

THE FOREST OF NIMRINOR

By

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CHARACTERS

Candice

Lewiston

Huxlebury

Fred

Ned

Albion

Chandler

Guard

SETTING

The Realm of Nimrinor, a world where magic has been banished and a wall erected to keep out ruffians. The Realm is in disrepair, with people slipping through a hole in the wall.

The Forest of Nimrinor, an enchanted place.

The Well of Tears, where Albion has been imprisoned for hundreds of years.

NOTES

- Denotes an interruption.
- ... Denotes a trailing off.

Content Warnings

Violence

Religion

Death

Ageism

Head Injury

Grief

Kidnapping

Blood

Torture

Flashing lights

JUST BEFORE THE ODN REP ENTERS TO READ THE PRE-AMBLE, THE CAST
FORM A FREEZEFRAME:

LEWISTON IS STANDING OVER A BROKEN CHANDLER, WHOSE FACE IS
PRESSED INTO A BIBLE. CANDICE IS DISTRAUGHT, HARDLY ABLE TO WATCH
FROM THE SIDE. A MASKED FIGURE HOLDS A BABY BUNDLED IN RAGS.

ODN PRE-AMBLE.

SCENE 1

CANDICE SCREAMS!

Lewiston: Swear on it!

Chandler: I – I –

Lewiston: Swear! Or I will, I'll feed it to the dog.

(THE MASKED FIGURE EXITS WITH THE BABY; CANDICE GOES FOR THE CHILD
BUT THE FIGURE THREATENS TO HARM IT.)

Chandler: I – I shwear –

LEWISTON THWACKS CHANDLER ON THE BACK OF THE HEAD. HE COUGHS UP
BLOOD.

Lewiston: Louder!

Chandler: I swear – I swear by the book.

Lewiston: The book of –

Chandler: Christ. Of Christ. Please!

LEWISTON KICKS CHANDLER.

Chandler: ...I didn't – Lewiston, please...

Lewiston: You signed the contract!

Chandler: It wasn't – you tri – I didn't – I swear.

Lewiston: Where is the crown?

SPUTTERING SILENCE.

Lewiston: Answer me!

Chandler: I don't know – I don't – I don't – I don't know – I don't – please – I don't – know – I swear I don't...

Lewiston: I believe you.

HE SNAPS CHANDLER'S NECK.

CANDICE BAWLS.

TURNING CHANDLER OVER WITH HIS BOOT, LEWISTON PICKS UP THE BIBLE. HE WIPES IT WITH HIS SLEEVE.

AS HE SPEAKS, CANDICE STAGGERS TO CHANDLER. SHE CHECKS HIM, HOLDS HIM, MUMBLES TO HIM – BUT HE IS UNDOUBTEDLY DEAD.

Lewiston: Let this be a reminder! We have rules for a reason. Boundaries for our protection. Under no illusions are we who stand on this sacred ground. A ground that has been marked! Marked by the blood of savages. Of animals who thought that they could defy the law! No-one is above the law. No-one is above God! Their pestilence shall be washed from the earth. Their practice banished! I am the authority now.

LEWISTON PUTS ON HIS MASK AND EXITS.

CANDICE IS WHIMPERING OVER CHANDLER'S BODY.

Candice: My – my – my baby... my baby – I want... I want my baby. I want my baby. I want my baby, you monster!

TWO FIGURES, WEARING MASKS, ENTER TO REMOVE THE BODY.

Candice: No! Get off him. Get off him!

CANDICE GRABS CHANDLER AS HE IS RAISED AND CARRIED OFF. SHE SCRATCHES AT THE FIGURES. IT IS NO USE.

Candice: Get – off! Get off! Get... off...

CANDICE IS A PILE UPON THE FLOOR.

Candice: I want my baby.

SOUND OF WIND. TIME PASSES.

CANDICE SETS LIKE STONE.

HUXLEBURY ENTERS, A WIZENED CRONE WEARING A SHAWL AND
BALANCING ON A GNARLED CANE.

Huxlebury: If you listen to the wind
You hear the voices of the dead
Singing the songs of old.
The tales of woe, heartache, and pain,
And you know that you're nearing the end.

HUXLEBURY LAYS A BLANKET ON CANDICE. SHE PERFORMS AN INCANTATION.

NED AND FRED, TWO VILLAGE IDIOTS, ENTER, CARRYING A LANTERN.

Ned: You hear that?

Fred: It's the wind, you daft lummo.

FRED SLAPS NED ON THE BACK OF THE HEAD.

Ned: What was that?

Fred: Me.

Ned: Of course. Of course, it was.

Fred: We've been this far before.

Ned: No, we definitely took a wrong turn.

Fred: It'll be fine.

Ned: Oi. What's that?

Fred: What's what?

Ned: That.

NED POINTS AT THE OLD WOMAN.

Fred: Oh yeah. (TO HUXLEBURY) Who are you?

NO REPLY.

Ned: Oi. He's speaking to you.

Fred: Yeah, I am. So answer. Who are you?

NO REPLY.

Fred: I think she's deaf.

Ned: Must be deaf.

Fred: Definitely deaf. Looks about two hundred.

Ned: That's impossible.

Fred: It was a figure of speech.

HUXLEBURY SWINGS HER STAFF ROUND AN INCH FROM THE TWO MEN.

Fred: (GULPS) We didn't mean to frighten you.

Ned: Yeah. We don't mean you any harm.

Huxlebury: Silence. If you talk the spell will not work.

Ned: Spell? Did she say spell?

Fred: She said spell. Did you say spell?

Huxlebury: Silence!

HUXLEBURY STOOPS AND PUTS HER HAND OVER CANDICE'S HEAD.

CANDICE COUGHS AND ROUSES.

Fred: That's not possible, that ain't.

Huxlebury: Why?

Ned: She's a statue. Everyone knows that. Been there for years.

Fred: Who are you?

Huxlebury: I came through a gap in the fence.

Ned: No, that's not allowed. That's not allowed. If the big man hears about this...

Fred: You go back. Back where you belong. Take your stick and your statue and get out of here.

Huxlebury: Who are you to command me?

Fred: I'm Fred and he's Ned. And we're citizens of this here sacred ground. We know our rights. And we know that you lot – your kind – cannot be here.

Huxlebury: Yet here I am.

Fred: Not for much longer. 'Cos we – on the authority of His Majesty – banish you.

Ned: So, go back where you belong or – or – or – yeah.

CANDICE RISES.

Ned:
Impossible.

Fred:
Impossible.

Huxlebury: (TO CANDICE) Careful, your Highness, you've been locked in grief for a very long time.

CANDICE STANDS.

Candice: My baby

Huxlebury: Is alive.

Candice: I must get my baby.

CANDICE TRIES TO WALK BUT FALLS.

Huxlebury: You are weak. And a long way from your destination. But I will help you. It has been prophesised by the Winds.

Candice: No, I must – (SHE TRIES TO RISE BUT FALLS) Please, I need to find him.

Ned: The prince?

