

## WYRD SISTERS – Scene 1

### SCENE 1 - THE BLASTED HEATH

*(The wind howls, lightning flashes and thunder crashes. A hit of dry ice would be quite nice - I know it s a swine to deal with, but it gives a good effect for the opening of the play. Around a smouldering cauldron huddle three hunched figures )*

MAGRAT *(laughs maniacally)* When shall we three meet again? (pause)

GRANNY *(referring to a pocket diary)* Well, I can do next Tuesday.

NANNY *(referring to a diary)* I'm babysitting on Tuesday. For our Jason's youngest. I can manage Friday. Hurry up with the tea, luv. I'm that parched.

*(Magrat sighs)*

GRANNY *(patting her hand)* You said it quite well. Just a bit more work on the screeching. Ain't that right, Nanny Ogg?

NANNY Very useful screeching I thought, Granny Weatherwax. And I can see that Goody Whemper, *[NOTE – whenever Goody Whemper's name is mentioned, the three witches put their right index finger, pointing upwards, against the front of their noses, and bob (in a form of curtsy) ]* may-she-rest- in-peace, gave you a lot of help with the squint, Magrat.

GRANNY It's a good squint.

MAGRAT *(Unflattered)* Thank you. (pause) I'm glad we decided to form this coven.

NANNY Oven?

GRANNY Coven. Like in the old days. A meeting. *(holding up a hand)* Something comes.

MAGRAT *(earnestly)* Can you tell by the pricking of your thumbs?

GRANNY The pricking of my ears. *(raises her eyebrows at Nanny Ogg) (to herself)* Old Goody Whemper was an excellent witch in her own way, but far too fanciful.

NANNY Hoofbeats? No-one would come up here this time of night.

MAGRAT *(Slightly alarmed)* What's to be afraid of?

GRANNY *(rather smugly)* Us.

*(The hoofbeats draw nearer and halt. A soldier, enters, carrying a large bundle. NOTE - he already has the crossbow quarrel sticking out of the back of his costume, but keeps his back away from the audience! He sees the witches and then pauses )*

GRANNY It's all right. *(She crosses to him. He hands her the bundle, and then topples forward. We can now see the feathers of a crossbow bolt in his back. Two other soldiers enter. One is carrying a crossbow. He reaches out his hand to Granny)*

BOWMAN You will give it to me.

GRANNY *(looks at the bundle, and then up to the Bowman)* No.

BOWMAN You are witches?*(Granny nods)* Does the skin of witches turn aside steel?

GRANNY Not that I'm aware. You could give it a try.

2ND SOLDIER Sir, with respect sir, it's not a good idea---

BOWMAN Be silent.

2ND SOLDIER But it's terrible bad luck to-

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BOWMAN Must I ask you again?

2ND SOLDIER Sir.

*(Granny gestures; there is a flash (a flash box) to one side of the stage. [NOTE - we had Granny use a battery-powered hand-held device, bought from a magic shop, that ignited a small amount of flash wool; quite effective.] 2nd Soldier is much alarmed)*

BOWMAN Missed. Your peasant magic is for fools, mother of the night. I can strike you down where you stand.

GRANNY Then strike, man. If your heart tells you, strike as hard as you dare.

*(The man draws his sword and raises it over his head. A look of puzzlement comes over his face. He drops to his knees and falls dead to the floor. Behind him we now see the 2nd Soldier holding a blood-soaked dagger)*

2ND SOLDIER I-I-I-I couldn't let . . . He shouldn't have . . . It's not right to. . . *(a new thought)* They'll kill me now.

GRANNY You did what you thought was right.

2ND SOLDIER I didn't become a soldier for this. Not to go round killing people.

GRANNY Exactly right. If I was you, I'd become a sailor. Yes, a nautical career. I should start as soon as possible. Now, in fact. Run off, man. Run off to sea where there are no tracks. You will have a long and successful life, I promise. At least, longer than it's likely to be if you hang around here. *(He runs off)* Now, will someone please tell me what's going on?

MAGRAT Perhaps they were bandits.

NANNY *(shaking her head)* Strange. They both wear the same badge. Anyone know what it means?

MAGRAT It's the badge of King Verence.

GRANNY Who's he?

MAGRAT He rules this country.

GRANNY *(dismissively)* Oh. That King Verence.

NANNY *(who has opened the bundle. Gently)* It's a baby. A baby boy. *(She rocks it gently)*

GRANNY Anything else in there?

MAGRAT There's this. *(She holds up a crown. It is a plain golden crown. Not jewelled, ermined or velveted)*

GRANNY Oh. Bloody hell. First, we've got to get him out of here. A long way away, where no-one knows who he is. *(She takes the crown from Magrat)* And then there's this.

MAGRAT Oh, that's easy. I mean, you just hide it under a stone or something. Much easier than babies.

GRANNY It isn't. The reason being, the country's full of babies, and they all look the same. But I don't reckon there's many crowns. They have this way of being found, anyway. They kind of call out to people's minds. If you bunged it under a stone here, it'd get itself discovered by accident. You mark my words.

NANNY It's true, that. How many time have you thrown a magic ring into the deepest depths of the ocean and then, when you get home and have a nice bit of turbot for your tea, there it is.

## WYRD SISTERS – Scene 1

*(They consider this)*

GRANNY Never. And nor have you. Anyway, he might want it back. If it's rightfully his, that is. Kings set a lot of store by crowns, you know. Really, Gytha, sometimes you say the most. . . what's that smell?

*(They both look at the baby)*

NANNY Ah. I'll just see if there's any clean rags, eh? *(she exits)*

MAGRAT What'd happen if we buried it somewhere?

GRANNY The baby?

MAGRAT The crown!

GRANNY A badger'd dig it up. Or someone'd go prospecting for something. Or a tree'd tangle its roots around it and then get blown over in a storm, and then someone'd pick it up and put it on . . . It isn't the putting them on that's the problem. It's the taking off.

MAGRAT It's not even as if it looked much like a crown.

GRANNY *(with sarcasm)* You've seen a lot, I expect. You'd be an expert on them, naturally.

MAGRAT Seen a fair few. They've got more jewels on them, and cloth bits in the middle-

GRANNY Magrat Garlick!

MAGRAT I have! When I was being trained by Goody Whemper. . .

*(Granny and Magrat put their fingers to their noses and bob)*

GRANNY May-she-rest-in-peace . . .

MAGRAT *(putting her finger to her nose and bobbing)* . . . may-she-rest-in-peace, she used to take me over to Razorback or Lancre [*NOTE - pronounced 'lanker'*] whenever the strolling players were in town. She was very keen on the theatre. They've got more crowns than you could shake a stick at, although Goody used to say they're made of tin and paper and stuff. And just glass for the jewels. But they look more realler than this one. Do you think that's strange?

GRANNY Things that try to look like things often do look more like things than things. Well-known fact. But I don't hold with encouraging it. What do they stroll around playing, then, in these crowns?

MAGRAT Don't you know about the theatre?

GRANNY Oh, yes. It's one of them kind of things, is it.

MAGRAT Goody Whemper said it held a mirror up to life. She said it always cheered her up.

GRANNY I expect it would. Played properly, at any rate. Good people, are they, these theatre players?

MAGRAT I think so.

GRANNY And they stroll around the country you say?

MAGRAT All over the place. There's a troupe in Lancre now, I hear. I haven't been because, you know . . . 'tis not right, a woman going into such places by herself.

GRANNY Right. And why not? Go and tell Gytha to wrap the baby up well. It's a long time since I heard a theatre played properly.

*(Lights out)*

## WYRD SISTERS – Scene 2

### SCENE 2 - LANCRE CASTLE

*(The Duke Felmet and Lady Felmet are on stage. The Duke looks distracted, and is rubbing his hands with a grubby hanky) [NOTE - the duke's obsession with getting his hands clean of the - imaginary - blood of King Verence can provide a good running gag that - by the play-within-a-play scene at the end of the show - can get the audience both laughing and squirming with discomfort at the same time!]*

DUKE Certainly, my dear.

DUCHESS *(The Duke's statement made no sense)* What?

DUKE I'll have some cut down and brought in directly, my cherished.

DUCHESS *(icily)* Cut what down?

DUKE Oh, the trees.

DUCHESS What have the trees got to do with it? What I said was, how could you have been so stupid as to let them get away? I told you that servant was far too loyal. You can't trust someone like that.

DUKE No, my love.

DUCHESS You didn't by any chance consider sending someone after them, I suppose?

DUKE *(rather smugly)* Bentzen, my dear, and another guard.

DUCHESS *(momentarily nonplussed by this show of competence)* Oh. *(then)* He wouldn't have needed to go at all if only you'd listened to me. But you never do.

DUKE Do what, my passion? *(he yawns, distractedly. He notices his hands and rubs at them, as if trying to remove a mark)*

DUCHESS For God's sake, leave your hands alone, You've washed them five times in the last half hour.

*(The Chamberlain enters)*

DUKE I can't seem to get rid of the blood. And where's the crown? I must find it.

CHAMBERLAIN Your Majesties.

DUCHESS And?

CHAMBERLAIN The baby was taken by witches.

DUCHESS Witches?

CHAMBERLAIN Oh yes, majesty. We have them all right. Lots.

DUCHESS And people don't do anything about them? They tolerate them?

CHAMBERLAIN Oh, indeed. It's considered good luck to have a witch living in your village. My word, yes.

DUCHESS Why?

CHAMBERLAIN They smooth out life's little humps and bumps.

DUCHESS Where I come from, they don't allow witches. And I don't propose to allow them here. You will furnish their addresses.

CHAMBERLAIN Majesty?

DUCHESS I trust your tax gatherers know where to find them?

*(a pause)*

DUKE I trust that they do pay taxes?

CHAMBERLAIN Well, not exactly pay taxes, my lord. It's more like they don't pay. The old King didn't think . . . Well, they just don't.

DUKE I see. You may go.

*(Chamberlain exits)*

## WYRD SISTERS – Scene 2/3

DUCHESS Well.

DUKE Indeed.

DUCHESS So that was how your family used to run a kingdom, was it? You had a positive duty to kill your cousin. It was clearly in the interest of the species.

DUKE (*rubbing his hands distractedly*) Quite so. Of course, there would appear to be many witches, and it might be difficult to find the three that were on the moor.

DUCHESS That doesn't matter.

DUKE Of course not.

DUCHESS Put matters in hand.

DUKE Yes, my petal. (*calling off*) Sergeant!

SERGEANT (*entering*) Yes, my lord?

[NOTE - The Sergeant is a peach of a cameo. Thick, solid and literal]

DUKE Go out into the town and bring me a witch. In chains, if necessary.

SERGEANT (*who, despite being thick, solid and literal, can see the danger in such a course of action*) Er...

DUKE What?

SERGEANT (*slightly dubious, but fearful of the Duke*) Yes, my lord. (*he salutes, and turns to exit*)

(*Lights out*)

### SCENE 3 - THE THEATRE

(*Applause. It is now after the show, and the three witches are just rising from their seats and preparing to leave*)

GRANNY Well, so that's theatre, is it? Very interesting. I wonder how they get all them kings and lords to come here and do all this. I'd have thought they'd been too busy. Ruling and similar.

MAGRAT (*wearily*) No. I still don't think you quite understand. They're just actors, you see . . . (*One of the actors strolls past*)

ACTOR Evening.

GRANNY You! You're dead!

(*Vitoller enters. He is very much an actor-manager of the old school*)

VITOLLER May I assist you, good ladies?

GRANNY I know you. You done the murder. Leastways, it looked like it.

VITOLLER So glad. It is always a pleasure to meet a true connoisseur. Olwyn Vitoller, at your service. Manager of this band of vagabonds. (He gives a low bow)

GRANNY (*rather flattered*) Yes, well.

NANNY I thought you was very good, too.

MAGRAT I hope we didn't upset things.

