

THE DYSFUNCTIONAL ROYAL FAMILY OF FARAWAY ESSARIA

by Brent Holland

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SYNOPSIS: Princess Bella is dead. She doesn't know how and she doesn't know why, but she is going to find out. Eventually joined in death by most of her fairy tale family, Bella eventually finds what she is looking for.

DURATION: 45 minutes.

SETTING: In the far away kingdom of Essaria.

TIME: Mid-Morning.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(6 females, 3 males, 3 either)

BELLA (f).....	Princess, heir to the throne, and dead. <i>(94 lines)</i>
KING RAFAEL (m)	The self-important king of Essaria. <i>(114 lines)</i>
QUEEN LARISSA (f)	The current unlikable queen, mother of the twins. <i>(80 lines)</i>
ERICA (f).....	A royal maid. A simple girl. <i>(39 lines)</i>
GABRIELLE (f)	Rafael's second daughter. A bit unbalanced. <i>(95 lines)</i>
CORDELIA (f)	The older of the twins. <i>(68 lines)</i>
CAMERON (m).....	The younger twin. Sexist and looking to reinstall the patriarchy. <i>(76 lines)</i>
DESTINY (f)	The Royal advisor and oracle. Also, Rafael's side chick. <i>(48 lines)</i>
GUARD 1 (m/f)	The jaded and world-weary guard. <i>(56 lines)</i>
GUARD 2 (m).....	Simple. Easy-going and fond of their job. <i>(38 lines)</i>
GUARD 3 (m/f)	Extremely concerned about being killed. <i>(32 lines)</i>
THE PRIEST (m/f)	A priest, not enthused about his job. <i>(26 lines)</i>

SET: Sets can range from minimal and representational to very complex and elaborate.

COSTUMING NOTES: Costuming can be simple or very extravagant. The original production had stereotypical fairytale costumes. ELLA, KING RAFAEL, QUEEN LARISSA, CORDELIA and CAMERON should be dressed as fairy tale royalty. Colorful dresses, robes and even crowns. Contrarily, GABRIELLE can be wearing almost anything, but should probably be dressed in black or darker colors. DESTINY should appear to be a mystic while ERICA should appear as medieval maid with simple colors and an apron. The PRIEST should be donned in robes and the GUARDS should have matching uniforms. (e.g. black pants, white dress shirts with a blue tunic and belt.)

AT START: *When the lights come up, PRINCESS BELLA is in her bed chamber. It is a typical fairy tale castle, but it appears, upon inspection that someone is sleeping in Bella's bed. ERICA, the chamber maid, has started cleaning the room. BELLA addresses the audience directly.*

BELLA: Hello boys and girls! Welcome to the magical far away land of Essaria! I'm Princess Bella, and this is the castle I have lived in for my entire life!

ERICA continues to clean. She moves to the bed to wake up whoever is asleep there.

BELLA: I can't wait to tell you all about Essaria and how wonderful our kingdom is, but right now there is more pressing business at hand.

ERICA screams.

BELLA: That's Erica, and she's a chamber maid. Right now, I bet you're thinking "Why did the chamber maid just scream"?

ERICA screams again.

BELLA: Well, boys and girls, that's because Erica just discovered a dead body in MY room! Isn't that terrible? You know what's even worse? The body she just found is mine! *(She lets that sink in.)* Now, I know what you're thinking... but first let me say that apparently, Princess Bella is now a ghost. Erica can't see or hear me. *(She walks up to ERICA who is crying and waves her hand in front of her face.)* Hey, Erica! I'm right here! *(Back to the audience.)* You see?

GUARD 1 rushes in.

GUARD 1: What's all the screaming about?

ERICA: She's dead!

GUARD 1: Who's dead?

ERICA: The Princess!

GUARD 1: (*Doubting.*) Let me see.

GUARD 1 checks the body as GUARD 2 rushes in.

GUARD 2: What happened?

ERICA: She's dead!

GUARD 2: She is?

ERICA: Yes!

GUARD 2: How?

ERICA: I don't know!

GUARD 2: Wait... who's dead?

ERICA: The princess!

GUARD 2: Which one?

ERICA: Bella.

GUARD 2: This isn't good.

GUARD 1: Tell me about it. The King's not going to be happy about this.

KING enters.

