

The Fool
A Villain's Story

Written by
Mason Aks

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Draft #7

masonaksamit@yahoo.com

BLACK

EXT. FATHER'S HANGING TREE - DAY

FOOL (V.O.)
Most never forget their childhood.
The good, the bad. Most forget the
mundane, so we won't talk about any
of that. Unfortunately, I never
forgot mine.

TITLE CARD: PROLOGUE

Gray, the world is colorless and mucky. A Hell.

A pair of feet drop, a man is HANGED.

On looks a **YOUNG FOOL** (10). Tears stream his face.

FOOL (V.O.)
On May 25th, 1628 my father was
hanged. How unfortunate. Just a 10-
year-old boy without a father. Ha,
look at me cry. Pathetic.

EXT. KING'S PLATFORM - DAY

The wooded area is scattered with large purple and gold
flags. The Royalty look from a hand-constructed balcony down
into a grass area matted down for the performers. A couple
hundred spectators watch intently.

GUARD #1

Next.

About 100 feet away, The **FOOL** (early 20s) sits behind a
nearby tree. He is a serious person, he does not trust
others. He masks his insecurities with a fake sense of
humor. He has a number 11 attached to his shirt. His Fool's
outfit is a hand-me-down.

FOOL (V.O.)
May 25th, 1642. 15 years later. I
came to Hell's fool tryouts.

On the other side of the royalty's platform is a row of
stools claimed by a group of men under a banner, "Hell's
Fool Try-Outs". Their fool's outfits are crisp and new.

One contestant still has a tag on his, another is made of silk.

GUARD #2 (20s) steps down from the platform, cuts down the body from the noose, and carries it off.

A map of Europe appears, a tiny dot lands on the border of France and Germany.

FOOL (V.O.)

Now for those who have never been,
Hell is horrifyingly unpleasant. It's
a gray muck of a country nestled in
between France and Germany.

INT. THRONE ROOM - ANYTIME

A **GERMAN KING** (50) sits on the throne with a stein of beer in his hand. He drinks and laughs.

FOOL (V.O.)

For most of our history, we were
ruled by the Germans. 'Hell to them
meaning bright, vivid, and clear.
Until the English took over and kept
the name.

An **ENGLISH KING** (25) enters, unsheathes a knife, approaches the king and stabs him repeatedly. He throws his body out of the throne and takes it. A servant enters and hands him a goblet, he laughs.

KING'S PLATFORM - CONTINUOUS

BENEDICT (late 50s) watches from the balcony, appalled. He snot-rockets. His English accent is heightened with aggression.

FOOL (V.O.)

And 3 kings later, the devil himself
took over. The merciless, nefarious,
egomaniac King Benedict. He holds his
specialty in hangings.

CONTESTANT #8 (13), dressed in a brand new fool outfit, performs in the grass area. He does a tuck and roll and poses.

BENEDICT

Hmm... Your stunts were ordinary, and
your face...

Contestant #8 smiles, his nerves overwhelm him.

BENEDICT
...repelling. Hang him.

CONTESTANT #8
No. No, please!

Benedict mimics him. Guards 1&2 grab him and drag him to the noose, there is a struggle. They tie a noose around his neck.

The Fool turns away. He sits against the backside of the tree.

FOOL (V.O.)
My only escape was my fantasies, I
could imagine whatever I wanted to be
true because the reality around me
was...

INSERT: Contestant #8's feet drop, he is HANGED.

FOOL (V.O.)
...so vividly horrid.

The Fool closes his eyes and takes a deep breath.

DREAM SEQUENCE

He opens his eyes.

*Vibrant Color, the world is bright and vivid all costumes
and props feel warm. A Heaven.*

He looks down at his arms, he is in the world he loves.

A crowd appears around him.

FOOL (V.O.)
My world was beautiful whenever I was
in my fantasies or performing,
nothing else made me happy.
Applause is the most euphoric feeling
I've ever experienced, nothing can
compare.

He pulls out a blindfold and ties it around his eyes.

FOOL (V.O.)
I wasn't really fond of myself, then
again who is?

But on stage, I could be anyone else,
live any other life I wanted to live.

He pulls out his DAGGER and flips and fingers the owl-faced hilt. It holds aged steel that shines a crisp beam of light.

FOOL

Ladies and Gentlemen. Today, I am exposed to a danger that most wouldn't dare take on. Am I going off to war? No. I am performing for our king. It is said, 1 out of 20 will leave his presence with their life. I like my odds.

The Fool pulls out an apple, tosses it in the air, and flings his dagger through it, and into the tree. The crowd applauds. He takes off the blindfold and bows. He looks up.

A **MAN** (40s) smiles at him, proud. A tear streams The Fool's cheek.

END DREAM
SEQUENCE

Fade from Color

The Fool stands up. He notices his gray world, this reality hurts him.

FOOL (V.O.)

I learned everything from my father.
He was the first fool for King Benedict, the first of 5.
He was hanged for the drink, no he wasn't a drunk. He had a glass of wine, blueberry, Benedict's favorite.
So he had him hanged without trial.
My life felt miserable after that.
God abandoned me.

Gray

NICHOLAS (30) steps out from a nearby tree, he tosses a small axle cap in the air. He dreams of being a hero, the one who rescues Hell from Benedict. He neglects practicality.

FOOL (V.O.)

But I always had Nicholas. Nicholas's family took me in after my mother lost her mind. When we were kids he always dreamed of being the hero.

The one that could save us from
tyranny. Any form of tyranny...
pissed him off.

Nicholas pulls down Guard #1's pants, kicks him over, and
runs away.

NICHOLAS
How did you do that blindfolded?

FOOL
Oh, I have a black mesh on the inside
of it, so I can see out of the spots
where my eyes are. But to everyone
else, it looks like a blindfold.

Guard #1 runs into the woods.

Nicholas holds up an AXLE CAP.

NICHOLAS
I stole the cap off the dead body
cart.

FOOL
Why?

NICHOLAS
It's funny.

FOOL
But you won't even see it.

NICHOLAS
No. But I'll know.

SARAH (20) A strong-willed, clever woman steps around the
tree. She is Princess Margery's handmaiden, and close with
Nicholas and the Fool. Her fear of loneliness makes her
desperate for love from the Fool.

NICHOLAS
Announce yourself. Please.

SARAH
Sorry.

NICHOLAS
Is everything set?

SARAH
She's still nervous.

NICHOLAS

Tell her what you told me with the blindfold.

FOOL

Oh right. There's a mesh in the blindfold so I can see through it.

SARAH

That's cheating.

FOOL

Only sort of.

SARAH

I'll tell her. She's a bit distracted at the moment.

NICHOLAS

With Lord Paul?

SARAH

She's getting cold feet. His kindness prevents him from realizing Benedict is hanging everyone.

FOOL

I can see that. He always seemed a bit fake. Have you ever noticed he puts on this smile? It makes all the women love him too. It's false. I never understood why women seem so desperate to fall in love.

SARAH

They aren't desperate. You're just judgmental.

FOOL

You're who I'm referring to Sarah.

SARAH

What the hell does that mean?

NICHOLAS

Knock it off you two. We have a performance to focus on.

The Fool stretches, lines up, and does a handspring. Sarah eyes him.

NICHOLAS

Sarah?

Nicholas glares at her. She exits.

The Fool glares at Benedict.

FOOL (V.O.)

We wanted peace for Hell. The level of peace that I was imagining in my fantasies. The only way there was to slit Benedict's throat while he slept, and free Hell from his demonic reign.

The Fool sits up twirls his dagger, and sheaths it.

TITLE SEQUENCE

EXT. FIELD - CONTINUOUS

The cart is wheeled by the **CART RUNNER** (20's) into a shaded section of the forest. He loves his job, it is his dream profession.

EXT. FORREST - CONTINUOUS

The cart runs down the trail.

EXT. HILL - CONTINUOUS

The cart is pushed to the base of the Hill.

On the other side of the Hill, sits a pit of dead bodies.

The cart runner pushes the cart up the hill.

A wheel falls off and he crashes.

CART RUNNER

Shit.

He then drags the bodies one by one over the hill and kicks them over. While titles appear to the music around him.

TITLE CARD: THE FOOL | A VILLAIN'S STORY

He sits out of breath.

END TITLE
SEQUENCE

TITLE CARD: CHAPTER 1 | THE OWL FACED HILT

EXT. HANGMAN'S PLATFORM - CONTINUOUS

Benedict sits, angered, on his throne. Next to him is **LORD PAUL** (20s), his kindness and generosity cause him to be light on his feet; the only thing lighter is his heart. He is frantic and fills Benedict's goblet with wine.

BENEDICT

I have sat here now for a whole hour.
Not one fool has made me laugh. The
stink here is unbearable.

CONTESTANT #3

That's probably because we don't have
sewers.

BENEDICT

What?

CONTESTANT #3 (20s) dressed in a fool's garb.

CONTESTANT #3

You said it stinks, the poop, it just
runs down the middle of the street...

INSERT: A woman dumps a bucket of poop out of her window and into the river of poop, it splashes on a man eating.

CONTESTANT #3

...because we don't have sewers.

BENEDICT

Are you criticizing my ability for
proper sewage construction?

CONTESTANT #3

No. I'm making an observation about
why you think it smells bad.

Benedict leans over and whispers to Lord Paul.

BENEDICT

I don't believe him.

LORD PAUL

Really? He seems an honest fellow.

They look at him, he waves.

BENEDICT
You don't think he was criticizing my
ability for proper sewage
construction?

LORD PAUL
Not intentionally.

BENEDICT
So does that mean that *I* am
unintentionally criticizing my own
ability for proper sewage
construction?

LORD PAUL
I believe so.

BENEDICT
(to Contestant #3)
After long deliberation with my
council. I have decided to let you
prove to me that you are worthy
enough to be my new Fool.

CONTESTANT #3
Thank you, sir.

Contestant #3 puts on antlers.

CONTESTANT #3
Ladies and gentlemen, prepare for the
spectacle of your life. A spectacle,
that will make you urinate with joy.
As I will now be doing my rendition
of 'A Deer in Autumn'.

Contestant #3 skips across the stage on all fours, he stops,
pats the ground, and whips his head around with doe eyes.

NICHOLAS
You're far better than him.

FOOL
Believe me, I know.

Contestant #3 eats grass off the ground.

NICHOLAS
Is he drunk?

FOOL

No. No. A lunatic maybe, not drunk.

NICHOLAS

Couldn't he be both?

FOOL

No, drunks are much more emotional.

NICHOLAS

Crazy people don't feel emotions?

FOOL

Well, yes.

Contestant #3 trots in circles.

FOOL

Have you read on the subject of rebellion against monarchs?

NICHOLAS

No.

FOOL

Many go poorly. Wars won by the rebels are often called 'Revolutions', and wars that are won by the King, 'Civil Wars'.

NICHOLAS

So?

FOOL

Have you ever heard of a revolution in Hell?

NICHOLAS

No, they were all civil wars. How do you know so much?

FOOL

I've read a book or two.

NICHOLAS

And reading makes you know things?

FOOL

Typically.

NICHOLAS

I should read more.

Contestant #3 trips over himself and face plants.

CONTESTANT #3
Shit.

FOOL
Passionless pitiful person.

NICHOLAS
Then go up.

FOOL
I'm still nervous.

A THUMP is heard from the dead body cart.

They glance over.

The cart runner sits next to the cart, out of breath.

CART RUNNER
Morning!

FOOL
Morning!

CART RUNNER
Morning!

NICHOLAS
Morning!

CART RUNNER
Morning!

Nicholas turns to the Fool, and pulls out the axle cap.

NICHOLAS
I should put this back.

Nicholas tosses the cap to himself and runs off. The Fool chuckles and looks to the balcony.

Vibrant Color

Behind Benedict, is **PRINCESS MARGERY** (early 20s), a pleasant woman whose insecurity with her father makes her overly flirtatious with others. She is in a bad mood.

FOOL
I've never seen a woman so at peace with life. She is engaged to Lord Paul, but that won't last.

I could see myself marrying her. Now you may be asking, have I had a conversation with her? Well... no. I've been trying to figure out what to start with. "I'm killing your father tomorrow." Isn't the best ice breaker. But I will put on the performance of a life time today and become Benedict's fool, that will impress her. Such a joyous woman.

Gray

Next to Margery is Sarah.

MARGERY
Every day. Hangings. Hanging, after hanging after hanging.

Sarah laughs.

MARGERY
Is that funny to you?

SARAH
Do you expect something else?

MARGERY
I want to, I want him to act how he did when I was a child.

SARAH
He's too old to.

MARGERY
Is your friend ready?

SARAH
Yes. He said to tell you not to worry, he can still see through the blindfold.

MARGERY
Through a blindfold? Where is he?

SARAH
Behind that tree.

Margery exits. Benedict stares, bored. The audience is silent.

CONTESTANT #3
 Thank you ladies and gentlemen.
 You're too kind. I will now be doing
 my final act, 'The Young Lady and Her
 Cat.'

Contestant #3 struts in on all fours and purrs.