ALL LOOK AT HIM.

Fred: Ned!

Ned: Sorry, but it's like the story, isn't it? The Prince's Mother. Her child was –

Huxlebury: You know nothing, you fool.

Fred: That story's banned, Ned, you know that. If He hears you, you'll also end up in The Tower.

Candice: My son is in The Tower?

Huxlebury: That is not yet your concern.

Ned: But you called her your Highness.

Fred: A story is just a story, Ned.

Ned: But they came from somewhere.

Fred: Not here.

Ned: Then where?

Fred: Not here.

Ned: Here.

Fred: Not here.

Ned: Here!

Huxlebury: If it was not in the prophecy that you two would be of use, then I would slay you this very instant.

Fred: You'd have to catch me first.

Ned: We're in the prophecy?

Huxlebury: It is true.

Ned: What does it say? What do we do?

Huxlebury: It is enough of a burden for one to carry their past, let alone their future.

Fred: So, you're not going to tell us?

Ned: Then why bring it up in the first place?

Fred: It must be important.

Ned: Must be.

Fred: It's important, isn't it?

Huxlebury: Enough!

HUXLEBURY SLAMS DOWN HER STAFF. NED AND FRED FALL TO THEIR KNEES.

Huxlebury: (TO CANDICE) Your Highness can either choose to trust me or you can walk into the jaws of the beast alone. But know that you will not survive.

Candice: I just want to find my son.

Huxlebury: It is settled then. You will come with me.

HUXLEBURY GIVES CANDICE A HAND. TOGETHER, THEY EXIT.

Fred: What about us?

Ned: Yeah. Hey!

Huxlebury: (OFFSTAGE) Up!

BOTH LURCH TO THEIR FEET.

Both: Woah!

Huxlebury: (OFFSTAGE) Follow.

AGAINST THEIR WILL, THEY FOLLOW HUXLEBURY OFFSTAGE, FIGHTING AGAINST THE SPELL.

Fred: What's going on? Oi!

Ned: My legs – they've got a mind of their own!

Fred: We need to tell His Majesty that an outsider has gotten in.

Ned: I know, but you try going that way when your legs are going this way.

THEY BOTH EXIT.

SCENE 2

THE WELL OF TEARS.

Singing: (AS THE CURTAIN IS DRAWN BACK)
There's a man who has lived a hundred years at the bottom of a deep, deep well.
Chained and bound he's imprisoned there, at the bottom of the deep, deep well.
The walls of grit and the shadows dark have been his sole company,
And when he looks up all that way, he knows he'll never be free.

A RUGGED, MALNOURISHED ALBION IS REVEALED, CHAINED TO THE WALL.

A SPOTLIGHT ILLUMINATES A ROGUE FLOWER – ITS PETALS ARE WILTED.
THERE IS THE SOUND OF DRIPPING WATER.

LEWISTON ENTERS WITH THREE HENCHMEN, WHO WHEEL ON A TROLLEY: BOWL, DAGGER IN A BOX, VARIOUS TORTURE DEVICES. LEWISTON EXAMINES THE EXHAUSTED ALBION, WHO YIELDS TO THE TOUCH – HE IS USED TO IT. A RITUAL OCCURS, AS THE HENCHMEN PASS A BOWL BETWEEN THEM (THE THIRD GUARD PLAYING/MIMING *TOCCATA AND FUGUE IN D MINOR* ON THE ORGAN); A DAGGER IS PRODUCED AND HANDED CEREMONIALLY TO LEWISTON, WHO THEN SLICES ALBION, COLLECTING HIS BLOOD IN THE BOWL; THE KNIFE IS RETURNED AND LEWISTON DRINKS THE BLOOD. HE BECOMES VISIBLY MORE POWERFUL.

LEWISTON SIGNALS FOR THE HENCHMEN TO LEAVE. ONE THROWS ALBION A HUNK OF BREAD. THEY EXIT.

ALBION DEVOURS THE BREAD.

(AS LEWISTON SPEAKS, HE TEARS THE PETALS FROM THE FLOWER ONE BY ONE; THEN, HE WIELDS VARIOUS TORTURE DEVICES.)

Lewiston: I felt something today.

It was heavy. Unpleasant. Like a knife on my spine. Not the usual pride or power, not relish – but something bitter. Something... unsatisfactory.

I've killed hundreds. Given the orders for scores more. I've slaughtered magicians and frauds, and consigned them all to myth. I've scorched the hordes of necromancy who once plagued this land – sent them all to the bonfire, screaming, howling, twisting in pain, their arms stretching for you, cursing you, and I just laugh.

But I've never felt anything.

Today we had that insufferable crone, Mine Assah. How small she looked on the pyre. How helpless. Her followers unable to save her – and they knew it, too. The despair in their faces as they realised that she really was just a woman. Oh, it was a pleasure to watch her burn. Even at the end, she proclaimed herself a free spirit to disguise her true rule over *magic*. I cannot describe what it was like to see the decades old thorn in my side finally torn from existence. To hear her howl!

I felt something.

Disappointment.

So, I thought I'd come down here and cheer myself up.

LEWISTON MOVES TOWARDS ALBION WITH A TORTURE DEVICE, WHEN A SIREN SOUNDS. RED-FLASHING LIGHTS.

Lewiston: (TO THE SKY) Thralgar!

A MASKED GUARD ENTERS AND WHISPERS IN LEWISTON'S EAR.

Lewiston: Send the troops to meet Thralgar at The Tower. He cannot be allowed to breach the perimeter.

GUARD WHISPERS.

Lewiston: Finally! Where was it?

GUARD WHISPERS.

Lewiston: Oh, Chandler, you surprise me even now. (TO GUARD) Bring the crown to me!

LEWISTON GOES TO EXIT, BUT GUARD ISN'T FINISHED. GUARD WHISPERS.

Lewiston: What? (LEWISTON BREAKS INTO LAUGHTER) The time has come! Put the preparations in order.

GUARD SALUTES AND EXITS.

Lewiston: (TO ALBION) We shall have to continue our little game later. It seems that your mother has finally awoken.

ALBION STIRS.

Albion: My mother...? I have a mother?

Lewiston: Not for much longer.

LEWISTON SHUTS THE CURTAIN AND EXITS.

SCENE 3

A CLOCK TICKS IN THE BACKGROUND.

FRED AND NED ENTER AND FREEZE.

Ned: Remind me why we're doing this.

Fred: Her Majesty needs training.

Ned: And we're helping...?

Fred: Because a scary old lady commanded us.

Ned: Yeah, but why are we the guinea pigs?

Huxlebury: (ENTERING) Because you're dispensable.

Ned: Oh, right – Hey!

Huxlebury: Don't move! Sudden gestures will upset the distortion spell.

Fred: The what?

Huxlebury: I would explain, but your puny minds would not understand.

Fred:
Try me.

Ned:
Try me.

Huxlebury: The distortion spell refracts the internal praxis to the external, so that the two are aligned, causing body and soul to express the same displacement and affectations of one-another. This has a kinetic effect upon the spectator, which distorts our perception of them and ourselves.