KING: What is it that I'm not going to be happy about?

GUARDS snap to attention.

ERICA: Princess Bella is dead!

BELLA: My dad is going to be crushed.

KING: Are you serious?

ERICA: I found her like this!

KING: (*After a beat.*) Wow. This really sucks.

BELLA: (*After it sets in.*) Sucks? That's the freaking understatement of the year, Dad!

KING: What happened?

GUARD 2: (*Pulling out a knife from the body.*) I imagine this was what did it sire.

KING: A knife?

GUARD 1: You can't just pull that out of the body like that! We have to investigate!

GUARD 2: I'm sorry! I wasn't thinking!

GUARD 2 stabs the knife back in the body as the QUEEN walks in. EVERYONE blanches except the QUEEN.

QUEEN: Yes!

EVERYONE looks at her.

QUEEN: Stab her again!

KING: What?

QUEEN: *(Noticing him.)* Oh... Rafael... um... I mean... uh... Arrest that man!

GUARD 2: Arrest me? What for?

QUEEN: For killing the princess!

GUARD 2: I didn't kill the princess!

QUEEN: She's not dead?

GUARD 2: Yes! But, she was already dead!

QUEEN: She was?

GUARD 1: She was, Your Majesty.

QUEEN: Oh, well, never mind then.

BELLA: That's the queen, but she's not my mom.

KING: What took you so long to get here?

QUEEN: I got lost!

KING: But you've lived here for sixteen years!

QUEEN: And I never have reason to come to this part of the castle, now do I?

BELLA: That's true. I don't think she's ever been in my room before.

KING: Guards, tell me what happened.

GUARD 1: Well, sire, we heard the chamber maid scream and came running, just like you did.

KING: *(Turning his attention on ERICA.)* Erica! What happened?

ERICA: She was laying there, just like that, Your Majesty! When I came in, I started cleaning as usual but the princess didn't move. When I went to wake her up... I saw... *(She starts to cry.)*

BELLA: Poor Erica. She's a simple girl. I always liked her.

KING: We must find out who did this! This is my daughter and the heir to my throne. *(He pauses... then EVERYONE in the room pauses.)*

QUEEN: Good God. This means....

GUARD 1: But... if Bella is dead... then...

BELLA: Wow. I didn't even think about that.

GABRIELLE enters. She looks disheveled.

GABRIELLE: Hey party people, what's going on?

KING: A bit of a family emergency.

GABRIELLE: Yeah, I picked up on that with all of the screaming. What's the dealio?

KING: Someone killed your sister.

GABRIELLE: Oh, yeah? Which one?

KING: Use your context clues, Gabby. Where are we?

GABRIELLE: *(Looking around.)* Bella's room. Someone killed Bella?

KING: It would seem so.

GABRIELLE: Bummer. I was kind of hoping it would be the other one. *(Pointing at the QUEEN.)* Her daughter.

QUEEN: What?

GABRIELLE: Yeah. That would have been better.

KING: That's not nice, Gabby.

GABRIELLE: Don't care, Dad.

BELLA: Boys and Girls, this is my sister Gabrielle. Our mother died in childbirth and Gabrielle is my only full sibling. And since I'm dead, that means...

GABRIELLE: Hey! I'm now the heir! Sweet.

KING: I guess that's right.

DESTINY enters. She is dressed as a fortune teller.

DESTINY: I have felt a deep disturbance in the castle.

GABRIELLE: It wasn't me.

DESTINY: I feel something terrible has happened.

QUEEN: *(Sarcastically.)* Really? What tipped you off? Was it your crystal ball or all of the screaming and commotion going on.

DESTINY: I was deep in meditation when I felt something was horribly wrong. What has happened?

BELLA: That's Destiny, she's the castle oracle. She's also dad's side chick and a bit of a skank.

DESTINY: (*Somehow hearing BELLA.*) I am not a Skank.

EVERYONE looks at her.

KING: What?

DESTINY: Nothing. The Shadow World whispers constantly in my ear.

GABRIELLE: The Shadow World just whispered to you that you're a skank?

QUEEN: Guess they know you pretty well.

DESTINY gives the QUEEN a look.

KING: Are you getting any vibes from this room, Destiny?

DESTINY: I do. (*Airy.*) The spirit of Bella is still here.

BELLA: Wow. I always thought Destiny was a fraud.

