

TRANSCRIPT – Smoke & Mirrors Vol. 1 – Chapter 1 – *The Grand Finale*

**PROLOGUE
VOICE-OVER**

LILLIAN: (somber) Harry Houdini had an interesting pet peeve. You see, whenever somebody sees a magic trick, they have one of three reactions. Some will inevitably see through the trick right away. Some are eager to unravel the trick but just can't nail down how it's done. And some will actually believe the magician can bend reality to their will, in other words, actual magic. Harry Houdini despised people who took advantage of this third group. He went out and debunked fortune-tellers, tea leaf readers, psychic mediums, tarot card readers. In addition to performing, I do tarot card readings myself and... I wish I didn't have to. I wish... I wish I had the same level of morality as Harry Houdini but... (sigh) but I really need the money. (exhales) This is Smoke & Mirrors.

BGM: Theme music

NARRATOR: Smoke and Mirrors, volume 1, chapter 1, The Grand Finale

**SCENE 1
EXT. THEATER PARKING LOT. 3AM**

Smoke and Mirrors just finished their second-to-last show. Lillian is outside the theater, hauling props into the van when she's met by Miriam, a frenemy and an important member of a rival troupe.

MIRIAM: (in an almost taunting voice) Hey Lillian.

Lillian always hates talking to Miriam after shows, mostly because her troupe has exponentially better ticket sales and she's exhausted to boot from doing a show that started at midnight.

LILLIAN: Hey Miriam. Come to gloat that your show sold more tickets than ours did?

MIRIAM: (in mock offense) I'm almost offended you would think I would just come down here in the middle of the night just to rub in how much better our show did than yours. No, I have a Tinder date and I thought I'd just stop by and see how you were. By the way, I heard Ed's leaving. That's gotta be hard.

Lillian hasn't fully convinced herself yet that Ed leaving the troupe for med school wouldn't be the end of the show.

LILLIAN: Yeah, next month is his last show but it's not the end of the world. And he's starting med school so, good for him.

MIRIAM: Well, we could always use someone with your talents in our troupe.

It was out the question. She was too proud to end her own troupe to join a more successful one.

LILLIAN: I'm not doing burlesque. We've had this discussion.

MIRIAM: You think people only come to see us because we go, mostly, topless on stage?

LILLIAN: Yes, that's exactly what I think.

MIRIAM: And how many seats did you fill tonight?

LILLIAN: (realizing she verbally backed herself into a corner) 40, but that's not the point!

MIRIAM: Our last show sold out the Moxie and next month, we're actually doing a show outside of Kansas.

Lillian would die and kill to have a show sell out the Moxie.

LILLIAN: You... (interrupts herself) I still have my integrity.

MIRIAM: I'm doing water torture cell next month. The proper way, with the undercage and the trap doors.

LILLIAN: You're...? (interrupts herself again)

MIRIAM: Not the weird bastardization you did because the theater wouldn't let you put in a trap door. Well, I'm getting mimosas down the street, so I need to run. Think about it though.

Miriam walks off

LILLIAN: (mutters to herself) At least I still have my integrity.

Nero and Octavius (stage names, obviously) come out, moving a large prop towards the van.

NERO: Hey Ock, let's wrap this up as soon as we can. I got a 3am Tinder date tonight.

OCTAVIUS: Damn. You don't miss a beat, do you? Just, um, just help me move the big prop and we can handle the rest.

NERO: Can do.

OCTAVIUS: Give me a call later if you need a ride home, alright? I don't want you driving drunk or walking home.

NERO: You want to save me from the walk of shame? I didn't think you cared.

Lillian comes out, holding a mostly asleep Vivian.

LILLIAN: Sack of potatoes coming through. Ed, can you and Ock handle the rest?

VIVIAN: Are we heading home soon?

LILLIAN: Yes, Vivian, just as soon as we get the van loaded. You did great tonight. I'm proud of you.

VIVIAN: (weakly) Yaaaayyyy.

Ed gets a text from his mother, surprising since it's so late.

ED: Geez, she's checking up on me even after a midnight show. Doesn't she have anything better to do? Well, I guess we're not eating out afterwards. (answers the phone) Hello?

Nero sees the chance for the double-entendre.

NERO: I'm eating out afterwards. Ow!

Lillian comes out holding the last bag of props that need to be loaded

LILLIAN: Children present.