FOOL
 It's an old lady and a dog. I swear
 to God...

Lord Paul smiles at Contestant #3.

FOOL
 There's that pseudo smile.

LUCY (10) walks by Lord Paul. An orphan who takes everything
 at a steady pace. She's observant and at peace.

LORD PAUL
 Lucy. Are you alright?

LUCY
 Fine, thank you. How are you?

LORD PAUL
 You know. I am just wonderful. Here,
 buy yourself some delightful
 clothing.

He hands her a BAG OF GOLD.

LUCY
 I like my clothes.

LORD PAUL
 Then spend the money however your
 tender heart desires.

She stares.

LORD PAUL
 Can I do anything else?

LUCY
 No. I'm just confused.

LORD PAUL
 I had heard that your parents had
 passed. I wanted to help.

LUCY
Well thank you, sir.

She hugs him.

LORD PAUL
Of course.

He tears up. She runs off. He wipes his tears.

FOOL
He's faking it. He watched Benedict
hang her parents, and said nothing.

The Fool collects himself, closes his eyes, and breathes in.

FANTASY

Vibrant Color

He opens his eyes.

Margery appears behind him.

He turns around.

He sheaths the dagger and holds out his hand.

She grabs it and they waltz.

He twirls her into his arms and dips her.

He leans in for a kiss, she leans in. But just before they
do-

END FANTASY

He looks up, Margery stands in front of him.

MARGERY
What are you doing?

FOOL
Daydreaming.

MARGERY
I'm still nervous.

FOOL
Would a practice run help?

MARGERY
Possibly.

He guides her against the tree. They are close to one another.

FOOL

Alright, this is a trick my father taught me when I was young. It took about 4 months to learn but I have never messed it up since. He said that I must always choose the most powerful woman in the room, or in this case field. It helps make the audience worry. And since you are clearly the most beautiful woman in the field.

MARGERY

Your father taught you to throw knives at powerful women?

FOOL

Above powerful women. Throwing knives at them would never go well.

MARGERY

It won't be *above* if you miss.

The Fool smiles at her and steps away.

FOOL

I never miss. My father wasn't the greatest of all people.

MARGERY

Neither is mine.

The Fool laughs.

FOOL

But, he did know how to win over an audience. He once told me that humans are quite simple.

He pulls out his blindfold.

FOOL

They fear the same basic things; no food, no money, no sex... But do you know the thing they fear most?

MARGERY

No love.

FOOL

Injustice against children. If a little girl fell down a well, everyone would rush to help her out. But a grown man loses everything, and people just watch him wither to nothing, but still offer him their prayers.

MARGERY

So why don't you use a child?

FOOL

Because you're old enough to make your own decisions. So if you die I don't feel bad.

He puts on the blindfold.

MARGERY

Can you do it without the blindfold?

He chuckles.

FOOL

There's nothing to fear.

MARGERY

There's plenty to fear. I don't want to die. But outside of that my father will torture you for years to come if you so much as nick my...

He walks over to a small pile of apples, picks one up, walks over to her, and places it on her head.

MARGERY

You can still see?

FOOL

Of course. Could you imagine what would happen if I killed a princess?

PLATFORM - CONTINUOUS

Contestant #3 rubs his face against the King's legs, he purrs.

BENEDICT

Hang him.

TREE - CONTINUOUS

MARGERY

Okay. I'm ready.

FOOL

No you're not.

MARGERY

Yes, I am. Just throw it.

FOOL

You need to relax first.

MARGERY

I am relaxed!

He puts his hands on her shoulders.

FOOL

Close your eyes.

She does.

FOOL

Breathe.

She does.

FOOL

Repeat after me. There is nothing to fear.

MARGERY

There is nothing to fear.

The Fool walks away.

FOOL

Your voice is still tense.

MARGERY

There is nothing to fear.

The Fool lines up his shot.

FOOL

Margery, to be without fear means there is no worry within you at all.

She breathes deeply. The Fool flings the dagger. She exhales.

MARGERY

There is nothing to fear.

She opens her eyes. He shows her his hands are empty. She looks at the dagger with an apple in it in the tree.

MARGERY

Wow. Okay. I can do it. Just be careful, please.

FOOL

Always.

He kisses her hand. She smiles at him. He bows. She curtsies and exits.

FOOL

(to self)

I would never hurt you.

He walks over to the pile of apples and puts 2 in his pocket.

PLATFORM - CONTINUOUS

Contestant #3 stands with a noose around his neck.

BENEDICT

Lord Paul, cleanse our conscience.

LORD PAUL

With pleasure.

Lord Paul holds a BIBLE next to Contestant #3.

LORD PAUL

I will now be reading from Matthew Chapter 1 verses 1-16. The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham begat Isaac, and Isaac begat Jacob, and Jacob begat Judas and his brethren...

The audience stares blankly.

LORD PAUL

And Judas begat Phares and Zara of Thamar, and Phares begat Esrom, and Esrom begat Aram, And Aram begat Aminadab...

The Priest hides behind his hands.

LORD PAUL
 ...and Aminadab begat Naasson, and
 Naasson begat Salmon, Salmon begat
 Booz of Rachab, and Booz begat Obed
 of Ruth, and Obed begat Jesse...

BENEDICT
 Get on with it Lord Paul!

Lord Paul flips a page. Then another.

LORD PAUL
 And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of
 Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is
 called Christ. Amen.

BENEDICT
 Amen. We are cleansed. Hang him.

Margery steps on stage.

MARGERY
 You don't need to kill him, just
 don't hire him!

BENEDICT
 But that's not as fun.

MARGERY
 Father, it's not right.

BENEDICT
 I am the King. I decide on what is
 right and what is wrong. Isn't that
 right, Lord Paul?

LORD PAUL
 Umm... mostly.

BENEDICT
 Mostly?

LORD PAUL
 I don't mean to offend his
 righteousness. Our decisions on right
 from wrong come from the Bible.

BENEDICT
 Yes, yes. Obviously. I'm saying on
 all matters that aren't directly in
 the Bible. That's up to me, yes?

LORD PAUL

Well...

BENEDICT

Well, what? What does the Bible say about hanging fools?

LORD PAUL

It doesn't say anything about hanging fools specifically... were you not even listening to me read?

MARGERY

If you're going to kill him at least grant him last words.

BENEDICT

My daughter has accepted. We shall have a hanging.

Guard #1 claps, nobody else does. It's awkward.

BENEDICT

Last words fool?

CONTESTANT #3

Well, God has never failed me before. If God wants me saved, let Him save me.

Benedict gives a hearty laugh.

Vibrant Color

The Fool stands on a tree branch.

FOOL

A sacrifice stands upon a stool this Sabbath. Shaped by a sadistic sovereign shelving sin in shoddy safes. Still, a simpleton in showy civvies should stop shining his smirk on the slacks of our short sheepish sadist.

The Fool jumps from the branch.

FOOL

Ladies and Gentleman. This pitiful personality presenting previously; performed as a preposterous pussy. No person, per contra, procures a premature passing.

But purring possibly prohibits previous privileges. A person's performance presents their proper personality. So, I ought to stop pretending to be a poet and be a fool.

Benedict laughs. The audience laughs.

FOOL

You need not know my name. For, if you do, your belief in me, will affect your view of the quality of my performance. You may call me friend, foe or, probably best just to say Fool.

The Fool pulls out his dagger and stares at the hilt.

FOOL

However, if I could characterize myself, it'd be as an owl. You may be saying, "This bloke thinks he's smart and can turn his head the other way around, good for him." However, these are an owl's most bland features. An owl's wings muffle sound. So to their prey, their attack is completely unexpected.

He eyes Margery.

FOOL

A mouse in the field stands no chance for the silent killer.

He throws Margery an apple. She catches it. He signals for her to place it on her head. She does. He holds up his dagger. Benedict on the edge of his seat.

FOOL

This is my owl. It flies nimbly and silently, but there is a catch. It cannot pierce human skin.

He pokes his hand with the knife. Nothing.

FOOL

As you can see, it is kind. It harms only things.

He tosses the other apple in the air and throws the dagger. It sticks in the apple and he catches the hilt. He takes a bite of the apple.

FOOL

So Margery, when I say there is nothing to fear, I hope you know, I'm being deeply honest with you.

Margery smiles.

The Fool flings the apple off the dagger and smiles at her.

The Fool pulls out a blindfold and covers his eyes.

Benedict sits up. Lord Paul, nervous.

FOOL

Princess, remember what I said?

She takes a deep breath.

MARGERY

There is nothing to fear.

He bows, twirls the dagger above his head, and flings it.

The blade slices the noose from the post and flies through the apple and into the wall behind her.

The audience applauds.

Contestant #3 smiles at Benedict.

The Fool rips off his blindfold and bows.

Benedict leans over and whispers to Lord Paul.

BENEDICT

Is that a sign from God?

LORD PAUL

Yes.

BENEDICT

Are you sure? I mean he came by and just cut the noose-

LORD PAUL

Yes, yes I know, I saw. But if he just said "let me be saved by God" and then God actually saves him-

BENEDICT
Are you suggesting that God sent a
fool to cut the noose?

LORD PAUL
I wouldn't test it.

He turns back to Contestant #3.

BENEDICT
I... I guess you're free to go.

CONTESTANT #3
Cool.

Contestant #3 walks away, hands still tied behind his back.
He looks to the sky.

CONTESTANT #3
I like you. You're funny but I like
you.

He walks into the forest. Benedict stares blankly.

BENEDICT
You are quite a show, sir.

FOOL
Thank you.

LORD PAUL
Wonderful, astonishing performer!
Where did you learn to do such a
fascinating stunt?

FOOL
My father.

LORD PAUL
Your father must be marvelous. I wish
to meet him.

FOOL
You can't. He's dead.

LORD PAUL
Oh my. I'm so sorry I made you relive
that experience.

Lord Paul cries.

FOOL

No need to get emotional. My mother didn't even cry this much when he died.

BENEDICT

Then he was cruel?

FOOL

To her, yes. He liked me.

BENEDICT

So it sounds as if God did the job of a King.

FOOL

That's one way to look at it.

BENEDICT

I like you. For the first time in my life, I've actually enjoyed the presence of a fool. I don't enjoy much of anything. You should feel greatly honored because I declare *you* to be *my* New Fool.

The audience claps.

The Fool smiles and bows.

FADE TO

TITLE CARD: CHAPTER 2 | A KING'S DECISION

FADE IN

EXT. PLATFORM - LATER

Gray

The audience has dispersed. The Fool sits under his tree and eats a leftover apple. He twirls his dagger in his other hand as he watches the servants pack up.

Nicholas and Sarah run over. Sarah tackles the Fool.

FOOL

Careful.

He drops the dagger.

SARAH
Sorry. I'm excited.

Her stare lingers, he lifts her off of him.

FOOL
I'm still nervous.

SARAH
Why? You're in.

FOOL
What if he changes his mind.

NICHOLAS
He won't be able to once he is slain.

The Fool smiles.

FOOL
Tomorrow?

NICHOLAS
Tomorrow.

The Fool glances over to Margery with Benedict and Lord Paul. She smiles at him, he smiles back.

Lord Paul notices, **FATHER MICHAEL** (40s-50s), a calm and collected German man. Lord Paul runs to him, giddy with excitement.

LORD PAUL
Sir. Sir. I wanted to talk to you about my readings.

FATHER MICHAEL
What of them?

LORD PAUL
I don't know if I'm reading them passionately enough. Like is the audience really getting what I'm talking about because nobody has converted thus far and I'm really-

FATHER MICHAEL
Your problem is not a lack of passion Lord Paul. When you read from the Bible, I would encourage you to read from the lessons that Jesus taught. Not his lineage.

LORD PAUL

Oh. Because people want to know the part that saves them. That makes so much sense.

FATHER MICHAEL

Calm down, Lord Paul. I know you're excited but speak softly, listen more than you speak.

LORD PAUL

I'm sorry.

FATHER MICHAEL

Stop apologizing. You need not feel guilty about your past errors. What's your favorite Bible verse?

LORD PAUL

Oh, how do I pick one? There are just so many good ones.

FATHER MICHAEL

Start simple. Try Matthew 7:17-20.

Lord Paul pulls out his Bible, he reads.

LORD PAUL

Yes. Yes. I'll be back.

Lord Paul skips off. Father Michael chuckles and walks to Margery.

FATHER MICHAEL

He's a great man.

MARGERY

I just don't feel useful around him.

The Fool approaches.

FATHER MICHAEL

That's a good thing. Believe me, you may not be in your position if it weren't for him.

FOOL

Yeah, you might be married and not engaged.

Margery smirks.

MARGERY

Thank you for not killing me.

FOOL

How could I kill you? You're far too lovely to be put to death this young.

She smiles. Lord Paul runs up.

LORD PAUL

I have something wonderful to share with you all.

FOOL

What's that?

LORD PAUL

Oh, you. You are a tremendous performer. We shall be the best of friends.

FOOL

Terrific.

MARGERY

What would you like to share with us?