KING: What is she feeling?

DESTINY: She is at peace. She died in her sleep and wants you all to know she loves you.

BELLA: What?!

Meanwhile, GABRIELLE has gone and taken the knife out of the body and has brought it forward.

GABRIELLE: This is a nice knife.

GUARD 1: Hey, that's evidence!

DESTINY: Evidence?

KING: That's the knife that killed my daughter!

GUARD 1: Put it back!

GABRIELLE: Everyone needs to chill.

GUARD 1: Put it back!

GABRIELLE stabs the knife back in the corpse.

GUARD 1: I meant, but it back BY the corpse, not IN the corpse!

GABRIELLE: You need to be more specific.

BELLA: This is intolerable.

CAMERON and CORDELIA enter.

CORDELIA: We heard someone offed Bella!

GABRIELLE: The gang's all here.

CAMERON: Who killed her?

GUARD 2: We're still investigating.

CAMERON goes over to the corpse.

CAMERON: Someone stabbed her?

GUARD 1: That's the working theory.

BELLA: Working theory? There's a knife sticking out of me!

CORDELIA is looking at the body as well.

CORDELIA: Looks like they stabbed her a bunch.

KING: Wait... (To ERICA.) When we came in, you didn't say anything about multiple stab wounds!

ERICA: There was only one! I only saw one!

GUARD 2: The second one was me. My bad.

GABRIELLE: And the other hole is mine. The current one.

At this CORDELIA takes the knife out and stabs the corpse. Everyone reacts vocally.

CORDELIA: What?

KING: Why did you do that?

CORDELIA: I figured it was ok.

KING: Why would you think that?

CORDELIA: He stabbed her and Gabby stabbed... I figured it was allowed.

BELLA: My family sucks so bad.

CAMERON: Can I stab her?

KING: No!

CAMERON: That's not fair.

GABRIELLE: (*Getting up to leave.*) All of this excitement has made me hungry. I'm going down to the kitchen to get a snack. Anyone want anything?

DESTINY: How can you be hungry at a time like this?

GABRIELLE: What does that have to do with anything? I was hungry BEFORE I heard all of you shouting. I wonder if it's too late to get some pancakes? (*She exits.*)

CAMERON: (*Realizing.*) Oh man.

QUEEN: It just hit you, didn't it?

CAMERON: If Bella is dead, then Gabrielle is the heir.

CORDELIA: What?

CAMERON: She's next in line!

CORDELIA: Gabrielle can't be the queen! She's nuts!

KING: I had plans to marry her off to Duke Marbury, but the price he demanded...

QUEEN: I told you that you were being a cheapskate.

KING: How was I to know someone was going to kill Bella?

CORDELIA: I mean, Bella sucked, no offense Dad, but other than that stupid thing she always did where she acted like she was speaking to an audience, she was pretty harmless. I mean, I'm not sad she's dead or anything.

KING: Cordelia!

CORDELIA: No offense Dad.

KING: But that IS offensive.

CORDELIA: But when I say "no offense" it negates the offensiveness.

KING: I don't think that's how it works.

CORDELIA: Anyways... compared to Gabby... You know she keeps the old gardener locked up in her closet, right?

KING: Is that what happened to him?

CAMERON: And that time she tried to staple the tarantula to my forehead! I have scars.

DESTINY: Even the Shadow World is scared of that one.

KING: I know! Look, I get it! What do you want me to do now? She's the heir! That's the law!

GUARD 1: Speaking of the law, what do you want us to do with the body, sire?

KING: The body?

GUARD 1: We can't leave it here.

KING: Of course not. But I want it known that I will not rest until the murderer of my daughter has been found!

BELLA: That's what I'm talking about!

KING: I don't want word to get out that she's been killed. That would be embarrassing. We'll just tell everyone that she died from leprosy.

BELLA: What?

DESTINY: But then won't everyone think that WE'LL get leprosy too?

BELLA: I don't want people to think I was a leper! That's gross!

KING: We'll say she got it on vacation and we haven't let her out of her room. It will be fine.

BELLA: Dad!

KING: Until then, put her body in the north tower!

CAMERON: But I sleep in the north tower!

KING: We have to put her somewhere!

GUARD 2: I would recommend somewhere cooler. Otherwise the body is going to start to stink pretty soon.