OCTAVIUS: Can I help you with the bag?

LILLIAN: Oh, nah, I'm good. I got it. Thank you, though.

Lillian sets the bag into the middle seat.

LILLIAN: And good to go.

VIVIAN: I don't wanna sit in the kiddie seat.

LILLIAN: You don't?

VIVIAN: I'm 7. I shouldn't need to sit in the kiddie seat.

LILLIAN: Okay, you can sit in the front seat, just this once. But don't tell Mom or it's never happening again until you're 12. Promise?

VIVIAN: Promise.

The van door slides closed.

NERO: Alright, time for mimosas.

SCENE 2
INT. HOME. EVENING.

NERO: Is THIS your card?

OCTAVIUS: No, dude. I saw exactly where you messed it up and I'm going to keep making you do it over until you get it right.

NERO: Aw, man!

OCTAVIUS: Seriously, if you can't get this right, we have to come up with another trick to fill the 90 minutes.

FX: Doorbell rings

MAMA: (in the background) Kevin, Kaitlyn's at the door!

OCTAVIUS: We're using our stage names, Mom!

MAMA: Octavius Blackwater, please open the door for Lillian!

OCTAVIUS: (muttering to himself as he gets the door) Gah, I used his real name one time, ONE TIME!

MAMA: And the entire audience was trying to figure out who Tyler was.

OCTAVIUS: And you won't let me forget it!

FX: Door click.

OCTAVIUS: Hi.

LILLIAN: Hey!

OCTAVIUS: C'mon in. Nero has a surprise for you.

LILLIAN: Is it water torture cell? Please tell me it's water torture cell.

OCTAVIUS: It's not water torture cell.

LILLIAN: (mock-disappointment) Awww. Where's Ed?

OCTAVIUS: Mom's working with him on a quick-change outfit. He wants to do a big finale for his last show.

ED: (on the phone) Mom, Mom! Settle down! What do you mean I have to come home? Why?! I'm not arguing with you! I'm just saying I'm exactly where I said I'd be, when I said I was going to be there, with exactly who I said I was going to be with and no one else! I'll be back at 8, just like I said I would! Why are we even having this conversation?! Hello? (off the phone) Well, she hung up, that's a good sign.

MAMA: Stand still, you gonna have high blood pressure by the time you're 25. You should be good. Help Lillian in the living room.

FX: Short pause

LILLIAN: Oh! You finished it!

ED: It's a recliner.

LILLIAN: It's not any recliner. It's... (yelp)J

NERO: Oh yeah, watch out. It has more seams than it looks.

MAMA: Here's your outfit for it. Go change in the bathroom.

ED: Okay, for the big finale, I want to this kinda ritualistic-looking thing, then do a quick-change out of this costume into just street clothes. Viv, can you look up the Latin for something like “The power is reclaimed, the 4 become 3.”

Vivian's Latin is near-perfect, because what 7-year-old HASN'T seen Harry Potter?

VIVIAN: Ok. Give me a second so I can type it in. (momentary pause, reading it off her phone) It's “Quod potentia sit recipi. Quattuor tribus facti sunt.”

LILLIAN: Okay, how do I look?

(Uncomfortable silence, before Nero punches Octavius)

OCTAVIUS: Oh yeah. You look, beautiful.

NERO: (whispers) Good job, Cassanova. Seriously, just ask her out already.

LILLIAN: Alright, let's walk through it.

NERO: Okay, Viv, get into position.

VIVIAN: Got it!

ED: And I'm recording... now...

FX: Lillian sits down in the recliner.

NERO: Okay, first step. Grab the cleaning cloth and make like you're cleaning your leg. Make sure it's covered completely, then tuck your calf into the seam. Okay, Viv, you gotta get the fake leg out a lot faster than that.

VIVIAN: (muffled from inside the recliner) Sorry!

LILLIAN: What's going to be hiding these seams after I tuck my calf in?

NERO: They should pop back out when she pushes out the mannequin leg. Okay, try again. There ya go. Now put the leg in the case. Okay, same thing with the other leg.

VIVIAN: How's that look?

NERO: Good, except I think that was the wrong leg.

VIVIAN: Well you put it there!

NERO: Okay, cover your knees then tuck them under.

LILLIAN: Oh my god, that looks like just like my real knees.