LORD PAUL

I have the most spectacular Bible verse. From Matthew 7:17-20, Even so, every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

The Fool notices the throne.

LORD PAUL

A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

EXT. FATHER'S HANGING TREE - DAY

Dark Gray

The Fool's father hangs from a tree in the woods.

LORD PAUL (V.O.)

Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits, ye shall know them.

The Young Fool watches. Tears stream his face.

EXT. PLATFORM - CONTINUOUS

Gray

The Fool pulls out an apple and takes a bite, he runs up to the throne and sits.

FOOL

Hang him. Hmm... and him too.
Actually, you know what. Just give me a list of names, I'll cross off the ones I don't like.

BENEDICT

You've clearly never been a King.

FOOL

And you have?

Nicholas is nervous. The Fool eyes Margery.

BENEDICT

Careful Fool. I like you, don't test me.

FOOL

I'm not testing you, I'm telling you your position is quite simplistic.

BENEDICT

Let me see your dagger.

The Fool hands it to him.

BENEDICT

Margery. Tie this to a piece of twine that is around twice your height.

She does.

FOOL

You want to kill me with my own knife? How original.

BENEDICT

Not kill you. Teach you.

FOOL

Teach me?

BENEDICT

The truth of what it is to be a king.
How hard it really is.

FOOL

I don't know how you do it? All the
food and servants. I couldn't even
imagine what it would be like to
gorge myself to death on a nightly
basis. I don't know how your belt
buckle handles the stress.

BENEDICT

Give it to me, Margery.

She hands the dagger and twine to him. Benedict tosses it
over the wood beam directly above the Fool's head. The Fool
is nervous. Benedict holds the other end of the twine.

BENEDICT

If it's so easy. You are the king. I
am the people. Whenever I think you
step out of line. I let go of the
twine.

MARGERY

Father.

BENEDICT

Hush Margery. Go ahead Fool, make a
decision. See if I approve.

FOOL

I will lower taxes for all-

The blade drops close to the Fool's head.

FOOL

The people would never-

BENEDICT

I am also God. Lowering taxes too low
causes people to think they are free.
When you let people have an inkling
of freedom. It always leads to
revolts.

FOOL

So what can I do?

BENEDICT

Protect yourself.

The Fool eyes the apple in his hand. He looks back at Benedict.

FOOL
So my best bet is to kill those who displease me.

BENEDICT
That's the only way they are scared enough to not drop the dagger.

FOOL
What about distracting them?

BENEDICT
How would you distract-

The Fool throws the apple at Benedict, he ducks and releases the twine. The Fool dives out of the way and runs into Lord Paul's legs. The dagger lands on the throne. Lord Paul falls off the platform.

Benedict holds his sword to the Fool's throat.

BENEDICT
You're dead. I think it's best if you stick to performing Fool. Leave kingly matters well... to me.

Benedict hops on his horse.

BENEDICT
It is getting dark. To the castle.

The people mount horses and head off.

BENEDICT
Fool, I want a new performance as soon as possible.

FOOL
I can have it by Tuesday.

BENEDICT
Great. And, I want something *more* exciting.

FOOL
Well I can use a baby instead of your daughter next time.

Benedict laughs.

BENEDICT

You remind me of someone. Have I met you before?

FOOL

When I was little.

BENEDICT

Huh. No idea then.

Nicholas approaches.

BENEDICT

Who are you?

Nicholas stares dumbfounded.

FOOL

He's my servant, he helps me with set building and costuming.

BENEDICT

He works for free?

FOOL

A family slave.

BENEDICT

Great. You two will be staying in the servant's quarters, the handmaiden can show you when we arrive.

Benedict kicks his horse and rides off.

Vibrant Color

The Fool stares at Margery. He runs to her side.

MARGERY

Don't be so stupid.

FOOL

What do you mean?

MARGERY

He will kill you if you set him off.

FOOL

See, I don't think he could. I think you would try to stop him.

MARGERY

I don't think I would.

FOOL
 I love your voice, you have this
 damsel in distress sound. Like a
 beautiful fairy.

They head off. The dagger still sits on the throne. Lucy comes up to the dagger. She looks at it, looks around. She realizes she is alone, takes it, and runs into the woods.

EXT. CASTLE - SUNDOWN

The entourage marches through the gate, Benedict at the head. The people applaud for him.

BENEDICT
 Yes, yes, I know.

The Fool walks next to Margery's horse.

FOOL (V.O.)
 Margery was telling me a story about
 being little in a castle. She had
 such a beautiful soul.

INT. CASTLE - CONTINUOUS

The Fool helps her off the horse.

He stares into her eyes.

MARGERY
 Thank you.

FOOL
 Of course.

NICHOLAS
 Hey. We need to get our things
 settled in.

MARGERY
 Oh yes. The servant's quarters are
 down the hall, third door on your-

Sarah walks in between the Fool and Margery and guides the Fool off.

SARAH
 I can show them. Just get to bed
 Princess, I'll be right up.

MARGERY

Okay. Well it was a pleasure meeting you mister...

FOOL

Just call me, Fool.

MARGERY

You don't have a name?

FOOL

Not one that I share.

NICHOLAS

I'm the only one who knows it.

MARGERY

It is a pleasure to make your acquaintance, Fool.

FOOL

The pleasure is all mine Margery.

She smiles and exits.

Fade to Gray

Sarah, Nicholas, and the Fool head down the corridor.

SARAH

I recommend you stop flirting with the Princess.

FOOL

Jealous?

NICHOLAS

We're about to kill her father, and I say after you pissed him off earlier, we should do it tonight.

FOOL

Already? They'll know it's us.

SARAH

We'll have to escape tonight then. We can go to my aunt and uncle's farm, it's about 25 miles from here.

The Fool stops and takes a breath.

NICHOLAS

What's wrong?

FOOL
If I'm doing it tonight I need to get ready first.

NICHOLAS
I'll do it then, give me the dagger.

The Fool reaches for it, it's gone.

FOOL
What? Where is it?

SARAH
When did you have it last?

The Fool panics, he can barely control his own mind.

FOOL
Oh fuck. Where is it?!

NICHOLAS
Relax. Did you have it on the walk back?

FOOL
No. The last time I saw it was, at the try-outs. I have to go get it.

The Fool runs towards the gate.

SARAH
Not tonight!

He exits.

NICHOLAS
Just let him get it. I can do it without him. He's too emotional anyway.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

The Fool panics down the hill. He is frantic. Thoughts overwhelm him. It's his father's knife, the only thing he has left of him. He searches through bushes. Nothing.

Trees. Nothing.

FOOL
God, give it to me! You've taken everything else, let me have a memory of my father at the very least!

He sits down and weeps.

A rustle comes from the bushes.

The Fool is ready to fight.

FOOL
I need to make a fire.

He throws some sticks together. Shoves some leaves underneath. Twiddles a stick on logs and sparks up a fire.

He sits nearby, and stares into the flames.

MEMORY

VIBRANT COLOR

YOUNG SARAH (10) and **YOUNG FOOL** (10) in peasant garb sit in front of a fire.

A rabbit hops by.

YOUNG SARAH
Alwin, look! He's so cute.

The Young fool eyes the rabbit.

YOUNG SARAH
Don't hurt him.

YOUNG FOOL
I'm hungry.

YOUNG SARAH
Eat something else.

The Young Fool leans over, he grabs a rock and crushes the rabbit with it. Sarah screams.

YOUNG SARAH
What's wrong with you?

YOUNG FOOL
It's just a rabbit.

She runs away. He stares at the corpse, he enjoyed it more than he will admit.

The rabbit roasts on a pit over a fire.

END MEMORY

GRAY

The Fire crackles

The Fool wipes a tear. He then lays down and goes to sleep.

FADE TO:

INT. COURT, RAFTERS - MORNING

Vibrant Color

Nicholas peers down from the rafters. He stands up and fixes his clothes. He pulls out a pointer, and points at the map next to him: 'The Evil Plan'.

TITLE CARD: CHAPTER 3 | BENEDICT'S NOOSE

NICHOLAS

(to camera)

It has come to my attention, that many talk as if they will take action, but it appears once again I must take matters into my own hands, I can't wait for a dagger to kill Benedict when there are so many fun ways to kill someone: you can...

INT. COURT - DAY

A man chokes after he bites a loaf of bread. Benedict laughs in the background.

NICHOLAS (V.O.)

...poison them...

INT. DINING HALL - NIGHT

Benedict pushes another man down a staircase.

NICHOLAS (V.O.)

...push them down the stairs...

EXT. COTTAGE - DAY

A crossbow bolt lands in a man's heart. Benedict, sips wine out of a goblet with a crossbow in hand. He laughs with the guards.

NICHOLAS (V.O.)
 ... fire a crossbow bolt through
 their heart....

EXT. HANGMAN'S PLATFORM - DAY

A man is hanged. Benedict claps in the background.

NICHOLAS (V.O.)
 ... or Benedict's personal
 favorite... hang them. Which is what
 we will be experimenting with today.

INT. COURT, RAFTERS - CONTINUOUS

NICHOLAS
 On many occasions, I have wished
 death upon our tyrannical King
 Benedict. We must stop wishing, and
 take action. In the past 17 years
 King Benedict has hanged an estimated
 43,443 people. A record for the kings
 of Hell. Here is my...

He sees the word 'evil' and crosses it out.

NICHOLAS
 (to camera)
 ...plan. The king will enter from the
 far side of the courtyard, where I
 have tied a noose behind the pillar
 on the left. When the pillar is
 lightly brushed by a piece of twine,
 the noose will release.

Nicholas mimics a fall.

NICHOLAS
 (to camera)
 As he's falling. The noose will swing
 through, wrap around his neck and he
 will be hanged. This will kill him,
 putting an end to his reign. A just
 death, for an unjust man.

Benedict enters the Courtyard, followed by his guards.

NICHOLAS
 As I speak.

Nicholas crouches, twine in hand.

BENEDICT
Where is my daughter?

GUARD #1
No idea, sir. I'd guess her bedroom.

GUARD #2
How long did it take you to think of that one? "She's not here, wonder where she'd be... oh maybe the place she sleeps."

GUARD #1
Why do you criticize everything I say?

GUARD #2
You said something stupid. I found it only appropriate to tell you that was the case.

Guard #1 pushes Guard #2. He pushes back. They fight.

BENEDICT
I need to hang them tomorrow.

Benedict marches towards the twine.

Nicholas' excitement builds.

Benedict trips, and falls to the floor. The noose releases, and passes over him. He stands up.

BENEDICT
Who wants to be castrated and disemboweled!?

He turns around and sees the noose pass back and forth.

The guards stop.

Benedict grabs the noose and pulls.

Nicholas runs away.

BENEDICT
Someone wants me dead.

GUARD #1
Not me.

Guard #2 punches him.

BENEDICT
I know it's not you. Find who did it.

They stand still.

BENEDICT
What?

GUARD #1
Oh now?

Guard #2 punches him again.

GUARD #1
Ow, why are you hitting me?

GUARD #2
You want me to be nice?

GUARD #1
Yes.

Guard #2 hits Guard #1.

GUARD #2
Oops.

They fight as they exit.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Nicholas runs down the hallway. He wraps around the corner and runs into Lord Paul. They collapse to the floor.

LORD PAUL
Going fast there friend.

NICHOLAS
Sorry. Are you alright?

LORD PAUL
Fine. You are the Fool's friend correct?

NICHOLAS
Servant, yes.

LORD PAUL
Have you seen him? I wanted to share with him the greatest story I have ever read.

NICHOLAS
Is it from the Bible?

LORD PAUL
It is. Wow, the Fool hangs out with
the cleverest of people.

NICHOLAS
No, I haven't seen him. He left his
dagger in the woods.

LORD PAUL
His father's dagger?

NICHOLAS
Yes.

The guards appear at the end of the hall.

NICHOLAS
Sorry. I just remembered my bucket of
shit is filled. I need to dump it.

Nicholas runs.

LORD PAUL
My brilliant and cunning new best
friend has lost his most prized
possession. Matthew 5:16: "In the
same way, let your light shine before
others, that they may see your good
deeds and glorify your Father in
heaven." I will make him a Christian
yet. I will not let him suffer.
Guards!

GUARD #1
What?

Guard #2 hits Guard #1.

GUARD #2
Yes sir?

LORD PAUL
Grab your horses. We are to set off
immediately. My quick-witted,
magnificent friend needs our help. He
needs Jesus.

Benedict appears.

BENEDICT

Not so fast Lord Paul. There is someone in this castle looking to have me killed. I need him hanged, immediately.

GUARD #2

Sir. We've checked the castle. I think he escaped.

LORD PAUL

Then we will search for the villain as well. We will save the soul of my closest friend and simultaneously, suppress an uprising against our great King Benedict.

Lord Paul whistles. A white horse trots down the hallway. He hops on.

LORD PAUL

And all in the name of my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! For Jesus!

He draws his sword and kicks his horse. He rides out of the castle. The guards watch. Benedict glares at them.

GUARD #1

Did you want us to go with him?

GUARD #2

Yeah, I wasn't sure about that either.