Fred: Sorry?

Huxlebury: It slows down time.

CANDICE ENTERS. SHE IS MORE REGAL AND PUT-TOGETHER THAN EARLIER.

Huxlebury: Your Highness must assess the threat posed by those two, conjure a distortion field, and render the enemy into near paralysis. It is a simple spell.

Ned: Sounds it.

Huxlebury: And you are ready.

Candice: I am ready.

Fred: I'm not.

Huxlebury: (TO NED AND FRED) Put on the masks.

Fred: They're definitely safe?

Ned: Yeah, we don't want no voodoo stuff to get us.

Huxlebury: They are harmless. I disarmed them myself.

Fred: (TO NED) You hear that? They're harmless.

Ned: They're harmless. Great.

Huxlebury: Then, let's begin.

CANDICE PERFORMS AN INCANTATION.

Huxlebury: Remember what I said. Eye contact. Concentration. Clarity. Of both mind and of voice.

CANDICE CONTINUES.

NED BECOMES ITCHY AND STRUGGLES AS SOMETHING RUNS UP HIS BODY.

Ned: What's that? Oh, I don't like it. Get it off me.

Fred: Stay still.

THE ITCHING GOES TO NED'S MIDRIF. FRED PUNCHES. NED RECOILS IN PAIN.

Candice: I'm sorry.

Huxlebury: Never apologise, your Majesty. Spells sometimes go awry. You two, stop fooling around.

Fred:
Us?

Ned:
Us?

Ned: She just put a gerbil in me knickers.

Fred: Why's this gotta be us anyway?

Ned: Yeah, I like being me, and I don't particularly want for some out of practice witch to turn me into a frog.

Fred: I like having my two arms, two legs

Ned: Two ears

Fred: Two eyes

Ned: Two hands, two feet

Fred: Ten fingers

HUXLEBURY CLICKS HER FINGERS.

Ned: Eleven toes.

Fred: Eleven toes?

FRED LOOKS DOWN. HE IS SURPRISED TO SEE THAT HE HAS ELEVEN TOES.
FRED AND NED SCREAM.

Huxlebury: Next time it'll be a tail. (TO CANDICE) Focus, your Majesty.

HUXLEBURY GESTURES FOR CANDICE TO TRY AGAIN.

CANDICE PERFORMS THE SPELL.

NED AND FRED MOVE VERY SLOWLY, ALMOST FROZEN. THE TICKING GROWS LOUDER.

Huxlebury: You now have them at your mercy.

CANDICE IS HESITANT.

Huxlebury: Go.

CANDICE ARRANGES NED AND FRED IN A FUNNY WAY.

Huxlebury: Now break the spell.

CANDICE CLAPS. NED AND FRED BREAK INTO THAT ACTION (WHATEVER WE DECIDE UPON.) THE TICKING STOPS.

Ned: That wasn't nice.

Fred: No, it wasn't. You've humiliated us.

Huxlebury: You don't need any help with that.

CANDICE STUMBLES AND FALLS FROM EXERTION. FRED AND NED CATCH HER.

Huxlebury: The first spell takes it out of you. But you did it, your Highness. You are ready.

Candice: Then I must go.

Huxlebury: Not yet.

Candice: Every second that I wait our enemy is getting stronger and my son is in danger.

Huxlebury: It has been that way for decades. Lewiston would not dare destroy your son. He needs him.

Candice: He is both Lewiston's strength and his weakness.

Huxlebury: Then you know what must be done.

CANDICE STANDS AND MOVES AWAY.

Candice: He was always fascinated with Albion. Wanted to initiate him into the church immediately. One touch of water upon the head and Albion's mind was his.

Huxlebury: It is not your fault, your Majesty. Many have fallen asunder to his trickery.

Candice: Yet Lewiston despised me. That was no secret. He had his church push me away but reeled in my son. He took my everything. And he would not even do the honour of killing me.

Huxlebury: That was his mistake. For you never come between a mother and her child.

Candice: Yes, now I will take everything from him.

Huxlebury: First –

HUXLEBURY WALTZES AS SHE CREATES A MAP WITH HER STAFF.

Huxlebury: The plan.

Ned: Wow! It's a map of the Realm.

Fred: Is there anything your magic stick can't do?

Huxlebury: Make you shut up apparently.

Candice: (ADMIRING THE MAP) The Tower. Lewiston commissioned for it to be the tallest in the realm – closer to God, he said. Nothing to do with his vanity.

Huxlebury: Your son is trapped here, below the mountains – in the Well of Tears.

Candice: Well of...?

Huxlebury: That is its new name. So called for the many innocents tortured there. You will know it as The Core.

Ned: Like an apple.

HUXLEBURY GLARES AT HIM.

Huxlebury: (TO CANDICE) The fraud, Lewiston, is hauled up in The Tower, protected by his minions and the walls of Tbofeyiro stone.

Fred: Forged from dragon fire.

Ned: They're impenetrable.

Huxlebury: Look here. (SHE GESTURES TO PART OF THE MAP.)

Candice: A gap.

Huxlebury: When the great dragon, Daemon, escaped, The Tower was damaged. Without Daemon, Tbofeyiro stone is extinct, so the breach was never repaired.

Candice: That's our way in.

Huxlebury: Lewiston knows it. Therefore, it is heavily guarded. Which is why you will be needing this.

HUXLEBURY PRODUCES A DAGGER. (FRED AND NED LOOK AT ONE-ANOTHER)

Huxlebury: It is imbued with a poison that even my magic cannot undo.

Candice: (TAKING THE DAGGER) Thank you. But how will I get close enough?

Huxlebury: We need a distraction.

Fred: Don't you go glaring at us. I know that look.

Ned: We know that look. And we're not being

Fred: Sacrifices for some little game of yours.

Huxlebury: This is no game. This is war.

Fred: And we're not soldiers.

Ned: Far from it.

Fred: So, if you don't mind, we're gonna go now –

AS THEY TURN TO LEAVE, HUXLEBURY CASTS A SPELL TO FREEZE THEM.

Huxlebury: You will do as I command.

Fred:
Yes, mistress.

Ned:
Yes, mistress.

Huxlebury: For this affects you as much as it does us. It affects everyone and everything.
Let me show you something else.

HUXLEBURY SWIRLS HER STAFF IN THE AIR. THE LIGHTING CHANGES. FRED
AND NED UNFREEZE.

Fred: Oh, great – it's bound to be another riddle.

Huxlebury: Your hands.

ALL PUT OUT THEIR HANDS. HUXLEBURY SLAPS FRED'S.

Fred: Ouch.

HUXLEBURY PRODUCES A CRYSTAL BALL.

Huxlebury: Now, touch.

THEY DO.

Huxlebury: Today, the great witch, Mine Assah, the prophet of our time, and of our past,
was slain. We felt her suffering –

Ned: I didn't.

Huxlebury: *We felt her sacrifice*, but she was released. Her spirit to the sky. For that is our
true purpose. To go wherever we dare.