NERO: Okay, tricky part. The outer skirt stays with the thighs, slip your butt through the seam in the back.

LILLIAN: Ah okay. So this is why I have the big flowy top.

VIVIAN: Ow ow! You're on my hair!

LILLIAN: Oh, I'm sorry. You okay?

VIVIAN: Yeah, I'm fine.

NERO: Okay, the hips go into their own box. You'll have to bend your left arm to cover it completely, then tuck it into the seam. Now, at this point Octavius puts the arm in a box. Same with the right arm.

LILLIAN: So I'm not doing the thing where I take apart the fingers?

NERO: Oh yeah. Um, I'll need to get another box but we can do it.

LILLIAN: I mean, it's really just an advanced game of "I got your thumb."

NERO: Anyways, right arm, same way.

LILLIAN: Then it'd be right arm first, then left.

NERO: Right. Put the torso box over her.

OCTAVIUS: Okay, how's this work?

NERO: Slide it in from the front, the bottom has a good-sized seam. No, keep the door closed or they'll see the fake torso. Now the head. Open the torso door. Now close the head. As soon the door closes, slip out and get to the table. Now pick up the head box and put it on the table.

LILLIAN: And the table has a headhole in it. Hi there! Hey! Stop looking at my torso. Hey, I have an idea. What if we moved this box here and the leg box here, then... okay. I could do a handstand and when he reaches for it, I can kick him before he closes it.

NERO: If you think you're bendy enough for it.

LILLIAN: (scoffs) Am I bendy enough for it?

NERO: Anyways, then we put all the boxes in the pile and wheel the whole thing away.

VIVIAN: How'd it look?

ED: Stopping the recording. Here ya go.

FX: Background dialogue of the recording

ED: We'll need to practice it a few times to get the transitions smooth, but I think this'll be a good last show.

NERO: Yeah.

ED: Well, I better get home before my mother has a conniption.

NERO: Okay, take care, man.

SCENE 3

INT. SPIRITUAL SUPPLY SHOP. DAY.

FX: A door opens and shuts, ringing a bell on the way in

LILLIAN: (in an obvious customer service voice) Welcome to American Chicanery... oh hey Ed, what's up?

ED: Hey, I've only got a few minutes. I'm supposed to be grocery shopping. Have we worked out the closing thing yet?

FX: Page flipping

LILLIAN: Yeah, this book came in. It's supposed to be, like, real magic spells but I'm adapting the words for one of them for the show.

ED: Anything in there that actually works?

The audience should be able to hear Lillian give him "the look."

LILLIAN: It's Wiccan. But... it'd be splendid if you could buy a copy.

ED: I don't need to be spending money right now.

Lillian's intentionally bad attempts at upselling borderline on comedic.

LILLIAN: You get a free crystal with every purchase.

ED: I... I'm good.

LILLIAN: (scoffs) Typical Libra.

FX: Phone rings.

ED: Gotta run. It's...

LILLIAN: Yeah.

ED: Ok, see you Friday!

FX: Door bells

SCENE 4
INT. THEATER. LATE EVENING

FX: Audience cheers for background noise

LILLIAN: Hi there! Hey! Stop looking at my torso!

FX: Thud

FX: Comic spring sound effect

NERO: Alright, you've been a great audience! We love all of you! There is... shh shh... there is one more thing before we finish tonight! Three years ago, the four of us set out to make a magic show unlike any other. And tonight, tonight has been Ed's final show. So let me get everyone out here. I need everyone to gather around Ed.

(This mini-scene between Vivian and Mama happens as Nero is talking)

VIVIAN: Ed's phone is buzzing.

MAMA: Probably his mother. Hand it here. He really texted her that?

VIVIAN: What?

MAMA: "You won. I thought for once in your life, you'd be happy."

NERO: (continuing) Ed, it has been a pleasure to have you with us but like all magic shows, at some point it has to end. Here. Hand me your wand.

FX: Lights shutting down

FX: Lighters being flipped

FX: Sparklers

FX: Eerie music starts up in the background (Kevin MacLeod – Gathering Darkness)

Lillian, Nero and Octavius repeat the chant three times.

ALL: Alefjall trollberget idasen, pax hemnes hampen adum, tarbak nodebo roskilde.

FX: A low bass-hum raises during the 2nd iteration

FX: A noise like electrical sparking during the 3rd iteration

FX: All sound stops

There's an awkwardly long silence afterwards.