QUEEN: That's a good point. (*Thinking.*) We could put her carcass in the wine cellar.

CAMERON: But I go to the wine cellar all the time!

QUEEN: You're only fifteen. What are you doing in the wine cellar?

CAMERON: Uh... nothing. Just hanging out.

KING: I don't want the servants to know, and they are in and out of that cellar all day.

DESTINY: You could put her in a sack and hide her with the cheese.

KING: That's a good idea. Let's put her in the wine cellar.

CAMERON goes to leave.

CORDELIA: (*Aside.*) Where are you going?

CAMERON: The wine cellar. Duh. I don't want to drink anything that's been stored next to a smelly carcass.

CORDELIA: Good point. I'll go with you.

CAMERON: You know, I think I AM starting to get a bit hungry. If I'm not needed here, I'll be off to the kitchens.

CORDELIA: (*Overacting.*) Mmmmm. Some bacon and eggs sure do sound good right now.

CAMERON and CORDELIA leave.

KING: (*To the GUARDS.*) You two, carry my daughter to the wine cellar and stuff her in a cheese sack.

GUARD 2: Yes sir!

The move to get the corpse and haul it off.

DESTINY: I am going back to my quarters to commune with the spirit world. I'm sure I will find out what happened here.

KING: I will join you there, shortly.

QUEEN: I bet you will.

KING: Excuse me?

QUEEN: Nothing.

KING: Is there something you wish to say?

QUEEN: Other than the fact that I rue the day my father got desperate enough to agree to this marriage. Essaria is a crap hole, this castle is old, you're a terrible king, and you snore! I hate my life.

DESTINY: Quite the miserable old cow, aren't you?

KING: (*To DESTINY.*) You should try living with her.

QUEEN: (*Dripping with sarcasm.*) Divorce me at your convenience, sire!

KING: And risk war with Altonia? That's insanity. But if you leave...

QUEEN: And not be here when you finally draw your last breath? I think not.

KING: Who says you'll outlive me?

QUEEN: Is that a threat?

KING: Is it?

They lock eyes for a moment. Then the QUEEN laughs and exits.

DESTINY: She's dangerous.

KING: So am I.

DESTINY: Will there be a funeral?

KING: Of course. But first, I should make a royal proclamation.

DESTINY: (*Seductive.*) Can't that wait for a little bit?

KING: I suppose it can. (*Finally noticing ERICA, who has been trying to be invisible.*) You didn't see any of this.

ERICA: Of course not, sire. If it pleases you, I should be off to my other duties.

KING: Be off. (*ERICA goes to exit.*) On second thought, take the rest of the day off. You have always taken good care of my daughter. I am sure this is upsetting.

ERICA: Yes, Your Majesty. (*She exits.*)

DESTINY: That was nice of you.

KING: What? Oh. That? She's a harmless girl, and a very diligent chamber maid. She would be tough to replace. But enough about that... we have business in your room.

KING and DESTINY exit, their intent obvious. A moment passes as BELLA addresses the audience.

BELLA: There's a lot to unpack there, of course. The King is my dad, and he's not the greatest. Stepmom is terrible. The witch is Dad's side chick and the Queen knows and Destiny knows she knows. It's been ugly for a while. The twins... well, we aren't close if you didn't pick up on that. They have issues. Speaking of issues, there's Gabby... well, Gabby isn't right in the head. You know?

GABRIELLE has entered.

GABRIELLE: That's not a nice thing to say.

BELLA: (*As GABRIELLE sits next to her.*) You're probably right. But it's true.

GABRIELLE: You know, you're not exactly the nicest person to live with.

BELLA: (*Realizing.*) Wait! You can see me!

GABRIELLE: In a lot of ways, I've always looked up to you, being the big sister and all.

BELLA: I don't understand...

GABRIELLE: I think most little sisters are like that.

BELLA: Not that! How can you see me.

GABRIELLE: You're sitting right in front of me.

BELLA: But I'm dead.

GABRIELLE: Yeah, I saw that.

A beat passes.

BELLA: And??

GABRIELLE: Oh, that. I just died. I'm dead.

BELLA: You're dead? How? I just saw you alive!

GABRIELLE: I know right?

BELLA: How did it happen?

GABRIELLE: You know that window, one floor down?

BELLA: Yeah.