Candice: But the prophecy, the prophecy binds us.

Huxlebury: In life. But in death, we are free.

Ned: I'm not liking the sound of this.

Fred: Yeah, what kind of cult have you brought us into?

HUXLEBURY STAMPS HER STAFF.

NED AND FRED STRETCH OUT INTO TREES. CANDICE BECOMES FEVERISH BUT CANNOT LET GO OF THE CRYSTAL BALL.

Huxlebury: In life, we are never free. We are persecuted. Hunted. Murdered for our beliefs. So, look. Look deep. Look hard. Feel the suffering of our family.

Candice: I feel its pain. The heat. It's burning.

Ned: I see red. I see anger. I see tears.

Fred: My brothers. My sisters. They're falling.

Ned: They're tearing us up.

Fred: They're breaking us down.

Candice: The darkness is coming.

All: It's all around.

THE DIALOGUE REPEATS AND OVERLAPS.

THE CRYSTAL BALL IS STRUCK BY A RED LIGHT. FRED AND NED RECOIL, CLUTCHING THEIR MASKS. NED TEARS HIS OFF; FRED CAN'T RESIST.

Ned: Fred! Fight it, Fred. Fight it!

Candice: I hear you, son! I hear you!

CANDICE FAINTS. NED CATCHES HER.

Ned: (TO HUXLEBURY) Do something.

Huxlebury: The spell, it isn't working.

Ned: (TO CANDICE) Your Majesty, wake up.

Huxlebury: The mask has taken on sentience.

FRED APPROACHES NED AND CANDICE.

Ned: Fred, it's me: Ned. No, Fred, stay back. (TO HUXLEBURY) Didn't your prophecy say anything about this?

Huxlebury: The eyes see only what they seek.

Ned: Oh, great – more riddles!

FRED FLIES AT NED.

Huxlebury: (CHANTING)
By the light of The Forest, I command thee.
By the words of the winds, I command thee.
By the wrath of the leopard, I command thee.
By the spirit of the land, I command thee.
Return from whence you came.
Return!
For Mine is the Prophet, the Soul, and the Light!
For Mine is the Prophet, the Soul, and the Light!
For Mine is the Prophet, the Soul, and the Light!
For Mine is the Prophet, the Soul, and the Light!

FRED FORCES A MASK ON NED'S FACE.

Huxlebury: He must be nearby. He must be –

A MASKED SOLDIER RUNS ON AND ATTACKS HUXLEBURY. HUXLEBURY CASTS A SPELL THAT BLOWS A WIND, CAUSING THE SOLDIER TO RUN ON THE SPOT, IMPEDED. CANDICE AWAKENS AND PUSHES FRED AND NED AWAY WITH A SPELL. SHE PICKS UP THE CRYSTAL BALL. IT ERUPTS A HEADACHE WITHIN HER; SHE PUTS IT DOWN.

CYMBALS CRASH. AS THE FIGHT CONTINUES, LEWISTON'S VOICE BLAZES FROM THE CLOUDS.

Lewiston: (VOICEOVER) 'I watched as the lambs opened the first of the seven seals. Then I heard one of the four living creatures say in a voice like thunder – '

Candice: (POINTING TO THE SKY) Come! I look, and there before me is a white horse! Its rider holds a bow, and he has stolen a crown, and he rides as a conqueror bent on conquest.

HUXLEBURY SPEARS HER STAFF INTO THE SKY. A STORM ERUPTS. LIGHTNING, THUNDER, RAIN.

Lewiston: (VOICEOVER) 'And behold a pale horse, and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the realm, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the realm.' You were fools to think that I would not see you. I have eyes everywhere. Even the mask of stone is a receptacle of life – just think of yourself: The Traitor of Nimrinor! In hibernation and protected against my wrath. Well, no more! I have been waiting for this moment. My ascension shall be total!

THERE IS A ZAP OF LIGHTNING. ALL SPELLS ARE BROKEN. FRED AND NED CAPTURE CANDICE. HUXLEBURY IS RESTRAINED BY THE MASKED GUARD.

A PYRE IS CONSTRUCTED AND HUXLEBURY IS TIED TO IT.

Lewiston: (CHANTING)
Fire shall burn and cleanse the Realm!
Fire shall burn and cleanse the Realm!
Fire shall burn and cleanse the Realm!
Fire shall burn and cleanse the Realm!

THE OTHERS JOIN IN AS THE PYRE BUILDS:

Fire shall burn and cleanse the Realm!
Fire shall burn and cleanse the Realm!
Fire shall burn and cleanse the Realm!
Fire shall burn and cleanse the Realm!
Fire shall burn and cleanse the Realm!
Fire shall burn and cleanse the Realm!

FIRE SPARKS. HUXLEBURY BURNS ON THE PYRE.

Huxlebury: (LAUGHING) You think that killing me will change anything? I am but one of the many. The many who see through your deceit. My death is irrelevant. Your arrogance is the source of your foolishness, Lewiston – and they both condemn you. You are cursed! For a thousand years. For oblivion! You will find comfort only in death!

Lewiston: (VOICEOVER) 'Tis not I who will perish tonight!

Huxlebury: I curse you!

(FRED AND NED RAISE A CURTAIN FOR CANDICE, HUXLEBURY AND THE MASKED SOLDIER TO EXIT.)

THE STORM DIES.

FRED AND NED COLLAPSE.

BEAT.

SILENCE.

SLOWLY, FRED AWAKENS. HE PEELS OFF HIS MASK. HE GOES TO CHECK NED.

Fred: Ned... Ned. Ned!

NED IS STATIONARY.

Fred: Wake up! No, you can't be – I promise if we're ever in a creepy forest, I'll follow your directions from now on. Please, Ned!

Ned: Fred...

Fred: You're alive!

HE EMBRACES NED.

Ned: Fred, where's Her Majesty?

FRED LOOKS.

Fred: She's not here.

Ned: She's not here... She's been taken!

NED SPRINGS UPRIGHT.

Ned: We need to find her, Fred. We need to go.

Fred: We don't want her.

Ned: We do.

Fred: No, we don't. She doesn't care for us. She ran.

Ned: She had no choice.

Fred: We're going home.

Ned: We are not.

Fred: We are.

Ned: We're not, Fred! As much as we like it or not, we're part of this – this prophecy or spirits or whatever it is. We can't keep sitting on the fence pretending that everything is fine.

We need to choose a side.

Fred: Master.

Ned: Fred!

Fred: He didn't mean us harm. Not really.

Ned: He's the villain.

Fred: I don't believe it. I won't believe it.

Ned: We did a bad thing, Fred. The witch, she's dead.

Fred: It was the masks.

Ned: It was him. He used us. But we can fix it.

Fred: How did you work that one out?

Ned: Stop being a fool.

Fred: I'm a fool? Have you heard yourself? You're telling me to run through a forest to hunt for a walking statue that ain't shown us the tiniest morsel of gratitude.

Ned: She needs us.