VITOLLER My dear lady. Could I begin to tell you how gratifying it is for a mere mummer to learn that his audience has seen behind the mere shell of greasepaint to the spirit beneath?

GRANNY I expect you could. I expect you could say anything, Mr Vitoller.

VITOLLER And now, to what do I owe this visit from three such charming ladies?

GRANNY We'd like to talk to you, Mr Vitoller. And Mrs Vitoller.

(*Mrs Vitoller enters*)

VITOLLER Here she is. What can we do for you?

### WYRD SISTERS – Scene 3

GRANNY Mrs Vitoller, may I make so bold as to ask if your union has been blessed with fruit?

*(The couple look blank)*

NANNY She means. . .

MRS VITOLLER No, I see. No. (slightly ruefully - this is clearly a personal tragedy) We had a little girl once.

*(A pause. Magrat sidles out at some stage in the following)*

GRANNY Only, you see, there is this child. And he needs a home.

VITOLLER It is no life for a child. Always moving. Always a new town. And no room for schooling. They say that's very important these days.

MRS VITOLLER Why does he need a home?

GRANNY He hasn't got one. At least not one where he'd be welcome.

MRS VITOLLER And you, who ask this, are by way of being his. . . ?

NANNY Godmothers.

*(Vitoller and his wife look at one another. She reaches out and takes his hand. He smiles)*

VITOLLER Money is, alas, tight. . .

MRS VITOLLER But it will stretch.

VITOLLER Yes. I think it will. We should be happy to take care of him.

GRANNY *(taking out a purseful of coins)* This should take care of . . . nappies and suchlike. Clothes and things. Whatever.

VITOLLER *(taken aback)* A hundred times over, I should think. Why didn't you mention this before?

GRANNY If I'd had to buy you, you wouldn't be worth the price.

MRS VITOLLER But you don't know anything about us!

GRANNY *(matter-of-factly)* We don't, do we? Naturally we'd like to hear how he gets along. You could send us letters and suchlike. But it would be a good idea not to talk about all this after you've left, do you see? For the sake of the child.

MRS VITOLLER There's something else here, isn't there? Something big behind all this?

*(Granny nods)* But it would do us no good at all to know it? *(Another nod)*

VITOLLER What's his name?

GRANNY and NANNY *(speaking simultaneously)*

Tom. John.

GRANNY Tom John. We'll come back, with the boy.

*(Vitoller bows. He and Mrs Vitoller exit) (Magrat re-enters)*

MAGRAT I found a box. It had all the crowns and things in. So I put it in, like you said, right underneath everything.

GRANNY Good.

MAGRAT Our crown looked really tatty compared to the others.

GRANNY Did anyone see you?

MAGRAT No, everyone was too busy . . . but-

GRANNY Yes?

MAGRAT *(very naive)* Just after I'd hidden it a man came up and . . . pinched my bottom.

GRANNY And?

MAGRAT And then . . . and then . . . he said . . .

NANNY What did he say?

MAGRAT He said, 'Hello, my lovely, what are you doing tonight?'

## WYRD SISTERS – Scene 3/4

GRANNY (*after a pause*) Old Goody Whemper, she didn't get out and about much, did she?

MAGRAT It was her leg, you know.

NANNY But she taught you midwifery and everything?

MAGRAT Oh, yes, that. I done lots.

GRANNY But . . . she never talked to you about what you might call the previous.

MAGRAT Sorry?

GRANNY You know . . . men and such.

MAGRAT What about them?

GRANNY (*giving up the challenge*) I think that it might be a good idea if you have a quiet word with Nanny Ogg one of these days. (with a look at Nanny) Fairly soon.

(*Lights out*)

### SCENE 4 - THE CASTLE

(*The Sergeant is on stage, at attention. The Duke is also on stage. At the rear of the stage, the Fool sits*) [NOTE – this scene is a gift to those involved; think of Roman Atkinson's *Blackadder II* as the Duke and Tony Robinson's *Baldrick* (or Hugh Laurie's *Prince Regent*) as the *Sergeant*]

DUKE She did what?

SERGEANT She give me a cup of tea, sir.

DUKE And what about your men?

SERGEANT She give them one, too, sir.

DUKE (*putting his arm round the Sergeant's shoulder*) Sergeant.

SERGEANT Sir?

DUKE (*charming, but threatening*) I mean, it is possible I may have confused you. I meant to say 'Bring me a witch, in chains, if necessary', but perhaps what I really said was 'Go and have a cup of tea'. Was this in fact the case?

SERGEANT (*unused to sarcasm*) No, sir.

DUKE I wonder why, then, you did not in fact do this thing that I asked?

SERGEANT Sir?

DUKE I expect she said some magic words, did she? I've heard about witches. I imagine she offered you visions of unearthly delight? Did she show you . . . (*he shudders as some sordid thought passes through his mind*) . . . dark fascinations and forbidden raptures, the like of which mortal men should not even think of, and demonic secrets that took you to the depths of man's desires?(*sits down and fans himself with a handkerchief*)

SERGEANT Are you all right, sir?

DUKE What? Oh, perfectly, perfectly.

SERGEANT Only you've gone all red.

DUKE (*snapping*) Don't change the subject, man. Admit it - she offered you hedonistic and licentious pleasures known only to those who dabble in the carnal arts, didn't she?

SERGEANT No, sir. She offered me a bun.

(*Pause*)

DUKE A bun?

SERGEANT Yes, sir. It had currants in it.

DUKE (*with great restraint*) And what did your men do about this?

SERGEANT They had a bun, too, sir. All except young Roger, who isn't allowed fruit, sir, on account of his trouble.

## WYRD SISTERS – Scene 4

*(A pause as the Duke looks at him, knowing he will tell him what Roger had)* He had a biscuit, sir.

*(The Duke struggles to keep control. This brings on his paranoia about his hands. He rubs them distractedly)*

DUKE You may go, Sergeant.

SERGEANT Sir.

*(He marches out)*

DUKE Fool?

FOOL *(capering to him and striking a pose. Nervously)* Marry, sir. . .

DUKE I am already extremely married. Advise me, my Fool.

FOOL I'faith, nuncle. . .

DUKE Nor am I thy nuncle. I feel sure I would have remembered. *(he leans forward until his face is very close to the Fool's)* If you preface your next remark with nuncle, i'faith or marry, it will go hard with you.

FOOL *(after a moment's thought)* How do you feel about 'prithee'?

DUKE Prithee I can live with. *(meaningful pause)* So can you. But no capering. *(with an encouraging grin)* How long have you been a Fool, boy?

FOOL Prithee, sirrah--

DUKE The sirrah . . . on the whole, I think not.

FOOL Prithee, sirra. . . sir. All my life, sir. Seventeen years under the bladder, man and boy. And my father before me. And my nuncle at the same time as him. And my granddad before them. And his-

DUKE Your whole family have been Fools?

FOOL Family tradition, sir.

DUKE You come from these parts, don't you?

FOOL Ma- Yes, sir.

DUKE So you would know about the native beliefs and so on?

FOOL I suppose so, sir. Prithee.

DUKE Good. Tell me about witches.

*(The Duchess enters)*

DUCHESS But not now. Well, where are the witches?

DUKE The Chamberlain would appear to be right, beloved. The witches seem to have the local people in thrall. The sergeant of the guard came back empty-handed. *(to himself; the word has struck a chord)* Handed . . . handed.

DUCHESS You must have him executed. To make an example to the others.

DUKE A course of action, my dear, which ultimately results in us ordering the last soldier to cut his own throat as an example to himself. By the way, there seem to be fewer servants around than usual.

DUCHESS Housekeeping is under my control. I cannot abide slackness! What of these witches? Will you stand idly by and let trouble seed for the future? Will you let these witches defy you? What of the crown?

DUKE *(with a shrug)* No doubt it ended in the river.

DUCHESS And the child? He was given to the witches. Do they do human sacrifice?

DUKE *(with a disappointed air)* Apparently not. These witches . . . apparently they seem to cast a spell on people.

## WYRD SISTERS – Scene 4/5

DUCHESS Well, obviously-

DUKE Not like a magic spell. They seem to be respected. They do medicine and so on. It might be difficult to move against them.

DUCHESS

I could come to believe that they have cast a glamour over you as well. In fact, you like it, don't you? The thought of the danger. I remember when we were married; all that business with that knotted rope-

DUKE (*snapping*) Not at all!

DUCHESS Then what will you do?

DUKE Wait.

DUCHESS Wait?

DUKE Wait and consider. Patience is a virtue. (*He starts to rub absent-mindedly at his hands. The Duchess leans over and slaps his wrist as the lights black out*)

### SCENE 5 - WITCH'S COTTAGE

(*Magrat and Nanny are on stage. Granny enters*)

GRANNY Good evening.

MAGRAT Well met by moonlight. Merry meet. A star shines on-

NANNY Wotcha.

GRANNY (*with a wince*) Anyway, how goes it, sisters?

MAGRAT If we're going to start, we'd better light the candles.

(*Nanny and Granny exchange looks*)

GRANNY Candle.

NANNY And a decent white one. Nothing fancy. (*they sit. Magrat lights the candle*) What about this new duke, then?

GRANNY He had some houses burned down in Bad Ass. Because of the taxes.

MAGRAT How horrible.

NANNY Old King Verence used to do that. Terrible temper he had.

GRANNY He used to let people out first though.

NANNY Oh, yes, he could be very gracious like that. He'd pay for them to be rehoused as often as not. If he remembered. And then there was that great hairy thing of his.

GRANNY Ah, yes. His 'droit de seigneur'.

NANNY Needed a lot of exercise.

GRANNY But next day he'd send his housekeeper with a bag of silver and a hamper of stuff for the wedding. Many a couple got a proper start in life thanks to that.

MAGRAT What are you two talking about? Did he keep pets?

(*The other two exchange glances and shrug*) Did you know that no-one is allowed to say that Felmet killed the king? He had some people executed in Lancre the other day. Spreading malicious lies, he said. He said Verence died of natural causes.

GRANNY Well, being assassinated is natural causes for a king. I think we have to keep an eye on this one. I think he might be a bit clever. That's not a good thing, in a king. And he don't know how to show respect.

MAGRAT A man came to see me last week to ask if I wanted to pay any taxes. I told him no.

NANNY He came to see me, too. But our Jason and our Wayne went out and told him we didn't want to join.

## WYRD SISTERS – Scene 5/ 6

GRANNY Small man, black cloak?

NANNY and MAGRAT Yes.

GRANNY He was hanging around in my raspberry bushes. Only, when I went out to see what he wanted, he ran away.

*(Pause. Magrat looks a bit embarrassed)*

MAGRAT Actually, I gave him tuppence. *(The other two 'tut' and sigh)* He was going to be tortured, you see, if he didn't get the witches to pay their taxes.

*(Granny and Nanny exchange glances as the lights black out)*

### SCENE 6 - THE CASTLE

*(The Duke and the Fool are on stage. The Duke is now using sand-paper on his hands, which are beginning to show signs of this abuse, looking a bit raw)*

DUKE Tell me, Fool, does it always rain here?

FOOL Marry, nuncle --

DUKE *(with iron patience)* Just answer the question.

FOOL Sometimes it stops, sir. To make room for the snow. And sometimes we get some right squand'ring orgulous fogs.

DUKE Orgulous?

FOOL Thick, my lord. From the Latatian 'orgulum', a soup or broth.

DUKE I am bored, Fool.

FOOL Let me entertain you, my lord, with many a merry quip and lightsome jest.

DUKE Try me. *(A pause)* I'm waiting. Make me laugh.

FOOL *(taking the plunge)* Why, sirrah, why may a caudled fillhorse be deemed the brother to a hiren candle in the night?

*(The Duke frowns)*

Withal, because a candle may be greased, yet a fillhorse be without fat argier. *(he pats the Duke lightly with the balloon)*

DUKE *(after a deadpan pause)* Yes. And then what happened?

FOOL That, er, was by way of being the whole thing. My granddad thought it was one of his best.