GABRIELLE: I fell out of it. One minute I was walking back up here to see what was going on and the next I was... *(She mimes waving her hands and falling.)* then... splat! I hit the stone cart path so I didn't have much of a chance. Plus I hit head first. No open casket for me!

BELLA: How did you fall?

GABRIELLE: No clue.

BELLA: Did you trip?

GABRIELLE: I don't think so.

BELLA: Did someone push you?

GABRIELLE: *(Thinking.)* You know, I think someone did! That would make a lot more sense than what I was thinking!

BELLA: Someone murdered us! I bet it was the same person!

GABRIELLE: Because I was thinking that maybe I let the intrusive thoughts in again... you know... you're walking up the stairs and your brain clicks in with something like... I wonder if I can fly today? Or I wonder if I try real hard I can jump from this tower to the one wayyyyyy over there!

BELLA looks at her.

GABRIELLE: I have thoughts like that all the time. It's probably why I am the way I am.

BELLA: Gabby!

GABRIELLE: What?

BELLA: Someone just killed me, and I was the heir... and as soon as you became the heir, they killed you.

GABRIELLE: Oh man!

BELLA: What?

GABRIELLE: I forgot about that. I was the heir! I had plans. This kingdom was going to get a serious makeover.

BELLA: Right... well...

GABRIELLE: I mean, I had a lot of awesome ideas. Like, every Wednesday, we would have "punch an authority figure in the face" day. Where like students could slug their teachers, or parents, or pretty much anyone over them with no punishment. But maybe once a week is too much. You think that's too often? I mean, we could just do it once a month if you think...

BELLA: I need you to focus here Gabby.

GABRIELLE: Focus on what?

BELLA: On who killed us!

GABRIELLE: Why?

BELLA: What do you mean why?!

GABRIELLE: We're dead! What are we going to do about it?

BELLA: There has to be something.

GABRIELLE: Want to go see my body?

BELLA: What?

GABRIELLE: I bet they've found it by now!

BELLA: Why didn't you stay down there to begin with?

GABRIELLE: Well, I was on my way back up here when it happened and all of the action was up here... plus when I hit it was pretty gruesome. It was head first and my head sort of... you ever see one of our bakers making a cake and they take the eggs... (*She is pantomiming this.*) and they crack them on the edge of the bowl and when they do, like everything that was in the egg... well... it's like that.

Offstage someone screams.

BELLA: Let's go!

GABRIELLE: You sure?

BELLA: Yes!

GABRIELLE: I'm warning you! It's nasty.

BELLA: We've gotta figure out who killed us! Come on!

They exit as the lights fade. When the lights come back on, we are in a common room area. Both BELLA and GABRIELLE have a traumatized look on their face. They are sitting.

BELLA: You totally undersold that.

GABRIELLE: Dude. That was worse than I remembered.

BELLA: How did it...

GABRIELLE: Splatter so far? I have no clue. I mean, I throw watermelons at the guards all the time, and they can make quite a splat when I miss... but that... Did you see how much blood got on that horse?

BELLA: And what was all that white stuff?

GABRIELLE: I have no clue. Dad always said I had fluff for brains. Maybe he was being serious.

BELLA: Maybe.

KING: *(From offstage.)* Don't you walk away from me.

The QUEEN enters.

QUEEN: I am done with this argument!

KING: *(Following behind her.)* I'm not!

QUEEN: What do you want me to say, Rafael? I don't know what happened!

KING: It's mighty convenient that two of my children died on the same day.

QUEEN: And?

KING: And it's even more convenient that your daughter is now the heir to my kingdom!

QUEEN: Our kingdom.

KING: Whatever.

QUEEN: Are you saying that I killed your children?

KING: I'm not saying that you didn't!

QUEEN slaps KING.

KING: Am I next, Larissa?

QUEEN: I'm going back to bed!

KING: I will find the truth!

QUEEN: And don't even think about following. If you're tired, you can sleep on the couch!

KING: I'm the king! I'll sleep where I want!

QUEEN: Then give Destiny my regards! I hope she gives you the incurable rash!

KING: Even that would be better than anything you've ever given me!

The QUEEN exits.

KING: *(After a moment.)* It's times like this when I regret having my first wife killed.

BELLA: What?

GABRIELLE: Did you hear that?

