

Beyond Our Border

An original play written by Niyazi Unugur

Created in collaboration with the Kensington Blue Company 2022-23

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DRAMA SCHOOL

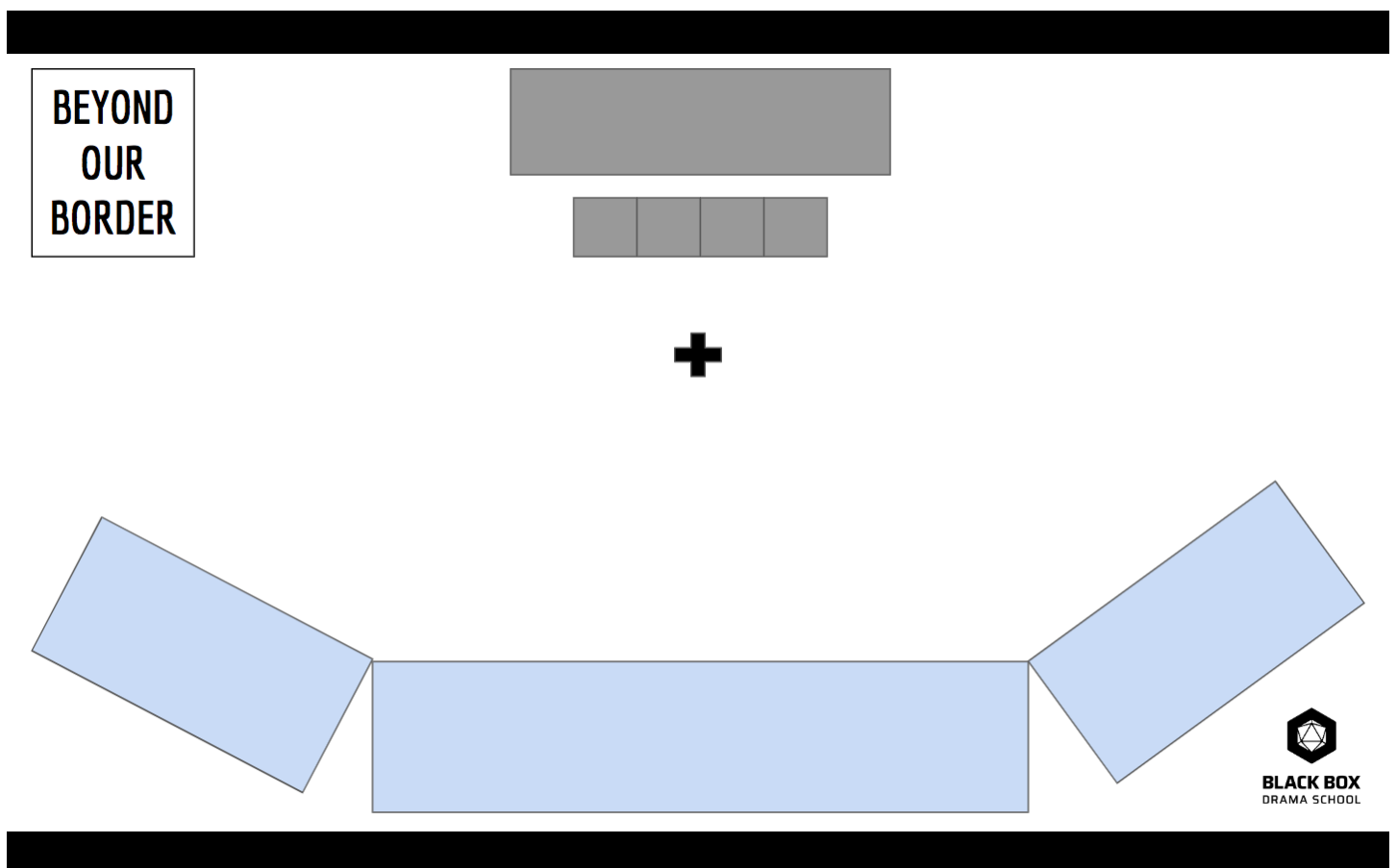
FOREWORD

Set in the town of Blackbridge, two rival hunting groups are commissioned by the town's Mayor to undertake a dangerous mission. The mission entails hunting a troll, who has apparently been terrorising the borders of the town. However, when a group of children discover that the Warden of Blackbridge has insidious ambitions, a race against time begins to gather all the clues and save the people of Blackbridge.