Fred: Yeah? Well, we don't need her. We need recognition. We deserve it. Master understands this.

Ned: The witch, too. She chose us for a reason. Believed in us when no-one else did. We need to repay that faith.

Fred: Avenge her?

Ned: Avenge her. Save the Prince.

FRED PICKS UP A MASK.

Fred: I will have no part in your plan. I wish for peace. Master will bring it to us.

FRED PUTS ON THE MASK.

Ned: What did he do to you?

Fred: What have they done to you?

FRED EXITS.

PAUSE. AN UPSET NED STANDS ALONE.

HUXLEBURY'S SPIRIT ESCAPES HER BODY. IT CHASES NED AND THEN SPIRALS INTO THE SKY.

CANDICE APPEARS AT THE EDGE OF THE STAGE. SPOTLIGHT.

Candice: We will see her again.

Ned: Your Majesty, she is slain.

Candice: The plan remains.

Ned: But she's dead, gone, kaput. And Fred – Oh, Fred!

Candice: There is another way.

Ned: I don't like our odds – two against an army of who knows how many!

Candice: Who said anything about two of us?

Ned: I'm coming to help obviously.

Candice: Oh, I know that. You've no choice in the matter.

Ned: Right. Oi! I don't particularly like that.

CANDICE IGNORES HIM AND RETRIEVES HUXLEBURY'S STAFF.

Candice: She knew she would perish.

Ned: Lemme guess – it was prophesised by the winds.

Candice: She made a necessary sacrifice. I must do the same.

Ned: What's that supposed to mean?

CANDICE IGNORES HIM. SHE WAVES THE STAFF. OFFSTAGE, A HORSE WHINNIES.

Candice: Let us ride!

Ned: But you haven't told me –

CANDICE EXITS. NED FOLLOWS.

Ned: Is now a bad time to tell you that I can't actually ride a horse?

SCENE 4

THE WELL OF TEARS.

A MASKED GUARD ENTERS, WHEELING ON THE TORTURE TROLLEY. HE THEN OPENS THE CURTAIN TO REVEAL A SLUMBERING ALBION.

GUARD KICKS ALBION.

Guard: Wake up!

ALBION REACTS FRANTICALLY.

GUARD EXITS.

ALBION CALMS. HE HEARS HIS MOTHER'S VOICE. HE FIGHTS AGAINST HIS MASK, REMOVING IT.

Albion: (TO HIMSELF) Behind my eyes, the patchwork there is a multitude of light, and the glare is bright, so bright it burns my skull – imprints in my mind an image, a map. Of a clear sky, a halcyon sun, and the fields and forest beyond. But I've never seen them before. The memory isn't mine. It comes from her. A vision of the world before this darkness. She whispers it to me. I hear it. I smell it. But I cannot see it when I open my eyes. I'm trapped inside myself. And she is calling me. Calling for me to come to her. Calling for me to fly. Calling for me to break free, and rise, and run – I can't. This is where I belong.

Educated by agony.

Huxlebury: (OFFSTAGE) You are not alone.

Albion: Mother!

Huxlebury: (OFFSTAGE) If you mean of the land, then so be it. If you mean of blood, then it is not I.

Albion: Show yourself.

Huxlebury: (OFFSTAGE) Very well.

THE GHOST OF HUXLEBURY ENTERS.

Huxlebury: You are not afraid?

Albion: Nothing can compare to the fear that Master puts in me.

Huxlebury: He is not your master. He is a coward.

Albion: And you are?

Huxlebury: I can explain the voice.

Albion: You are the voice?

Huxlebury: No, but I am of it.

Albion: (LISTENING, THEN:) She speaks of you. It is a great pain to her. You're –

Huxlebury: I am an echo of what once was.

Albion: I don't understand.

Huxlebury: Your mother speaks to you through her spirit, which passes through the land. We are all constituted of this spirit. All connected. From the living to the dead. One must only listen, and they will hear.

Albion: My body is not my own...

Huxlebury; That is correct. We are vessels for all life. For the voices of the Forest speak through us.

Albion: You are dead.

Huxlebury: You listen well.

Albion: How can that be?

Huxlebury: Spirits store data of who we were in life. Our minds are downloaded into an ecosystem amongst the clouds.

Albion: I can be anyone.

Huxlebury: First you must be yourself.

Albion: Years of solitude have denied me that right.

Huxlebury: But you are no longer alone. When your mother awoke, it resurrected the desecrated bond between the two of you. That is why you hear her now.

Albion: I long for silence to return if her words will only confuse me. And what is this connection I feel? It is like a bridge that has been severed.

Huxlebury: We call that love.

Albion: It's excruciating.

Huxlebury: But unbreakable. A mother's love for her child is more potent than the most powerful magic.

Albion: You talk from experience.

Huxlebury: I am mother to all –

Albion: No. I have heard Master mention someone called Thralgar.

Huxlebury: A warrior.

Albion: Your son.

Huxlebury: He fights for your mother's cause.

ALBION UNDERGOES A TRANSFORMATION.

Albion: (CANDICE'S VOICE) You send your only son to die.

Huxlebury: We are not so different.

Albion: (CANDICE'S VOICE) My son was stolen from me.

Huxlebury: And he will be again.

Albion: (CANDICE'S VOICE) I thought you were an ally.

Huxlebury: I merely maintain the natural order.

Albion: (CANDICE'S VOICE) You dare betray me!

Huxlebury: You will come to understand.

ALBION RETURNS.

Albion: Mother is silent now – what did you say?

Huxlebury: That the future is written. She will come for you.

Albion: Why then do I feel empty?

Huxlebury: Love has deserted you. But this emptiness is your strength. Your master believes that love makes you weak. He believes in envy – envy of his God, whose shadow he will forever be doomed to live in. He does not realise that love is a superweapon. Love is his destruction.

Albion: Let's destroy him then.

Huxlebury: Is that what you desire?

Albion: I desire to escape.

Huxlebury: Your mother is –

Albion: No, not only to escape from this hole in the ground, but from this skin. This body is worn – it has never felt the sun. I have grown, and what's inside me cannot be contained by this prison.

Huxlebury: Then fight. Listen to the voices that scream your name, that give you power, that call for you to return – and fight! Fight forever. Fight for the past, the present, and the future! For the untold stories. For those that will be sung. Fight!

ALBION RATTLES IN HIS CHAINS. A CRACK OF THUNDER. LIGHTNING. THE SOUND OF APPROACHING FOOTSTEPS INCREASES ALBION'S DESPERATION.

Huxlebury: Hurry. Hurry. Hurry.

(OFFSTAGE: LEWISTON WHISTLES AS HE APPROACHES.)

THUNDER. LIGHTNING.

Huxlebury: Hurry. Hurry. Hurry. Hurry.

ALBION CEASES ATTEMPTING TO ESCAPE AS LEWISTON ENTERS, HIS APRON BLOOD-SPLATTERED.

Lewiston: Thralgar's men are always messy.

THUNDER. LIGHTNING.