BELLA: *(To the KING, who can't hear her.)* You said she died in childbirth!

After a moment.

KING: Well, nothing to be done about it now. I wonder where Destiny is.

The KING exits.

GABRIELLE: He killed mom!

BELLA: I know!

GABRIELLE: *(Dramatically.)* My whole life is a lie.

CAMERON and CORDELIA walk in.

CAMERON: You came out thirteen minutes before I did!

CORDELIA: Which makes me thirteen minutes older.

CAMERON: Only because you were closer to the exit when Mom went into labor!

CORDELIA: I was in the right place at the right time. It's fate.

CAMERON: More like blind luck.

CORDELIA: Nonetheless, I'm now the heir. Queen Cordelia!

CAMERON: Yeah, yeah. Enjoy it while it lasts.

CORDELIA: What does that mean?

CAMERON: The previous two heirs died in the last two hours. I'd keep your eyes open if I were you.

CORDELIA: Do I look like I an idiot? I don't trust anyone.

CAMERON: I'm just saying.

CORDELIA: You should just be glad someone took care of Gabrielle. She would have been the worst queen ever.

GABRIELLE: Hey!

CAMERON: We could have avoided all of this if we just went back to a patriarchy.

CORDELIA: That's never going to happen.

CAMERON: Well, in my opinion, it should.

CORDELIA: A man supporting a patriarchy. Who would have guessed.

CAMERON: Yeah yeah. I will say though, you are right about Gabrielle. She would have been terrible.

GABRIELLE: Why does everyone think I would have sucked so bad at being queen?

CORDELIA: Remember that time at dinner when she announced that if she were queen she would mandate that everyone in the kingdom would be required to put mayonnaise on their hotdogs?

CAMERON: And she was serious!

GABRIELLE: What's wrong with that! It's a great flavor combination!

GABRIELLE looks at BELLA who is making a face.

GABRIELLE: (To BELLA.) Shut up! You eat yours with Ketchup and Mustard!

BELLA: So does, like, everyone else!

GABRIELLE: You guys are all just a bunch of culinary heathens.

CORDELIA: So, just be glad that it's me that's going to be the queen and not her.

CAMERON: *(Crossing away, with his back to her.)* I still think we should go back to the good old days.

CORDELIA: Men are not better at ruling than women.

CAMERON: I guess we're just going to have to disagree on that.

CORDELIA: I mean, look at Dad. He's a terrible king.

CAMERON: I guess. *(Looking out a window.)* They still haven't got all of the blood up. Ha! They actually have a couple of kids out there scrubbing down that horse.

CORDELIA: Do you have any idea what that white-ish grey stuff was?

A person in a hood has snuck on stage. They have a knife and are sneaking up on CORDELIA.

CAMERON: Probably some kind of brain disease. I can't believe someone pushed her out that window.

CORDELIA: She was just a stupid girl who got what she deserved.

GABRIELLE turns to face CORDELIA.

GABRIELLE: Stupid? You think I'm stupid? *(She sees the masked knife wielder.)* Hey, who's that?

BELLA turns and sees the ASSASSIN.

CORDELIA: But not me. When I'm queen, the security will be so tight that I'll see danger coming from miles away.

GABRIELLE: Miles away?! It's right behind you!

BELLA: Cordelia! Turn around!

CORDELIA: Queen Cordelia the Wise, they will call me. Or maybe Cordelia the Wary!

BELLA: Behind you!

At this the ASSASSIN strikes and stabs CORDELIA in the back while covering her mouth. CAMERON is completely oblivious. The ASSASSIN drags CORDELIA off.

CAMERON: I had no clue it would be that tough to scrub blood off of a horse. You should see how hard they're working on this. *(He turns.)* Cordelia? Cordelia?

BELLA: She's dead, you doofus.

GABRIELLE: He can't hear you.

The QUEEN enters.

QUEEN: There you are!

CAMERON: Cordelia?

QUEEN: What, are you not going to talk to me?

CAMERON: *(As he exits.)* Maybe we can be co-rulers! How about that?

The QUEEN is still standing there.

QUEEN: I know we haven't always had the best relationship, but it's rude to ignore me.

BELLA: Are you talking to us?

QUEEN: Who else would I be talking to?

GABRIELLE: But we're dead. You can't see us.

