

SECOND SHIFT

Episode #9: Civil War (v.1.7)

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Scene One — Professor Archer's Marketing 101

SFX Door

MIKE

Good morning Zana.

ZANA

Oli yuung Meek. You are earlier than expected.

MIKE

Yeah, unusual for me, I know.

ZANA

“Unprecedented” would be more accurate.

MIKE

Um, yeah. Fesmer and Shauna invited me to go jogging with them, but I don't think I'm up for that yet. Anyway, since I was already awake, I decided to bring pastries to make up for ruining breakfast a couple days ago.

ZANA

Well I am pleased to see you and your pastries. So long as you brought some *ronandu* [sticky buns, pronounced roh-naan-DOO]. Would you assist me with this?

MIKE

Sure. Where are Katherine and Arkahn? Aren't they usually here early?

ZANA

I am unsure. Kath seemed to be sour-spirited when I returned from fishing yesterday. Perhaps she decided to acquire some additional sleep.

MIKE

Why don't you just go wake her up? I mean, she is sleeping upstairs.

ZANA

I am her employer. Not her mother. She will come down when she is ready. Fortunately, I have you to assist me. Could you knead the dough?

MIKE

Suuuure.

SFX: Mike attempting dough-kneading

ZANA

Since we are alone Meek, I have need to discuss certain matters with you.

MIKE

I had a feeling this was coming.

ZANA

I have prepared an itemized list of your debt for review... ah, where did I place it...

MIKE

Ehhh no need. I'll just take your word for it.

ZANA

Not at all. It is important to fully understand the depth of one's debt.

MIKE

I'm a bigger fan of "What you don't know won't send you into cardiac arrest. Again."

ZANA

Frayo! [Fiddlesticks]! I cannot locate it.

MIKE

Let's, um, not worry about specifics. I owe you big time. Tallied, invoice sent. Acknowledged.

ZANA

Indeed. And I am concerned as to how that debt will be repaid.

MIKE

Yeah, I've been trying to figure it out. I know that there's no way I'll be able to work it off. Especially since we'll be leaving at some point.

ZANA

Such was also my thought.

MIKE

So I thought of something the other day that might work. It was actually Jareth yelling at me that made me think of this, funny enough. He said something about me doing nothing. And I suppose he's kind of right, although in all fairness to me, I haven't had much time to do anything.

ZANA

This is truth.

MIKE

So here's my thought: I can never pay you back personally. So what if I help you make more money?

ZANA

I am not sure I understand.

MIKE

Now, I don't normally like to brag. Actually, yes I do. But anyways, back in Boston I was a marketing major.

ZANA

"Marketing"?

MIKE

Yeah. And I figured that, with my... expertise, we could do some work and fix up your marketing plan.

ZANA

"Marketing plan"?

MIKE

Exactly. First off, we'll need to go over your books and see where you are losing money. We need to restructure how your place is run to try and make it a little more efficient. But most importantly, we need some good old-fashioned advertising. Now it might all sound a little drastic, but when I'm through with you Zana, I promise you'll be making so much money it will be coming out your ears. Laundi won't know what hit it.

<long beat>

ZANA

I... can see that you have granted this much thought, Meek. And, assuming this ear malady you speak of is some bizarre colloquialism, I am willing to give this an honest attempt. But first, answer me this: What is a marketing plan?

MIKE

Hoo boy. We've got more work to do than I thought. <fade out>
Well for starters, a marketing plan is...

Scene Two — The Black Shadow

SFX Outside sounds, two people running

FESMER

...And after all of Jareth's bluster, the Terentenodi Terrors are still reigning failures. <laughs> Oh, Jareth must have been sour when he heard of this. Had we stayed longer, we might have witnessed it ourselves...

SHAUNA

Yeah.

<beat>

FESMER

Cannot believe that I am jogging this morning after all the *borsen* [beer] I imbibed. But I suppose I am my father's son. Ha!

SHAUNA

Mhm-hm.

<beat>

FESMER

Shae, have you given additional thought to Shift?

SHAUNA

Huh. <beat> Wait, what? Sorry Fesmer. I wasn't paying attention.

FESMER

I was asking if you were any closer to finding out how you might return to Boston.

SHAUNA

Yeah, I've got some ideas. I used to read a lot of science-fiction, so I've got a lot to work off of.

<Pause>

FESMER

And?

SHAUNA

Oh... I'm still working on it.

FESMER

Are you unwell? You seem... what was it? "Out of it"?

SHAUNA

Yeah. I'm alright. I've just had some rough nights.

FESMER

There has been a great deal happening. No one is saddened to see Meek awake, but it is sparking some changes.

SHAUNA

Yeah, I suppose... I've been having these dreams lately.

FESMER

Fair or ill?

SHAUNA

Definitely ill. But just last night, for the first time, I remembered what they were about. And now I can't stop thinking about it. I keep

hearing things, looking back over my shoulder for something that's never there...

FESMER

Sometimes there is truth in dreams. What was yours?

SHAUNA

Well I was in bed and everything, and suddenly there was this thing at the foot of my bed. This horrible thing...

FESMER

What was it?

SHAUNA

It was like a vulture... a big, black, ugly bird. Only it had a human face. And it spoke to me. Said it would find me.

