it's important to keep living.

ALESSANDRA

Yeah.

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

I think of it this way: Yes it's devastating to have someone you love die. But you feel the pain because you felt the love. You only get hurt if you're open to the world. The more open, the more hurt. But it's worth it.

ALESSANDRA

Is it?

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

Definitely.

ALESSANDRA

I don't know that I believe that.

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

Well – hopefully you will. All right sweetie I'm going to bed. Good night.

ALESSANDRA

Good night, Barb.

Grendel's Mother exits.
Alessandra sits for a minute.

Lights change to daytime.

NARRATOR 2

All right the next day it was on.

Everyone gathers.
High-energy music.

ALESSANDRA

You're up, Gabriella.

Gabriella stands in front of the crew.

GABRIELLA

All right here's what I learned. We're facing a class one enchanted witch hut. The toughest magical cottage ever invented. You can't find it, you can't break in, you can't get near it. Its location changes randomly every day – the only way to find it is to get the magic password, which is kept by three different guards in three different places. To activate the magic you need to speak it out loud simultaneously in three different spots.

MEGOOSA

No problem.

GABRIELLA

And that's before you even get to the front door. Which is also enchanted. And the inside, which is also enchanted. Because the hut is larger than it looks – it's the size of a mansion on the inside, with sensors designed to locate and decapitate intruders – no one has ever gotten past the inner ring. It's an impossible job.

ALESSANDRA

Difficult. Not impossible. You need a crew of five. Mostly monsters.

COURIER

How did you get this information?

GABRIELLA

Skipping Forward

GUARD 3 is guarding. Gabriella enters, dressed in an identical Guard outfit. She adopts a very manly act.

GABRIELLA

What up?

GUARD 3

Hello?

GABRIELLA

Shift change. Yup. Gonna get my guard on. Do some guarding. Oh yeah.

She spits. Scratches herself.

Man I love this. Nothing like standing in a foul bog and looking around and standing here and not doing anything.

GUARD 3

I thought the shift change was at sunset.

GABRIELLA

Aw you know how it is. Middle management coming in, changing everything. Have they ever been out here on duty? Heck no.

GUARD 3

I hear that.

GABRIELLA

Right? You come out here and try this. It ain't easy.

GUARD 3

No it is not. I'm in it mostly for the dental plan, to be honest with you.

GABRIELLA

Oh definitely, definitely.

GUARD 3

Far and away best dental plan in the whole swamp.

GABRIELLA

Yeah my teeth are –

GUARD 3 *(showing teeth)*

Check this out.

GABRIELLA

Oh those are nice.

GUARD 3

Lot of time at the dentist.

GABRIELLA

I got tooth pain up the wazoo. Can't even focus most days. Tell ya what, why don't you take off early?

GUARD 3

Oh thanks. I gotta pick up my daughter from pre-school. I guess they call it pre-school, but mostly I just surround her with toadstools and venomous frogs and hem her in, you know what I mean?

GABRIELLA

That's how they learn. Getting stung by venomous frogs.

GUARD 3

That's how my parents taught me and look how I turned out. Awe-some. I mean not awesome awesome but I make a decent living.

GABRIELLA

All right get outta here.

GUARD 3

You're a life-saver.

He exits. Hands over the code.

ALESSANDRA

And then, at the exact same time –

Everyone looks at their wrist where there's a watch.

Read the spell out loud.

GRENDEL'S MOTHER and GABRIELLA

Silvestra! Vomioblo!

Jabberwock raises her hand again.

JABBERWOCK

Question?

ALESSANDRA

Once the hut appears, Megoosa is up.

JABBERWOCK

Hey um what happens if someone can't read? Theoretically. Asking for a friend.

The Courier runs out to her.

COURIER

Appearamento!

A strange magical noise.

GABRIELLA

Once the hut appears, we have exactly sixty seconds to blow the door before it vanishes again.

NARRATOR 1

And to their dismay, nothing whatsoever happened. They had failed the quest. It was all in vain –

NARRATOR 2

Whoah. That's not what happens.

NARRATOR 1

They felt the weight of their failed dreams coalesce around them –

NARRATOR 2

And from thin air, the hut appeared. It was high in the air, standing on two enormous chicken legs, nearly ten feet tall. Their feet were tipped with nasty claws that could tear anyone apart.

A figure of the hut on chicken legs appears.

They all look up.

ALESSANDRA

Well that's freaky.

MEGOOSA

Hm… I think these are goose legs, actually. HONK HONK HONK.

NARRATOR 2

Hearing a call they recognized, the house leaned over to investigate and Megoosa grabbed the doorway.

A doorway appears.

Megoosa starts wrapping something around it.