DUKE I dare say he told it differently. *(There is a sudden rumbling, as of an earthquake. The Duke and the Fool stagger somewhat - a bit like 'Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea')* What's happening? Is it an earthquake?

FOOL We don't have them in these parts, my lord.

DUKE It's the witches, isn't it? They're out to get me, aren't they?

FOOL Marry, nuncle-

DUKE They run this country, don't they?

FOOL No, my lord, they never-

DUKE Who asked you?

FOOL Er, you did, my lord.

DUKE Are you arguing with me?

FOOL No, my lord!

DUKE I thought so. You're in league with them, I suppose.

FOOL My lord!

DUKE You're all in league, you people! I am the king! Do you all hear me? I am the king! *(He starts to sniffle. The Fool crosses to him and holds out his hanky to him - it matches his*

## WYRD SISTERS – Scene 6

*costume and has little bells sown on the corners. The Duke doesn't see it)* Is this a dagger I see before me?

FOOL Um. No, my lord. It's my handkerchief, you see. You can sort of tell the difference if you look closely. It doesn't have as many sharp edges.

DUKE Good Fool. Are you loyal, Fool? Are you trustworthy?

FOOL I swore to follow my lord until death.

*(The Duke leans towards him, conspiratorially)*

DUKE I didn't want to. They made me do it. I didn't-

DUCHESS *(entering)* Leonal!

DUKE Yes, my dear?

DUCHESS What was that earthquake?

DUKE Witches, I suspect.

DUCHESS So. They still defy you?

DUKE How should I fight magic?

FOOL With words.

DUCHESS What?

FOOL *(nervous)* In . . . in the Guild, we learned that words can be more powerful even than magic.

DUKE Clown! Words are just words. Brief syllables. Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me.

FOOL My lord, there are such words that can. Liar! Usurper! Murderer! *(he adds, quickly)* Such words have no truth. But they can spread like fire underground, breaking out to burn-

DUKE It's true! It's true! I hear them all the time! *(hissing)* It's the witches!

FOOL Then, then, then they can be fought with other words. Words can fight even witches. . .

DUCHESS *(thoughtfully)* What words?

FOOL *(with a shrug)* Crone. Evil eye. Stupid old woman.

DUCHESS You are not entirely an idiot, are you? You refer to rumour.

FOOL Just so, my lady.

DUKE *(to no-one in particular)* It's the witches. We must tell the world about the witches. They're evil. They make it come back, the blood. *(he rubs at his hands)* Even sandpaper doesn't work.

*(Duke and Duchess exit as he speaks. The Fool is left alone, to soliloquise)*

FOOL *(speaking to his jester's stick)* What have I got myself into? I never asked to be a Fool, you know. It just happened. First thing I can remember is Granddad standing over me, making me repeat the jokes by rote, hammering home every punchline with his belt.

He was credited with seven official new jokes, you know. He won the honorary cap and bells of the Grand Prix des Idiots at Ankh-Morpork three years in a row.

I remember, when I was about seven, I tried to make up a joke. When I told Granddad he gave me the biggest thrashing of my life: 'You will learn, lad, that there is nothing more serious than jesting.' *(miming the thrashing)*

Never, never, ever, utter a joke that has not been approved by the Guild. never, never, never let me catch you jocularizing again. *(he sighs, and exits as . . . lights out)*

## WYRD SISTERS – Scene 7

### SCENE 7 - WITCH'S HOUSE

*(Nanny is on stage. Granny and Magrat enter)*

NANNY What ho, me old boiler. See you turned up then. Have a drink. Have two. Watcher, Magrat. Pull up a chair and call the cat a bastard. Actually, don't think you can.

MAGRAT Can what?

NANNY Call the cat a bastard. He's disappeared, old Greebo. Haven't seen him for a couple of days. *(a new thought)* Here, what about that earthquake, then?

GRANNY Extremely worrying developments of a magical tendency are even now afoot.

NANNY Well, we'd better have a look, then. *(she takes the lid off her wash copper)* I think perhaps we should join hands. Is the door shut?

*(Magrat nods)*

GRANNY What are you going to try?

NANNY I always say you can't go wrong with a good Invocation. Haven't done one for years.

MAGRAT Oh, but you can't. Not here. You need a cauldron, and a magic sword. And an octogram. And spices, all sorts of stuff.

*(Nanny and Granny exchange glances)*

GRANNY It's not her fault. It's all them grimmers she bought.

MAGRAT Grimoires.

GRANNY You don't need none of that. You just use whatever you've got. *(she picks up a rolling pin, holds it aloft and declaims)* We conjure and abjure thee by means of this . . . weighty and terrible rolling pin.

MAGRAT *(picking up a packet of soap flakes)* See how we scatter *(she sighs)* rather old washing soda and some extremely hard soap flakes in thy honour. Really, Nanny, I don't think-

NANNY And I invoke and bind thee with the balding scrubbing brush of Art and the washboard of Protection.

MAGRAT Honesty is all very well, but somehow it just isn't the same.

GRANNY You listen to me, girl. Demons don't care about the outward shape of things. It's what you think that matters. Get on with it.

*(They all look, in deepest concentration, at the copper. Smoke rises from it, and a head appears ) [NOTE - we couldn't do the copper, so we had our demon appear out of a, very shallow, drawer apparently full of laundry, placed over an unseen trap-door in the Unicorn's stage]*

DEMON Well?

GRANNY Who're you?

DEMON My name is unpronounceable in your tongue, woman.

GRANNY I'll be the judge of that. And don't you call me woman.

DEMON Very well. My name is Wxrtl-Ilt-jwlpklz.

NANNY Where were you when the vowels were handed out? Behind the door?

GRANNY Well, Mr . . . WXrtHlt-jwlpklz *(it's a good effort, and pretty close to the Demon's pronunciation)*, I expect you're wondering why we called you here tonight.

DEMON You're not supposed to say that. You're supposed to say-

GRANNY Shut up. We have the sword of Art and the octogram of Protection, I warn you.

DEMON They look like a balding scrubbing brush and a wash-board to me. You are allowed three questions.

## WYRD SISTERS – Scene 7

GRANNY (*to the others*) We must be careful; Demons always tell the truth, but only as much as they need to. We must phrase our questions very carefully. (to the Demon) Is there something strange at large in the kingdom?

DEMON You mean stranger than usual? No. There is nothing strange.

GRANNY Hold on, hold on. (*she tries again*) Is there something in the kingdom that wasn't there before?

DEMON No.

GRANNY (*a last try*) What the hell's going on? And no mucking about trying to wriggle out of it, otherwise I'll boil you. (*The Demon hesitates at this new approach*) Magrat, just bring over that kindling, will you?

DEMON I protest at this treatment.

GRANNY Yes, well. I haven't got time to bandy legs with you all night. These word games might be all very well for wizards, but we've other fish to fry.

NANNY Or boil.

DEMON (*a little worried now*) Look, we're not supposed to volunteer information just like that. There are rules, you know.

NANNY There's some old oil in the can in the shed, Magrat.

DEMON If I simply tell you. . . .

GRANNY (*encouragingly*) Yes?

DEMON You won't let on, will you?

GRANNY Not a word.

MAGRAT Lips are sealed.

DEMON There is nothing new in the Kingdom, but the land has woken up.

GRANNY What do you mean?

DEMON It's unhappy. It wants a king that cares for it.

GRANNY You don't mean the people, do you? (*Demon shakes its head*) No, I didn't think so.

NANNY What ---?

(*Granny holds up a hand*)

GRANNY Can you tell us why?

DEMON I'm just a demon. What do I know? Only what it is, not the why and how of it.

GRANNY I see.

DEMON May I go now?

GRANNY Mmm?

DEMON Please?

GRANNY Oh. Yes. Run along. Thank you.

DEMON (*after a pause*) You wouldn't mind banishing me, would you?

GRANNY (*still distracted*) What?

DEMON Only I'd feel better if I was properly banished. 'Run along' lacks that certain something.

GRANNY Oh, well. If it gives you pleasure. Magrat! Do the honours, will you?

MAGRAT Certainly. Right. Okay. Um. Begone, foul fiend, unto the blackest pit. . . .

(*The head starts to sink back into the copper. As it goes . . .*)

DEMON Run aaaalonggg. \_ \_

NANNY Well. I wonder if that's why Greebo's vanished.

GRANNY Cats can look after themselves. Countries can't. Duke Felmet hates the kingdom. The villagers say that when they go to see him he just stares at them and giggles and rubs his hands and twitches.

## WYRD SISTERS – Scene 7

NANNY The old king used to shout at them and kick them out of the castle. But he was always very gracious about it. You felt he meant it. People like to feel they're valued.

GRANNY The kingdom is worried. You heard what the demon said. This morning when I opened my door, there were all the animals of the forest, just stood outside.

MAGRAT What did they say?

GRANNY Nothing. Animals, aren't they? Knew what they wanted, though. Rid of the king. They was sent, by the kingdom, the land itself. It doesn't care if people are good or bad. But it expects the king to care for it.

MAGRAT It's a bit like a dog, really. A dog doesn't care if its master's good or bad, just so long as it likes the dog.

NANNY What are we going to do about it?

GRANNY Nothing. You know we can't meddle.

NANNY You saved the baby.

GRANNY That's not meddling!

NANNY Have it your way. But maybe one day he'll come back. Destiny again.

GRANNY Right.

*(Pause)*

MAGRAT You know the Fool, who lives up at the castle?

NANNY Little man with runny eyes?

MAGRAT Not that little. What's his name, do you happen to know?

GRANNY He's just called Fool. No job for a man, that. Running around with bells on.

NANNY His mother was a Beldame, from over Blackglass way. Bit of a beauty when she was younger. Broke many a heart, she did. Bit of a scandal there, I did hear. Think he was named after his master the king. Verence. Granny's right, though. At the end of the day, a Fool's a Fool.

GRANNY Why d'you want to know, Magrat?

MAGRAT *(blushing)* Oh . . . one of the girls in the village was asking me.

*(Nanny clears her throat, and nudges Granny)*

NANNY It's a steady job. I'll grant you that.

GRANNY Huh. A man who tinkles all day. No kind of a husband for anyone, I'd say.

NANNY You . . . she'd always know where he was. You'd just have to listen.

GRANNY Never trust a man with horns on his hat.

MAGRAT *(suddenly)* You're a pair of silly old women. And I'm going home!

*(she stalks out)*

GRANNY and NANNY Well!

*(Lights out)*

## WYRD SISTERS – Scene 8

### SCENE 8 - THE CASTLE DUNGEON

*(Noise of echoey dripping water. Nanny, the Duke and Duchess are on stage. Also on stage is King Verence (in a green follow-spot), sitting in a corner and watching the action. Nanny is in the stocks. The Duke's hands are now a bit bloody, and he is working away at them using a rather rusty-looking rasp)*

DUKE Quite comfortable, are we?

NANNY Apart from these stocks, you mean?

DUKE I am impervious to your foul blandishments. I scorn your devious wiles. You are to be tortured, I'll have you know.

DUCHESS *(since that seems to have had no effect)* And then you will be burned.

NANNY Okay.

DUKE Okay?

NANNY Well, it's bloody freezing down here. What's that big wardrobe thing with the spikes?

DUKE Aha. Now you realise, do you? That, my dear lady, is the Iron Maiden. It's the latest thing. Well may you . . .

NANNY Can I have a go in it?

DUKE Your pleas fall on deaf . . . what?

DUCHESS This insouciance gives you pleasure, but soon you'll laugh on the other side of your face!

NANNY It's only got this side.

DUCHESS *(fingering a pair of pliers)* We shall see.

DUKE And you need not think any others of your people will come to your aid. We alone hold the keys of this dungeon. Ha ha. You will be an example to all those who have been spreading malicious rumours about me. I hear the voices all the time, lying. . .

DUCHESS Enough! Come, Leonal. We will let her reflect on her fate for a while.