BENEDICT

Yes.

GUARD #1

But we don't have horses.

Guard #2 hits him.

GUARD #2

They're in the courtyard wanker.

GUARD #1

You're always so mean to me.

GUARD #2

Stop asking stupid shit then.

They exit.

INT. SERVANT'S QUARTERS - LATER

Nicholas storms in, furious. He slams his bookshelf into the floor. A book sprawls out: "Medieval Weaponry".

NICHOLAS

I should've taken timing into account. Too many variables allowing him to survive.

He looks back to the bookshelf, picks it up, and puts it back. He grabs some books and puts them away. When he reaches back down, he picks up "Medieval Weaponry" and reads.

NICHOLAS

A weapon that could be fired from a stage, at the King. I can build it to look like it was part of Alwin's show.

He smiles, moves the table and chairs out of the way, He reads from the book.

TITLE CARD: CHAPTER 4 | THE ORPHAN IN THE WOOD

FADE IN

EXT. PLATFORM - LATER

Gray

The Fool lays asleep against a tree. Tall trees engulf him. Next to him, a recently lit campfire. He looks around and notices the emptiness. He gets up, stamps out the fire, and continues.

He notices the platform and runs up to the throne. He touches the hole where the dagger was. He turns around and looks at the matted down grass area.

DREAM SEQUENCE

Vibrant Color

The Fool crouches on the front of the stage.

FOOL

Ladies and Gentleman.

The area fills with an audience. Margery and Benedict at the center.

FOOL
I am your Fool. As funny as a baboon
in a leotard. A witty wordsmith with
a wisp of worth.

He runs through the crowd and picks up a stick.

FOOL
An overenthusiastic pacifist immersed
in everlasting sadness.

He stabs Benedict, he dies.

FOOL
A devious fiend.

He looks at Margery.

FOOL
Not a cliché. But a mastermind. A
manipulator.

He approaches her.

FOOL
One who loves deeply and
unconditionally.

He grabs her and they waltz around the grass area. It is out of a fairy tale, sun shining through the trees and a romance that connects the two is deeper than the corniest of romantic comedies. He dips her and leans in for the kiss-

END DREAM
SEQUENCE

Gray

Lucy appears.

LUCY
What are you doing?

FOOL
Nothing.

LUCY
Are you about to kiss the air?

FOOL
No.

LUCY
She's pretty. I say go for it.

FOOL
Look kid, I was using my imagination.

LUCY
I do that too. But I never kiss
anyone. Who were you kissing?

FOOL
Nobody.

LUCY
So you were just kissing the air in
your imagination, over nobody in
particular.

FOOL
Yes.

LUCY
Okay.

Lucy looks down. He's knee-deep in water. He climbs out.

LUCY
Men either seem to not care or be too
desperate for others to care.

FOOL
It's Princess Margery.

LUCY
That's rough.

FOOL
Why?

LUCY
She's engaged?

FOOL
Yes. She hates him though.

LUCY
Are you sure?

FOOL
Yes.

LUCY
So why aren't you in the castle,
talking to her?

FOOL
I left my dagger here.

LUCY
Does it have an owl on the handle?

FOOL
Hilt. And Yes.

LUCY
Oh. That's over here, follow me.

He follows her.

FOOL
You have it?

LUCY
Oh yes. When I first saw it. I knew
it was special so I hid it.

FOOL
Oh, thank you so much!

LUCY
Of course! When you play pretend, you
don't smile or laugh...

FOOL
And?

LUCY
Do you really like her, like as a
person?

FOOL
She's an angel.

Silence.

FOOL
What?

LUCY
I guess I'm confused.

FOOL
Why?

LUCY

The first time you smiled was when I told you I have the dagger.

FOOL

It's important to me.

LUCY

I'm just saying that maybe you don't like her as much as you think you do.

FOOL

What are you, 8?

LUCY

11.

FOOL

Well...

LUCY

Just shut up, have some fun. Play a game or something.

FOOL

Like what?

She crouches over and grabs the dagger.

LUCY

Keep away.

She runs away with the dagger. The Fool looks around confused.

FOOL

Oh... Oh shit.

The Fool pursues.

Lucy runs down the path. She rejoices in laughter.

FOOL

Hey kid, I am not well trained in the cardiovascular realm. Can I just pay you?

LUCY

I don't want money.

He bends over and wheezes.

FOOL
Can we do something else?

LUCY
No.

FOOL
This isn't fun!

She laughs. His anger rises. She swerves around a corner and under a tree branch.

He turns the corner and hits his head on the tree branch. He hits the ground. He tries to talk. She appears above him.

FOOL
I hate you.

LUCY
You just met me.

FOOL
And in that short of a time, I grew to hate a 9-year-old.

LUCY
11.

FOOL
Look, I need to get back to the castle, the King's already looking for me.

LUCY
That sounds more like...

The Fool looks at a nearby tree branch. His pupils dilate.

DREAM SEQUENCE

EXT. FATHER'S HANGING TREE - DAY

Vibrant Color

His father hangs from the tree. The Young Fool cries underneath.

END DREAM
SEQUENCE

EXT. WOODS - CONTINUOUS

The Fool's horror builds. Lucy turns and runs. The Fool trips her, she falls, he jumps on her and grabs her by the throat. He holds her over a pond.

FOOL

I don't have time for this! I need to get back or the King will have me hanged! You want to see my body strung from a tree!?

Vibrant Color

He is ready to drown her. A tear streams her cheek.

FOOL

Oh, God. I'm sorry.

He puts her down on dry land and cleans her off.

FOOL

I'm so sorry. I lost my temper.

LUCY

It was just a game.

FOOL

I know, I'm sorry. Are you alright?

She nods. She holds up a different knife.

Gray

LUCY

I gave yours to the priest.

FOOL

Why?

LUCY

He said it was special and I couldn't have it.

FOOL

Then why did you say you had it?

LUCY

I haven't gotten to play with anyone in a long time.

FOOL
Maybe another time? I just need to
get my dagger back.

LUCY
Yeah.

They stand up. He hugs her.

FOOL
I'm sorry.

LUCY
I understand.

He lets go and heads off.

FOOL
How about I come back next week, and
we can play any game you like?

LUCY
Do you promise to come back?

FOOL
Yes.

LUCY
Okay.

She smiles at him.

He smiles and exits.

She walks back towards the platform. Lord Paul and the
guards are there.

LUCY
Can I help you?

LORD PAUL
Oh yes, dear child. I am looking for
a dagger. But this dagger is special
to a good friend of mine.

LUCY
Does it have an owl on the handle?

LORD PAUL
Yes. Yes, it does.

She holds the knife up.

LUCY
You'll have to catch me first.

She runs, he smiles.

LORD PAUL
Oh, I'm the best at tag.

He skips after her. The guards look at each other, and trot after him.

EXT. STREET - LATER

Gray

The Fool trots out of the woods and onto the street.

FOOL
You need to be better about your temper. You almost hurt a child. Who are you kidding, you almost killed her. Stop losing your temper so easily. You psychopath.

He sees the church and takes a deep breath.

FOOL
It's almost over. Get the dagger, get back, kill Benedict. Kill Benedict. Kill the man who killed your father.

TITLE CARD: CHAPTER 5 | A BROKEN PRIEST

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Gray

Father Michael is on a step ladder, he hangs a painting of Lucy, with a donation box attached.

FOOL
Excuse me?

FATHER MICHAEL
Oh hello. Don't mind me, she needs all the help she can get.

He looks at the painting, his paranoia returns.

FATHER MICHAEL

Anything you can donate to help, she
lost her parents a couple weeks ago.

FOOL

Of course.

The Fool stares. Long silence. He then pulls out a gold coin
from his pocket and places it in the donation box.

FATHER MICHAEL

Thank you. That's very kind of you.

FOOL

Sure thing. I've been told you have
my dagger.

FATHER MICHAEL

I do. Come, come.

They go inside-

INT. CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

FOOL

This is a beautiful church.

FATHER MICHAEL

Thank you. Lord Paul keeps us
running. He sends us thousands every
week.

FOOL

What about everyone else?

FATHER MICHAEL

They've all been killed by Benedict,
most of my income is from Lord Paul.
In the last year, he has donated over
50,000 gold pieces to the church.

FOOL

Well, he does need to keep up
appearances.

FATHER MICHAEL

Believe me, that's not the case, the
King may be the most hated man in the
kingdom. If it wasn't for Lord Paul I
think Hell would have rioted long
ago.

FOOL

But it's Margery giving the money to him. He's not even related to them.

FATHER MICHAEL

No, but he will be. Once he and Margery marry.

FOOL

If they marry.

FATHER MICHAEL

It is her money, but he's the one doing the actions. It's a perfect cycle; the King takes the people's money...

INT. FATHER MICHAEL'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

They both enter.

FATHER MICHAEL

...gives it to his daughter, she gives it to Paul and he distributes it back to the people. Please, sit.

The Fool does.

FATHER MICHAEL

Tea?

FOOL

No thank you, I can't stay long.

FATHER MICHAEL

Where do you have to be?

FOOL

Just somewhere.

FATHER MICHAEL

Are you married?

FOOL

No.

FATHER MICHAEL

Children?

FOOL

No.

FATHER MICHAEL
Then I see no obligations.

Father Michael pours two cups of tea.

FATHER MICHAEL
Your speech at the Fool tryouts. Did you come up with that off the top of your head?

FOOL
Not really. I planned it for a couple minutes beforehand.

FATHER MICHAEL
Amazing.

FOOL
Thank you, it's just alliteration.

FATHER MICHAEL
I'd like to hear you use it.

FOOL
Right now?

FATHER MICHAEL
Please.

FOOL
Umm... Perplexing is the perception of a person who tries to please. A people pleaser persists a perpetual problem. In the process of pleasing people, a person pares personal care. Protest of a personal prize slaughters silly single sirs.

FATHER MICHAEL
Wow. Brilliant. Dark but brilliant.

FOOL
Thank you.

Father Michael hands him a cup of tea. The Fool stares out the window he sees the castle in the distance.

FATHER MICHAEL
I have a question.

FOOL
I have an answer.

FATHER MICHAEL

My daughter.

Father Michael turns a picture of his daughter. She looks stupid.

FATHER MICHAEL

She's stupid. Very. Very stupid.

FOOL

Oh.

FATHER MICHAEL

Her teacher removed her from the school. She said that she can't keep up with the kids even 5 years younger than her.

FOOL

Quite stupid indeed.

FATHER MICHAEL

Yes.

FOOL

What's the question?

FATHER MICHAEL

Oh yes, would you be willing to tutor her?

FOOL

No.

Father Michael smiles.

FATHER MICHAEL

I'll pay you 200 gold pieces per day.

FOOL

200?

FATHER MICHAEL

Yes.

FOOL

I'm not qualified.

FATHER MICHAEL

You're beyond qualified. I heard your speech.

FOOL

It's just alliteration. Just make all the words have the same first letter.

FATHER MICHAEL

I'm asking you as a favor. I love my daughter. It's been hard for her since her mother passed.

FLASHBACK

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Vibrant Color

The Fool and a pretty **YOUNG WOMAN** (20) hugs him from behind. They kiss.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Gray

The Fool stares at a grave.

END FLASHBACK

INT. CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

Gray

FOOL

I can't. I work for the King.

FATHER MICHAEL

Can't you do both?

FOOL

Can I get my dagger, please? I need to go.

FATHER MICHAEL

Not until you tell me why.

The Fool walks towards the door.

FATHER MICHAEL

Wait. I will pay you 250 gold pieces.

FOOL

Sometimes people are born stupid, no matter how much you try to teach them they never get better.

FATHER MICHAEL

Please. There are no other tutors in Hell. I have looked high and low...

DREAM SEQUENCE

Vibrant Color

The Fool looks out the window. Margery rides a beautiful horse. She flips her hair over her shoulder and smiles at him. He waves back. She blows him a kiss and rides off.

END DREAM
SEQUENCE

Gray

FATHER MICHAEL

...Benedict had them all hanged.

FOOL

I doubt that.

Father Michael, steps in front of the Fool.

FATHER MICHAEL

I have looked through every business, restaurant, and church. Every nook and every alleyway. There is nobody. I need my daughter to feel better again.

The Fool looks out the window and notices Lord Paul talk to the man in the house across the street.

FATHER MICHAEL

Whatever money you want, I'll make it work...

The Fool pulls away.

Father Michael raises his arms for a hug. The Fool inches back.

Father Michael inches closer, the Fool pushes his hands off him.

FOOL

Stop.

Father Michael inches closer and tries to put his arms around the Fool.

FOOL

What are you doing?

FATHER MICHAEL

I'm giving you a hug.

FOOL

Why?

The Fool looks to a side table and notices the dagger on top.

FATHER MICHAEL

I know how it feels, to be alone.
Just wanting a little bit of love
from someone and feeling such a lack
of it. That's how I felt when my wife
died...

FLASHBACK

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Vibrant Color

The Fool wrestles the young woman, she pulls away. They smile at one another.