This play was inspired by the role-play sessions with the Kensington Blue Company of 2022-23.

Using the 'Role That Dice' system, the pupils explored an immersive world in an improvised drama setting. Through this process the pupils created the characters, lines and narrative for this play.

STAGING DIAGRAM



SCENE 1 - BLACKBRIDGE CHURCH. SUNSET.

SFX: BLACKBRIDGE MOTIF

THE ENSEMBLE stood frozen onstage in tableaux as the audience enter.

As the lights go up **LIEUTENANT POWELL** begins to move, connecting with the audience.

LIEUTENANT POWELL

Welcome one and all to Blackbridge.

A town, whose history and heritage, is as old as the Blackwood trees that encompass it.

Blackbridge is one of the great trading towns of the eastern continent,

Mainly in part to her prime location.

You see, she sits an equal distance south of the capitol, Yhada's Gate,

As she does north of the golden city of Zabrille.

For centuries, Blackbridge has flourished in the profits that

Merchants, travellers and hunters bring her,

As they wander the passage between the two great cities.

But, for nearly a month now, something has not been quite right in our old town.

Along the southern and northern bridge borders,

Strange disappearances of food, materials and even people

Have caused quite a panic amongst the townsfolk.

Rumours have begun to spread,

And, like the abandoned roots of weeds, in a garden of flowers,

Those rumours have begun to strangle our community.

Yet there is a glimmer of hope.

For tonight, in Blackbridge Townhall, Lord Mayor, Holden Raimbaud,

Will host a meeting of the bravest and most skilled hunters for hire in all of the lands.

LIEUTENANT POWELL looks out beyond the audience.

MADDALENA and **CARMEN** from opposite sides begin to move, making eye contact..

BOTH sing.

MADDALENA + CARMEN

Bridge over water.

Moon over land.

Secrets so dark,

In this village of the damned.

(repeating four times)

BLACKOUT.

SCENE 2 - TOWN HALL. SUNSET.

SFX: FIREPLACE

A hooded DROOT enters stage, sniffing around on the table.

She removes her hood revealing her troll ears.

She loads her bag with items from the table.

After some time she hears the CHILDREN'S voices from off-stage and quickly leaves.

LOOSINDA

(off stage)

This way, quickly!

LOOSINDA, BUTTONS and LUNA enter, with caution in the movement but excitement on their faces. They stand centre stage.

LOOSINDA

Look at all this food!

And drink!

And silver!

BUTTONS

I told you this was a good idea!

LOOSINDA

Shhhhh!

Lower your voices.

If the town's guard finds us here they'll have our hands!

LUNA

I don't like this.

We should - we should go!

BUTTONS

Just a little longer Luna!

LUNA

Quiet!

Someone is coming.

Hide!

LOOSINDA, BUTTONS and LUNA exit stage.

WARDEN ADRI, MAYOR RAIMBAUD and LIEUTENANT POWELL enter.

MAYOR

Warden, I trust everything is in order?

WARDEN

As you advised my Lord.

I have doubled our defences around the perimeters of the Blackwood.

The last of the hunters have just arrived in town.

And are gathering outside.

They await our proposal.

MAYOR

Right.

Good.

Now, get me a proper drink.

And invite the hunters in!

WARDEN

As you wish, my Lord.

WARDEN ADRI pours MAYOR RAIMBAUD a drink.

LIEUTENANT POWELL invites the HUNTERS in.

The HUNTERS ENTER; the NORTH stage right and the SOUTH stage left.

There is animosity between the NORTH and the SOUTH.

WARDEN ADRI waits for all to find the positions on stage before beginning.

WARDEN

Welcome hunters of the North and of the South.

I am Owin Adri, Warden of Blackbridge.

I am certain that our Lord Mayor Raimbaud requires no introduction.

You have no doubt travelled some ways to be here tonight.