Lewiston: The barrage continues. When will they learn?

Huxlebury: Fight. Keep fighting.

Lewiston: You'll do better than those supposed soldiers. Last longer for starters, and much, much quieter.

Huxlebury: Fight. Keep fighting.

Lewiston: I don't mind the screamers, so long as they do it right. Out of fear, not pain. Anyone can hurt someone. Only Gods can make men fear them.

Huxlebury: Fight. Fight. Keep fighting.

Lewiston: Soon I shall ascend. But first – give me the final component.

Huxlebury: He tries to break you. Break you. But fight.

Lewiston: Don't look at me like that. Warranted, it's a shock – it was to me, too. After all, what does a man who has everything want? As I sliced some scum, I pondered that exact question – when it hit me! I have a crown, but not yet under the recognition of God do I possess this crown. Solution: a ceremony! I will be anointed, and the Lord will have his Chosen One.

THUNDER. LIGHTNING.

Huxlebury: You can't, you can't, you can't, you can't, you can't, you can't.

Lewiston: I need one tiny favour from you. Oh, come on – surely, you've got it by now.

I need your mother.

THUNDER. LIGHTNING.

Huxlebury: He asks. You refuse. You fight.

Lewiston: I know you're connected to her.

Huxlebury: Ignore. Ignore. Ignore.

Lewiston: I can sense her in your head.

Huxlebury: Don't let him in. Don't let him in.

Lewiston: I can taste it in your blood.

Huxlebury: Refuse. Fight. Refuse.

Lewiston: Part of you is in me.

Huxlebury: He'll devour. He desires. He'll kill.

Lewiston: And soon will she.

Huxlebury: Block her out. Fight. Fight it.

Lewiston: Where is your mother?

Huxlebury: Fight. Fight it.

Lewiston: Fun it shall be.

LEWISTON PICKS UP A TORTURE WEAPON. HE PACES.

Huxlebury: Fight it. Fight it. Fight it. Fight it. Fight it. Fight it. Fight it. Fight it. Fight it. Fight it. Fight it. Fight it. Fight it. Fight it. Fight it.

(THE ECHOING WILL BUILD TO A CRESCENDO, FALL AWAY WHEN LEWISTON STRIKES ALBION, AND THEN BUILD AGAIN.)

Lewiston: Jesus loves me, this I know. For the Bible tells me so.

STRIKE!

Lewiston: Tell me! Where!

STRIKE!

Huxlebury: Fight it. Fight it. Fight it. Fight it. Fight it. Fight it. Fight it. Fight it. Fight it. Fight it. Fight it. Fight it. Fight it. Fight it. Fight it.

Lewiston: Where!

LEWISTON GOES TO STRIKE, BUT GUARD AND FRED ENTER. FRED TRIES TO PUT ON A REGAL DISPOSITION.

Lewiston: What! Can't you see I'm having fun?

Guard: Someone's here to see you, Master.

Lewiston: Who?

Guard: He says his name's Fred.

Fred: I did, your Majesty.

FRED BOWS. (WHILST THIS IS HAPPENING, ALBION IS WRIGGLING FREE.)

Lewiston: And?

Guard: He says he has information on the whereabouts of The Most Traitorous One.

Fred: No, I said Candice of –

Lewiston: Blasphemy!

THUNDER. LIGHTNING.

Lewiston: (QUIETER) That name is not to be said here.

Guard: He has information, Master.

Lewiston: Get out of my sight.

GUARD EXITS. FRED FOLLOWS.

Lewiston: Not you!

FRED STOPS.

Lewiston: Do not look upon me with that face. Where is your mask?

Fred: Your Majesty, that be a very long story.

Lewiston: Make it short.

Fred: (QUICKLY) You see, it all began when I was a nipper – no before that, must have been. My parents, they were from the same small village, the one from The Border that has both a glorious reputation for buttery beer and a not-so glorious one for the magic sympathisers who brewed such buttery beer – who, may I say, sir, you did a marvellous job of burning, like fireworks. Anyway, my parents did the old roly-poly in a berry bush – then one day, I popped out. They knew then that I was special – they told me that all the time. That's great, that is. All was blissfully amazing... for about seven seconds, when my brother sloshed out. Ruined the carpet, he did – was never forgiven –

Lewiston: I said make it short.

Fred: That's me – I like to talk. And I haven't yet finished –

Lewiston: Good. You'll divulge your information.

Fred: Of course, your Majesty.

PAUSE.

Lewiston: Well?

Fred: Oh, you mean now.

Lewiston: You want something?

Fred: Something? No, nothing, sir... Actually, I wouldn't mind –

LEWISTON PICKS FRED UP BY HIS THROAT. THUNDER. LIGHTNING.

Lewiston: I make the demands. Do you understand?

FRED NODS.

Lewiston: Do you understand?

Fred: Y – yes.

LEWISTON RELEASES FRED.

Lewiston: Get on your knees.

FRED COMPLIES.

Lewiston: Tell me what it is that you possess.

Fred: Queen Candice – I mean, The Traitorous One – I have travelled with her.

Lewiston: You have conspired with the enemy.

Fred: I don't know what that means.

Lewiston: Where is she?

Fred: Who?

Lewiston: Don't play games with me, boy.

Fred: I'm older than I look.

LEWISTON SWOOPS TO FRED'S HEIGHT AND GETS INTIMIDATINGLY CLOSE.
THUNDER. LIGHTNING.

Lewiston: Do you want to feel my wrath?

Fred: No, n – n – n – not particularly.

Lewiston: Then tell me where she is.

Fred: That's the problem – I don't know exactly where she is at this moment –
buuuut –

LEWISTON OVERSHADOWS FRED.

Fred: I would tell you if I did know, I would, I swear I would – all I know is that she's
on her way here!

LEWISTON STOPS.

Lewiston: Excellent.

HE PEELS AWAY, LEAVING FRED COWERING. LEWISTON PACES, DEEP IN
THOUGHT. RAIN.

Fred: You won't touch my brother, Ned, though, will you? 'Cos he's travelling with
Cand – The Traitorous One. He's not bad really. Just daft. But that damned
weirdy witch has twisted his mind. Always was easily led – that's how we got
lost. Ned was telling me to go that way, but I said it was this way. Next thing
we know, we see a statue come to life and end up sitting in a circle singing
kumbaya.

Lewiston: Will you shut up!

BEHIND, ALBION HAS BROKEN HIS CHAINS. THE SPIRIT (OF CANDICE)
APPEARS AT HIS SIDE; THE GHOST OF HUXLEBURY ON THE OTHER.

THUNDER. LIGHTNING.

Spirit: Be strong, my son. Kill him.

Huxlebury: Fate is locked. You can't.

Lewiston: I have a purpose.

Spirit: Kill him. Fate changes. Kill him.

Huxlebury: You can't.

Lewiston: A purpose for you.

Spirit: Kill him. For me. Kill him.

Huxlebury: You can't.

Lewiston: You will stay here.

Spirit: Kill him. Do it. Kill him.