<Fesmer stops running>

FESMER

The Black Shadow...

<Shauna stops running>

SHAUNA

What?

FESMER

It is a creature of legend. The Winged Herald of Oren. But why...

SHAUNA

Wait, Oren? As in: The Legion of Oren?

FESMER

The same.

SHAUNA

Well that's creepy... So umm... Who exactly is this Oren guy?

FESMER

Oren Blackhand is the legendary dread lord and master of the Legion. He is an ageless being of tremendous power and bottomless evil who desires nothing more than to grind the world beneath his heel. <beat> According to legend.

SHAUNA

Seriously?

FESMER

Indeed.

SHAUNA

Okay...

FESMER

In truth, not much is known about Oren. From what I have heard, even the Legionnaires do not know who he is. There are rumors of a "Brotherhood of Oren" that controls the Legion. They might know, but who knows if they even exist.

SHAUNA

Okay, so rumors and legends. What you're saying is that Oren might not even be real.

FESMER

I think Oren is real in one sense or another. But many people do not believe. Good information is difficult to acquire. History tells us that twice in the last eight hundred years, the Legion has swept across Baela and conquered all before them. All except for Laundi. They have never been able gain a foothold here. This whole region is too protected by rivers and hills. Some say Draenmer protects us as well, but I doubt that. So all we really have to learn from are traveler's stories and old books. And University is not disposed to share those for whatever reason.

SHAUNA

Uh-huh...

FESMER

Shae, come closer a moment. <whisper> We can not be careless, the Legion has it's spies everywhere. It is an organization that eats from many tables, if you understand what I intend. If you have questions later, come by my house. Ensure that you are not followed. I have several pamphlets that you may find intriguing.

SHAUNA

O-kay...

FESMER

<still whispering> I have dedicated my life to unraveling them. Evidence is sparse, but the truth is out there Shae...

SHAUNA

Umm... Right. So anyways, why am I dreaming about this guy's pet bird... -thing?

FESMER

To be truthful, I have no idea. There is a much we do not know. Such as how you even arrived in Laundi in the first place. Or why you are so adept at using Odi. Was it coincidence that Legionnaires stumbled across us after casting the spell? Or that undying attacked shortly after? It could be that—

SHAUNA

Stop it. You're just freaking me out even more.

FESMER

We should speak to Jareth and Arkahn about this. Perhaps they know something. Zana as well. She would certainly have some insight.

SHAUNA

Yeah, I guess so.

FESMER

Come. Let us continue running, or we will be late for work.

Scene Three — You Can Be The Pig

ZANA

Much of your advice is sound, Meek, but I am still skeptical of this “Value Menu.” The prices are barely different from what we already charge.

MIKE

That’s not the point. People like to think they’re getting a good deal, even if they’re not.

ZANA

So you would advise that I deceive my customers?

MIKE

I wouldn’t call it deceiving them... I mean, after all, the best deal is for them to make their own food. It’s not lying. We’re just reorganizing things to make the customer’s decision-making process easier.

ZANA

Like your proposal to offer smaller portions at a higher cost?

MIKE

I don’t know if you’ve noticed, but the portions you sell are huge! A slice of pig pie alone is enough for a whole meal.

ZANA

I have always considered that the point. And speaking of which, how is the dough progressing?

MIKE

Almost done. I think. But anyways, if you slice the pies a little smaller, the customer will still be hungry for more. Like those fried vegetable dumplings. You said you don’t charge much because they cost you barely anything to make. Well the customer doesn’t care how much they cost *you*. They just know that, if they are still a little hungry after a slice of pig pie, a couple of those would be great. Jack up the price on those a little, encourage customers to try them with a eye-catching sign, and, bang, instant profit.

ZANA

And that is why you also want me to offer more of these side dishes?

MIKE

Exactly. We can’t really make French fries, but we’ve got other things to work with. You process a lot of pig here. You could make cracklin’ or pork rinds or something.

ZANA

I have no idea what those are. Would you begin the gravy, *senjen*?

MIKE

Sure. My mom’s side of the family has a secret recipe for cracklin’ that’s about as easy as it gets and good too. I don’t think Grandma would mind me giving the recipe to someone on another world. But enough about that. What do you think about my other advertising ideas?

ZANA

Well, having a better sign out front makes sense. But do you truly think I need to distribute menus around town?

MIKE

Absolutely. Word of mouth is fine and all. But you're a business and businesses have to grow. And it's not going to grow if you don't reach out to new markets. Like the University. Get Jareth to put up menus near the public magiphones.

ZANA

Charepuenofai.

MIKE

Yeah, that one. Students usually have plenty of money to throw around and they are always hungry. Especially late at night, which is another reason you should start hiring more part-time workers.

ZANA

I suppose my first concern is cost. All of these efforts will require a great deal of money.

MIKE

Hey, it's like they say, you gotta spend money to make money. I'm sure if we think about it we can scrape together enough for an initial investment. I mean, what if we sell some of those paintings you have around the place?

ZANA

Sell my artwork? I have never heard of such a thing. You sell your art in Boston?

MIKE

People do, sure. If it's good enough.

ZANA

That would be akin to selling a piece of myself, Meek. The very idea is alien to me.