LILLIAN: (whispering) Where are the lights?

Another awkward silence

NERO: (whispering) Did we blow the breaker?

Another awkward silence

OCTAVIUS: (whispering) I don't see any lights on in the tech booth

Another awkward silence

NERO: Well, sorry for the technical difficulties. You've been a great audience! Have a good night!

Another awkward silence

ED: Well, this isn't weird or anything.

LILLIAN: Anybody have a flashlight? Cellphone?

OCTAVIUS: The one time I don't have my phone on me.

FX: Dull thud

OCTAVIUS: Found the stage

FX: Lighter flipping and lighting

NERO: There's seriously no one here

CITY GUARD: (coughing) Hello? Anyone alive in here?

NERO: Four of us and we can't see a thing

FX: Oil torch burning

LILLIAN: Careful of the curtains!

CITY GUARD: How are the lot of you still alive after that?

OCTAVIUS: What do you mean?

CITY GUARD: What do I mean? You just had a house dropped on your heads.

The four of them look around speechless.

CITY GUARD: This way.

FX: Footsteps. Lillian's platforms and the city guard's chain mail will be the dominant sounds.

SCENE 5

EXT. THEATER. EVENING

They all walk out the door and everything outside out of the theater. They've gone from a modern big city to a musket-age town.

LILLIAN: Where are we?

ED: Whoah.

OCTAVIUS: Did I miss the note about the ren faire?

NERO: Was this one of your ideas?

ED: You and I both know we don't have the budget for a prank this big.

LILLIAN: Guys. (long pause) I've a feeling we're not in Kansas anymore.

BYSTANDERS: (errata) What are they wearing? Where did they come from? Are they witches? Does anyone know whose house that is?

CITY GUARD: Alright, people nothing more to see. (addressing another guard) Put them on the cart and take them to the stockade, at least until we can figure out what's going on.

CITY GUARD #2: Yes, sergeant.

FX: Shackles closing.

LILLIAN: Wait, we're going to jail?
OCTAVIUS: Do you even have the right to do this?
NERO: I can't believe this.
ED: Hey hey hey! Don't!
LILLIAN: This isn't fair! We didn't DO anything! Let me go!

FX: A carriage door closes, a horse whinnies and a chariot takes them away on a cobblestone road.

SCENE 6
INT. STOCKADE. EVENING

The four of them have been thrown in a cell and chained together.

CITY GUARD: Alright, in ya go!

FX: Door locking

OCTAVIUS: Was it really necessary to chain us all together?

NERO: Unbelievable.

OCTAVIUS: Where would we go?

ED: When we came in, there was a flag above the entrance. I've never seen it before. Blue over white, with a yellow sun in the middle.

OCTAVIUS: I have SO many questions.

NERO: So Lillian, what are you thinking about that lock?

OCTAVIUS: You can't be planning an escape already!

LILLIAN: It's a ward spring lock. I've never actually seen one in person but I know how it works since I was... looking up the locks used in water torture cell. This wasn't one of them but it was still... interesting. But sadly, there's nothing in here I can use to open it with. If I had a set of knitting needles...

OCTAVIUS: Not that escaping would get us anywhere. We don't know the layout of the city, where to hide, where to escape to.

LILLIAN: Well, at least... yep, at least I got my hands free.

NERO: Me, too.

OCTAVIUS: Same.

ED: Am I the only one that didn't hold my hands in the escape position?

LILLIAN: I mean, yeah.

ED: I thought that would be something they look for, so I just let them shut it all the way.

OCTAVIUS: Ed, you are such a fail whale.

ED: Oh shut up Ock! What was in that book?

LILLIAN: What book?

ED: The one you got that incantation thing from!

LILLIAN: That was not supposed to work!

ED: Well it did!

LILLIAN: It's a Wiccan spellbook! It doesn't do anything! It's love spells for teenage witches written by a moonlighting hairdresser in Jersey.

Ed has an epiphany and starts laughing, which probably makes him sound a little looney.

LILLIAN: Ed, what's so funny?

ED: I'm rid of her. (pause while he's waiting for them to comprehend what he's saying) I'm in jail, in a strange place, where I have no idea where I am, what rights, if any, I have. I could die and all I can think about is... I'm free of her. This... this could be the best day of my life.