Huxlebury: You can't.

Lewiston: A place by my throne.

Spirit: Do it. Do it. Do it. Do it. Do it. Do it. Do it.

Fred: Thank you, your Majesty.

Spirit: Do it. Do it. Do it. Do it. Do it. Do it. Do it.

Lewiston: My ascension shall be total.

Spirit: Do it. Do it. Do it. Do it. Do it. Do it. Do it.

Lewiston: I'll make sure of it.

Spirit: Kill him!

ALBION GOES TO ATTACK LEWISTON WHEN A MASSIVE EXPLOSION STRIKES THE WELL OF TEARS. EVERYONE TOPPLES. FIRE ERUPTS.

THE SPIRIT (OF CANDICE) AND THE GHOST OF HUXLEBURY VANISH.

THE ALARM SOUNDS. LEWISTON STUMBLES TO HIS FEET. THE ALARM FADES OUT.

Albion: They have deserted me...

Lewiston: How did you –?

GUARD ENTERS.

Guard: Sir, Thralgar has broken through the gap –

Lewiston: (GESTURING AT ALBION) Get the chains on him.

GUARD RUSHES TO THE CRUSHED ALBION AND RESTRAINS HIM.

Albion: I have failed her...

Lewiston: Bring him to the throne room. (TO FRED) And you come along also.

Fred: I didn't see him get out, your Majesty, I swear. I swear I didn't see. I was no decoy, sir, I promise. I had no idea. I had –

Lewiston: If you don't shut up, I'll leave you down here.

Fred: I'm not being executed? Oh, thank the Lord for that! I don't think I'd be the same if I didn't have this old mug. I said, sir, I said when I arrived that I would not lose my head. I said it a hundred times. No, a thousand times. And I praise, praise every being that ever lived.

FRED TURNS TO SEE THAT EVERYONE HAS EXITED.

Fred: Wait for me!

FRED RUNS OFF.

SCENE 5

THE TOWER THRONE ROOM.

OPENING INSTRUMENTAL OF *ACTION*, DEF LEPPARD PLAYS. LIGHT SHOW.

LEWISTON ENTERS, DANCING ECCENTRICALLY ROUND THE SPACE. ALBION IS BROUGHT ON BY GUARD AND CHAINED UP. LEWISTON GLOATS. FRED ENTERS AND POSITIONS THE THRONE FOR LEWISTON, WHO SITS AND GETS FRED TO KISS HIS BOOTS. THE TORTURE TROLLEY IS WHEELED ON; LEWISTON BASHES AND HACKS AT VARIOUS THINGS AS THOUGH PLAYING THE DRUMS OF THE MUSIC. A SCULPTOR ENTERS AND MIMES SCULPTING LEWISTON FROM STONE. THE CROWN IS BROUGHT ON. LEWISTON POSES WITH IT, DANCES WITH FRED, AND TAUNTS ALBION.

MUSIC STOPS.

Lewiston: Is everything in place?

Guard: Just as commanded, Master.

Lewiston: Then Thralgar's men will have little resistance at the breach.

Guard: Of course, Master. They will think they have won.

Lewiston: Only to fall right into my trap.

Fred: You are a genius, sir. A military genius – no, extraordinaire! You are, sir. I say so myself.

Lewiston: (TO GUARD) The Traitorous One is with them?

Guard: The eyes of the masks see all, Master –

Lewiston: Perfect.

Guard: And they see that The Traitorous One has gone missing.

Lewiston: Igor!

LEWISTON HAS A MINOR TANTRUM. THEN:

Lewiston: Explain.

Guard: It's perfectly natural, Master. The masks, the spies, they've lost them in the sea of troops –

LEWISTON IS ON THE VERGE OF EXPLODING.

Guard: It'll only be temporary, Master! They're probably hiding – that is, the Traitorous One and her companion, Ned.

Fred: That's my brother.

Lewiston: I don't want probabilities, Igor – I want facts! Cold, hard facts!

Guard: Of course, Master. Of course. Fact is, they are most definitely hidden amongst the mass.

Lewiston: Then they shall be here soon. And we will crush them.

Fred: Not my brother, though. Right?

BEAT.

Sculptor: Your sculpture is ready, sire.

LEWISTON PERFORMS ADMIRING THE "SCULPTURE", BEING THE SCULPTURE, AND THEN POSING THE "SCULPTURE'S" GESTURE AS HIMSELF TO COMPARE THE TWO. THEN, THE SCULPTOR BRINGS ON A MIRROR (OR IS A MIRROR OF LEWISTON – DEPENDING ON BUDGET CONSTRAINT.)

Guard: A magnificent likeness, Master.

Fred: Beautiful. Surely beautiful, sir.

Guard: Like looking in a mirror.

LEWISTON BREAKS AWAY.

Lewiston: Igor, take the artist and his divine creation to the vault. And while you're at it, find out where that Priest has gotten to. It's nearly time for my ascension.

Guard: Of course, Master.

AS GUARD AND SCULPTOR STRUGGLE TO CARRY OFF "THE STATUE":

Lewiston: (CHECKING HIS WATCHES) The time, Igor! The time! I will soon be broadcasted to the minds of all my subjects. Hurry!

GUARD AND SCULPTOR EXIT.

Lewiston: The Lord said on the first day, "Let there be light!" And then he proclaimed the true ruler of the Realm – me!

Albion: My mother will stop you.

Lewiston: Look who's decided to join in.

Albion: She will avenge my father.

Lewiston: Your father was a fool.

Albion: He was a good man. A just ruler.

Lewiston: They are not the same thing.

Albion: If he knew what you would become –

Lewiston: 'If' ties us to the past. I will soon have the power to see the future.

Albion: My father would be disappointed in you.

Lewiston: You never knew him.

Albion: Mother told me.

Lewiston: Did she now?

Albion: You swindled my father.

Lewiston: He signed a contract.

Albion: You lied to him.

Lewiston: I offered him a way out.

Albion: He's dead.

Lewiston: I offered him a way out.

Albion: You murdered him!

Lewiston: Murder implies that he was innocent. Your father was far from that.

Albion: Lies!

Lewiston: Then I suppose your mother didn't tell you about The First Great Purge.

Albion: We know it as The Great Fire because you tortured our kind with flames, without mercy.

Lewiston: It was on your father's orders.

Albion: No.

Lewiston: He ruled then. He gave the final command.

Albion: It was your idea. You tricked him.

Lewiston: I presented him with the facts: dark forces were interfering with his territory. I was helping him.

Albion: You liar!

Lewiston: I am no liar! He ordered for the first section of the forest to be culled, to push back the dark forces that lurked there. I assured him that it was for the best. He stood with me as the fires blazed. He watched as folk ran from their homes, burning, screaming, their skin blistered and peeling – he watched... and ordered the flame-throwers to burn harder.

Albion: He didn't. Mother wouldn't have let him.

Lewiston: The Traitorous One was worse than your father. Oh, yes. She watched as her kind were massacred, felt their agony through the spirits, pounding in her head, and she did nothing.