MIKE

Ooor not. Anyway, we can get the money. You could even take out a loan. I guarantee you would be able to pay it back.

ZANA

I suppose we should think on this more. You do seem to have some good proposals. But I still fail to see the purpose of having a, what did you call it? Mascot?

MIKE

Uh, mascot. It may be a little old fashioned—on my world at least—but it really works. Kids love them and you want the kids on your side. Families spend a lot of cash.

ZANA

But do we really need a costume?

MIKE

That's the cornerstone of the whole thing! Nobody here has ever seen anything like this before. You'll get all sorts of people coming here just to see what the big deal is.

SFX Door

KATHERINE

<groggy> *Oli young*, Zana. Sorry I overslept.

ZANA

Oli young, Kath. Avail yourself of the pastries Meek brought.

KATHERINE

Ooh, pastries.

ZANA

So, Meek, who would wear this costume?

MIKE

Hey Katherine, you could be the pig.

KATHERINE

<mouth full> What did you say?

MIKE

I said you could be the pig.

KATHERINE

<insulted and pissed> Well good morning to you too! What the hell is wrong with you?

MIKE

All I said is that you'd make a good pig for the—

KATHERINE

If you weren't always this much of an insensitive jerk, I'd be worried that your fall might have caused brain damage. Then again, I'm not sure we could even tell the—

ZANA

Silence you two! I will not have this sort of fighting in my kitchen. Kath, I'm sure Meek did not intend for that to be as insulting as it was.

MIKE

Yeah, I was just giving Zana some marketing advice until you interrupted us.

KATHERINE

<derisive> Marketing advice? You?

MIKE

Yeah. What's your point? I am a marketing major.

<pause>

KATHERINE

<skeptical and a little surprised> Really?

MIKE

Well yeah. I talk about it all the time.

KATHERINE

<puzzled> No you don't.

MIKE

I'm not all brawn and beauty you know. I happen to have a very keen business mind.

KATHERINE

<short derisive laugh>

ZANA

End this, *senjen!* There is enough work to do without your ceaseless bickering.

MIKE

She started it.

ZANA

Two are required to dance the *duka moren*.

MIKE

I was just saying that Katherine has the right build to wear the pig costume.

KATHERINE

Pig costume? What are you telling her Mike?

MIKE

I'm just giving her some classic advertising tips.

KATHERINE

<angry> What are you doing? Trying to turn this place into McDonalds?

MIKE

<angry> I'm trying to help her make money!

KATHERINE

By destroying the soul of this place? By polluting it with all the garbage that's made our world such a mess?

MIKE

That is so ridiculous! If you could look beyond your ultra-liberal—

ZANA

That is enough! Meek, go outside and gather the lizard eggs. Kath, kindly take that broom and clean out the storefront.

MIKE

Fine.

SFX door slamming.

KATHERINE

But—

ZANA

Now Kath.

KATHERINE

Yes, Shi-shwa.

SFX door slamming.

Scene Four — Recruiting part 1

SFX sweeping

KATHERINE

<upset mumbling> Stupid Mike never thinking about consequences or people's feelings or anything I've had just about enough of that why doesn't anyone else see it...

SFX door opening

SHAUNA

Good morning Katherine

FESMER

Oli yuung Kath.

KATHERINE

<despondent> Hey Fesmer, Shauna.

FESMER

What is troubling you Kath?

SFX Sweeping stops.

KATHERINE

You want to know what's troubling me? Your buddy Mike is troubling me! He insults me, calls me a *pig*, and on top of it all he's trying to infect your culture with his half-assed schemes!

FESMER

<serious> He called you *what*?

KATHERINE

He said I would make a good pig. But the real issue here—

FESMER

<offended> He called you a pig? Of all things...

KATHERINE

Yeah, but the problem is—

FESMER

I cannot believe he would say such a thing! That is unforgivable. I am going to confront him!

SFX stomping out of the room

KATHERINE

But... But...

SHAUNA

What was that about?

KATHERINE

<confused> I don't know. Maybe that's a big insult in their language? <changing pace> But as I was saying, the real problem here is Mike's colonialist attitude—

SHAUNA

Katherine.

KATHERINE

Yeah?

SHAUNA

<cold> Don't put me in the middle of your argument. I have enough to worry about. I'm going to get to work.

SFX Sauna leaves, closing the door behind her.

KATHERINE

Well... that could have gone better.

Scene Five — Recruiting part 2

SFX outside

MIKE

<upset mumbling> Stupid Katherine always taking things too seriously never stopping to look at other people's points of view "I'm always right Mike"...

ARKAHN

Oli yuung Meek.

MIKE

<despondent> Hey Arkahn.

ARKAHN

What is troubling you?

MIKE

Katherine's troubling me, that's what. Here I am trying to help out Zana and she turns it into a big fight. Accusing me of trying to destroy the soul of this place or something like that. I'm just trying to do what I can and here she is passing judgment without even listening to all the sides of the story.

ARKAHN

That sounds familiar.

MIKE

What's with the cynicism? I thought you two were thick as thieves.

ARKAHN

What did you say?

MIKE

It's a saying. You know, like buddy buddy.

ARKAHN

Ahh... Well, suffice to say we had a... difference of opinion yesterday. I too was merely trying to do what had to be done but her views are very white and black.