END FLASHBACK

INT. CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

Gray

FOOL

Sorry about your wife, but I haven't
lost anyone that important to me.

The Fool grabs his dagger and bolts.

Father Michael pursues. The Fool runs up the center aisle, his clothes rip on the front pew. Father Michael chases him, arms spread.

FATHER MICHAEL
 There is nothing wrong with accepting
 love from friends...

The Fool gets to the front door, it is locked. He bolts to the back door.

Father Michael dives after him, and wraps around his legs.

EXT. CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

The Fool drags Father Michael, wrapped around his legs, out the back door. The Fool pulls Father Michael through the river of poop. Father Michael climbs on top of him and grabs at the dagger.

FOOL
 That's mine.

FATHER MICHAEL
 I'm trying to help you!

FOOL
 Look, old man, I'm trying to kill Benedict and let Hell be free. He has murdered thousands of people, including my father. I don't have time to tutor idiots.

The Fool kicks Father Michael. Father Michael's body pulls back, with him, the sheath comes off the dagger and he falls back down. The blade pierces Father Michael's heart.

Vibrant Color

The Fool stares a moment. He looks around.

FOOL
 Sir.

Silence.

FOOL
 Sir, are you alright?

He lifts his body off of him.

FOOL
 Shit. Shit. Oh, God.

He weeps. The front doors of the church open.

LORD PAUL
Father Michael!

INT. CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

Lord Paul marches through the front doors. The guards right behind him.

Lord Paul runs to his office.

GUARD #1
I like Lord Paul.

GUARD #2
You like anybody who pays you money.

GUARD #1
That's not true.

GUARD #2
Do you like Benedict?

GUARD #1
Of course.

GUARD #2
My point exactly, you have no reason to.

GUARD #1
He pays us.

GUARD #2
Exactly.

Lord Paul comes back out.

LORD PAUL
He's not in there. Search for him, he would be here by now.

They do. Lord Paul searches, frantic. He sees the piece of red and black cloth stuck on the front pew.

Guard #2 is at the back door.

GUARD #2
Sir, I think you should come here.

LORD PAUL
What?

Lord Paul pockets the cloth and runs over and sees Father Michael laid in a pool of blood.

LORD PAUL
Father Michael?

Silence.

LORD PAUL
Oh my God.

He runs over to him.

LORD PAUL
No, no, no. Please, no.

He weeps. He drops to his knees and holds him. The guards take off their helmets in respect.

FADE OUT

INT. CASTLE, FRONT GATE - LATER

Gray

The Fool runs through the gate, frantic.

TITLE CARD: CHAPTER 6 | BLOODY FOOTPRINTS

His foot prints stain the floor.

INT. SERVANT'S QUARTERS - CONTINUOUS

Gray

The Fool runs inside and closes the door. He hunches over and weeps. Nicholas watches from the kitchen.

NICHOLAS
Oh good, you got your special knife.

Silence.

NICHOLAS
What's wrong?

FOOL
I don't want to talk about it.

Nicholas walks over and crouches next to him.

NICHOLAS

Well since you've been gone all day I went ahead and tried to hang Benedict in the courtyard.

FOOL

And?

NICHOLAS

He's after me.

FOOL

Good. Serves you right, you impatient bastard.

NICHOLAS

This affects you *bastard*. If I get found out who do you think he's coming after next?

FOOL

I don't want to talk about this right now.

NICHOLAS

Of course, you don't.

Nicholas gets up.

NICHOLAS

Move.

FOOL

Why?

NICHOLAS

I want to leave.

The Fool moves. Nicholas heads out the door.

FOOL

Nicholas.

He ignores him and struts off.

FOOL

Fine! Act like a bloody child!

INT. CASTLE, FRONT GATE - CONTINUOUS*Gray*

Lord Paul enters the castle with the guards. He carries Father Michael's body.

LORD PAUL

Benedict!

He marches down the hall.

COURTYARD - CONTINUOUS*Gray*

Benedict sits on his throne, he looks like he has lost his mind. He is paranoid looking from corner to corner of the room.

LORD PAUL (O.S.)

Benedict!

BENEDICT

Who said that?

Lord Paul enters. Guards behind him.

LORD PAUL

Benedict! Someone has murdered Father Michael!

He lays his body down.

LORD PAUL

I demand that you do your job as King according to the Bible, and bring justice to this murderer.

BENEDICT

My job as-

LORD PAUL

Your job as King. You are supposed to bring justice and peace. This is neither.

Benedict examines Father Michael's body.

BENEDICT

Yes. Yes. I will bring him justice.

LORD PAUL

Good.

BENEDICT

As well as justice for myself.

LORD PAUL

No-

BENEDICT

Something gives me the feeling that this is the same killer as the man who tried to kill me this morning.

LORD PAUL

You're alive right now. Father Michael is dead. His justice is more vital than yours.

BENEDICT

You don't believe me?

Benedict floods out the door. Lord Paul and the guards follow.

LORD PAUL

Where are you going?

BENEDICT

He tried a tactic that I would have done myself. Luckily I'm cleverer than him.

FRONT GATE - CONTINUOUS

They arrive.

LORD PAUL

And what tactic is that?

BENEDICT

He couldn't kill me, so he decided to kill the next best thing, my last priest.

Benedict sees the Fool's bloody footprints, which are small drops at this point. He follows them. Lord Paul joins in. The footprints stop.

BENEDICT
 The killer is in the castle. Lock
 everything! He won't escape this
 time! Find him! Find the murderer!

The guards run.

BENEDICT
 Justice will be served shortly.

He walks back to the courtyard. Lord Paul searches.

MARGERY'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Gray

The Fool weeps at the door. Sarah helps him in.

SARAH
 What happened?

FOOL
 I... I.

MARGERY
 Oh my. Let me get some rags.

She searches in the cupboards but can't find any.

Sarah comforts the Fool by the window. The Fool whispers to Sarah.

FOOL
 I killed him.

SARAH
 Benedict?

Margery takes one of her dresses and rips it, she dips it in water and runs over to the Fool. The Fool shakes his head.

Sarah is worried. The girls clean him up.

DREAM SEQUENCE

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Vibrant Color

Father Michael lays in a pool of blood.

END DREAM
SEQUENCE

MARGERY'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

MARGERY
Are you okay?

FOOL
I'll be fine.

She hugs him. He holds back tears.

MARGERY
It'll be alright.

FOOL
Thank you.

The Fool notices a painting stashed behind the armoire.

FOOL
What's that?

Sarah pulls it out.

SARAH
It's the King before your father.

MARGERY
He looks so nice.

SARAH
He was.

FLASHBACK

INT. MANOR - DAY

The **FORMER** (early 30s) sword fights the two guards. He defeats them.

SARAH(V.O.)
He was also the greatest swordsman in the kingdom. Every day he lived much like Lord Paul...

The Former walks over to a BOX OF DONATIONS.

SARAH (V.O.)
...donations, charities, helping

where help was needed. But, he was so excited about his day he always forgot to eat...

He walks out the door. Benedict stands in the corner, dressed modest.

SARAH (V.O.)

As his adviser, your father saw an opportunity.

Benedict picks up a sword, spins, and slits the throat of the air. The Former returns.

SARAH (V.O.)

He thought he could challenge him to a duel for the Kingdom. Your father was so confident, he told the King, "I won't even practice, and he will still watch your body hang from the castle walls."

Benedict exits. The Former pulls out a sword.

SARAH (V.O.)

This frightened the former king, so for a week he practiced with his guards the whole day.

The Former dances around Guard #1 with ease.

SARAH (V.O.)

But, the day before the battle he had his annual fall charity. He thought it would help get his mind off of the duel.

The Former's belt doesn't tighten all the way.

SARAH (V.O.)

But, that whole week he was so nervous about the duel, he neglected eating.

EXT. STREET - DAY

The Former skips down the street, joyful.

SARAH (V.O.)

He stepped into the gutter and his belt was loose enough that his pants

dropped. He tripped and broke his wrist.

INT. MANOR - DAY

The Former tries to pick up the sword, he switches hands.

SARAH (V.O.)
When the duel took place, he was unable to hold his sword with his right hand. So he fought left-handed...

The Former's body hangs from the castle walls.

MARGERY'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

END FLASHBACK

MARGERY
My father told me the battle was long and lasted into the night.

SARAH
It lasted less than 20 seconds.

MARGERY
You were there?

SARAH
The former king was my father.

The Fool stares off.

DREAM SEQUENCE

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Vibrant Color

The Young Girl hits the Fool she hates him, she's in tears.

END DREAM
SEQUENCE

MARGERY'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

FOOL
Where could I get some water?

SARAH

Oh, I'll get it for you. Just stay there.

Sarah leaves.

FOOL

Benedict hanged my father as well.

MARGERY

When?

FOOL

He was his first fool.

Margery cries.

FOOL

Hey. Hey. Don't cry.

He comforts her.

MARGERY

He's killed hundreds of people then?

Silence.

MARGERY

More?

He nods. She cries harder.

MARGERY

That's why he keeps me locked in this room all day long and doesn't tell me anything. He doesn't want me to know what he's doing.

FOOL

It's okay.

He holds her.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Sarah walks down the hallway with a pitcher of water and a glass. She is stopped by the guards.

SARAH

Hello gentleman.

GUARD #1
Where's the Fool?

SARAH
I don't know. Why what's wrong?

GUARD #2
We have reason to believe that he
tried to hang Benedict this morning
with his friend.

GUARD #1
We saw footprints leading into the
servant's quarters.

SARAH
Not possible.

GUARD #2
Why not?

SARAH
He was with me all morning and
afternoon.

GUARD #1
So where is he?

GUARD #2
And where is his friend?

SARAH
Check the theater. He's performing
tomorrow night.

They trot off. When they are out of sight, Sarah goes
quickly back to Margery's room.

INT. MARGERY'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

The Fool snuggles Margery.

MARGERY
Do you ever miss childhood?

FOOL
I didn't really have a great
childhood.

MARGERY
You never had fun?

FOOL

Not really. I worked a lot.

MARGERY

As a fool?

FOOL

Yeah, my dad was hanged when I was little and ever since I've been trying to be as good of a Fool as he was.

MARGERY

Why was he hung?

FOOL

The drink.

MARGERY

He was a drunk?

FOOL

That's how he died. Hanging, for being a drunk.

MARGERY

Oh.

FOOL

He wasn't a drunk though. He was hanged for drinking that blueberry wine your father likes.

MARGERY

I know you're planning on killing him.

FOOL

Who?

MARGERY

I want to do it.

FOOL

Be careful what you say Margery. He's your father.

MARGERY

I don't care. He has killed thousands of people, every day is this never ending upheaval watching people die. And I've just had to sit here and watch.

My fiance is incompetent and just lets him do it. I feel as if I should do something. I can't stand this mental torment.

FOOL

Let me kill him. You don't need that on your-

MARGERY

No. He's my father, I must do it.

FOOL

Okay.

The Fool stares into Margery's eyes.

FOOL (V.O.)

Something about the passion in her voice. I never thought murder talk would make me pitch a tent. But hey, here we are.

FOOL

You're beautiful.

DREAM SEQUENCE

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Vibrant Color

The Young Girl hits the Fool she hates him, she's in tears.

END DREAM
SEQUENCE

He leans in to kiss her.

Sarah opens the door. She is heartbroken, and drops the pitcher of water. Margery is paranoid, she shields her eyes and gets up.

MARGERY

I'm sorry. I barely know you.

FOOL

Of course. Every time I get close to any woman they abandon me. I guess all I'm good for is making people laugh.

SARAH

Leave.

FOOL

Fine.

The Fool hates himself and heads out.

FOOL

I'm sorry.

The Fool leaves.

INT. SERVANT'S QUARTERS - CONTINUOUS

Nicholas sleeps in his bed. The guards barge in. Lord Paul behind them.

LORD PAUL

Nicholas Rathborne. You are under arrest for the torture of children, the attempted murder of our beloved King Benedict, as well as the murder of Father Michael. The kindest man I have ever known.

The guards grab Nicholas out of bed, he is only in undergarments.

NICHOLAS

I demand a trial.

BENEDICT (O.S.)

Why would we need one, when we know you're guilty?

Benedict stands in the doorway.

BENEDICT

I will never let scum speak to my people. Take him. We will hang him in the morning.

They take him away.

NICHOLAS

You must let me stand trial according to the edict of Hell in 1624, all criminals are allowed a public trial.

BENEDICT

I didn't write that.

Lord Paul glares as Nicholas leaves.

BENEDICT
Satisfied?

LORD PAUL
I will be when he's dead.

Lord Paul pushes past the King in tears. Benedict follows.

Beat.

The Fool enters, tears stream his face. He lays down in his bed.

INT. SERVANT'S QUARTERS - LATER

The Fool lays in bed, he stares at the ceiling, tears stream his face.

FOOL (V.O.)
I couldn't sleep, my thoughts were
unceasing.

The Fool gets out of bed and flees.

TITLE CARD: CHAPTER 7 | THE HANGING IN THE COURT

INT. COURTYARD - EARLY MORNING

Gray

The Fool strides in. He paces fast around the room, not in control.