Lillian doesn't intentionally try to be the buzzkill of the situation but just blurts out the first thought that comes to mind.

LILLIAN: I'm never going to see Vivian again.

Ed stops laughing and sighs, but keeps quiet out of respect to her situation.

(Long silence)

FX: Door slams

LILLIAN: (screams)

ROGER: Everybody up and at 'em! It's a new day! Get a move on!

OCTAVIUS: When did we all fall asleep?

ED: I dunno.

LILLIAN: Alright, I'm moving!

ROGER: (in disbelief) Did you just put your shackles back on?

OCTAVIUS: (very quickly) I have no idea what you're talking about.

ROGER: (grunts)

NERO: Where are we going?

ROGER: You have an audience with the King, so make sure to end all your sentences with "Your Majesty," don't approach unless asked, don't speak unless asked and above all be respectful.

ED: We have a king? Nobody told me anything about a king.

NERO: It isn't even daylight yet.

ROGER: You must not be from around here. We're in the middle of our 30 days of night. We won't see daylight for at least another month. The bell tower will tell you what time it is once an hour. It's mid-morning. I promise.

LILLIAN: If it's not imposing, could we at least know the king's name before we meet him?

FX: Guard walks up to Lillian

ROGER: Are you serious?

LILLIAN: (trepidation) Mm hmm.

ROGER: All of you? (pause) Well, you're meeting with His Royal Majesty King Rowan II, ruler of Soleil, possibly flanked by Queen Tambri or their son Prince Oswald. Oswald's wife Princess Yourie will probably not be in attendance as she is trying to de-escalate tensions to the east, and his sister Princess Mackenzie... well, more than one unfortunate fellow has lost his head for displeasing her, so above all BE POLITE!

Awkward pause as they start walking again

LILLIAN: You don't literally mean lost their head, do you?

ROGER: (*laughs to himself, an ambiguous answer to her question*) Well, this way. Francine will instruct you on how to behave in the king's court.

FX: Audio fades, then back up

SCENE 7
INT. COURT. MORNING

Later, as the four are being introduced to court

ROWAN: Bailiff, bring the next case.

ROGER: I bring to you...

LILLIAN: Lillian Carlisle, of Kansas.

ED: Ed Dushane, also of Kansas.

OCTAVIUS: Octavius Blackwater, of Kansas.

NERO: Nero Chamberlain, of Kansas.

ROWAN: A chamberlain, you say? And which lord exactly are you a chamberlain to?

NERO: It's um... it's just a name. Kansas is part of a republic... your majesty.

ROWAN: And where exactly is Kansas?

There's an awkward pause while they try to figure out who speaks first

LILLIAN: From where we're standing, we're not certain, your majesty.

ROWAN: And why have the four of them been brought here?

CITY GUARD: While I didn't see it in person, the report is that their theater was dropped on top of a house in Court Square.

Rowan is silent for a moment trying to comprehend what he was just told.

OCTAVIUS: We were in the...

ROWAN: (makes a noise signal him to stop) (pause) You may speak.

OCTAVIUS: We were in the theater at the end of our performance. All the p... the lights went out and then we were here. Believe me when I say, we are just as confused about how we got here as anyone else, your majesty.

ROWAN: I see.

Tambri breaks the awkward silence as Rowan tries to figure out what to make of them.

TAMBRI: So you're performers?

OCTAVIUS: Yes, your majesty.

TAMBRI: And what manner of show were you performing?

OCTAVIUS: It's a magic show. Not, like, actual witchcraft, just, you know, illusions and sleight-of-hand, smoke and mirrors. That kind of thing.

LILLIAN: That's actually the name of the troupe, Smoke and Mirrors...

TAMBRI: I see. From the sound of it, I would be very interested in having you perform for us at some point.

ROWAN: What are you doing?

ED: Thank you, your majesty.

TAMBRI: If they aren't performers, it'll be very obvious once they start, performing. Besides, if it is witchcraft, I mean, witchcraft itself hasn't been a crime here in centuries.

ROWAN: Well, I can't see that we have any cause to hold them for a crime...

CITY GUARD #2: Your majesty! Anannon's army is approaching the gate!

ROWAN: Another time then. Quickly, to the front bulwark.

OCTAVIUS: (whispering) Who's Anannon?

LILLIAN: (whispering) I don't know!