MIKE

She's always pushed on me like this. Yeah, I know I'm a jerk and not the smartest person in the world, but neither is she. She can't deal with people who disagree with her. Do you know what she did when she disagreed with her parents?

ARKAHN

She moved across the country.

MIKE

Yeah! And they were going to pay for college and everything. If I could have afforded some of the schools she got accepted to... Well let's just say I wouldn't be as worried right now about losing my football scholarship because of my screwed up leg. And that's what she does. When she has a problem she writes it off and gets the hell away from it!

ARKAHN

<sad> For a time, I thought we had made a strong connection. But now, all at once I fear it is lost. And I cannot help but feel at fault.

MIKE

No! Do not let her do that to you! You said you were trying to do what was right.

ARKAHN

Yes.

MIKE

And did it work?

ARKAHN

We will find out soon enough. But regardless, I am certain it was the right course of action.

MIKE

Well then don't feel guilty! What counts is that you've done the best that you could do, and not some spoiled Cali girl's opinion.

ARKAHN

I hope you are right.

MIKE

I know I'm right.

ARKAHN

Then I suppose there is nothing to worry about...

MIKE

That's the ticket.

<beat>

Is it just me, or is it starting to rain?

ARKAHN

I think—

SFX Thunder!

ARKAHN

Perhaps we should go back inside.

MIKE

Yeah. Hey Arkahn?

ARKAHN

Yes?

MIKE

Thanks for listening.

Scene Six — Get back to work!

SFX kitchen sounds

SHAUNA

Hey Fesmer. Thought you were going to “confront” Mike.

FESMER

Zana suggested that I calm myself before confronting him. Then she “suggested” that I busy myself with the thrilling task of shredding gelek root.

SHAUNA

Ah... I guess I'll get started on the dumplings.

<beat>

So “pig” is that bad an insult?

FESMER

It is not only that. It is Meek's attitude lately.

SHAUNA

Well he's been under a lot of—

FESMER

That excuse only travels so far. Admittedly I was not much help yesterday, but he could have avoided that fight. He wanted it. He is on a dangerous path. And not only for himself.

SFX walking up stairs from basement

ZANA

I am hearing a great deal of conversation, but very little work.

SHAUNA + FESMER

Apologies Zana.

ZANA

Shae, I know that Meek, Kath, and yourself are having difficulties. I understand that the three of you want to get home. But currently all of you are in my employ and I do expect a certain level of conduct.

SHAUNA

But I—

ZANA

I am not accusing you of anything Shae, save for being somewhat late. However, I will not have arguments between individuals hampering the day's work.

SHAUNA

Zana, I'm not having an argument with—

ZANA

But Meek and Kath are. And you stand in the best position to remedy this.

SHAUNA

I've tried and failed on many occasions, believe me. Besides, I do have my own problems to worry about.

ZANA

I understand, Shae. I only ask you to do what you are able.

SHAUNA

Yeah yeah. I'll try. For all the good it'll do.

Scene Seven — Recruiting part 3

SFX door, rain sounds as heard from inside

JARETH

Bensa wei! That storm came out of nowhere!

KATHERINE

<distracted> Huh? Oh, hi Jareth. You're just in time for the lunch rush. If we get one today.

JARETH

Excellent. I was so busy preparing for next year's classes that I feared I would be late.

KATHERINE

Next *year*?

JARETH

Yes. The year is almost at its close. Did you not know that?

KATHERINE

Oh, is that what this New Life festival is all about?

JARETH

Precisely. The five days marking the end of the old year and the beginning of the new.

<beat>

Is Zana present?

KATHERINE

Yeah, I think she's in the kitchen. Careful though, she's in a bad mood.

JARETH

Zana is?

KATHERINE

Yeah. I think it's partly my fault. Mike and I got into an argument in front of her this morning.

JARETH

Well if Meek is involved I can imagine why she would become frustrated.

KATHERINE

I suppose I didn't have to get so mad, but he started off the day by insulting me. And then he has the audacity to tell Zana how she should run her business.

JARETH

He seems to have so little regard to the effect he has on others.

KATHERINE

Exactly. I mean, he's trying to Americanize your culture and doesn't even realize the impact that could have.

JARETH

What do you mean?

KATHERINE

He's trying to infect the way Zana is running her business. He's carelessly introducing foreign concepts without even thinking about the consequences. And it's not like he knows much about Laundi. He hasn't even been awake for a full week! He thinks he knows what he's doing but he has no clue!

JARETH

On that I must agree. His arrogant manner has already proven dangerous to all. I had hoped that surviving his accident might help ground him. But so far it seems he has only worsened. I am concerned that he will cause irreparable harm before Shae is able to return the three of you home.

KATHERINE

Well if you were ever looking for something like that, this is it. He might just be trying to help Zana make more money, but I've seen what tactics like he is proposing can lead to. He is opening a door that can never be closed again.

JARETH

Tell me more about these plans of his. It sounds serious, but without specifics it may be difficult to deal with them.

KATHERINE

Alright. It might take a little explaining, so bear with me. <fade out>
Do you know the concept of advertising? Yes? Well that makes it a little easier...