FOOL (V.O.)
It was an alternating repetition.

DREAM SEQUENCE

Vibrant Color

EXT. WOODS - DAY

The Fool nearly drowns Lucy.

FOOL (V.O.)
The Orphan...

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Father Michael lays in a pool of blood.

FOOL (V.O.)
Father Michael's body...

INT. MARGERY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Margery is paranoid, she shields her eyes and gets up.

FOOL (V.O.)
Margery's reaction, and Sarah's face
when I left the room.

END DREAM
SEQUENCE

He notices a clock on top of a mirror in the corner. He
walks to the mirror and stares.

FOOL (V.O.)
You have nobody to blame but
yourself. You did this. You killed
him. You hurt everyone in your life.
No wonder you're alone.

DREAM SEQUENCE

Vibrant Color

EXT. WOODS - DAY

The Fool nearly drowns Lucy.

INT. SERVANT'S QUARTERS - EVENING

Nicholas storms past the Fool.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Father Michael lays in a pool of blood.

INT. MARGERY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Margery and Sarah stare at him, scared.

END DREAM
SEQUENCE

INT. COURTYARD - CONTINUOUS

Gray

He cries.

FOOL
I'm sorry. I'm so sorry. I'm sorry
for what I've done.

Small amounts of people trickle in.

He wipes his tears.

He notices the rafters. The bell tolls.

The Fool rubs his eyes and runs through the side staircase.

Margery and Sarah enter. They both have a seat near the main bench, other members of the audience enter.

INT. PRISON - CONTINUOUS

The guards open Nicholas' cell. Nicholas stays seated.

GUARD #2
Come on.

NICHOLAS
Is he giving me a trial?

GUARD #1
That's a stupid question.

NICHOLAS
Then I'm not coming.

Guard #1 pulls out his dagger.

GUARD #2
What are you doing?

GUARD #1
You think Benedict will care?

Guard #1 approaches Nicholas. Nicholas head-butts him and runs. He knocks over Guard #2.

GUARD #1
Get him!

Guard #2 books it down the hall.

Nicholas has some distance, until-

He runs into Lord Paul and falls on the ground.

Guard #2 dives on Nicholas. He picks him up.

LORD PAUL
You killed an innocent man.

NICHOLAS
Benedict is alive, and far from innocent.

Guard #2 takes him away. Lord Paul is confused.

INT. COURTYARD, RAFTERS - CONTINUOUS

The Fool enters, sits, wipes his tears, and takes a deep breath.

INT. COURTYARD - MORNING

Gray

Lord Paul enters.

Margery runs over and hugs him.

MARGERY
What's wrong?

LORD PAUL
Father Michael died.

MARGERY
How?

LORD PAUL
He was murdered. Stabbed in the
heart.

She holds him.

LORD PAUL
Hopefully, your father will find his
justice this morning.

She looks at him, doubtful.

Benedict enters. Margery is troubled to contain herself.

MARGERY
Justice will be here shortly.

DREAM SEQUENCE

COURTYARD - LATER

Vibrant Color

The Fool walks through the main door and stares at Margery.

Margery turns around. She smiles and runs to him. She wraps herself around him.

They kiss-

END DREAM
SEQUENCE

RAFTERS - CONTINUOUS

Gray

The Fool kisses the air that his arms are wrapped around.

He wakes up from his dream and looks down. He sees Lord Paul and Margery chat.

The Fool's jealousy builds and he storms downstairs.

COURTYARD - CONTINUOUS

LORD PAUL
What are you planning to do?

MARGERY

I need to confront him when we're alone.

LORD PAUL

If it doesn't go well we can escape from here together. I will always protect you from whatever evil comes.

She kisses him.

The Fool enters, frozen.

Benedict stands at his throne and lifts a glass of wine.

BENEDICT

In recent days, there has been an evil among us. An evil that has tortured the innocent, murdered our beloved Father Michael, and attempted to hang those sent from God. But not to fear, one who is so traitorous... can not escape my justice for long. Last night our brave guards...

The guards stand proud.

BENEDICT

...caught him hiding away in a cellar.

The crowd claps. The Fool looks through the audience.

BENEDICT

The perfect place for filthy vermin. Just remember, God looks down upon those who attempt to murder their own King. I present to you all... the traitor!

Nicholas is pushed onto the stage by an **EXECUTIONER** (30s). He shoves Nicholas to the noose.

The Fool is broken. Sarah notices him and makes a casual exit.

The noose is wrapped around Nicholas' throat. Benedict walks to him.

BENEDICT

I have to be honest. I've never been impressed by the grooming of people like you. You all reek of poverty.

Silence.

BENEDICT

(mimics)

"I'm proud I won't say anything and maybe he'll leave me alone."

NICHOLAS

You ought to be less aggressive. You may show your people who you truly are.

BENEDICT

The vermin speaks!

NICHOLAS

Weak men cover insecurities with insults and screaming. Few can control their words, most control them better than you.

Benedict spits on Nicholas' face.

NICHOLAS

Is it raining?

Benedict steps to the lever.

MARGERY

Stop!

BENEDICT

What Margery?! Is this too much of a shock? He murdered Father Michael and tried to have your father killed. This oaf is a sin on God himself!

Silence.

The Fool stares at Nicholas. Nicholas winks back. The Fool shakes his head. Nicholas smiles and mouths the word 'crossbow'. The Fool is confused.

Margery stares at her father.

MARGERY

He gets his last words.

BENEDICT

He has had them.

NICHOLAS

I have not.

BENEDICT

I will end your life regardless!
What's the matter if you speak or
not?

NICHOLAS

Because the kingdom will know what a
coward you truly are. If I'm dead
either way, then let me explain
myself, so the people can feel as if
a true criminal was hanged.
Otherwise, they will hate you.

Benedict looks to the audience, they are unnerved.

BENEDICT

(to Nicholas)

You have one minute.

Benedict steps aside.

NICHOLAS

I have been charged with, torturing
innocents, murdering Father Michael,
and hanging those sent from God.
Funny, I don't even remember talking
to Father Michael recently.

Paul realizes it wasn't Nicholas.

NICHOLAS

I've had plenty of problems, I've
been looking to complain to a Priest
for a while, I feel as if I would've
remembered a conversation with one.

The audience laughs.

BENEDICT

That's enough!

NICHOLAS

You give me no trial. No ability to
advocate for myself. I will speak
until my words are done and you will
listen to them all!

Benedict's anger builds. Margery steps in front of the
lever.

NICHOLAS

I don't like torture. It's extremely
depressing.

You have to watch someone have the life drained from them for months on end. Not for me. Especially not a child. However, the last claim is true...

Benedict calms.

NICHOLAS

...in part. It is a sin to try and hang those sent from God. Priests, Kings, and worst of all the Pope. But I tell you all, I committed no such crime. I attempted to hang a vile, cruel, treacherous usurper who calls himself your King!

Benedict pushes Margery to the floor.

NICHOLAS

Mark my words Benedict! You will die before the sun goes down tomorrow!

Benedict pulls the lever. Nicholas is hanged.

The Fool is still. The crowd pulls away from him as he watches his best friend breathe his last breaths.

BENEDICT

The traitor is dead.

Benedict exits, angry. The guards follow him.

Paul sits dumbfounded.

The Fool runs away. Sarah chases after him.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The Fool wraps the corner and wails.

Sarah follows. She slows when she sees his pain.

The Fool weeps, she holds him.

SARAH

Shh... sh... stop crying. We need to get you out of here.

She stands him up.

SARAH
Contain yourself.

He takes a breath and stands.

She helps him exit.

TITLE CARD: CHAPTER 8 | THE STEPS

INT. SERVANT'S QUARTERS - LATER

Gray

Sarah helps the Fool into his bedroom and lays him down on the bed. He lays there in shock.

FOOL (V.O.)
Sarah was always a good friend. She loved me. But I never loved her. I could never explain why.

SARAH
I'll go get you a blanket and some water.

She leaves.

FLASHBACK

INT. COURT - DAY

Vibrant Color

Benedict pulls the lever. Nicholas is hanged.

His body is wheeled to the pit of dead bodies.

He lays in the pit.

END FLASHBACK

INT. SERVANT'S QUARTERS - LATER

Gray

Sarah enters with water and swaddles him in a blanket.

He weeps, she holds him.

SARAH

Sh, sh... It's okay. I think it's best if we leave.

FOOL

Without killing Benedict?

SARAH

It's too dangerous here now. We can go to my aunt's. I'll help you pack.

She packs.

SARAH

Benedict needs to be killed, but you're not in the mental state to do it. We need to worry about ourselves and escape.

FOOL

My mental state is broken permanently, what's the damage if I make it worse?

SARAH

Because he was going to have you hanged too.

Silence.

SARAH

The guards were suspicious. I pulled them off your trail. Let's go to the country, start a new life.

FOOL

Not until I kill the tyrant. The tyrant that killed my father, and the one that killed yours.

SARAH

It's not safe for us right now.

He walks over to her at the trunk.

FOOL

It hasn't been safe for years, and now you have cold feet after he killed Nicholas.

SARAH

Shut up! You're going to get us found out.

FOOL
Who cares? I'm going to murder
Benedict! The evil bastard-

She grabs his mouth.

SARAH
Shut up. My life is at stake here
too!

She pulls away.

FOOL
I don't love you, Sarah.

SARAH
Margery and Paul are getting married.

FOOL
And I need to accept that?

SARAH
You aren't royalty.

FOOL
No. But I deserve to be loved.

SARAH
And you are.

FOOL
All we ever do is complain to each
other, I don't think I've ever had a
pleasant conversation with you.

SARAH
We're in the midst of a murder plot,
is that supposed to be pleasant
conversation? We understand each
other, do we need more?

FOOL
I don't feel like we understand each
other.

SARAH
I love you, Alwin.

DREAM SEQUENCE

INT. SMALL CHAPEL - NIGHT

Vibrant Color

A wedding between Margery and Lord Paul.

FOOL (V.O.)
Love is supposed to fix our pain not
make us dwell in it.

They kiss.

END DREAM
SEQUENCE

INT. SERVANT'S QUARTERS - CONTINUOUS

Gray

SARAH
Regardless, we can live somewhere
safe.

DREAM SEQUENCE

INT. SMALL CHAPEL - NIGHT

Vibrant Color

A wedding between Margery and Lord Paul.

They kiss.

END DREAM
SEQUENCE

INT. SERVANT'S QUARTERS - CONTINUOUS

Gray

FOOL
You sound desperate.

SARAH
I always listen to you, no matter how
much you whine about everything in
your life. I always tried to be
understanding of your situation.

FOOL
My situation? What about your
situation you arrogant bitch?

She slaps him.

FOOL
I don't love you. What do you want
from me?

SARAH
To be safe! I want you to be okay.

She cries.

FOOL
Sh... Sh... Don't cry, please.

SARAH
You're scaring me.

FOOL
I'm sorry. I just want to him dead.

FLASHBACK

INT. COURT - DAY

Vibrant Color

Benedict pulls the lever. Nicholas is hanged.

END FLASHBACK

He weeps. She hugs him.

FOOL
I miss him.

SARAH
I miss him too.

DREAM SEQUENCE

INT. COURT - DAY

Vibrant Color

Benedict pulls the lever. Nicholas is hanged.

END DREAM
SEQUENCE

INT. SERVANT'S QUARTERS - CONTINUOUS

Gray

He reaches out his hand.

SARAH
What's this?

FOOL
I'd like to try.

She takes his hand and they waltz. He smiles.

SARAH
Are you alright?

FOOL
More than alright.

She pushes him off of her.

SARAH
Something's off.

FOOL
You don't like the way I do it?

She shakes her head.

FOOL
What's wrong? You wanted me to love
you.

SARAH
I do want it, but when you aren't so
anxious.

FOOL
I'm always filled with anxiety and
that never stopped you before.

SARAH
Alwin, stop, please. We can stay and
kill Benedict.

FOOL
And now you just give me what I want?

SARAH
I want you to be happy-

FOOL
In this muck of a country? I can't be
happy!

SARAH
We can create a better world
together.

FOOL
I don't feel anything for you Sarah!
I'm empty, everything that I had was
taken away from me and now I just
feel a permanent numbness in my soul.

She cries.

FOOL
What? Is seeing the real me scaring
you?

SARAH
This isn't who you are Alwin! You've
never acted like this!

She picks up the fire poker.

FOOL
You don't love me then?

SARAH
Not whoever you are now.

FLASHBACK

EXT. RIVER - DAY

Vibrant Color

A Young Fool and a **YOUNG SARAH** (8) climb a tree next to the
river, they laugh.

END FLASHBACK

INT. SERVANT'S QUARTERS - CONTINUOUS

Gray

SARAH

I want the man that made me laugh all day.

FOOL

This is me. This is who I really am. What, am I only ever worth anything when I perform? I'll use alliteration to help you.

SARAH

Alwin stop, please!

FOOL

A tumultuous twat.

SARAH

Stop!