ED: (whispering) Why would I know?

NERO: May we follow?

CITY GUARD: Stand to the side and keep your distance from the king and queen unless called. You can walk the tunnel behind the last of the guards.

OCTAVIUS: They have a tunnel all the way to the city gate?

CITY GUARD: Yes. Don't fall behind.

FX: Footsteps and the sound of torches burning

LILLIAN: So, um... who's Anannon? If I may ask.

CITY GUARD: An unholy wizard. Honest-to-God, I'm not lying to you. Every year he marches up here with his army of monsters, demanding a tribute.

OCTAVIUS: Well what does he usually ask for?

CITY GUARD: Sometimes gold, sometimes children for his perverse magic. Nothing that can't ever be sacrificed but it always makes us look weak. He holds a member of each of the 13 nations' royal families hostage. Leverage, they call it. Either way, he's not someone to be trifled with.

CITY GUARD #2: Your majesty. Thank God you arrived.

King Rowan is addressing the commander of the barracks

ROWAN: What are his demands this time?

CITY GUARD #2: He's demanding that we hand over Princess Mackenzie or... and I don't know what this means, your majesty... but he said he's heard we have outlanders as well and will take them in her stead.

ROWAN: Mackenzie, that must mean...

CITY GUARD #2: I'm sorry, your majesty.

FX: A torch flicker as Lillian turns around

CITY GUARD: It means, the Queen Mother has died in Anannon's custody and he's looking for another hostage.

ROWAN: Now what is this about the outlanders?

They all stop in their tracks.

LILLIAN: He's not talking about us, is he?

OCTAVIUS: Well, what else could that possibly mean?

ED: I don't like where this is going.

CITY GUARD: That's all he said, and that he'll be returning in a day's time for our answer.

MACKENZIE: Make way, make way!

Mackenzie runs down the hallway and stumbles into Ed.

MACKENZIE: Oof! Hey, watch where you're going, nitwit!

ED: I'm sorry, your majesty.

MACKENZIE: It's highness. I'm not queen, yet.

ROWAN: You're not even in line for it.

MACKENZIE: Your son is too lazy to even lie with his wife! You think he'd make a good king? Ha! Admit it! It's in-ev-it-able!

ROWAN: Now is not a time for this conversation.

Mackenzie rolls her eyes and gets back to business.

MACKENZIE: How much does that windbag want from us this time?

CITY GUARD #2: Anannon wants you as a hostage or the outlanders, your highness.

MACKENZIE: Well, why are we still having this conversation? Send them the outlanders and let's be done with this!

CITY GUARD #2: They're standing right behind you.

MACKENZIE: I don't care where they're standing as long as they get moving to the front gate!

NERO: I want to see him. Anannon. I'd like to see his face.

ROWAN: You're not in any position to make demands of a king.

NERO: I highly doubt you're planning on sacrificing your own daughter so I'd like to at least see what I'm getting into.

TAMBRI: Just let him, if only for a minute.

ROWAN: Very well.

FX: Footsteps, then stopping

ROWAN: This is what the guard was explaining to you. Anannon draws an army of the undead to our doorsteps.

Nero stares at the enemies in the field below.

OCTAVIUS: He's looking right at me. It almost feels like, like he's looking through me.

NERO: It's a trick.

ROWAN: Excuse me?

NERO: They are not undead, reanimated skeletons, zombies, ghouls, whatever you call them, anything like that. They are just men. They're wearing a morph suit, er... black cloth on their legs, hands and faces. The bones of those they killed strapped to their legs, their skulls worn like masks.

OCTAVIUS: Well, no, what about the one he walked behind carrying the torch?

NERO: Okay. That one's the throw. It's the only one he walked behind before moving back to in front of them all. The guy or more-likely someone behind him, unstraps the leg-bones and straps in a stand, then he slips out the back of the armor. You could almost mistake it for a shadow if you weren't looking for it.

ROWAN: If that army is nothing more than mere men...

NERO: Could your forces take them?

ROWAN: (thinking about it) It'll be costly.

Nero thinks for a moment.

NERO: How interested are you in making a statement?

ROWAN: What did you have in mind?

MACKENZIE: We are not having this conversation! Send them out there!

ROWAN: I am the king and I make the decisions.