Scene Eight — Opening Shots

SFX door opening, kitchen sounds

SHAUNA

Hi guys. It's raining like crazy outside.

ARKAHN

Jareth, how can you even say that?

JARETH

Because it is truth!

SHAUNA

Hello?

ARKAHN

You know as well as I that Zana's business has not been doing well.

JARETH

That does not mean she should change her business based on Meek's nonsensical ideas!

SHAUNA

So... how are you guys doing?

ARKAHN

Nonsensical? He studies this at his University. He is more qualified to give advice of this nature than any of us. We should be assisting him, not standing in his way!

JARETH

Assist him? Absolutely not!

SHAUNA

Would you two cut it out!

JARETH

<embarrassed> Oh, *cha builana fai, Shae* [formal hello out of surprise]

SHAUNA

<angry> What is wrong with everyone today! Jeez. So Mike and Katherine are having a fight. What's the big deal?

ARKAHN

This is more than a fight between those two.

SHAUNA

Yeah, you're all freaking about Zana. Well Zana doesn't need us to protect her honor; she needs us to work!

JARETH

I suppose you are correct Shae. I apologize.

SHAUNA

<drained> Yeah, good... Let's get some work done. Pass me the big knife? Thanks.

SFX a moment of only angry chopping sounds which continue under dialogue)

JARETH

Shae?

<beat>

Shae, are you ra-na?

SHAUNA

I'm fine. I'm just having a bad day.

JARETH

Please do not hesitate to ask if there is anything with which I can assist you.

SHAUNA

I'm fine.

SFX chopping stops

SHAUNA

Actually, I did want to ask you about something.

JARETH

Certainly.

SHAUNA

I've been having these nightmares lately, but I wasn't able to remember them until last night. And now that I've remembered it, I'm feeling all freaked out. I tried talking to Fesmer about it, but he started to get this strange look in his eye and started going on about some weird stuff...

JARETH

Fesmer has his... theories. But do not give them much credence Shae. He tends to take gossip and rumor as fact. Sometimes I worry about him...

ARKAHN

Parado fai! Hot pie passing through.

JARETH

Apologies Arkahn. What was this dream, Shae? Sometimes dreams can have great significance, especially to those who are attuned.

SHAUNA

Okay, so at Arkahn's house and suddenly there's this thing at the end of my bed. This giant black bird with a human face. And it tells me that it will find me. And that's when I wake up.

JARETH

The Winged Herald of Oren?

SFX Thunder!

SHAUNA

Wow, cue thunder...

JARETH

But why would you be dreaming of obscure creatures from our folklore?

SHAUNA

I was kind of wondering the same thing.

JARETH

When did you begin having these dreams?

SHAUNA

A few weeks ago.

JARETH

And do you know what may have inspired them?

SHAUNA

No idea.

ARKAHN

Apologies for interrupting, but I seem to remember Kath trying to read a book about the Winged Herald. Perhaps that is where you heard of it?

SHAUNA

I had totally forgotten about that. I do remember Katherine saying something about it too...

JARETH

I suppose the mystery is solved, then.

SHAUNA

I guess... But why am I dreaming about it every night?

JARETH

In truth I do not know. I must apologize for not being of greater assistance Shae...

SHAUNA

No, that's okay Jareth.

JARETH

Perhaps Zana would be of more help.

ARKAHN

I agree. You should certainly discuss this with Zana.

SHAUNA

You're probably right. <sigh> So what is this Winged Herald thing?

JARETH

It is part of the legend of Oren. It is supposedly his eyes, ears, and voice in the world. I think the first time it appears in mythology is before the Legion's conquest of Aerendi seven hundred years ago. The story goes that the creature appeared in the night-chamber of the Sovereign of Aerendi and told him to offer his life in exchange for those of his people. The creature was driven off and three days later the entire city was put to the sword.

SHAUNA

So it *is* real?

JARETH

Whatever Fesmer might believe, it is merely a story Shae; one intended to frighten children into understanding the importance of self-sacrifice. Shrouding a tale in scraps of history does not make it truth. In any case, the fall of Aerendi was a long time ago.

ARKAHN

There are many other stories as well. In all of them, the Herald serves as an omen of ill fortune.

SHAUNA

Oh, well that's great.

JARETH

Do not hold to omens, Shae. The strong create their own future. And you are very strong...

SHAUNA

I don't know about that.

JARETH

Do not steal from your own wealth Shae.

ARKAHN

Apologies for the interruption. Would one of you pass me the whetting stone please?

<beat>

Cha grendi (or "cha grendi fai").

JARETH

These ill dreams are likely the result of your constant training. You are putting a tremendous strain on yourself, Shae.

SHAUNA

You think that's it?

JARETH

I do. Using Odi with the intensity that you have can lead to strange effects. It is one reason that Savage Magic is outlawed. Perhaps you should rest for a few days? If you do not relax, you might risk harm to yourself.

SHAUNA

<meaning it> Thanks for your concern Jareth. But I can't stop now. I'm so close to figuring it out...

ARKAHN

Have you had the revelation you were seeking?

SHAUNA

Kind of. I'm just worried about how much power it will take. Floating fruit is one thing, but sending three people hurtling across the universe might be a level or two beyond my ability.

JARETH

Well... New Life is approaching.