BELLA: Wait, are you dead?

The QUEEN makes a "duh" gesture.

BELLA: How?

QUEEN: I went to my room and had barely closed my eyes when someone smashed in my face! *(Crying.)* My beautiful, beautiful face!

GABRIELLE: I wouldn't say beautiful.

The QUEEN cries.

GABRIELLE: Six out of ten. Maybe a little higher back when you were younger.

BELLA: Did you see who did it?

QUEEN: No! I lingered there for a few minutes but I couldn't see because...

GABRIELLE: Someone smashed your face in.

QUEEN: Yes.... Because of that. But when they were leaving, they made enough noise that it alerted the guards. They're hot on my killer's trail!

BELLA: They are?

QUEEN: They are! But then I thought that if I am a ghost then you must be also. Do you know who killed you?

BELLA: No clue.

GABRIELLE: I don't know that someone did. It may have been the intrusive thoughts. Probably someone pushed me, but I'm not 100 percent on that. Someone definitely killed her though. Unless she fell asleep and rolled over on that knife. I don't think that sounds likely though.

GUARD 1 enters with DESTINY in tow. She is covered in blood and carrying a cudgel.

GUARD 1: Your Majesty!

QUEEN: The witch! I should have known!

GABRIELLE: Known what?

QUEEN: That she'd be the one!

GUARD 1: Your Majesty! Where are you?

The KING enters.

KING: What has happened?

GUARD 1: Sire, the Queen has been murdered!

KING: *(With no emotion.)* Oh no. That's terrible.

GUARD 1: I was walking by her room and I heard a terrible sound... like a baseball bat being used on giant bowl of jello, and then a grunt. So, I went in to inspect, and the queen... her face. It was truly terrible... I was about to get sick from the sheer damage done to that woman's face, but then the oracle rushed past me! I chased her halfway through the castle before catching her!

DESTINY: I'm innocent, sire!

GUARD 1: The blood all over her dress, belongs to the queen.

DESTINY: That's my blood! When I was running down the hall I tripped and I got a boo-boo.

KING: You see? That's her blood! She got a boo-boo!

GUARD 1: (*Picking something off the dress.*) I also believe that this is one of the queen's teeth.

DESTINY: (*Obviously lying.*) I could have picked that up anywhere...

GUARD 1: And the bloody cudgel she's carrying that seems to have hair mixed in with the blood, that's undoubtedly the murder weapon!

DESTINY: Um... I used it to kill a rat in my room.

GUARD 1 looks at her.

DESTINY: It was a big rat.

KING: We must call an exterminator!

GUARD 1: Then why are you carrying it with you?!

DESTINY: I was just about to go down to the courtyard and use this to beat the dirt out of my rugs! Yeah. That's it.

GUARD 1: A likely story!

KING: What do you have to say for yourself!

DESTINY: I didn't do it! I'm innocent!

KING: (*After a beat.*) Well, I believe her. You can let her go, Guard number 1.

GUARD 1: But sire! She's covered in blood! And has the weapon on her!

KING: Destiny, did you kill the queen?

DESTINY: Of course not!

KING: Of course not! You see? She didn't do it!

GUARD 1: But Your Majesty! I must protest! The evidence!

KING: Is circumstantial at best!

GUARD 1: I saw her leave the murder site! And sir, what she did to the queen's face. It was... I don't have words for it.

The QUEEN cries again.

KING: I'm sure it was quite disgusting. We will make sure whoever did it, pays the price.

QUEEN: You worthless turd! You planned this!

KING: So, let's investigate a little further.

GUARD 1: But we have the murderer!

KING: Are you sure about that?

GUARD 1: I would swear an oath to it, my king!

KING: *(Pulling out a knife.)* I was scared you might say that. *(He plunges the knife into GUARD 1.)*

GUARD 1: But, my lord... why?

KING: Guard 1...

GUARD 1: My... name is Mark.

KING: What?

GUARD 1: I said, my name is Mark.

KING: It is? I thought it was Guard number 1.

GUARD 1: That's my job sire.

KING: *(As he lays the guard down behind a piece of furniture.)* Right... um... Mark, I hate it has come to this. You will be very hard to replace. As for why? Well, if you lived with Larissa for even three days, you would understand and have killed her for me.

QUEEN: You'll pay for this!