Do you know how many died?

SILENCE.

Fred: Thousands...

Lewiston: Your father. Not me.

PAUSE.

Albion: Mother will destroy you.

Lewiston: You don't listen, do you?

Albion: We will burn you like you have done to so many others.

Lewiston: You're more of a fool than your father.

Albion: I will tear myself from these chains and strangle you. She will strangle you. She will look at the life fading from your eyes, and she will laugh.

Lewiston: That's what I want her to believe.

Albion: I will tell her of your plan.

Lewiston: Not in here. The walls are insulated. There will be no more of your escape attempts. Now, hold still whilst I get my dinner.

LEWISTON GOES TO EXTRACT BLOOD FROM ALBION. ALBION SQUIRMS. LEWISTON GESTURES FOR FRED TO HELP. FRED DELIBERATES. RELUCTANTLY, HE COMPLIES.

A BOWL IS FILLED WITH BLOOD. LEWISTON HANDS IT TO FRED.

A PRIEST AND A MONK ENTER. THE MONK HUMS A CHOIR-TUNE.

Lewiston: Ah, perfect!

LEWISTON GESTURES FOR FRED TO PREPARE THE THRONE AND CROWN. LEWISTON SITS. THE CROWN IS PUT ON A CUSHION. THE PRIEST BOWS.

Lewiston: You certainly took your time.

Priest: The work of God cannot be rushed, your Majesty.

Lewiston: I trust you are ready.

Priest: Of course.

Lewiston: Good. (TO FRED) You, pull the lever.

FRED PULLS A LEVER. THE LIGHTING CHANGES. ALBION HOWLS AS HIS CHAINS TIGHTEN.

Lewiston: (SPINNING) Hellooooo, Nimrinor!

Priest: (CLAPPING) Your Majesty, you were born to rule. But first, we bring you gifts.

Lewiston: The only gift greater than my crown would be that traitorous wench's head.

Priest: Your wish is my command.

THE MONK PULLS BACK THEIR HOOD TO REVEAL – CANDICE! THE PRIEST REVEALS HIMSELF AS NED. FRED LEANS ON THE ORGAN.

Albion: Mother?

Fred: Ned?

Lewiston: Guards!

NED BOLTS THE DOOR.

Ned: The key, Fred! Grab the key!

FRED IS TORN BETWEEN NED AND LEWISTON.

BANGING ERUPTS ON THE DOOR. WE HEAR A GUARD SHOUTING.

Lewiston: (LAUGHING) How adorable!

WHILST NED IS STILL SHOUTING AT FRED FOR THE KEY:

Albion:

Mother? You have come at last. I've waited long, so long to see you, to know you – your thoughts, I cannot hear them, but I know it's you. Yet your face is different. Where is the warmth? Where is the sun in your eyes? I see fire there. A cold in your skin. Hollow, are your cheeks. You look tired and in pain. You look lost and alone. You look – you look like me. It is horrible. It is - And I know what it is. Hatred, it has made abrasive what was soft. Hatred, it is a disease that has you in its clutches.

Lewiston:

Choose! The side of atrocities or the side of atrocities? There are no heroes! Gods have the power to create and to destroy! We are Gods!

I am unarmed. Take what you came for – fulfil your destiny. A life for a life! Give me my ascension! Make me your God!

CANDICE EMBRACES HER SON. LEWISTON BREAKS INTO MANIACAL LAUGHTER.

Candice: Albion! Your face, your body, your – you are young but are so old.

ALBION RETURNS THE EMBRACE.

BEAT.

ALBION THEN WRAPS HIS CHAINS AROUND CANDICE'S NECK.

Albion: You lied! You said we were salvation – but you and him - *father* - killed so many! We deserve nothing more than master. Nothing more!

LEWISTON PULLS FRED AWAY FROM THE DOOR. HE STARTS TO UNBLOCK IT.

Ned: Fred!

SEEING NED GET HURT IS TOO MUCH FOR FRED; HE THREATENS TO DESTROY THE CROWN.

LEWISTON FREEZES, BUT HE CANNOT STOP LAUGHING.

FRED THROWS NED THE KEYS; HE LOCKS THE DOOR.

Candice: (TO ALBION) You were never my son.

CANDICE STABS ALBION.

LEWISTON'S LAUGHTER TURNS TO A JOLT OF PAIN IN HIS CHEST.

Candice: He corrupted you.

SILENCE.

Ned: What's happened? What's happened? What's – oh...

THE THUMPING ON THE DOOR SLOWLY DIES.

LEWISTON IS DELIRIOUS –

Lewiston: The blood! Where is it? Give it to me! The bowl – Now!

LEWISTON BEGINS TO AGE. HE SPRAWLS, MOVING LIKE A DECAYING ANIMAL; DRAGS HIMSELF ACROSS THE ORGAN TO CACOPHONOUS EFFECT; SCRAMBLES FOR THE BOWL OF BLOOD. HE DRINKS SOME. SPITS IT OUT.

Lewiston: He can't be!

LEWISTON STUMBLES TO THE DOOR. HE IS WITHERING. WITH A FINAL HOWL, HE VANISHES. NOTHING LEFT BUT A PILE OF RAGS.

FRED AND NED UNCHAIN ALBION. THEY HELP TO CARRY HIM CENTRE-STAGE. CANDICE IS BY HIS SIDE, SOBBING.

Albion: Mother, I can feel the light. For the first time, I feel the light.

Candice: Do not be afraid.

Albion: It is you who is frightened. I feel warm. I feel wanted. I'm free... I am finally free...

CANDICE LAYS ALBION TO REST.

Candice: (SINGING) Through the forest and up the hill
There's an old woman who wanders.
She picks red flowers and plaits her hair,
And all the wildlife loves her.

THE GHOST OF HUXLEBURY APPEARS.

Huxelbury: (SINGING) If you listen to the wind
You hear the voices of the dead
Singing the songs of old.
The tales of woe, heartache, and pain,
And you know that you're nearing the end.

Candice: (SINGING) She spreads seeds for the birds and sings on her way
About the days gone by.
And when she smiles life is complete;
The sun is always shining.

Fred and Ned: (SINGING) There's a man who lived a hundred years at the bottom of a deep,
deep well.
Chained and bound he was imprisoned there, at the bottom of the deep,
deep well.
The walls of grit and the shadows dark were his sole company,
But now he sees the light above and he knows his spirit roams free.

Candice: (SINGING) From afar, she looks banal,
But she holds a wonderful secret.
For this old lady with the plaits in her hair
Is a powerful magician.

Some say her name is an ancient tongue;
That she tamed the wild leopard.
So, if you see her in the forest –
Be sure – be sure – be sure...

Goodbye, my son. Goodbye.

FINAL IMAGE: CANDICE AND ALBION FREEZE AS A STATUE. FRED AND NED
BECOME TREES, FOREVER TO GUARD THEM. HUXLEBURY BOWS AT THE
STATUE, RESTING ON HER STAFF.

THE END.