ARKAHN

Of course!

SHAUNA

New Life? That's the New Year's thing, right?

JARETH

Exactly. And the five days of New Life are marked by a massive surge in the flows of Odi.

SHAUNA

And that might make it easier to cast the spell?

JARETH

In theory.

ARKAHN

But that is so soon!

SHAUNA

We've got what, about a week and a half? If I really work at it, I think I'll be able to pull it off.

JARETH

Not even two weeks... It is a lofty goal, but it may be your best chance.

SHAUNA

Hey, if I can write a 25-page paper the night before it's due and still get a decent grade, I can handle this.

SFX Thunder!

ARKAHN

That was very close! I hope Meek and Fesmer are *ra-na* out there...

SHAUNA

They're making deliveries in *this* weather?

ARKAHN

No, Umbra was frightened by the noise and jumped her pen. Those two are the only ones she will allow to get close to her, so they are trying to find her. Undying may not be a threat to a goat, but a storm is not so particular.

SHAUNA

Stupid goat...

Scene Nine — Changing Sides

SFX loud rain w/intermittent rolling thunder

MIKE

Here girl! Oh my god why is it raining so hard! Hey, Fesmer, don't you have an umbrella spell or something?

FESMER

Yes. Shae suggested it several weeks ago...

MIKE

Well, hook me up!

FESMER

Unfortunately, it shields only me from the driving rain. I do not know how to protect another with it.

MIKE

Oh man. Maybe I could just stand close to you?

FESMER

If you were so concerned about getting wet you should have taken an oilcloak before we left.

MIKE

Ah well. I guess I'll know better next time.

FESMER

So he finally begins to learn.

MIKE

Yow. That was harsh.

FESMER

So was calling Kath a pig.

MIKE

Oh come on. Don't tell me you're on her side?

FESMER

Why should I not be? You should not tell people that they are pigs, Meek.

MIKE

It wasn't like that. Look, I was giving Zana some advice and Kath came in and misunderstood something I said and suddenly she's all up in my face...

FESMER

What did you say to her?

MIKE

Ok, this is going to take some explaining. See, you know how I owe Zana all this money, right?

FESMER

Oh yes. We all know.

MIKE

Yeah. Well there's no way I can pay it back before we leave, so I was giving her some tips to make more money. And one idea was to make this big pig costume and have someone wear it while handing out coupons or something.

FESMER

Pig... costume?

MIKE

Yeah, like a big, cute, cartoon pig. Call him Mister Ham or something.

FESMER

Mister Ham?

MIKE

Yeah. And so someone would wear Mister Ham and parade around outside and drum up some business for Zana's.

FESMER

That actually sounds kind of fun...

MIKE

And so, half-joking, I suggested that Katherine could be the pig and she totally took it the wrong way and the next thing you know we're at each other's throats again.

FESMER

I see. That is not nearly so bad as Kath made it sound...

MIKE

Thank you! She's always like "money is evil blah de-blah blah," not that she's ever had to—

SFX

THUNDER!

MIKE

Gah! That was close!

FESMER

Let us find the goat and get back inside. And tell me more of this Mister Ham...

Scene Ten — Confession

SFX door

SHAUNA

Welcome to Zana's... Oh, *bui bui* Zana. Still raining out?

ZANA

Rather heavily I am afraid. Are the others still in hot spirits?

SHAUNA

They're still arguing, yeah. It's such a slow day that there really isn't anything to distract them.

ZANA

<sighs> What do you make of this Shae?

SHAUNA

I don't know really. I mean, Mike and Katherine have always been like cats and dogs, but I've never seen them get into a fight like *this* before.

ZANA

And what of Meek's advice to me? That appears to be the matter of debate.

SHAUNA

Well, I don't know too much about business. But I think they are both kind of right. People on my world do know how to make money. If you followed Mike's suggestions they would probably work. But at what cost? I don't think it would be so bad as Katherine makes it out to be, but it could be a slippery slope...

ZANA

I suppose I should practice caution, then.

SHAUNA

Yeah, I guess so.

ZANA

For your wisdom, Shae, *cha grendi fai*. I know that it is difficult to be fair-minded when loved ones are on opposite sides of a conflict.

SHAUNA

Second nature to me. My younger brothers are constantly fighting about something. <beat> God. My younger brothers. I haven't thought about them in weeks...

ZANA

You have been extremely busy.

SHAUNA

Yeah, but still... When I first got here, they were all I thought about. And I haven't forgotten about them, but... This... just isn't me. Learning three forms of magic, researching some unknown mega-powerful spell... I'm doing all this so that I can see them again, but it's consumed so much of my time and energy that I barely think about them anymore. <beat> Instead, I think about "Winged Heralds"...

ZANA

Ah, your ill dream. Arkahn spoke to me of this.

SHAUNA

I don't know who to believe. Fesmer thinks that some ghoulish overlord is hunting me, Jareth thinks I'm O.D.ing on Odi, and it seems like Mike and Katherine couldn't care less.

ZANA

Well, what do you believe?

SHAUNA

I don't know what I believe anymore. <beat> When I was younger, I had this re-occurring dream that I was falling. It always felt so real: the hot panic, the ground rushing up to meet me. In the dream, I knew that I'd wake up alive in my bed if I could just stop flailing and lie down. At the very last moment, just before I hit the ground, I'd jolt awake. But it still scared the hell out of me every time.