FOOL

A tumultuous twat! Tethered to those that take. Tethered to you.

He inches towards her, she backs away.

SARAH

I don't want to hurt you.

FOOL

You're going to stab me? You have nothing Sarah. You have less than I do.

SARAH

And I just want to start over with you.

FOOL

(he mimics her)

I just want to start over with you.

She cries.

FOOL

Do you love me now?!

SARAH

No.

FOOL

What?

SARAH
No! I hate you, you're awful!

FOOL
Shut up!

SARAH
I hope you're hung next! You're not
okay! You're insane!

He shoves her from the top of the steps and she tumbles down
the staircase. Her head cracks on the bottom stair.

Vibrant Color

FOOL
Get up! Don't joke. Get up.

He trots down the steps. He touches her. She doesn't move.
He puts his head between his legs and weeps.

FOOL
Breathe. Breathe. Breathe.

INT. FOOL'S BEDROOM - LATER

Vibrant Color

Sarah's body is laid in bed. He has covered her wounds and
closed her eyes.

FLASHBACK

INT. STAIRS - EARLIER

Vibrant Color

The Fool shoves Sarah.

She falls.

Her head cracks on the bottom stair.

END FLASHBACK

INT. FOOL'S BEDROOM - LATER

He stares at Sarah's corpse.

FLASHBACK

INT. STAIRS - EARLIER

Vibrant Color

The Fool shoves Sarah.

She falls.

Her head cracks on the bottom stair.

END FLASHBACK

He weeps and exits.

INT. BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

Vibrant Color

The Fool steps down the stairs. He grabs the poker off the ground and smashes it into the wall. His temper is worse than ever before.

He looks at an item underneath a tarp.

He notices a sketch on the desk. The sketch has an elaborate drawing of a giant crossbow.

FLASHBACK

INT. COURTYARD - DAY

Vibrant Color

Nicholas mouths the word 'Crossbow'

END FLASHBACK

INT. BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

Vibrant Color

He looks around and sees an item covered by a tarp. He approaches it and takes it off. THE CROSSBOW, a large weapon.

INT. CASTLE, HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The Fool wheels the crossbow past a room where Guard #2 sets himself up a bath.

INT. THEATER - DAY

The Fool wheels in the Crossbow and aims it for Benedict's Balcony. He loads a bolt and fires at his throne. A direct hit. The Fool is excited.

FLASHBACK

INT. STAIRS - EARLIER

Vibrant Color

The Fool shoves Sarah.

She falls.

Her head cracks on the bottom stair.

END FLASHBACK

THEATER - CONTINUOUS

The Fool weeps.

FOOL

This is your fault, this is all your
fault. I deserve death. I wish
someone loved me.

Guard #1 stands at the other end of the theater, he understands the Fool's intentions.

FLASHBACK

INT. STAIRS - EARLIER

Vibrant Color

The Fool shoves Sarah.

She falls.

Her head cracks on the bottom stair.

END FLASHBACK

THEATER - CONTINUOUS

GUARD #1
You're under arrest for the attempted
murder on King Benedict.

FOOL
What are you talking about?

FLASHBACK

INT. STAIRS - EARLIER

Vibrant Color

The Fool shoves Sarah.

She falls.

Her head cracks on the bottom stair.

END FLASHBACK

THEATER - CONTINUOUS

GUARD #1
Stop playing games. Step away from
the crossbow.

Guard #1 pulls out his sword ready to fight the Fool.

The Fool steps away from the crossbow.

FOOL
Sir, I'm setting up for the King's
show tomorrow.

GUARD #1
Down on your knees.

The Fool smiles at him.

GUARD #1
On your knees, throw me your dagger.

FOOL
Dagger?

GUARD #1
Yes your dagger.

FOOL
No thanks, I'm alright.

The guard stops.

GUARD #1
Give it to me fool.

He holds out his hand. The Fool switches from serious to pleasant on a dime.

FOOL
Of course. Anything for a servant of King Benedict.

The Fool unsheathes the dagger.

FOOL
You know, this is a very special weapon to me. It was my father's. He was the smartest man I ever knew, but he died all the same.

GUARD #1
Give it to me.

FOOL
Patience sir. I will hand this over to you, but I need you to understand the severe importance this blade holds. Do NOT let it break.

GUARD #1
Fine. Give it.

FOOL
Ah ah ah. Ask nicely.

GUARD #1
Give me the dagger.

FOOL
No.

GUARD #1
Give it to me.

FOOL
Watch your tone, young man.

GUARD #1
Give me the fucking dagger!

The Fool laughs.

FOOL

Wrong.

The Fool flings the blade into the guards face, he drops to the floor, dead.

He pulls the dagger out of his face.

FOOL

Why did I enjoy that?

He looks to the sky.

FOOL

Is this what you want?! You want to leave me? You want to make me like killing? Answer me you son of a bitch!?

INT. CHURCH - DAY

The Fool enters.

He smashes a pew.

He throws a rock through stained glass.

He takes crosses and smashes them to bits.

He lights a match and sets the church on fire.

EXT. CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

The Fool strides away, devoid of himself.

INT. CASTLE, HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The Fool drags his dagger through a painting of Benedict.

He smashes bookshelves.

His feet march down the hallway and stop at the bathroom where Guard #2 bathes.

The Fool enters, his shadow dawns the wall. The Fool slits the guards throat.

He has lost his soul.

INT. THEATER - NIGHT

Vibrant Color

The auditorium is brightly colored in velvet. A large poster of the Fool is draped in front of the stage.

TITLE CARD: CHAPTER 9 | THE PENULTIMATE PASSING

A small crowd has formed inside, the house lights still up.

INT. BACKSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

Gray

The Fool peers through the curtains.

FLASHBACK

INT. STAIRS - EARLIER

Vibrant Color

The Fool shoves Sarah.

She falls.

Her head cracks on the bottom stair.

END FLASHBACK

FOOL

I need to save Margery. Do this for Hell. And for her.

DREAM SEQUENCE

INT. STAGE - CONTINUOUS

Vibrant Color

The Curtains open, the crowd cheers. Margery and Benedict clap, Lord Paul fake claps next to them.

FOOL

Thank you. Thank you. Please, I'm not worthy of this praise. Have a seat.

The Audience sits.

FOOL
 You've sat still ninety six minutes
 for a silly show. Still, serious
 statements are soon to be said.

Margery looks at him.

FOOL
 Margery, I love your little laugh.
 Light like a lily on a lake. A room
 is reminiscent of your presence for
 hours to come. You are one of the few
 genuine people on this Earth.

She starts towards the front of the stage.

FOOL
 I love you, and I always have. My
 love cannot be touched or compared
 to. It's unconditional.

The crowd cheers. They kiss-

END DREAM
 SEQUENCE

INT. BACKSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

Vibrant Color

Margery enters.

MARGERY
 Hey.

FOOL
 Hey.

MARGERY
 Are you doing alright?

FOOL
 Never better.

MARGERY
 I'm sorry.

FOOL
 No. Don't be, I messed up.

MARGERY
 Then what's wrong?

FOOL
This will be my last night in Hell.

MARGERY
You don't have to go because of me-

FOOL
Your father killed one of the only
friends I had here.

MARGERY
What about Sarah?

FLASHBACK

INT. STAIRS - EARLIER

Vibrant Color

Sarah's head cracks on the bottom stair.

END FLASHBACK

FOOL
She left.

MARGERY
Where?

FOOL
I don't know.

MARGERY
What do you mean?

FOOL
She left without a word. I haven't
seen her since before Nicholas' was
hanged.

She hugs him.

MARGERY
I'm sorry. Tonight will be better
than you know.

A vile of poison sits in her belt.

FOOL
Thank you.

He smiles. She leaves.

He stares at himself in the mirror and punches it. He screams.

INT. THEATER - NIGHT

Margery approaches Lord Paul.

MARGERY
Have you seen Sarah?

LORD PAUL
Was she here?

MARGERY
No, but the Fool said that she left.
She would have told me.

LORD PAUL
When was the last time you saw her?

MARGERY
The hanging.

LORD PAUL
Do you think your father did
something?

MARGERY
Check the servant's quarters.

LORD PAUL
Okay.

MARGERY
Wait, Lord Paul.

He stops.

MARGERY
I love you.

She kisses him.

LORD PAUL
I love you too.

Lord Paul ventures off. Benedict drinks wine.

BENEDICT
Margery, come here. Both of my guards
were found dead this morning.
Something is seriously wrong.

MARGERY

I'm sure everything will be fine.

BENEDICT

Someone is after me, I can feel it.

MARGERY

Father, let's just enjoy the show. We can leave after. We don't want to make a scene.

BENEDICT

Yes, you're right. I have lodgings in Aachen that I could arrange.

He hands her a DAGGER.

BENEDICT

Hide this in your dress. In case anyone comes after me while we're here.

MARGERY

Yes sire.

She ties the blade to her leg.

Benedict pours himself a glass of wine.

BENEDICT

Have you killed anybody before?

MARGERY

No.

BENEDICT

The traitor said I'll die before the night is out.

MARGERY

Why would you listen to a traitor?

Margery sneaks the poison into his glass.

BENEDICT

Because there is more than one of them. There is another.

MARGERY

Who?

BENEDICT

Your handmaiden.

MARGERY
She was with me last night.

BENEDICT
Then it must be the Fool.

MARGERY
He was with me last night too.

BENEDICT
Why was he with you?

MARGERY
He's in love with me. I thought it
only right to hear what he had to
say.

BENEDICT
You are engaged.

MARGERY
I know. It was just harmless
flirting.

BENEDICT
It's not harmless.

MARGERY
I didn't do anything.

BENEDICT
Margery. You and Paul will marry this
Saturday. A wife is not allowed to
flirt with other men.

MARGERY
But a man can sleep with other women?

BENEDICT
I never cheated on your mother
Margery.

MARGERY
Then why did she leave?

BENEDICT
She left because she is a spiteful
woman without love for her own
husband!

Benedict slams the table and knocks over his wine.

BENEDICT

Damn it! Margery go get a cloth.

MARGERY

Yes father.

STAGE - CONTINUOUS

The curtains open, a silhouette of the Fool is in the middle of the stage.

FOOL

We blink 1,200 times per hour.
Meaning we are rendered blind for 5
whole minutes. Ladies and Gentlemen,
I suggest you forget how to blink for
the next hour. For you will not want
to miss a second of this performance.

His hand pops through the white paper.

He feels around and pulls his hand back. He sticks his head through.

The audience laughs and applauds.

He pops back.

INT. PRISON - CONTINUOUS

Lord Paul enters, hastened.

He runs down the hall.

Cell by cell, all empty.

He gets frustrated and leaves.

INT. STAGE - CONTINUOUS

The Fool pulls himself through the hole. He stands.

FOOL

That one is called the miracle of
childbirth.

The crowd laughs and applauds. He bows. He looks to Margery and Benedict.

INT. AUDIENCE - CONTINUOUS

Margery glares at Benedict.

MARGERY
Where is my mother?

BENEDICT
Drop it Margery. I have enough to
worry about right now.

MARGERY
Did you kill her?

BENEDICT
No.

MARGERY
Where is she?

BENEDICT
I don't know.

MARGERY
I don't believe you.

He slaps her.

BENEDICT
A king never lies.

INT. STAGE - CONTINUOUS

The Fool looks up and sees Margery, she looks off to the side in tears.

FOOL (V.O.)
Even in the end, she paid no
attention, Sarah was right. She never
loved me. I should have seen that
then.

He steps behind the curtain, it shuts.

INT. AUDIENCE - CONTINUOUS

BENEDICT
You should be more grateful. If it
wasn't for me, you would have
nothing.

He gets up and walks away. Margery is awestruck.

INT. SERVANT'S QUARTERS - CONTINUOUS

Lord Paul barges through the door.

LORD PAUL
Is anyone here?

He walks up the stairs. He notices a splotch of blood on the floor. He draws his sword.

INT. STAGE - CONTINUOUS

The curtains open, the Fool sits on a stool in the middle of the stage.

FOOL
A lot of you have looked at me as a fool. A person to make you laugh. But those who make others laugh tend to come from darkness. We see so much of it, that the only thing we can do about it, is laugh. Inside, we aren't laughing.

FLASHBACK

INT. STAIRS - EARLIER

Vibrant Color

The Fool shoves Sarah.

She falls.

Her head cracks on the bottom stair.

END FLASHBACK

STAGE - CONTINUOUS

He looks at Margery, she's in tears.

FOOL
I'm sorry if this hurts you.

INT. SERVANT'S QUARTERS - CONTINUOUS

Lord Paul gets to the top of the stairs and walks into one bedroom. Nothing.

Down the hall, he enters another bedroom. Nothing.

He enters another room. Sarah's body lays in the bed.

LORD PAUL

Sarah.

He approaches her. He sees the blood.

He sheaths his sword and runs.

INT. THEATER, STAGE - CONTINUOUS

The Fool sits on the front of the stage.

FOOL

The world is permanently in pain. No matter how much I try, nothing goes the way that I want it to.

He looks at Lucy. She is scared.