MACKENZIE: This is my life we're talking about! If we fight him, he kills all the hostages and blames us and twelve nations come down on our head!

ROWAN: Not if he's dead.

Mackenzie realizes she's not going to win this argument.

MACKENZIE: I'll prepare a boat and enough supplies for when I'm living in EXILE after he kills all of you!

Mackenzie starts to storm off.

MACKENZIE: What are you looking at, nitwit!

ED: Sorry, your highness.

Mackenzie pauses for a moment

MACKENZIE: Are you turned on by this?

ED: No, no! I'm... that means nothing!

MACKENZIE: Ewww! You are disgusting. You better hope this works because if it doesn't, I'll find you and I'll... have your heads... if Anannon doesn't get to you first. I'm LEAVING!

Mackenzie vents as she storms off

OCTAVIUS: You know that means she was looking at your...

ED: I know. I know. That's so hot.

NERO: So... do you know where we can get some bones?

ROWAN: There's a firepit outside the city where we burn the bodies.

FX: Music playing as Nero describes his plan

NERO: When we hear Anannon's army is on the move, we'll have everyone line up in front of the gate. We'll have all the soldiers done up as skeletons much in the same way he has. They'll dig into the sand and cover their heads with tarps. When he arrives, we'll step out, convince him Soleil has not one but four wizards of their own. The trigger word is 'Arise.' Our 'skeleton army' will rise up out of the ground and attack.

ROWAN: Just remember, if this doesn't work, there's nothing in his demands that states we have to deliver you alive.

SCENE 8

INT. THEATER. DAY

OCTAVIUS: I can't believe you actually managed to talk them into this crazy plan.

LILLIAN: You do realize how highly uncomfortable I am with using an actual torch in the costume closet?

NERO: We'll need the palm torches and the purple sparklers.

OCTAVIUS: Why the purple ones?

ED: Because necromancy is always purple. Haven't you ever played Skyrim?

NERO: We'll put the mirror block in the place we'll stand, to make it look like we're levitating ourselves.

LILLIAN: So shoes with raised heels then?

NERO: Yeah.

ED: I really hope this works.

NERO: So I see you and Mackenzie got off to a great start.

ED: Yeah. Kinda don't wanna talk about it. Though there is one thing I wanted to discuss with everyone, completely unrelated.

OCTAVIUS: What's up?

ED: Okay... assuming we survive this, we're still stuck here. Wherever we are, these countries have never existed. We couldn't be in a past version of Earth because there's not a lack of similarity, there's no similarity whatsoever, except...

OCTAVIUS: They all speak English.

ED: Yes and that worries me. They speak English, they all call it English and no one has any idea where the name came from.

LILLIAN: Do you think there was... another "outlander" who brought English to this world?

ED: It's possible but that's not the point. I know medicine. Ock, you know enough about HVAC to get people started.

NERO: And I work retail.

OCTAVIUS: I can show them the mechanics of how an air conditioner works well enough but I don't know anything about how to make Freon. I suppose I could use propane but I don't know the pressure ratios.

ED: I was in the pharmacy program, not pharmacology. I can't just walk in and cure tuberculosis or anything because I don't know how the drugs are made. I can tell you which drugs, that may or may not have the same names here, interact negatively with other drugs that may or may not have the same names. Anyway, I'm off on a tangent. The question I need to ask is, are we all okay with sharing what we know?

OCTAVIUS: I'm fine with it.

LILLIAN: I mean we should get paid for it. (pause) What? We're not getting paid any other way!

NERO: Focus. We gotta survive tonight first. Then we can worry about where we'll live and how we'll eat.

FX: Tower bells ringing in the background

NERO: That's our cue.

SCENE 9

EXT. CITY GATE. EVENING

ED: Alright, we're here. What's the story?

CITY GUARD: (yelling down from the bulwark) Nothing's happening yet.

HERALD: The almighty, omniscient, omnipotent Lord Anannon, Harbinger of the Lower Gods, demands to hear your decision. Have you chosen to hand over the Princess or have you decided to hand over the outlanders? Or better yet, maybe you have decided on your own destruction? Anannon is not choosy. All options are still on the menu. Perhaps if Anannon is feeling generous, he will decide to show mercy on your women and children. What'll it be, Rowan?

NERO: Well, (adjusts his hair) time to give them our answer. Open the gate.