ZANA

Perhaps this is like your falling dream, then.

SHAUNA

But I didn't dream that every night for weeks on end. This one's too literal. Too consistent. Some nights, I can almost feel the thing's breath on my cheek.

ZANA

Ainorem...

SHAUNA

Everyone thought that I should ask you, Zana. So what do you think it is? What should I do?

ZANA

<a long beat; sigh> I do not know, Shae.

SHAUNA

<beat> Well... sure you do. I mean, you're Zana. You always have some clever insight to offer.

ZANA

In this situation, Shae, I regret that I do not. You must find your own way through this trial. <beat> *Minem boxen wo fai*, Shae.
[I am truly sorry]

<long beat>

SHAUNA

Well. That's... great. That's really...

SFX: Arguing from other room.

SHAUNA

You know what I've learned, Zana? That there is just no justice in the world. Either of them. I am a good person. I do right by myself, I bust my ass to help others, even when they say they don't need it... and yet, every time, I get screwed. At the end of the day, I'm exhausted and everything's still a big mess. And now superpowered dread lords want to eat me. Y'know what? Fine! Let them! At least then, maybe, I'll get some decent rest!

ZANA

Shae, *voluna*... [love]...

SFX: Argument is louder and more heated.

SHAUNA

And what the hell are they fighting about now?

ZANA

The work you do is not in vain, Shae. You are needed. If you require evidence of this, you need only look to the next room.

SFX: Shouting. A pan clatters.

SHAUNA

Yeah. Just great. Super Shauna to the rescue. Ms. Everything to Everyone strikes again.

ZANA

For your troubles, Shae, *boxen wo fai*. [I am sorry.]

SHAUNA

Yeah, you're *boxen* [sorry], I'm *boxen* [sorry], everyone's *boxen* [sorry]. For all the good it does. Alright then, you children...

SFX: Shauna stomps off.

ZANA

Ainorem help her...

Scene Eleven — And We Shall Meet On The Field Of Battle

FESMER

Let us not speak rashly—

JARETH

Oh ho! From the *own-gerrigt* [horse's] mouth!

FESMER

And what do you mean by—

KATHERINE

He means that—

ARKAHN

And now you speak for Jareth?

KATHERINE

Do not even start with me, Arkahn—

MIKE

Guys! We're way off topic—

JARETH

At last, I do agree with Meek.

MIKE

Hope it didn't hurt too much—

JARETH

What—!

ARKAHN

You have always judged Meek unfairly, Jareth.

JARETH

I what—!

KATHERINE

No, Jareth is the only one of you who saw—

MIKE

Oh, here we go—

KATHERINE

—who saw Mike for what he truly is—

MIKE

And everyone can see what you are—

KATHERINE

What--!

MIKE

—a condescending—

JARETH

I will not suffer this—

MIKE

—stuck up—

KATHERINE

--idiot jock!

MIKE

—friendless, miserable hag!

<beat>

FESMER

Uh-oh...

KATHERINE

<furious> WHAT—!

MIKE

Truth hurts, don't it—

JARETH

The only truth here is your reckless—

FESMER

Jareth, consider for the briefest of moments that perhaps—

KATHERINE

Why don't you consider what Jareth has to say for once—

FESMER

Jareth and I are good friends, Kath! I do consider—

JARETH

“Friends,” Fes? So my words are granted the highest consideration before they are ignored outright in favor of whatever insipid—

ARKAHN

Since the others arrived, Jareth, you have only spoken at, not with—

JARETH

Perhaps I should say nothing as the five of you set about the fall of Baela—

FESMER

That is somewhat extreme, Jareth—

MIKE

Hold up. What's a “Baela”?

KATHERINE

There! You see? That's exactly what I'm talking about! He wants to change your world forever, and he doesn't even know the name of your—

MIKE

I'm not changing anything, you friggin' zealot!

KATHERINE

Just further proof that idiots—

MIKE

Call me that one more time and you'll—

SFX Door slamming open

SHAUNA

All right that's enough!

JARETH

Shae...

SHAUNA

Not now Jareth. You two with me. Now.

KATHERINE

Ah, leggo my arm.

MIKE

Where are you taking us?

SHAUNA

Were're going to have us a little talk.

SFX Door slamming!

Scene Twelve — Peace Talk

SHAUNA

Alright, sit. Welcome to mediation, Shauna-style. Now, what the hell is going on?

KATHERINE

Well, like I told you this morning—

MIKE

She went overboard with the high and mighty—

SHAUNA

Okay, that's not going to work. Katherine: you go first.

MIKE

That is so not—

SHAUNA

Mike! Shut up!

MIKE

But why does she get to go first?

SHAUNA

Because she's known me the longest.

MIKE

Yeah, by like two minutes...

SHAUNA

Well somebody has to go first. No one is leaving this room until you two have settled whatever it is that has you at each other's throats. Because I need you both on my side—

MIKE

I'm on your side! She's the one—

KATHERINE

Oh yeah, because you can always rely on Mr. Hormones to—

SHAUNA

Enough! <beat> Katherine: what is your problem with Mike?