DUKE *(muttering, as he exits)* . . . the faces . . . wicked lies . . . I wasn't there, and anyway he fell. . . .

*(A moment's silence)*

NANNY All right. I can see you. Who are you? *(King Verence steps forward)* I saw you making faces behind him. All I could do to keep a straight face.

VERENCE I wasn't making faces, woman. I was scowling.

NANNY 'Ere, I know you. You're dead. You're the late King Verence.

VERENCE I prefer the term 'passed over'. I'm afraid it was I who borrowed your cat: I knew you'd come looking for it.

NANNY What's that big bed thing over there?

VERENCE The rack.

NANNY Oh. I suppose you're no good at locks?

VERENCE *(shaking his head)* But surely, to a witch this is all so much . . .

NANNY Solid iron. You might be able to walk through it, but I can't.

VERENCE I didn't realise. I thought witches could do magic.

NANNY Young man, you will oblige me by shutting up!

VERENCE Madam! I am a king!

NANNY You are also dead, so I wouldn't aspire to hold any opinions if I was you.

## WYRD SISTERS – Scene 8

*(Pause. Lights go down and up to indicate the passage of time. During the brief blackout a clock chimes)*

I spy, with my little eye, something beginning with P.

VERENCE Oh. Er, Pliers.

NANNY No.

VERENCE Pilliwinks?

NANNY That's a pretty name. What's that?

VERENCE It's a kind of thumbscrew.

NANNY No.

VERENCE Choke-pear?

NANNY That's a C, and anyway I don't know what it is. You're a bit too good at these names. You sure you didn't use them when you were alive?

VERENCE Absolutely, Nanny.

NANNY Boys that tell lies go to a bad place.

VERENCE Lady Felmet had most of them installed herself. It's the truth.

NANNY All right. It was 'pinchers'.

VERENCE But that's just another name for pliers. *(pause)* They'll be back soon. Are you sure you'll be all right?

NANNY If I'm not, how much help can you be?

*(A sound of bolts sliding back. The Duke, Duchess and Fool enter)*

DUCHESS We will begin with the Showing of the Implements.

NANNY Seen 'em. Leastways all the ones beginning with P, S, I, T and W.

DUCHESS Then let us see how long you can keep that light conversational tone.

NANNY Is this going to take long? I haven't had breakfast.

DUCHESS Now, woman, will you confess?

NANNY What to?

DUCHESS It's common knowledge. Treason. Malicious witchcraft. Harboursing the king's enemies. Theft of the crown and spreading false rumours.

NANNY What false rumours?

DUKE *(hoarsely)* Concerning the accidental death of the late King Verence.

NANNY Oh, I don't know nothing false. *(Verence whispers to her, telling her what happened)*

I know you stabbed him, and you gave him the dagger. It was at the top of the stairs. Just by the suit of armour with the pike. And you said, 'If it's to be done, it's better if it's done quickly' or something, and then you snatched the king's own dagger. . .

DUKE You lie! There were no witnesses. We made . . . there was nothing to witness! I heard someone in the dark, but there was no-one there!

DUCHESS Do shut up, Leonal!

DUKE Who told her? Did you tell her?

DUCHESS And calm down. No-one told her. She's a witch, for goodness sake, they find out about these things. Second glance, or something.

NANNY Sight.

DUCHESS Which you will not possess much longer, my good woman, unless you tell us who else knows and indeed assist us on a number of other matters. *(pause)* And now we will commence. Your friends can't help you now.

*(Lights out)*

## WYRD SISTERS – Scene 9

### SCENE 9 - CASTLE GATEHOUSE

*(Guards and crowd on stage. Granny enters, carrying a basket of apples)*

PEASANT *(to Granny)* There's a witch in the dungeons. And foul tortures, they say.

GRANNY Nonsense. I expect Nanny Ogg has just gone in to advise the king, or something.

PEASANT They say Jason Ogg's gone to fetch his brothers.

GRANNY I really advise you all to return home. There has probably been a misunderstanding. Everyone knows a witch cannot be held against her will.

PEASANT It's gone too far this time. All this burning and taxing and now this. I blame you witches. It's got to stop. I know my rights.

GRANNY And what rights are they?

PEASANT Dunnage, cowage-in-ordinary, badinage, leftovers, scrommidge, clary and spunt. And acornage every other year. And the right to keep two-thirds of a goat on the common. Until he set fire to it. *(pause)* It was a bloody good goat, too.

GRANNY A man could go far, knowing his rights like you do. *(a hint of threat)* But right now he should go home. *(The peasants exit. Granny turns and looks at the guards)* I am a harmless old seller of apples. Pray let me past, dearie.

GUARD 1 No-one must enter the castle. Orders of the Duke.

GRANNY I know you, Champett Poldy. I recall I laid out your granddad and I brought you into the world. *(leaning in to him)* I gave you your first good hiding in this vale of tears and by all the gods if you cross me now I will give you your last. *(He drops his spear. Granny pats his shoulder)* But don't worry about it. Have an apple.

GUARD 2 So that's witches' magic, is it? Pretty poor stuff. Maybe it frightens these country idiots, woman, but it doesn't frighten me.

GRANNY I imagine it takes a lot to frighten a big, strong lad like you.

GUARD 2 And don't you try to put the wind up me, neither. Old ladies like you, twisting people around. It shouldn't be stood for, like they say.

GRANNY *(pushing his spear aside)* just as you like. . .

GUARD 2 *(grabbing her)* Listen, I said . . . *(suddenly he is clutching at his arm and moaning)* *(Granny puts her hatpin back in her hat and exits, triumphant. Almost before the guards have rearranged themselves, Magrat enters, also hearing a basket of apples)*

GUARD 1 Oh my God.

MAGRAT I've come to sell my lovely apples.

GUARD 2 There's not a sale on, is there? *(it dawns on him)* You're not a witch, are you?

MAGRAT Of course not. Do I look like one?

GUARD 2 *(uncertainly)* Right. *(He looks at her. Pointed hat, blue cloak, etc)* Pass, apple seller.

MAGRAT Thank you. Would you like an apple?

GUARD 1 No, thanks. I haven't finished the one the other witch gave me. Not a witch. Apple seller.

MAGRAT How long ago was this?

GUARD 1 just a few minutes. . . . *(Magrat exits quickly)* An apple seller. Yes. Well, she should know.

*(Lights out)*

## WYRD SISTERS – Scene 10

### SCENE 10 - OUTSIDE THE DUNGEON

*(A corridor in the castle. Two guards on stage. Magrat enters)*

GUARD 3 Well, well. Come to keep us company, have you, my pretty?

MAGRAT I was looking for the dungeons.

GUARD 3 Just fancy. I reckon we can help you there. *(he puts an arm around her waist)*

MAGRAT I think I should warn you. I am not, as I may appear, a simple apple seller. *(no reaction)* I am in fact a witch.

GUARD 3 Fair enough. I've always wondered what it was like to kiss a witch. Around here they do say you gets turned into a frog.

GUARD 4 *(nudging him)* I reckon, then, you kissed one years ago. *(he laughs)*  
*(Guards shove Magrat up against the wall)*

GUARD 3 Now listen to me, sweetheart. You ain't the first witch we've had down here, but you could be lucky, and walk out of here. If you're nice to us, that is. *(he mauls her a bit)* Here, what's this? A knife? I reckon we've got to take this very seriously, don't you, Hron?

GUARD 4 You got to tie her hands and gag her. They can't do magic if they can't speak or wave their hands about. . .

FOOL *(who has entered suddenly)* You can take your hands off her! Let her go this minute! Or I'll report you!

GUARD 3 This is a witch we have here. So you can go and tinkle somewhere else. *(he turns back to Magrat)* I like a girl with spirit.

FOOL I told you to let her go.

*(Guard 4 draws his sword. Suddenly Magrat lashes out at Guard 3 with all her might. He spins around with the force of the blow and crashes to the floor. Guard 4 turns in amazement to see his colleague laid out. The Fool charges at him, knocking him over. He grabs the Fool around the throat, but Magrat comes up behind him and holds a knife to his throat)*

MAGRAT Let go of him. *(a pause)* You're wondering whether I really would cut your throat. I don't know either. Think of the fun we could have together, finding out. *(Both guards get to their feet)* Right. And now. Run away. *(They exit)* *(To Fool)* Right, now where is she?

FOOL *(crossing to the door)* It's locked.

MAGRAT Well, it's a dungeon, isn't it?

FOOL They're not supposed to lock it from the inside. *(Magrat examines the door)* Are you really a witch? You don't look like one. You look very . . . that is . . . not like a, you know, crone at all, but absolutely beautiful. . .

MAGRAT *(a little flustered by this)* I think you'd better stand back, Verence. I'm not sure how this is going to work.

FOOL How did you know my name?

MAGRAT *(examining the door)* Oh, I expect I heard it somewhere.

FOOL I shouldn't think so, I never use it. I mean, it's not a popular name with the Duke. It was me mam, you see. They like to name you after kings, I suppose . . . *(Magrat holds up her hand. There is a small flash)* *[We used a handheld clockwork device, bought from a magic shop, that fires sparks through the fingers]* Is that it?

MAGRAT Wait. It's not over yet.

*(Granny enters)*

GRANNY Good technique. But it's all old wood. Lot of iron nails and stuff in there. Can't see it working. . .

*(There is an almighty flash, and an explosion (sound effect))*

*(Lights out)*

## WYRD SISTERS – Scene 11

### SCENE 11 - THE CASTLE DUNGEON

*[We repeated the flash, to give the effect that we are now seeing the events in the corridor from inside the cell.] (Nanny, Duke and Duchess (with Verence) are inside. Granny, Magrat and Fool enter. Magrat and the Fool stay to one side of the stage)*

NANNY Took your time. Let me out of this, will you? I'm getting cramp.

VERENCE My own dagger! All this time and I never knew it! They bloody well did me in with my own bloody knife!

GRANNY Isn't that the old king? Can they see him?

NANNY Shouldn't think so.

DUCHESS Guards! Fool, fetch the guards!

GRANNY They're busy. We were just leaving. Are you the duke?

*(The Duke nods)* I'm going to give you no cause. But it would be better for you if you left this country. Abdicate, or whatever.

DUCHESS In favour of whom? A witch?

DUKE I won't.

GRANNY What did you say?

DUKE I said I won't. Do you think a bit of simple conjuring would frighten me? I am king by right of conquest and you cannot change it. It is as simple as that, witch. *(a pause as he lets this sink in)* If you defeat me by magic, magic will rule. You can't do it. Any king raised with your help would be under your power. Hag-ridden, I might say. That which magic rules, it destroys. It would destroy you, too. You know it. Ha, ha. *(Granny's knuckles whiten)* You could strike me down, and perhaps you could replace me. But he would have to be fool indeed, because he would know he was under your evil eye, and if he displeased you, why, his life would be instantly forfeit. You could protest all you wished, but he'd know he ruled with your permission. And that would make him no king at all. Is not that true? *(a pause)* I said, is that not true?

GRANNY Yes. Yes, it is true . . . but there is one who could defeat you.

DUKE *(sneering)* The child? Let him come when he is grown. A young man with a sword, to seek his destiny. Very romantic. But I have many years to prepare. Let him try. *(nose to nose with Granny, he hisses)* Get back to your cauldrons, wyrd sisters.

*(The Duke turns on his heel, and swoops out. Rather taken aback, the Duchess follows. Offstage, we hear the Duke laughing)*

NANNY You could give him boils or something. Haemorrhoids are good. That's allowed. It won't stop him ruling, it just means he'll have to rule standing up. Always good for a laugh that. *(pause)* Mind you, that'd probably make him worse. Same with toothache.

GRANNY I ain't going to give him the pleasure of saying it, but he's got us beaten.

NANNY Well, I don't know. Our Jason and a few lads could soon. . .

GRANNY You saw some of his guards. These aren't the old sort. These are a tough kind.