MEGOOSA

It's locked, but I think this will work! I mean I'm not positive this will work because I've never blasted my way into a magical witch's hut before, but I put a whole lot of everything into this – sometimes the best way to make things explode is just mix everything together and then run away and get behind something solid – HONK HONK HONK yes I know you're hungry Mommy's doing a job right now HONK HONK relax relax for one minute! OKAY HERE WE GO.

Nothing.

ALESSANDRA

Once the door is blown we enter phase two.

MEGOOSA

It's gonna work… NOW! Now it's gonna work. Oh wait hold on I forgot to add salt. You always need to add salt to things.

She runs up, shakes some salt on the door and –
The lights flicker.
BIG NOISE. EXPLOSION.
The door is rolled off.

Ow. Oh that worked. It worked! I've never had anything work before! YESSSS! HONK HONK HONK.

ALESSANDRA

Once the door is blown we enter phase two. PHASE TWO IS STEALTHY.

Jabberwock runs in.

JABBERWOCK

I AM A FIERCE MONSTER RARR RARR ME SMASH YOU GOOD RARR I EATS ALL THE WITCHEZ YES I DO! RARR RARR RARR. Hey does anyone have treats?

She stops.

Whoah.

Lights change into the interior of the witch's hut.

NARRATOR 2

All right we gotta stop here. And yeah, I know this is in the most important part of the action –

NARRATOR 1

Which they are about to fail at.

NARRATOR 2

Which is really hard to show, so you're gonna have to use your imagination.

To Narrator 1

And you shut it, because I'm doing this part.

NARRATOR 1

Fine.

NARRATOR 2

All right so – first they had to climb the legs, because they hut reared back up once its down was blown. They had to crane their necks just to see the doorway.

They all look up.

MEGOOSA

I sure hope this hut doesn't poop.

JABBERWOCK

I can climb it! I am very slippery!

NARRATOR 2

And up the Jabberwock went, with her tail twitching, and her eyes full of flame and, but her claws hadn't been trimmed in a while and it tickled. You know like when a cat climbs up your shirt? Like that. So the house freaked out and it fell over, giggling.

MEGOOSA

Let's go!

NARRATOR 2

And when they got inside it was crazy. Huge. Bigger than the castle on the inside.

ALESSANDRA

Don't. Move.

NARRATOR 2

Cause it was booby-trapped. One false move –

They make a throat-cutting gesture.

ALESSANDRA

Stay very still. This is a trap.

Jabberwock vibrates with energy.

JABBERWOCK

Um… that's hard for me.

Grendel's Mother puts a treat on her nose.

Oh I'm gonna eat this I am a good monster I am such a good monster I will wait I wait and I will get this treat – oh it's still there it's still on my nose…

ALESSANDRA

Look up. Do you see it?

They all look up.

NARRATOR 2

There was a crystal ball like twenty feet in the air which was shooting all these lasers around the room –

NARRATOR 1

It was not –

NARRATOR 2

I said shut it! They're laser beam tripwires.

MEGOOSA

I think I can reach it with my geese. But I need something to smear over it to block the lasers.

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

How `bout gum?

MEGOOSA

Ooh.

Light on Megoosa. She lifts one of her goose heads towards the ceiling, stretching.

NARRATOR 2

And her geese stretched – they can reach farther than you think. Geese can get you from anywhere. And she attached the gum.

ALESSANDRA

Now let's find that witch!

COURIER

And it's time for the sound track!

He launches into a sound-track song – something upbeat and energetic. Dances a little bit. Bumps into something.

He trips over not one, not two, but three things. Everything clatters to the ground.
An alarm sounds.
Lights flash.

COURIER

Whoops.

ALESSANDRA

Are kidding me?!

COURIER

Sometimes walking in a straight line is hard for me.

Alessandra draws her sword on him.
Everyone reacts.

GABRIELLA *(overlapping)*

Whoah –

MEGOOSA *(overlapping)*

Slow down there –

GRENDEL'S MOTHER *(overlapping)*

Everybody calm down.

ALESSANDRA

You've been against us this whole time, haven't you? It's all an act. Pretending to crush on Gabby, following us, making noise – you brought the knights and now you're alerting the witch.

COURIER

No I'm just really incompetent.

ALESSANDRA

Then how did you find us?

GABRIELLA

Ally this is crazy!

ALESSANDRA

How did you find us?

COURIER

Gabriella sent me a letter.

Alessandra spins on her.

GABRIELLA

It was a love letter! He was worried about me and I wanted to let him know I was okay! He can read!

ALESSANDRA

You jeopardized this whole mission!

GABRIELLA

He's a good person!

ALESSANDRA

You're blind! You've always been blind!

GABRIELLA

And you don't trust anyone!

ALESSANDRA *(to the Courier)*

Get out before I kill you.

GABRIELLA

Oh come on.