FX: Really slow, massive gate opening

FX: Footsteps on the sand

OCTAVIUS: (voice low) Eyes forward, confidence, we have to sell this act

CITY GUARD #2: (whispering) Watch where you're stepping!

LILLIAN: (whispering) My bad.

FX: Footsteps on the sand

The four of them walk up to designated spots and stop. Lillian lights her sparkler in her hands.

LILLIAN: (yelling) Hail to the guardians of the watchtowers of the East, the powers of air and invention. Hear me! Us! Hear us!

ED: (whispering) Is she quoting "The Craft?"

NERO: Just roll with it, dude.

FX: Sparklers. They all light purple sparklers at the beginning of each line.

ED: Hail to the guardians of the watchtowers of the South, the powers of fire and feeling. Hear us.

NERO: Hail to the guardians of the watchtowers of the West, powers of water and intuition. Hear us.

It'll become apparent that Octavius is the only one who hasn't seen that movie a thousand times.

OCTAVIUS: Hail to the guardians of the watchtowers of the... North, um, powers of earth and... sand. Hear us! (whispering) It was north, right?

LILLIAN: (whispering) Close enough. (yelling) May the spirits of those fallen aid us in our time of need, to protect our (slight hesitancy) homeland. Arise!

FX: The soldiers rise up out of the sound, growling like the undead.

ALL: Arise! Arise!

FX: The soldiers run past them, heading off to the battle

FX: Cannons fire for the bulwark

FX: The skeleton army in front of them shrieks as they move into battle

FX: A great battle

CITY GUARD: This is a real skeleton army guys!

CITY GUARD #2: Too late to stop now!

FX: A skeleton shrieking

FX: A thud

FX: Shreiking skeleton head getting punted into the distance

CITY GUARD #2: The head's the weak spot! Go for the head!

FX: The battle dies down

CITY GUARD: It's over Anannon! Put down your staff and surrender! You've nowhere to run!

ANANNON: Your arrogance knows no boundaries, General.

Anannon spins his staff around as a plume of smoke envelopes.

FX: Smoke

ANANNON: We live amongst you. We see everything you do. We guard your palaces. We know your routines. We'll strike just when you think you're safe. We are here and we will never see us coming!. (evil laughs)

CITY GUARD #2: (coughing) I can't see a thing!

Anannon bursts into a plume of flame and disappears completely.

CITY GUARD: Open fire!

FX: Musket fire

FX: Plume of flame

CITY GUARD #2: Where'd he go?

CITY GUARD: Stab the ground! Get him! Do not let him escape!

FX: Swords slicing through the sand

FX: Scene transition

SCENE 10
INT. COURT. DAY

ROWAN: The people of Soleil owe you a debt of gratitude. Admittedly, we had a bit of difficulty finding a way to properly thank you. Given your situation, however, I think you'll find your reward to your liking. However, like everything granted in Soleil, it comes with conditions. In the matter of the theater building in Court Square, you may occupy it under one condition.

TAMBRI: The Royal Court has decided to sponsor your theater for the first year or until such a time as you are able and willing to return home.

The four of them try to contain their excitement.

OCTAVIUS: Oh wow.

LILLIAN: Thank you, your majesties.

ED: Thank you, sir, madam.

NERO: We look forward to serving your majesties.

ROWAN: That will be all.

FX: Footsteps

NERO: So, we're living in the theater now?

OCTAVIUS: Looks like.

LILLIAN: I call dibs on the costume room!

ED: We'll have to convert the back studio into a kitchen and figure out how to cook without gas... or electricity. That'll be a little weird.

OCTAVIUS: Can I have the ballet troupe's office? It has a window.

ED: Upstairs green room?

NERO: Well, I guess I'm in studio 1.

OCTAVIUS: Or the Rocky Horror office?

NERO: That works too.

(Dialogue fades out)

END

Featuring:

Kirsten Kraus as Lillian Carlisle

Ryo Kimball as Octavius Blackwater

Mike Kooistra as Nero Chamberlain

Jason Winstead as Ed Dushane

Ava Allsup as Vivian Spencer

James Blaisdell as King Rowan II

Kim Nelson as Queen Tambri

Marianne Orendorff as Princess Mackenzie

Additional voices by Paul Arbisi, Stacey Cotham, Jay Langejans, Jason Luka, Melissa Sheldon and Kai Winterpaw.

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