NANNY We could give the boys a bit of help.

GRANNY It wouldn't work. People have to sort this sort of thing out for themselves. Magic's there to be ruled, not to do the ruling.

FOOL *(who has been plucking up his courage)* Can I see you again?

MAGRAT Oh no. I'm very busy tonight.

FOOL Tomorrow night, then?

MAGRAT I think I should be washing my hair.

## WYRD SISTERS – Scene 11/12

FOOL I could get Friday night free.

MAGRAT We do a lot of work at night, see. . .

FOOL The afternoon, then?

MAGRAT Well. . .

FOOL About two o'clock. In the meadow by the pond, all right?

MAGRAT Well . . .

FOOL See you there, then. All right?

DUCHESS (*off*) Fool!

FOOL I've got to go. The meadow, Okay? I'll wear a flower so you recognise me. All right?

MAGRAT All right.

(*Fool exits*)

NANNY Esme, there's someone here to see you.

## SCENE 12 - THE CASTLE

(*Duke, Duchess and Fool are on stage. The Duke is now working away at his, very bloody, hands with a rusty cheese grater*)

DUKE It works. The people mutter against the witches. How do you do it, Fool?

FOOL Jokes, nuncle. And gossip. People are halfway ready to believe it anyway. Everyone respects the witches. The point is that no-one actually likes them very much.

DUKE This is very pleasing. If it goes on like this, Fool, you shall have a knighthood.

FOOL Marry, nuncle, if 'n I had a Knighthood -- Night Hood - why, it would keep my ears warm in Bedde; i' Faith, if many a Knight is a Fool, why then . . .

DUKE Yes, yes, all right.

DUCHESS It seems that words are extremely powerful.

FOOL Indeed, lady.

DUCHESS You must have made a lengthy study.

FOOL (*nodding*) Words can change the world.

DUCHESS So you have said before. I remain unconvinced. Strong men change the world. Strong men and their deeds. Words are like marzipan on the cake. Of course you think words are important. You are weak, and have nothing else.

FOOL Your ladyship is wrong.

DUCHESS (*icily*) You had better be able to substantiate that comment.

FOOL Lady, the Duke wishes to chop down the forests, is this not so?

DUKE The trees talk about me. I hear them whisper when I go riding. They tell lies about me!  
(*The Fool and the Duchess exchange glances*)

FOOL But this policy has met with fanatical opposition.

DUKE What?

FOOL People don't like it.

DUCHESS What does that matter? We rule! They will do what we say or they will be pitilessly executed!

DUKE But, my love, we will run out of people!

## WYRD SISTERS – Scene 12

FOOL No need, no need! You don't have to do that! What you do is . . . you . . . you embark upon a far-reaching and ambitious plan to expand the agricultural industry, provide long-term employment in the sawmills, open new land for development, and reduce the scope for banditry.

DUKE (*baffled*) How will I do all that?

FOOL Chop down the forests.

DUKE But you said. . .

DUCHESS Shut up, Felmet. (*she turns to the Fool*) Exactly how does one go about knocking over the houses of people one does not like?

FOOL Urban clearance.

DUCHESS I was thinking of burning them down.

FOOL Hygienic urban clearance.

DUCHESS And sowing the ground with salt.

FOOL Marry, I suspect that it is hygienic urban clearance and a programme of environmental improvements. It might be a good idea to plant a few trees as well.

DUKE (*shouting*) No more trees!

FOOL Oh, it's all right. They won't survive. The important thing is to have planted them.

DUCHESS But I also want to raise taxes.

FOOL Why, nuncle --

DUCHESS And I am not your nuncle.

FOOL N'aunt?

DUCHESS No.

FOOL Why . . . prithe . . . you need to finance your ambitious programme for the country.

DUKE (*getting lost*) Sorry?

DUCHESS He means that chopping down trees costs money. (*to the Fool*) Intriguing, but can your words change the past?

FOOL More easily, I think. Because the past is what people remember, and memories are words. Who knows how a king behaved a thousand years ago? There is only recollection, and stories. And plays, of course.

DUKE Ah yes. I saw a play once. Bunch of funny fellows in tights. A lot of shouting. The people liked it. But you say history is what people are told?

FOOL (*taking a coin from his pocket*) What about him? Champot the Good. Was he? Who knows, now? What was he good at? But he will be Champot the Good until the end of the world.

DUKE I want to be a good ruler. I want people to like me.

DUCHESS (*ignoring him*) Let us assume that there were other matters subject to controversy. Matters of historical record that had . . . been clouded.

DUKE I didn't do it, you know. He slipped and fell. That was it. He attacked me. It was self-defence. That's it. He slipped and fell on his own dagger in self-defence. I have no recollection of it at this time.

DUCHESS Be quiet, husband. I know you didn't do it. I wasn't there with you, you may recall. It was I who didn't hand you the dagger. (*turns to the Fool*) And now, Fool. I was saying, I believe, that perhaps there are matters that should be properly recorded.

FOOL Marry, that you were not there at the time?

## WYRD SISTERS – Scene 12/13

DUCHESS Not where?

FOOL (*hastily*) Anywhere.

DUCHESS So long as you remember it. Reality is only weak words, you say. Therefore, words are reality. But how can words become history?

DUKE It was a very good play I saw. There were fights, and no-one really died. Some very good speeches, I thought.

DUCHESS Fool?

FOOL Lady?

DUCHESS Can you write a play? A play that will go around the world, a play that will be remembered long after rumour has died?

FOOL No, lady. It is a special talent.

DUCHESS But can you find someone who has it?

FOOL There are such people, my lady, in Ankh-Morpork may hap.

DUCHESS Find one. Find the best. The truth will out. Find one.

(*Lights out*)

## SCENE 13 - THE BLASTED HEATH

(*Magrat, Granny and Nanny are on stage*)

GRANNY We ain't going to curse anyone. It hardly ever works if they done know you've done it.

NANNY What you do is, you send him a doll of himself with pins in it--

GRANNY No, Gytha.

NANNY All you have to do is get hold of some of his toenails.

GRANNY No.

NANNY Or some of his hair or anything. I've got some pins.

GRANNY No.

MAGRAT Cursing people is morally unsound and extremely bad for your karma.

NANNY Well, I'm going to curse him, anyway. Under my breath, like. I could've caught my death in that dungeon for all he cared.

GRANNY We ain't going to curse him, we're going to replace him. What did you do with the old king?

MAGRAT But you can't put the old king back on the throne. Ghosts can't rule. You'd never get the crown to stay on. It'd drop through.

GRANNY We're going to replace him with Verence's son. Proper succession.

NANNY Oh, we've been through all that. In about fifteen years' time, perhaps, but . . .

GRANNY Tonight.

NANNY A child on the throne? He wouldn't last five minutes.

GRANNY (*quietly*) Not a child. A grown man. Remember Aliss Demurrage?

(*A pause*)

NANNY Bloody hell. You ain't going to try that, are you?

GRANNY I mean to have a go.

NANNY See here, Esme. I mean, Black Aliss was one of the best. I mean, you're very good at, well, headology and thinking and that, but . . .

GRANNY You're saying I couldn't do it, aren't you?

## WYRD SISTERS – Scene 13

MAGRAT Excuse me. Who was Black Aliss? And none of this exchanging meaningful glances and talking over my head. There's three of us in this coven, remember?

NANNY She was before your time. Before mine, really. Lived over Skund way. Very powerful witch. She turned a pumpkin into a coach once.

GRANNY Showy. That's no help to anyone, turning up at a ball smelling like a pie. And that business with the glass slipper. Dangerous, to my mind.

NANNY (*ignoring this interruption*) But the biggest thing she ever did was to send a whole palace to sleep for a hundred years until . . . Can't remember. Was there rose bushes involved, or was it spinning wheels in that one? I think some princess had to finger . . .no, there was a prince. That was it.

MAGRAT (*uneasily*) Finger a prince?

NANNY No, he had to kiss her. Very romantic, Black Aliss was. She liked nothing better than Girl meets Frog.

MAGRAT Why did they call her Black Aliss?

GRANNY Fingernails.

NANNY And teeth. She had a sweet tooth. Lived in a real gingerbread cottage. Couple of kids shoved her in her own oven at the end. Shocking.

MAGRAT And you're going to send the castle to sleep?

GRANNY She never sent the castle to sleep. That's just an old wives' tale. (*she glares at Nanny*) She just stirred up time a little. It's not as hard as people think. Everyone does it all the time. It's like rubber, is time. You can stretch it to suit yourself.

MAGRAT But time is time. Every second lasts a second, that's what they're for . . .

GRANNY How many times have weeks flown past, when afternoons seem to last for ever? How many times have minutes seemed to last for hours, when some hours have gone so quickly. . . ?

MAGRAT But that's just people's perception. Isn't it?

GRANNY Oh yes. Of course it is. It all is. But what difference does that make? I reckon fifteen years would be a nice round number. That means the lad will be eighteen at the finish. We just do the spell, go and fetch him, he can manifest his destiny, and everything will be nice and neat.

NANNY Could work out nice. A bit of peace and quiet for fifteen years. If I recall the spell, after you say it you have to fly round the castle before cock crow.

GRANNY I wasn't thinking about that. It wouldn't be right. Felmet would still be king all the time. The kingdom would still get sick. No, what I was thinking of was moving the whole kingdom. (*she beams at them*)

NANNY The whole of Lancre?

GRANNY Yes.

NANNY Fifteen years into the future?

GRANNY Yes.

NANNY (*looking at Granny's broomstick*) You'll never do it. Not round the whole kingdom in that, on your own.

GRANNY I've thought of that. I'm going to need some help. (*she looks pointedly at Nanny*)

NANNY Bleeding bloody hell!

(*Lights out*)

## WYRD SISTERS – Scene 14

### SCENE 14 - THE WOOD

*(Crows caw in the background. Magrat and Fool (wearing a flower pinned to his motley) enter, strolling together, to centre)*

MAGRAT You've been a Fool long?

FOOL *(bitterly)* All my life. I cut my teeth on a set of bells.

MAGRAT I suppose it gets handed on, father to son?

FOOL I never saw much of my father. He went off to be a Fool for the Lords of Quirm when I was small.

MAGRAT That's terrible. Still, it must be a happy life. Making people laugh, I mean.

FOOL No. It's a terribly serious business. The College of Fools in Ankh-Morpork is one of the dullest, strictest, most spartan colleges on the whole of Discworld.

MAGRAT Didn't you want to be anything else?

FOOL What else is there? I haven't seen anything else I could be. How did you get to be a witch? I mean, did you go to a school or something?

MAGRAT Oh, no. Goody Whemper just walked down to the village one day, got all us girls lined up, and chose me. You don't choose the Craft, you see. It chooses you.

FOOL Yes. But when do you actually become a witch?

MAGRAT When the other witches treat you as one, I suppose. If they ever do. I thought they would after that spell in the corridor. It was pretty good, after all.

FOOL Marry, it was a rite of passage. Sorry. Er, the other witches being those two old ladies?

MAGRAT Yes.

FOOL Very strong characters, I imagine.

MAGRAT Very. They're quite nice, really. It's just that, well, when you're a witch you don't think about other people. I mean you think about them, but you don't actually think about their feelings, if you see what I mean.

FOOL You're not like that.

MAGRAT Look, I wish you'd stop working for the Duke. You know what he's like. Torturing people and setting fire to their cottages.

FOOL But I'm his Fool. Right until he dies. I'm afraid it's tradition. Tradition is very important.

MAGRAT You don't even like being a Fool. . .

FOOL I hate it. But if I've got to be one, I may as well do it properly.

MAGRAT That's really stupid!

FOOL Foolish, I prefer. *(pause)* If I kiss you, do I turn into a frog?