ALESSANDRA

You want to go with him? Be my guest!

GABRIELLA

You are so consumed with revenge that you don't care who you hurt.

ALESSANDRA

I am doing this for my freedom –

GABRIELLA

You're doing this for revenge. The witch killed your mother. Now you want pay-back. That's what it's always been about. And you don't care who you're going to trample to do it. I am asking you, as your friend, to trust him. And if you can't do that, then I'm going too.

ALESSANDRA

Good.

GABRIELLA

Ally.

ALESSANDRA

Go. I don't need you.

GABRIELLA

You don't need anybody, do you?

ALESSANDRA

Nope.

GABRIELLA

Fine.

Gabriella takes the Courier's hand.

Let's go, Jeff.

COURIER

I'm sorry I just –

GABRIELLA

Let's go.

They exit.

Alessandra watches her go.

ALESSANDRA

Anyone else got a problem?

JABBERWOCK

When do I get to move again?

ALESSANDRA

All right, the Bog Witch is around here somewhere, we just need to –

The BOG WITCH appears, shrouded in a hood.

The lights dim.

BOG WITCH

Oh the Bog Witch is right here.

JABBERWOCK

Now can I attack fierce monster fierce monster?

ALESSANDRA

Get her!

The Jabberwock charges.

The Bog Witch holds up her hand. A sound effect happens. The Jabberwock freezes in place.

JABBERWOCK

OH NOES I CAN'T MOVE. OH NO! AAAAAH! I'M HAVING ALL KINDS OF PROBLEMS OVER HERE NO LIKE THIS!

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

That might work on her but –

The Bog Witch holds up her hand again.

A different magical sound effect happens.

BOG WITCH

You don't want to hurt me, do you?

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

Why would I want to do that? You're my oldest and best friend in the entire world even though I've just met you this minute but I totally think we should retire to an island somewhere and have little fruity drinks with umbrellas and then maybe do each other's hair and maybe do some nails –

BOG WITCH

Shush.

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

Okay. You're so pretty by the way. But I'll shush. Because I respect you so much.

JABBERWOCK

MY FEETS ARE NOT LISTENING TO MY THINKS!

Megoosa goes to attack, holding her hair.

MEGOOSA

So I should let you know that I'm normally not very violent, but my geese are not pleasant and –

The Bog Witch holds up her hand.

A third magical sound.

Oh I'm getting so sleepy…

She curls up and goes to sleep.

It's just the Bog Witch and Alessandra now.

BOG WITCH

Honestly it's been a while since someone got this far. Well done. I must admit, you look a little different than the other knights.

ALESSANDRA

So I just want to state for the record that my plan seemed a lot more effective before you started casting a whole bunch of magic spells on everyone.

BOG WITCH

Kill me with a group of monsters?

ALESSANDRA

They're not monsters. You're the monster. And I'll kill you myself.

BOG WITCH

Will you?

She holds up her hand. Another magical sound.

NARRATOR 2

But this time the magic failed and something flashed on Alessandra's neck –

ALESSANDRA

My locket –

NARRATOR 2

And now it was *on.*

The Bog Witch draws her own sword.

BOG WITCH

I guess I'm doing this the old-fashioned way.

Alessandra attacks.

Swordfight!

Alessandra is better at it. The Bog Witch retreats and retreats and retreats.

ALESSANDRA *(during the fight)*

You're going to pay for what you've done!

BOG WITCH

What have I done –

ALESSANDRA *(still attacking)*

The curse – My mother. I've been waiting my whole life to see you die.

BOG WITCH

You're going to be –

Alessandra hits the Bog Witch

Ow –
Very disappointed –
Alessandra hits her again. The Bog Witch loses her sword.
Ow –
Alessandra knocks her down. Stands over her, sword raised.

NARRATOR 2
But there was a flash of light as she looked down – and a fog seemed to clear from the witch's eyes -

NARRATOR 1 *(very excited)*
But with her blade poised, Princess Alessandra looked down at the broken, evil form of the vicious old witch and knew her cause was just.

BOG WITCH
Alessandra?

NARRATOR 1
She knew her cause was just.

BOG WITCH
Alessandra is that you?

ALESSANDRA
Die, monster.

BOG WITCH
…My little monster…
Alessandra stops.

ALESSANDRA
What did you just say?

BOG WITCH
Ally, it's me.
The Bog Witch takes a locket out from around her neck.

ALESSANDRA
Where did you get that?

BOG WITCH
I made this locket.

ALESSANDRA
That was my mother's. You took it from her when you killed her, didn't you?

BOG WITCH

Who told you that?

ALESSANDRA

Everyone. My father.

BOG WITCH

Ally… I'm your mother.

Alessandra stares at her.

Eldegaarde bursts in.

End of Excerpt

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