KATHERINE

Well—

MIKE

Isn't it obvious? Ever since we got here she has done nothing but ridicule—

KATHERINE

Oh, that's rich! You wanna talk about your *actions* since the day—

SHAUNA

Shut up!

<beat>

KATHERINE

Well he—

SHAUNA

Sh! I am going to ask very simple, very direct questions. Katherine gets one, then Mike. Rinse, lather, and repeat as necessary. You are not allowed to interrupt each other. Understood?

KATHERINE

Yep.

SHAUNA

Mike?

MIKE

<hard sigh> Fine...

SHAUNA

Okay. Katherine: fill in the blank. If Mike started “blank”, you would get along with him better.

KATHERINE

Well, change “started” to “stopped,” and give me several more blanks, then maybe I could answer that.

MIKE

<mimicking> “Meh meh meh.” My turn now?

KATHERINE

No, because I haven’t answered the question.

MIKE

Well, maybe next time you should do that. Now—

SHAUNA

Mike, wait your turn.

MIKE

But it is—

SHAUNA

Katherine, just answer the question.

KATHERINE

Fine. “If Mike started acting like a grown man, even if he clearly is not, and stopped playing fast and loose with foreign cultures, then maybe—”

MIKE

This is such bull. She’s bending the rules to take cracks at me!

SHAUNA

Mike, be quiet. Katherine, stop insulting Mike.

KATHERINE

I did not insult him!

MIKE

You just said I clearly wasn’t a grown man!

KATHERINE

Well that’s my answer. If you would just *grow up*—

MIKE

See, there she goes again! Let me talk. You’re just giving her license to insult me.

KATHERINE

Is it an insult if it’s the truth?

MIKE

I don't have to listen to this crap—

SHAUNA

Stop it!

KATHERINE

But he—

MIKE

But she—

SHAUNA

Both of you! God, you're worse than my twin brothers. At least their insults were... unique.

BOTH

Sorry Shauna.

SHAUNA

Now Katherine—

MIKE

What! I don't believe this! She gets three questions?!

KATHERINE

Way to count. I'm not even onto the second question.

MIKE

Great, so I'll just sit here all night and listen to her half-assed insinuations—

KATHERINE

Unlike you, I don't half-ass anything, <venomous> Mikey.

MIKE

Oh, so that must mean you're a complete ass!

SHAUNA

Guys—

MIKE

I can't believe you're letting her get away with this, Shauna!

KATHERINE

What what, speaking my mind? Oh, heaven forbid that—

MIKE

Oh, that smug look on her face—

SHAUNA

Guys—

KATHERINE

What smug look?

MIKE

Oh, is that just the way your face looks? Now that I think about it, I don't think I've ever seen any other expression on your face.

SHAUNA

Guys!

KATHERINE

You should talk! You and your glassy-eyed apeface—

MIKE

“Apeface”?? Better that than your sour pus, passing silent judgment on everyone—

KATHERINE

What “silent judgment”?

MIKE

<mock thoughtful> You know, that’s true. I don’t think you’ve ever been silent.

KATHERINE

You’re just intimidated by an intelligent, articulate woman who isn’t afraid to speak her mind.

SHAUNA

Guys!

MIKE

So maybe if you were intelligent we’d have a problem.

KATHERINE

You stupid, sexist, Midwestern trash—

MIKE

Stuck-up, condescending, valley girl—

SHAUNA

ENOUGH! <silence> I have absolutely 100% no-holds-barred had it with you two! Tear each other apart for all I care!

<beat>

You know, for a while there I thought that the biggest upshot to being *stuck* here would be that *you* two would finally have to start getting along. But now I know the truth! You two are *never* going to be friends, and worse, you’re going to keep putting others in the middle of all your stupid petty arguments. Well now I have a good reason to get you home! To finally give these wonderful nice people who have taken care of us for months some peace and QUIET!

SFX: Stomp stomp SLAM!

<long pause>

MIKE

Oops.

KATHERINE

Yeah.

<pause>

MIKE

You know—

KATHERINE

I guess—

<pause>

MIKE

Sorry—

KATHERINE

You go—

<pause>

MIKE

I've been kinda reckless. I'm sorry. And I'm really sorry for being so mean to you after you took care of me back then.

KATHERINE

And I guess I have been a little harsh on you. I'm sorry for snapping.

<beat>

MIKE

Look, I still have to pay off my debt to Zana and I'm pretty sure helping her business improve is the only way I can do it. But, if she's okay with it I'd like to have your input. You do know a lot more about this place than I do. I mean, we could get rid of the mascot costume if that's what's bothering you.

KATHERINE

No, that's not it. Actually, now that I think about it, it's kind of a neat idea. You know what would be really funny?

MIKE

What?

KATHERINE

If we could get Jareth to wear it.

MIKE

Oh man, that would be awesome. I don't know though, Fesmer seemed to really like the idea. He even offered some suggestions.

<begin fade out>

KATHERINE

Oddly enough, I'm not surprised by that at all. But seriously, you know what we should do?

MIKE

Shoot.

KATHERINE

We should add some real vegetarian options to the menu.

MIKE

That's good. Add some more variety.

KATHERINE

Do you think Zana buys organic?

MIKE

I think all the food here is organic...