KING: So, it had to come to this. If you could have been convinced to turn the other way, maybe it could have ended differently for you. *(The KING stands and addresses DESTINY.)* That color red looks so good on you!

DESTINY: *(Moving in.)* Doesn't it?

KING: How about we go and celebrate?

DESTINY: I am totally in the mood for a celebration.

KING: Are you in the mood for a wedding?

DESTINY: A wedding? Rafael! So soon?

KING: The sooner the better! I should have done this ages ago! Let's do it tonight!

DESTINY: But what will everyone say?

KING: Who cares? I'm the king. They'll like it if they know what's good for them.

The KING and DESTINY exit.

GABRIELLE: Well, that just happened.

QUEEN: He's letting her get away with it! She killed me!

BELLA: I'm pretty sure he planned it with her. Did you know that he had my mom killed?

QUEEN: No comment.

GABRIELLE: What?

QUEEN: I prefer not to answer. Plus, that happened a long time ago. Let's stay in the present.

BELLA: But...

QUEEN: Let's focus on the here and now please. Look, if they planned to kill me, they probably had you two killed as well.

BELLA: *(Thinking.)* I don't know. That doesn't make sense to me.

QUEEN: That man is cold hearted.

BELLA: But killing us doesn't make sense. Killing YOU makes total sense.

QUEEN: What?

GABRIELLE: Yeah, she's got a point. I mean, we all knew Dad kept her around as a side chick, and while I'm not the biggest fan or anything, she's an upgrade to you.

QUEEN: She is NOT an upgrade.

GABRIELLE: Total upgrade. 100 percent.

BELLA: *(To the audience.)* Boys and Girls, even in death, it seems I am going to be stuck listening to my family argue.

QUEEN: Do YOU think that harlot is an upgrade?

BELLA: No comment.

QUEEN: You can't say that!

BELLA: I just did.

QUEEN: It's an easy question!

BELLA: Alright, I'll answer it if you answer whether or not you knew that my dad had my mom killed.

QUEEN: Nevermind. I know that there is no way that woman is an upgrade to me.

GABRIELLE: Whatever.

QUEEN: But if HE didn't have the two of you killed, then who did?

BELLA: I'm still working that out.

QUEEN: I really can't believe he would do something like that. I mean, we didn't have the best marriage of course, but I don't think he could possibly do anything worse than having me killed.

GUARD 1 stands up from behind the furniture.

GUARD 1: I disagree.

BELLA: I forgot you were back there!

GABRIELLE: Welcome to the afterlife! For what it's worth.

QUEEN: What did you just say?

GUARD 1: I said that I disagree. I mean, he had you killed, but with me, he actually did the deed himself. He even looked into my eyes as he did it.

QUEEN: But I'm his wife!

GUARD 1: And I'm the head of his loyal guards. I would have died for him.

GABRIELLE: You kind of did, if you think about it.

GUARD 1: Too soon.

GABRIELLE: Sorry!

QUEEN: I have kids!

GUARD 1: Yeah, two. I have six. And my wife is disabled.

GABRIELLE: Don't you run the charity bingo night for the orphanage?

GUARD 1: I sure do. Or did.

GABRIELLE: Dang yo. The kids down there love you.

BELLA: A few years back, you saved my puppy from drowning.

GUARD 1: I remember that. I hope he's doing ok.

BELLA: He is!

GABRIELLE: So, basically dad just killed the nicest guard in kingdom in cold blood.

QUEEN: He's evil.

GUARD 1: I never saw it coming. I always trusted him. I can't believe he's marrying that witch.

QUEEN: Tell me about it.

GUARD 1: To be honest, I said the same thing when he married you.

Also, I agree with the girls. She's an upgrade, though not a big one.

QUEEN: All three of you are insane! That woman is nasty!

GUARD 2 and GUARD 3 enter.

GUARD 2: The king told us to come up here and clean up the mess.

I don't see any mess.

GUARD 3: Well, I'm not going back down there until we've cleaned up something.

GUARD 2: I thought Guard 1 was up here.

GUARD 1: Guard 2 and I have worked together for years.

BELLA: Do you guys actually call each other that?

GUARD 1: Of course we do.

GABRIELLE: Seems a bit impersonal.

GUARD 3: (*Looking behind the furniture.*) I found both "The mess" and Guard 1.

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