*(As they kiss, they freeze. Lights up on another part of the stage - preferably higher than the Fool and Magrat, where Nanny and Granny are saying the spell )*

GRANNY By the infinite might of the all powerful Great A'Tuin, the star turtle who supports our Discworld, and by the four great elephants who stand upon his meteor-pocked back and hold the world on their mighty shoulders, I conjure the gods of Fate, Destiny and Time. The Kingdom of Lancre shall remain frozen while the whole of Discworld moves on fifteen years full and final. Then shall nemesis come to Felmet self-styled king of Lancre. Right, we're off!

*(They grab their broomsticks and start to exit)*

NANNY Does yours still need to be bump-started?

## WYRD SISTERS – Scene 14/15

GRANNY I'm afraid so.

*(And they are gone) [Magic effect We used stage flashes, a disco wheel and a gobo of a witch on a broomstick, flying around the stage, all to the accompaniment of 'The Ride of the Valkyries ']*

### INTERVAL

*[NOTE - The scene continues after the interval. The lights come up on the frozen pair, who now break from their kiss]*

FOOL Did you feel the whole world move?

MAGRAT *(to herself)* They've done it. We kissed for fifteen years.

FOOL What?

MAGRAT She's done it!

FOOL Done what?

MAGRAT Oh. Nothing. Nothing much, really.

FOOL Shall we try that again? It would be something to remember on my long journey to Ankh-Morpork.

MAGRAT What! That's five hundred miles away! You'll be away for ages!

FOOL I can't help it. The Duke's given me special instructions. To get a playwright. . .

MAGRAT But you don't have to go. You don't want to go!

FOOL That doesn't have very much to do with it. I promised to be loyal to him. . .

MAGRAT Yes, yes, until you're dead! But you don't believe that!

FOOL Well, yes. But I still have to do it. I gave my word.

MAGRAT Just when we were getting to know each other! You're pathetic!

FOOL I'd only be pathetic if I broke my word. But I may be incredibly ill-advised. I'm sorry. I'll be back in a few weeks anyway.

MAGRAT Don't you understand I'm asking you not to listen to him?

FOOL I said I'm sorry. I couldn't see you again before I go could I?

MAGRAT *(stiffly)* I shall be washing my hair.

FOOL When?

MAGRAT Whenever!

*(Lights out)*

### SCENE 15 - A STREET IN ANKH-MORPORK

*(On stage are three robbers, around the Fool, who is on the ground. Tomjon and Hwel enter)*

TOMJON What's this?

HWEL It's a clown! They're mugging a clown!

*(As they reach the others, the leader holds up a business card)*

TOMJON 'Theft Licence'?

ROBBER 1 That's right, only don't expect us to do you too, 'cos we're on our way home.

ROBBER 2 That's right. We've done our whoosit, quota.

HWEL But you were kicking him!

ROBBER 1 Werl, not a lot. Not what you'd call actual kicking.

WYRD SISTERS – Scene 15

ROBBER 3 More what you'd call foot-nudging, sort of thing. (*He demonstrates*)

TOMJON Well, it all seems to be in order.

HWEL (*who is helping Fool up*) In order? To rob someone?

ROBBER We'll give him a chitty, of course. So he won't get done again today.

TOMJON How much did you get?

ROBBER 1 (*opens Fool's purse*) Oh, bloody hell. (*He shows the other robbers*)

ROBBER 2 Now we're for it.

ROBBER 1 Well, how was I to know? I mean, look at him; how much would you expect him to be carrying? Couple of coppers, right? I mean, we'd never have done him, only it was on our way home. You try to do someone a favour and this is what happens.

TOMJON How much has he got then?

ROBBER 1 (*fed up*) There must be a hundred silver dollars in here. I mean, that's not in our league. You've got to be in the Guild of

Solicitors or something to steal that much. It's way over our quota.

TOMJON Give it back, then.

ROBBER 1 But we've given him a receipt.

ROBBER 2 They've all got numbers on. The Guild of Thieves check up on them . . .

TOMJON How would it be, then, if you were to rob him of, say, five copper pieces, instead.

FOOL Here, what's going on?

TOMJON That represents two copper pieces as the going rate, plus expenses of three copper pieces for time, call-out fees . . .

ROBBER 1 Wear and tear on cosh.

TOMJON Exactly.

ROBBER 1 Very fair, very fair. (*takes the coins out of the purse. Gives the rest back to Tomjon*) Come on then, lads. (*They all exit*)

FOOL That was amazing. How can I thank you, sir?

HWEL You're a Fool, aren't you?

FOOL Yes. It's the bells, isn't it? Well, I'm really grateful. Is there a tavern around here, I'd like to buy you boys a drink.

TOMJON Well, that would be . . .

HWEL We'd love to, but we need to get back to the theatre.

FOOL You two are in the theatre?

HWEL That's right. This here is Tomjon, son of the great Vitoller. I am Hwel, the playwright.

FOOL Then I've come five hundred miles to find you. (*he links arms with them, and they start to exit*)

(*Lights out*)

WYRD SISTERS – Scene 16

SCENE 16 - THE THEATRE

*(Vitoller, Tomjon and Hwel are on stage )*

VITOLLER Can you do it?

TOMJON It sounded interesting, the way he told it. Wicked king ruling with the help of evil witches. Storms. Ghastly forests. True Heir to the Throne in life and death struggle. Flash of dagger. Screams, alarums. Evil king dies. Good triumphs. Bells ring out.

VITOLLER Showers of rose petals could be arranged. I know a man who can get them practically at cost. *(He and Tomjon look at Hwel. All three turn and look at the Fool's bag of gold, on the table )* You'll do it then, will you?

HWEL It's got a certain something. But, I don't know. . .

VITOLLER I'm not trying to pressure you, you know. *(They all turn again and look at the gold)*

TOMJON It seems a bit fishy. I mean the Fool is decent enough. But the way he tells it . . . it's very odd. His mouth says the words, and his eyes say something else. And I got the impression he'd much rather we believed his eyes.

VITOLLER On the other hand, what harm can it do? The pay's the thing. Er, play. . . the play's the thing.

HWEL But we can already afford to build the Dysk Theatre.

VITOLLER just the shell and the stage. But not all the other things. Not the trapdoor mechanism, or the machine for lowering gods out of heaven. Or the big turntable, or the wind fans.

HWEL We used to manage without all that stuff. Remember the old days? All we had was a few planks and a bit of painted sacking. But we had a lot of spirit. Mind you, we could afford a wave machine. A small one. I've got this idea about this ship wrecked on this island . . .

VITOLLER *(shaking his head)* Sorry.

TOMJON But we've had some huge audiences!

VITOLLER Yes, but they pay in halfpennies. I already owe Chrystophrase the Troll more than I should.

TOMJON But he's the one who has people's limbs torn off !

HWEL How much do you owe him?

VITOLLER It's all right, I'm keeping up the interest payments. More or less.

HWEL Yes, but how much does he want?

VITOLLER An arm and a leg.

HWEL and TOMJON What??

VITOLLER I did it for you two! Tomjon deserves a better stage. He doesn't want to go ruining his health sleeping in lattys and never knowing a home. And you, my man, you need somewhere settled, with all the proper things you ought to have . . . like trapdoors and . . . wave machines and so forth. You talked me into building the Dysk Theatre, and I thought, they're right. It's no life on the road, giving two performances a day to a bunch of farmers and going round with the hat afterwards, what sort of future is that? We need our own place, with comfortable seats for the gentry people who don't throw potatoes on the stage. I said, blow the cost. I just wanted you to---

HWEL All right! All right, I'll write it!

TOMJON I'll act it.

VITOLLER I'm not forcing you, mind. It's your own choice.

## WYRD SISTERS – Scene 16/17

HWEL Mind you, there were some nice touches. The three witches was good. Lots of smoke and green light. You could do a lot with three witches. Surprising no-one's thought of it before, really.

VITOLLER So we can tell this Fool that we'll do it, can we?

HWEL And of course you couldn't go wrong with a good storm. And there was that ghost routine we cut out of 'Please Yourself' 'cos we couldn't afford the muslin. P'raps I could put Death in, too.

TOMJON How far away did he say he came from?

VITOLLER The Ramtops. Some little kingdom no-one has ever heard of. It'd take months to get there.

TOMJON I'd like to go, anyway. That's where I was born (*Vitoller looks at the ceiling, Hwel looks at the floor*) That's what you said, when you were on a tour of the mountains.

VITOLLER Yes, but I can't remember where.

TOMJON I could take some of the younger lads and we could make a summer of it.

VITOLLER Hwel's got to write the play, yet. (*But he has already started. They exchange glances, then quietly leave him to it*)

(*Lights out*)

### SCENE 17 - THE THEATRE

(*Exactly as for Scene 16, but the following day. Vitoller and Hwel are on stage. Vitoller has just finished reading Hwel's play*)

VITOLLER It's a good play. Apart from the ghost.

HWEL (*sullenly*) The ghost stays.

VITOLLER But people always leer and throw things. Anyway, you know how hard it is to get all the chalk out of the clothes.

HWEL (*defensively*) I like ghosts.

VITOLLER You still bent on going?

HWEL Yes. Tomjon's still a bit wild. He needs an older head around the place.

VITOLLER I'll miss you, laddie, I don't mind telling you. You've been like a son to me. How old are you, exactly? I never did know.

HWEL Fifty-eight,

VITOLLER You've been like an older brother to me, then. I don't know what I'll do without you and Tomjon around, and that's a fact.

HWEL It's only for the summer. You said yourself it'd be a good experience.

VITOLLER We grow old, Master Hwel.

HWEL Aye. You don't want him to go, do you?

VITOLLER I was all for it at first. You know. Then I thought, there's destiny afoot. Just when things are going well, there's always bloody destiny. I mean, that's where he came from somewhere in the mountains. Now fate is calling him back. I shan't see him again.

HWEL It's only for the summer. . .

VITOLLER (*holding up a hand*) Don't interrupt. I'd got the right dramatic flow there.

HWEL Sorry.

VITOLLER I mean, you know he's not my flesh and blood.

HWEL He's your son, though. This heredity business isn't all it's cracked up to be.

VITOLLER But you said he looks like this Fool person. I can't see it myself, mark you.

HWEL The light's got to be right.

VITOLLER Could be some destiny at work there, too.

(*Lights out*)

## WYRD SISTERS – Scene 18/19

### SCENE 18 - WITCH'S HOUSE

*(Granny, Nanny and Magrat are on stage)*

GRANNY *(squinting into a crystal ball)* He's definitely on his way. In a cart.

NANNY A fiery white charger would have been favourite.

MAGRAT Has he got a magic sword?

GRANNY You're a disgrace, the pair of you.

MAGRAT A magic sword is important. We could make him one, out of thunderbolt iron. I've got a spell for that. You take some thunderbolt iron . . . and then you make a sword out of it.

GRANNY I can't be having with that old stuff.

NANNY And a strawberry birthmark.

GRANNY Can't abide strawberries. It must have worked. Otherwise he wouldn't be coming here. I dare say the armour and the swords are in the carts.

NANNY It's a long road. There's many a slip twixt dress and drawers. There could be bandits.

GRANNY We shall watch over him.

MAGRAT That's not right. If he's going to be king he ought to be able to fight his own battles.

NANNY We don't want him to go wasting his strength. We want him good and fresh when he gets here.

MAGRAT And then I hope we shall leave him to fight his battles in his own way.

GRANNY Quite right. Provided he looks like winning. *(she exits)*

MAGRAT Whatever happened to not meddling?

NANNY It's not proper meddling. Just helping matters along.

MAGRAT But only last week you were saying. . .

NANNY A week is a long time in magic. Fifteen years, for one thing. Anyway, Esme is determined and I'm in no mood to stop her.

MAGRAT So what you're saying is that 'not meddling' is like taking a vow not to swim. You'll absolutely never break it unless of course you happen to find yourself in the water?

NANNY It's better than drowning.

MAGRAT I think that I shall never really understand about witchcraft. Just when I think I've got a grip on it, it changes.