FOOL

I'm sorry.

In the audience the Fool notices two figures come out of the shadows, Sarah and Nicholas. They smile at him and disappear.

The Fool gets an idea. He exits the stage and reenters with his chest puffed out.

FOOL

Who are you demon? That cannot compose yourself.

He switches back to being insane.

FOOL

Nobody. A worthless child in the gutter.

He puffs out his chest.

FOOL

Wonderful, hang him.

He pulls out an imaginary noose.

The Fool switches characters.

FOOL
No. No, please.

He switches characters.

FOOL
Quiet you. I'll hang whoever I want.

The audience laughs.

EXT. CASTLE - CONTINUOUS

Lord Paul runs up the front bridge in haste.

STAGE - CONTINUOUS

The Fool chuckles, He puts the imaginary noose around his own neck, hangs himself, and fake dies.

The audience laughs.

FOOL
Thank you. Now for, the story of the Old Lady and the Aggressive Dog. This is a true story I witnessed one day while walking down Pine Street. Honestly, I don't know what happened afterwards. But I saw an old woman walking her dog, now this dog was probably twice her size, so when he saw another dog...

He walks stage left, gets on all fours, and sniffs. He sees another dog and barks after it, fast. He stops. He withers himself and holds an imaginary leash. The imaginary dog drags his 'frail' body across the stage.

The audience laughs.

AUDIENCE - CONTINUOUS

Lord Paul slams open the doors, drenched in sweat.

LORD PAUL
Stop! Stop the show!

Margery stares at Benedict. She grabs the hilt of the dagger.

FOOL
No! You stop heathen!

The Fool stays in character.

LORD PAUL
You don't understand.

FOOL
No, you don't understand sir. This is your chance to join me on stage.

LORD PAUL
But-

FOOL
Now or never.

Lord Paul marches to the stage. When he passes Margery, he whispers.

LORD PAUL
She's dead.

Margery holds back her tears. She glares at Benedict.

Lord Paul arrives on stage.

FOOL
Let's give the Prince a hand.

The audience applauds. Lord Paul looks at the Fool, stern. The Fool eyes the Crossbow. They whisper.

LORD PAUL
I went back to the servant's headquarters and found Sarah lying dead.

FLASHBACK

INT. STAIRS - EARLIER

Vibrant Color

The Fool shoves Sarah.

She falls.

Her head cracks on the bottom stair.

END FLASHBACK

FOOL
Dead?

LORD PAUL
Yes.

FOOL
Better not stir up a panic. I will
end the show quickly.

LORD PAUL
What do you need me to do?

FOOL
Put on a fake smile and follow me.

LORD PAUL
How do I do that?

The Fool looks at Lord Paul.

FOOL
Just smile.

The Fool steps away. Lord Paul smiles at the audience, in agreement.

AUDIENCE - CONTINUOUS

Margery turns to her father.

MARGERY
Why is she dead?

BENEDICT
Why is who dead?

MARGERY
My handmaiden Sarah. She's dead. Why?

BENEDICT
I do not know.

STAGE - CONTINUOUS

FOOL
I present the crossbow.

He rips off the tarp. The audience applauds.

FLASHBACK

INT. STAIRS - EARLIER

Vibrant Color

Nicholas is hanged.

END FLASHBACK

LORD PAUL

What is this?

FOOL

The end of a reign. Looks like you'll be King soon enough.

The Fool winks. Lord Paul is shocked, the Fool smiles and waves at the audience.

AUDIENCE - CONTINUOUS

MARGERY

She was a child and you killed her father.

BENEDICT

She was the daughter of the former King. I let her go, didn't I?

MARGERY

To be my slave.

Benedict grabs his daughter's hand, he torments her.

BENEDICT

I know the French will be glad to have a little maid like you. They are a lustful lot. They will be glad to have a pretty thing like you.

STAGE - CONTINUOUS

The Fool sees Margery cry.

FOOL
Death is inevitable for all of us.
But, don't worry folks this weapon
cannot kill, only severely maim.

Lord Paul draws his sword and points it at the Fool.

FOOL
What are you doing?

LORD PAUL
You killed her.

The Fool jumps behind the crossbow.

FLASHBACK

INT. STAIRS - EARLIER

Vibrant Color

The Fool shoves Sarah.

She falls.

Her head cracks on the bottom stair.

END FLASHBACK

FOOL
This is going to be a spectacle you
will love to witness. For the end of
our evening we will host a battle
between a crossbow and a sword, with
my new best friend Lord Paul.

LORD PAUL
I don't know you.

The Fool eyes Benedict.

AUDIENCE - CONTINUOUS

BENEDICT
I won't sell you off to them. But you
need to behave better. Your lack of
appreciation is getting on my nerves.

He twists her wrist harder. Margery pulls the dagger from
her leg and stabs Benedict in the wrist. He screams.

STAGE - CONTINUOUS

LORD PAUL
You are under arrest.

The Fool looks to the audience.

FLASHBACK

Vibrant Color

EXT. WOODS - DAY

The Fool nearly drowns Lucy.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Father Michael lays in a pool of blood.

INT. MARGERY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Margery stares at him, scared.

INT. COURT - DAY

Benedict pulls the lever. Nicholas is hanged.

INT. STAIRS - EARLIER

The Fool shoves Sarah.

She falls.

Her head cracks on the bottom stair.

END FLASHBACK

STAGE - CONTINUOUS

The Fool fires the crossbow towards Benedict.

AUDIENCE - CONTINUOUS

Margery stands up and stabs him in the chest.

STAGE - CONTINUOUS

The bolt flies through the air. The Fool and Lord Paul watch.

AUDIENCE - CONTINUOUS

Margery stabs him again. Tears stream her face-

The bolt pierces her heart.

Benedict falls to the floor, dead.

Margery collapses to the floor.

Nearby audience members panic.

The world slows.

STAGE - CONTINUOUS

The Fool walks off the stage.

Lord Paul sees the door, clogged.

The crowd floods out, chaos ensues.

Lord Paul sprints to the back.

The Fool steps down the stairs. People all around him scream and run from him. Tears stream his cheeks. He sees Margery soaked in blood gasp her last breaths.

Lord Paul pushes away audience members and flings open the door and jumps out of the way, the audience floods out.

The Fool picks up Margery.

FLASHBACK

Vibrant Color

EXT. WOODS - DAY

The Fool nearly drowns Lucy.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Father Michael lays in a pool of blood.

INT. MARGERY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Margery stares at him, scared.

INT. COURT - DAY

Benedict pulls the lever. Nicholas is hanged.

INT. STAIRS - EARLIER

The Fool shoves Sarah.

She falls.

Her head cracks on the bottom stair.

END FLASHBACK

The Fool carries her back to the stage.

Lord Paul draws his sword and marches towards him.

The Fool weeps.

MARGERY

Help.

FOOL

Don't talk, that will rush things.

Margery looks at the Fool.

FOOL

I'm sorry.

MARGERY

It's okay.

FOOL

I didn't mean to hit-

MARGERY

It's fine. Accidents happen. He's dead.

FOOL

You did it?

MARGERY

I did.

The Fool smiles.

FOOL
Thank you.

MARGERY
What's your name?

FOOL
Alwin. Alwin Abyrford.

MARGERY
Oh that's awful. No wonder you don't
tell anyone.

FOOL
It's ridiculous and old but that's
what my mother wanted.

MARGERY
It's nice to meet you, Alwin.

FOOL
The pleasure is all mine, Margery.

She dies. The Fool weeps.

The Fool looks around and sees the audience empty, minus the
dead King and Lord Paul with his sword drawn. The Fool
places Margery's body on the ground.

FOOL
I didn't want this.

DREAM SEQUENCE

INT. CHAPEL - DAY

Vibrant Color

Margery lays in a casket.

END DREAM
SEQUENCE

STAGE - CONTINUOUS

Vibrant Color

FOOL
I would have never done anything to hurt her.

Lord Paul stares.

FOOL
Please, please kill me.

The Fool runs over to Lord Paul and kneels. He puts Lord Paul's sword to his throat.

FOOL
I don't want to live like this.
Please.

Lord Paul looks at him, and then at Margery.

FOOL
Kill me.

Lord Paul sheaths his sword. He turns and marches out the door, he does not look back.

FOOL
No, please! Kill me!

The Fool is covered in her blood. He scrubs it with a cloth. He sees her body. He weeps. He holds her.

FOOL
Please be a dream.
Please be a dream.

FADE OUT

FOOL (V.O.)
It has been a year since that night.

INT. SERVANT'S QUARTERS - LATER

The Fool writes.

TITLE CARD: CHAPTER 10 | A FINAL APOLOGY

FOOL (V.O.)
In the past year, I have been reviewing all of these events over and over in my head.

FLASHBACK

Vibrant Color

EXT. WOODS - DAY

The Fool nearly drowns Lucy.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Father Michael lays in a pool of blood.

INT. MARGERY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Margery stares at him, scared.

INT. COURT - DAY

Benedict pulls the lever. Nicholas is hanged.

INT. STAIRS - EARLIER

The Fool shoves Sarah.

She falls.

Her head cracks on the bottom stair.

END FLASHBACK

FOOL

I tried to blame Benedict for them.
But it always was me. It was my
fault. If I helped Nicholas, Benedict
would have been dead before all of
this even had the chance to happen. I
know what I have done and I have
nothing to say but, I'm sorry. I fear
I am worse off now than I ever have
been. So, consider this my final
apology.

EXT. CASTLE - EVENING

Lord Paul marches a small crowd away from the castle. Lord Paul looks back, a tear streams his cheek. He marches on.

FOOL (V.O.)
 Lord Paul marched into Germany,
 everyone left with him. The life he
 lives is the life I could have lived.

INT/EXT. COTTAGE - DAY

The Fool walks over to the window and peers inside. Lord Paul cuddles Lucy on the couch. They sleep.

FOOL (V.O.)
 Often I would try to reach out but
 never knew how.

He runs away.

DREAM SEQUENCE

Vibrant Color

Father Michael's body lays in a pool of blood.

END DREAM
 SEQUENCE

FOOL (V.O.)
 Their bodies lie in my thoughts,
 eternally. A permanent image etched
 into my brain.

EXT. FORREST - DAY

The Fool runs through.

A rustle comes from a nearby bush.

The Fool hides behind another tree.

Lucy skips by.

The Fool musters up and steps out from behind the tree.

FOOL
 Would you still like to play?

Lucy freezes.

FOOL
 I promised you.

Lucy runs. The Fool, defeated.

FOOL (V.O.)
Even a dictator can't kill enough to
justify what I did.

EXT. FATHER'S TREE - LATER

The Fool writes in a book.

FOOL (V.O.)
All I can say, is I'm sorry.

The Fool closes the book. He rests it on the tree.

A noose hangs from the tree.

The Fool stares at it.

He stabs his dagger into the ground and puts his Fool's hat
on it.

He climbs the branch.

He ties the noose around his neck.

FLASHBACK

Vibrant Color

EXT. FATHER'S HANGING TREE - DAY

The Young Fool sees his father's body hang from a tree.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - NIGHT

The Fool weeps over her body.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

The Fool nearly drowns Lucy.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Father Michael lays in a pool of blood.

INT. MARGERY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Margery stares at him, scared.

INT. COURT - DAY

Benedict pulls the lever. Nicholas is hanged.

INT. STAIRS - EARLIER

The Fool shoves Sarah.

She falls.

Her head cracks on the bottom stair.

INT. AUDIENCE - NIGHT

The Fool flings his dagger into Guard #1's face.

EXT. CHURCH - NIGHT

The Fool strides away from a burning church.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

He slits Guard #2's throat.

INT. AUDIENCE - NIGHT

Margery dies in his arms.

END FLASHBACK

EXT. FATHER'S HANGING TREE - CONTINUOUS

Gray

He hangs himself.

Vibrant Color

His body stays for a while.

Lucy and Lord Paul come into the area.

LUCY

But then I told her that she was
bossy, and that I didn't want to play
with her.

Paul notices the body. He shields her eyes. Lucy screams.

LUCY
What? What's wrong?

LORD PAUL
I'll tell you later. For now I need you to listen to me, okay?

LUCY
Yes sir.

LORD PAUL
I need you to keep your eyes closed, turn around, and head back home. Do you understand?

LUCY
Can I open my eyes after I turn around?

LORD PAUL
As long as you don't look back.

She does as she's told, until she gets far enough away to not be seen by Paul. She ties up her horse and runs back to the spot.

She hides behind a tree and watches Paul read from the book against the tree.

Paul comes to the last page and writes.

LORD PAUL (V.O.)
Afterwards. From Lord Paul. I wanted to give this story a proper ending. One I think the Fool didn't give. Those bonded by their past and future will never find happiness. True bliss can only be found today. I'm alive because I moved on, Alwin is dead because he didn't.

Lord Paul puts the book down, gets on his horse and trots off.

Lord Paul looks back at the Fool's body.

LORD PAUL (V.O.)
I'm alive because I moved on. The Fool is dead because he didn't.

FADE OUT