NANNY We're all just people. *(a new thought)* Had a row with your young man?

MAGRAT I really don't know what you're talking about.

NANNY Haven't seen him about for weeks.

MAGRAT Oh, the Duke sent him to . . . sent him away for something or another. Not that it bothers me at all. Either way.

NANNY *(sarcastically)* Oh, quite.

*(Lights out)*

### SCENE 19 - ON THE ROAD

*(Tomjon, Hwel and Players)*

TOMJON *(examining a map)* I think we're lost.

HWEL We were lost ten miles ago. There's got to be a new word for what we are now.

TOMJON Where are we, then?

HWEL The mountains. Perfectly clear on my atlas.

WYRD SISTERS – Scene 19/20

TOMJON We ought to stop and ask someone.

HWEL A lonely curlew? A badger? Who did you have in mind?

TOMJON (*pointing off*) That old woman in the funny hat. I've been watching her. She keeps ducking down behind a bush when she thinks I've seen her.

HWEL Ho there, good mother!

GRANNY (*off*) Whose mother?

HWEL just a figure of speech, Mrs . . . Miss. . .

GRANNY (*entering*) Mistress! (*defiantly*) And I'm a poor old woman gathering wood. Lawks! You did give me a fright, young master. My poor old heart!

TOMJON I'm sorry?

GRANNY What?

TOMJON Your poor old heart what?

GRANNY What about my poor old heart?

HWEL It's just that you mentioned it.

GRANNY Well, it isn't important. Lawks. I expect you're looking for Lancre.

TOMJON Well, yes. All day.

GRANNY You've come too far. Go back about two miles, and take the track on the right, past the stand of pines.

PLAYER (*tugging at Tomjon's sleeve*) When you m-meet a m-mysterious old lady in the road, you've got to offer to sh-share your lunch, or help her across the river.

TOMJON You have?

PLAYER It's t-terribly b-bad luck not to.

TOMJON (*to Granny*) Would you care to share our lunch, good mo- old wo- ma'am?

GRANNY What is it?

TOMJON Salt pork.

GRANNY (*shaking her head*) Thanks all the same. But it gives me wind. (*She turns on her heel and sets off up the road*)

TOMJON (*calling after her*) We could help you across the river if you like!

HWEL What river? We're on the moors, there can't be a river for miles.

PLAYER Y-you've got to get them on y-your side.

HWEL Perhaps we should have asked her to wait while we went and looked for one! Come on! (*They start to exit*)

(*Lights out*)

SCENE 20 - THE WOODS

(*The Fool is onstage. Magrat enters, in a foul temper*)

MAGRAT What's all this about a play?

FOOL (*sagging*) Aren't you glad to see me?

MAGRAT Well, yes. Of course. Now, this play. . .

FOOL My lord wants something to convince people that he is the rightful King of Lancre. Himself mostly, I think.

MAGRAT Is that why you went to Ankh-Morpork?

FOOL Yes.

MAGRAT It's disgusting!

FOOL You would prefer the Duchess's approach? She just thinks they ought to kill everyone. She's good at that sort of thing. And there'd be fighting and everything. Lots of people would die anyway. This way might be easier.

MAGRAT Oh where's your spunk, man?

FOOL Pardon?

## WYRD SISTERS – Scene 20/21

MAGRAT Don't you want to die nobly for a just cause?

FOOL I'd much rather live quietly for one. It's all right for you witches, you can do what you like, but I'm circumscribed.

MAGRAT When's this play going to be, then?

FOOL Marry, I'm sure I'm not allowed to tell you. The Duke said to me, he said, don't tell the witches that it's tomorrow night.

MAGRAT I shouldn't then.

FOOL At eight o'clock.

MAGRAT I see.

FOOL But meet for sherry beforehand at seven-thirty, i'faith.

MAGRAT I expect you shouldn't tell me who is invited, either.

FOOL That's right. Most of the dignitaries of Lancre. You understand I'm not telling you all this?

MAGRAT That's right.

FOOL But I think you have a right to know what it is you're not being told.

MAGRAT Good point. Is there still that little gate around the back, that leads to the kitchens?

FOOL The one that often gets left unguarded?

MAGRAT Yes.

FOOL Oh, we hardly ever guard it these days.

MAGRAT Do you think there might be someone guarding it at around eight o'clock tomorrow?

FOOL Well, I might be there.

MAGRAT Good.

FOOL The Duke will be expecting you.

MAGRAT You said he said we weren't to know.

FOOL He said I mustn't tell you. But he also said, 'They'll come anyway. I hope they do.' Strange, he seemed in a very good mood when he said it. Can I see you after the show?

MAGRAT I think I might be washing my hair. Excuse me, but I think I ought to be going. I.  
*(She starts to leave)*

FOOL Yes, but I brought you this pres - *(but she has gone)* Ah, well. Marry, it is true, witches sometimes do unpleasant things to people, sometimes.

*(Lights out)*

## SCENE 21 - THE MAIN HALL of THE CASTLE

*(The Play. The action alternates between the auditorium (-played by us in an on-stage balcony; a rostrum to one side of the stage would also suffice) and backstage (played on the main stage). Throughout, we hear, indistinctly, the action of the play continuing 'offstage')*

### AUDITORIUM

*(The Fool, and some guests, are on stage. The three witches enter with Verence)*

FOOL There's not going to be any trouble, is there? I don't want there to be any trouble. Please.

GRANNY *(regally)* I'm sure I don't know h-- what you mean.

NANNY Wotcha, jingle bells! I hope you haven't been keeping our girl here up late o'nights

MAGRAT Nanny!

## WYRD SISTERS – Scene 21

*(They seat themselves )*

NANNY (to Granny, offering a walnut) Want one?

*(Granny shakes her head )*

*(To Verence)* Walnut?

VERENCE No, thank you. They go right through me, you know.

ACTOR *(off)* Come, gentles, all and list to our tale. . . . *(he continues, indistinctly during the dialogue)*

GRANNY What's this? Who's the fellow in the tights?

NANNY It's the Prologue. You have to have him in the begining so everyone knows what the play's about.

GRANNY Can't understand a word. What's a gentle, anyway?

NANNY Type of maggot.

GRANNY That's nice, isn't it? 'Hello, maggots, welcome to the show'. Puts people in a nice frame of mind, doesn't it?

NANNY These walnuts are damn tough. I'm going to have to take my boot off to this one. . .

### BACKSTAGE

*(Hwel is looking off onto the stage, at the show. He ls carrying a small cauldron)*

HWEL C'mon, Come on! *(prompting)* 'What hath befell the land?' *(he turns)* And where are the witches? Where are the blasted Witches??

*(Three unlikely-looking witches enter)*

WITCH 1 I've lost my wart!

WITCH 2 The cauldron's all full of yuk!

WITCH 3 There's something living in this wig!

HWEL Calm down, calm down! It'll be all right on the night!

WITCH 1 This is the night, Hwel!

*(Hwel hears a pause on stage, he prompts)*

HWEL 'avenge the terror of thy father's death.' *(He turns to the 'witches' and starts to psyche them up, in the manner of an American sports coach)* Right, Now what are you? You're evil hags, right?

WITCHES Yes, Hwel.

HWEL Tell me what you are.

WITCHES We're evil hags, Hwel.

HWEL Louder!

WITCHES We' re evil hags!

HWEL And what are you going to do?

WITCH 2 *(uncertainly)* We're going to curse people. . .

HWEL I can't hear you!

WITCHES We're going to curse people!

HWEL What are you?

WITCHES We're hags, Hwel!

HWEL What sort of hags?

WITCHES We're black and midnight hags!

HWEL Are you scheming?

WITCHES Yeah!

## WYRD SISTERS – Scene 21

HWEL Are you secret?

WITCHES Yeah!

HWEL What are you?

WITCHES We're scheming evil secret black and midnight hags!

HWEL Right! Now I want you to get out there and give 'em hell. *(He absent-mindedly puts the cauldron on his head, in the manner of say, John Wayne in any one of half a dozen WW2 movies and looks out front. He adopts an American accent)* Not for me . . . not for the goddam captain . . .

but for Corporal Walkowski and his little dawg. *(He pushes the rim of the helmet up with his thumb. A pause. He snaps out of his reverie)* What are you waiting for? Get out there and curse them!

*(They exit)*

TOMJON *(entering)* Hwel, there's no crown. I've got to wear a crown.

HWEL Of course there's a crown. The big one with the red glass, very impressive, we used it in that place with the big square . . .

TOMJON I think we left it there.

*(Hwel judges another prompt is needed)*

HWEL 'I have smothered many a babe. . .' *(to Tomjon)* Well, just find another one, then. In the props box, You're the evil King Verence, you've got to have a crown. Improvise . . .

### AUDITORIUM

GRANNY Gytha.

NANNY I never shipwrecked anybody! They just said they shipwreck people! I never did!

MAGRAT Green blusher! *(to Fool)* I don't look like that, do I?

FOOL Absolutely not.

VERENCE That's him, isn't it? That's my son! But what is he doing?

What is he saying?

NANNY I think he's meant to be you.

VERENCE But I never walked like that! Why's he got a hump on his back? What's happened to his leg? *(pause)* And I certainly never did that! Or that. Why is he saying that I did? *(Nanny shrugs)* And it's my crown he's wearing! Look! This is it! And he's saying I did all those . . . All right. Maybe I did that. So I set fire to few cottages. Everyone does that. It's good

for the building industry, anyway. Why is he saying all this about me?

NANNY It's art. It holds a wossname, mirror, up to life. That's us. Round that silly cauldron. That's meant to be us.

GRANNY Bloody distorted one at that. But the audience are taken in: it's more real than reality. It's not true, but that has nothing to do with it. Words. As soft as water, and as powerful as water, too, carrying away the past. We've lost. There's nothing we can do against this.

NANNY Did you hear that? One of them said they put babies in their cauldron! I'm not sitting here listening to these lies!

GRANNY Don't do anything! It'll make things worse! Words. That's all that's left. Words.

NANNY And now there's a man with a trumpet come on. What's he going to do?

*(Trumpet effect, off)*

Oh. End of Act One.

*(Sound of applause )*

## WYRD SISTERS – Scene 21

VERENCE My own flesh and blood. Why has he done this to me?

GRANNY Come, Gytha, we're going backstage.

*(The witches and Verence exit, with the Fool)*

*(The Duke enters. His hands are now covered in bloody bandages. He scratches away under the bandages with a large knitting needle - if this doesn't get your audience squirming in their seats . . . well, you've had your chance and muffed it!)*

DUKE Guards, go, find the witches and arrest them.

DUCHESS Remember what happened last time, foolish man.

DUKE We left two of them loose. This time . . . all three. The tide of public feeling is on our side. That sort of thing affects witches, depend upon it. You must admit, my precious, that the play seems to be having the desired effect.

DUCHESS It would appear so.

DUKE *(turning to the guards again)* Very well. Don't just stand there. Before the play ends, those witches are to be under lock and key.

### BACKSTAGE

WIMSLOE *(who is dressed as Death)* Cower now, Brief Mortals. For I am Death, 'gainst whom no . . . no . . . no . . . Hwel - 'gainst whom no?

HWEL Oh, good grief, Wimsloe . . . 'Gainst whom no lock will hold nor fasten'd portal bar'. I really don't see why you have difficulty with it. *(he exits)*

WIMSLOE Right. 'Gainst whom no . . . tumpty-tum . . . nor tumpty- tumpty bar. *(Tomjon enters)* Do you think I'm fearsome enough?

TOMJON No problem, my friend. Compared with a visit from you, even Death himself would hold no fears.

WIMSLOE Great. Thanks, Tomjon. *(he exits)*

TOMJON The play's just not working. It keeps trying to force itself into different words. It's not right. Once it's written, a play should just stay writ. It shouldn't come alive and start twisting itself around. No wonder everyone needs prompting all the time. *(he exits)*

*(The witch actors enter, escorted by guards)*

WITCH 1 But we're not witches!

GUARD Why do you look like them, then? Tie their hands.

WITCH 2 Yes, but excuse me, we're not really witches!

GUARD 2 Shall we gag them as well?

WITCH 3 If you'd just listen, we're with the theatre-

GUARD Yes, gag them. Very well then, my theatrical witches. You've done your show, and now it's time for your applause. Clap them in irons! *(he laughs ironically)* *(The guards drag them off. The real witches enter)*

GRANNY *(reading a script)* 'Divers alarums and excursions'?

MAGRAT That means lots of terrible happenings. You always put that in plays. We can't let this happen. If this gets about, witches will always be old hags in green blusher. Witches just aren't like that. Why don't we just change the words?

GRANNY I suppose you're an expert at theatre words? They'd have to be the proper sort, or people'd suspect.

NANNY I don't know about new words. But we can make them forget these words.

GRANNY I suppose it's worth a try.

*(Hwel enters)*

## WYRD SISTERS – Scene 21/22

HWEL At last! What are you three playing at? We've been looking for you everywhere!

MAGRAT Us? But we're not. . . .

HWEL Oh yes, you are! We put it in last week, remember? You don't need to say anything, you just sit there and symbolise occult forces at work. Come on, you've done well so far. (*he slaps Magrat on the bottom*) Good complexion you've got there, Wilph. You look as nasty a bunch of hags as a body might hope to clap eyes on. Well done. Pity about the wigs. Curtain up in one minute. Break a leg. (*He slaps Magrat on the bottom again, and hurries off*)

GRANNY Useful.

NANNY (*in Hwels direction*) Break your own leg. (There is a cry of pain ) Come on, girls. (*They exit*)

(NOTE - Hwel should limp when he next appears on-stage.)

(Lights out)

### SCENE 22 - ON STAGE

(The Play. To one side of the stage at the front are two chairs, on which are sat the real Duke and Duchess. On 'stage' are Tomjon, as 'bad' King Verence (looking a lot like Richard III,) Bedlin as good' Duke Felmet, and Gumridge as Lady Felmet. All three stand amazed as Granny, Nanny and Magrat take up their places)

HWEL (off) Get on with it!

BEDLIN And now our domination is complete. . .

NANNY (tapping the cauldron) It's just tin, this one.

MAGRAT And the fire is just red paper.

GRANNY Never mind. just look busy, and wait till I say.

BEDLIN The very soil cries out at tyranny . . . erm.

TOMJON (prompting) And calls me forth for vengeance.

BEDLIN (pointing at the witches ) B-but. . .

MAGRAT How do they make it flicker?

TOMJON (prompting Bedlin again) And calls me forth for vengeance. . .

GRANNY Be quiet, you two. You're upsetting people. Go ahead, young man. Don't mind us.

BEDLIN Wha. . .

TOMJON (desperately) Aha, it calls you forth for vengeance, does it? And the heavens cry revenge, too, I expect.

DUKE (cornering in his seat) There they are. That's them. What are they doing in my play?

TOMJON Aha, thou callst me an evil king, though thou whisperest it so none save I may hear it. And thou hast summoned the guard, possibly by some secret signal, owing naught to artifice of lips or tongue. (A guard enters, crabwise, and hisses at Tomjon)

'GUARD' Hwel says what the hell is going on?

TOMJON What was that? Did I hear you say, 'I come, my lady'?

'GUARD' Get these people off, he says.

TOMJON (ignoring him) Thou babblest, man. See how I dodge thy tortoise spear. I said, see how I dodge thy tortoise spear. Thy spear, man. You're holding it in thy bloody hand, for goodness' sake. (There is a desperate silence. Granny walks to the front of the 'stage')

## WYRD SISTERS – Scene 22

GRANNY Ghost of the mind and all device away, I bid the Truth to have . . . its tumpy-tumpy day.

(She returns to her place on stage. Hwel enters during the following dialogue)

GUMRIDGE (the words are forming themselves in his mouth) Do you fear him now? And he so mazed with drink? Take his dagger, husband . . . you are a blade's width from the kingdom.

BEDLIN I dare not.

GUMRIDGE Who will know? See, there is only the eyeless night. Take the dagger now, take the kingdom tomorrow. Have a stab at it, man.

BEDLIN I have it, wife. Is this a dagger I see before me?

GUMRIDGE Of course it's a bloody dagger. Come on, do it now. The weak deserve no mercy. We'll say he fell downstairs.

BEDLIN I cannot! He has been kindness itself to me.

GUMRIDGE And you can be Death itself to him . . .

BEDLIN No, I cannot do it! I will be seen! Down there in the hall, someone watches!

GUMRIDGE There is no-one! Must I put it in for you? See, his foot is on the stair . . .

DUKE (*rushing on to the stage*) No! I did not do it! It was not like that! You were not there! (*he looks around*) Nor was I! (*giggles*) I was asleep at the time, you know. There was blood on the counter-pane, blood on the floor. I couldn't wash it off. These are not proper matters for this inquiry. I cannot allow the discussion of national security. It was just a dream . . . When I awoke, he'd be alive tomorrow. And tomorrow you can say I did not know. I had no recollection. What a noise he made in falling. Enough to wake the dead . . . who would have thought he had so much blood in him? grins brightly at the assembled company I hope that sorts it all out. Ha. Ha.

DUCHESS These are just slanders. And treason to boot. The rantings of mad players. Therefore there is no proof. And where there is no proof there is no crime.

FOOL (*entering*) No. I saw it all. I was in the Great Hall that night. You killed the King, my lord.

DUKE I did not! You were not there! I did not see you there! I order you not to be there! You swore loyalty unto death!

FOOL Yes, my lord. I'm sorry.

DUKE You're dead!

(*He snatches a knife off Bedlin, and stabs the Fool*)

FOOL (*collapsing to the floor*) Thank goodness that's over.

MAGRAT Verence! (*she crosses to him*)

DUKE I didn't do it. You all saw that I didn't do it. Telling lies is naughty. (*He stabs himself with the knife, and hands it to Granny Weatherwax*) You can't get me now. (*He starts to exit.*) Will there be a comet? There must be a comet when a prince dies. (*he wanders away*)

(*Granny walks over to the knife, picks it up and tests the blade. It retracts back into the handle (or the blades made of rubber - whichever you can get.)*)

GRANNY There's your magic sword.

MAGRAT Are you dead or not? (*she holds him to her bosom*)

FOOL I must be. I'm in paradise.

MAGRAT No, look, I'm serious.

FOOL (*checking himself*) I'm alive.

GRANNY Of course. It's a trick dagger. Actors can't be trusted with real ones.

DUCHESS Clearly my husband has lost his wits. I decree--

GRANNY Be silent, woman! The true King of Lancre stands before you! (*she points at Tomjon*)

## WYRD SISTERS – Scene 22/23

TOMJON Who, me?

DUCHESS Oh no. We're not having that. No mysterious returned heirs in this kingdom. You don't frighten me, Wyrd sisters.

GRANNY No. We don't, do we? We really don't.

DUCHESS Your witchcraft is all artifice and illusion, to amaze weak minds. It holds no fears for me. Do your worst.

GRANNY (after a threatening pause) My worst?

DUCHESS Yes, get on with it! I'm proud of what I've done, do you hear? I enjoyed it, and I did it because I wanted to! (*to the others*) You gaping idiots! You're so weak! There's not one of you that doesn't fear me! I can make you widdle your drawers out of terror, and now I'm going to take- (*Nanny hits her on the head with a rock ( or whatever your props people can come up with )*)

NANNY She does go on, don't she? Where's the Duke?

GUARD (*entering*) He fell over the battlements. Eventually.

GRANNY Take her away and lock her up. And now, my lad. You are the King of Lancre.

TOMJON But I don't know how to be a king! I don't want to be a king! Listen to me, all of you. I thank you for your offer. It's a great honour. But I can't accept it. I've worn more crowns than you can count, and the only kingdom I know how to rule has got curtains in front of it. I'm sorry.

HWEL (*stepping forward*) The problem is that you don't actually have a choice. You are the king, you see. It's a job you are lined up for when you're born. The only chance you've got is if there was another heir. You don't remember any brothers or sisters, do you? (*he looks pointedly at the Fool*)

MAGRAT Verence!

(*They all tum to look at the Fool*)

(*Lights out*)

## SCENE 23 - THE BLASTED HEATH AGAIN

(*Granny, Nanny and Magrat are on stage*)

GRANNY It was a good banquet, I thought.

NANNY I got a coronation mug, too. It says, 'Viva Verence II Rex'. Fancy him being called Rex. I can't say it's a good likeness, mind you. I don't recall him having a handle sticking out of his ear.

MAGRAT What happened to the Duchess?

GRANNY She escaped from the castle. Didn't get far. Had to go through the forest. The animals got her. That's Destiny for you. Still, we've got a king. And there's an end of it.

MAGRAT It's thanks to you and Nanny really.

NANNY Why?

MAGRAT It's because you spoke up. Everyone knows witches don't lie, that's the important thing. I mean, everyone could see they looked alike, but that could have been coincidence. You see, I looked up 'droit de seigneur'. Goody Whemper had a dictionary.

GRANNY Yes. Well. Erm.

MAGRAT You did tell the truth, didn't you? They really are brothers, aren't they?

NANNY Oh yes. Definitely. I saw to his mother when your . . . when the new king was born. And to the queen when young Tomjon was born, and she told me who the father was.

MAGRAT Just a minute.

## WYRD SISTERS – Scene 23

NANNY I remember the Fool's father. Very personable young man. He didn't get on with his dad, you know. But he used to visit sometimes. To see old friends.

GRANNY He made friends easily.

NANNY Among the ladies. Very athletic, wasn't he? Could climb walls like nobody's business. I remember hearing. Very popular with the queen.

GRANNY The king used to go out hunting such a lot.

NANNY It was that droit of his. Always out and about with it, he was.

MAGRAT Just a minute.

GRANNY Yes?

MAGRAT You told everyone they were brothers and that Verence was the older.

NANNY That's right.

MAGRAT And you let everyone believe that.

GRANNY We're bound to be truthful. But there's no call to be honest.

MAGRAT No, no, what you're saying is that the King of Lancre isn't really. . .

GRANNY What I'm saying is that we've got a king who's got his head screwed on right, and the old king's ghost has been laid to rest happy. There's been an enjoyable coronation and some of us got mugs we weren't entitled to, them being only for kiddies, and, all in all, things are a lot more satisfactory than they might be. Never mind what should be or what might be or what ought to be. It's what things are that's important.

MAGRAT But he's not really a king!

NANNY But he might be. The late queen wasn't very good at counting. Anyway, he doesn't know he isn't royalty.

GRANNY Anyway, look at it this way. Royalty has to start somewhere. It might as well start with him. How are you and he getting on, now, by the way?

MAGRAT (*coily*) All right. (*pause*) I'm surprised at you two. I really am. You're witches. That means you have to care about things like truth and destiny, don't you?

GRANNY That's where you've been getting it all wrong. Destiny is important, but people go wrong when they think it controls them. It's the other way around.

NANNY Bugger destiny.

GRANNY After all, you never thought being a witch was going to be easy, did you?

MAGRAT I'm learning. I think I'd better be off. It's getting early.

NANNY Me too. Our Shirl frets if I'm not home when she comes to get my breakfast.

GRANNY When shall we three meet again?

NANNY I'm a bit busy this month. Birthdays and such. You know.

GRANNY That's nice. How about you, Magrat?

MAGRAT There always seems to be such a lot to do at this time of year, don't you find?

GRANNY (*pleasantly*) Quite. It's no good getting yourself tied down to appointments all the time, is it? Let's just leave the whole question open, shall we?

(*They all nod, and start to leave the stage in separate directions*)

(*Lights out*)

[NOTE -in the curtain call, we brought our Fool on wearing the crown on his Fool's cap -just in case the audience hadn't got the point]

THE END