And in answering the summon of our Lord Mayor - the people, give thanks.

The Lord Mayor and I wish to proposition you with a quest.

And no doubt, you will have many questions on it.

However, I would first ask for you all to formally introduce yourselves.

An awkward silence fills the space.

WARDEN

Let us begin then, with the North.

MADDALENA

I am Maddalena.
A bard, among other things.
I protect the forests and those that inhabit them.
Animals, plants and all the other woodland folk.

YOUSHI

I am Sister Youshi.
Cleric to the Churches of Yhada.
I serve the lady of the moon.
And my sword does her bidding.

ARTEMIS

Artemis.
Formerly, a lieutenant of the Eastern Gate.
A rogue and master of stealth.
I've a decent shot with a bow and arrow.
When the moment requires it.

DRAAGO

The name is Draago.
I am a bloodhunter.
I, like all bloodhunters before me,
Have sworn a sacred oath to rid this world of chaos and darkness.
One beast at a time.
Simply, if you need something killed.
Then look no further.

OLGA

And I am Olga.
My enemies refer to me as The Brute.
I serve one master alone - coin.
And my hammer, well she obeys the highest bidder.

MAYOR

Very good. Very good!
Now the South.

VIGO

Vigo Bloodfist.
A pleasure to make your acquaintance.
Sorcerer extraordinaire.
Charmed, I'm sure.

JACOB

Jacob Williams.
Rogue by trade.
Master of shadows.
If you want something *done* discreetly.
I'm your knave.

SANGIUM

I am Sanguim.
Friend of the forest folk.
An unusual scavenger of unusual things.
Half squirrel, half man.
Full druid - but nice.

WARDEN

Yes, our scholars have written at great lengths about your recent transformation.
I have never seen one of your kind up close.

SANGIUM

I wouldn't get too close, old man.
Sometimes, I just can't control the animal within.

WARDEN

Very good, moving on.

HERMIS

Hermis.
Ranger.
There is not a creature in these lands that I cannot track.
And, none can escape my dagger.

WARDEN

An excellent quality to have.
(moving to Carmen)
And you must be -

CARMEN

Carmen.
Also, a bard.
Formerly of The North, now allied to The South.
Whilst the golden city summoned me,
My heart will always belong in The North.

WARDEN

Of course, Carmen.
Of the crow sisters.
I had heard that you abandoned the double act with your sister,
And made for the golden city of Zabrille.
What a pleasure to play host to you both this evening.

CARMEN

You should know better than to believe everything you hear, Warden.

MAYOR

Perhaps the two crows would like to sing us a song?

MADDALENA

No, we're here to work.
Not to play.

CARMEN

Precisely, another time, perhaps.

Another awkward silence fills the space.

MAYOR

Very well.
Now that we all know who's who, let us begin.
Warden?

WARDEN

(moving downstage centre)

It is no secret that the town of Blackbridge has suffered much of late.
This great town is not what it once was.
The Lord Mayor and I seek to restore Blackbridge to its former glory.
However, whilst refurbishing the Northern and Southern bridges we encountered a beast.

OLGA

Get to the point already.
What do you need us to kill?

MAYOR

A troll.
Violent and savage.
The biggest one seen in these parts for some time.
This *thing* has stolen. And *it* has killed.

WARDEN

And it will kill again, without your intervention.
The terms of the contract are quite simple.
Whichever hunting party brings us the head of the beast.
Each living member shall be paid the sum of 100 gold - each.

Excitement flurries throughout the space.

JACOB

Lord Raimbaud.
I am certainly not complaining,
Yet, that is an unusually high fee for just one beast.
Might I inquire as to why you would be willing to pay so dearly?

ARTEMIS

Why do you care?
It's not like you *southerners* will kill it.
You couldn't catch a fish in a barrel of water.

NORTHERN HUNTERS laugh.

HERMIS

My dagger will catch you tongue,
If you insult me or my party again.

SILENCE.

OLGA

Do it.
(pause)
I dare ya...

ALL HUNTERS and LIEUTENANT POWELL draw their weapons.

LIEUTENANT POWELL

There will be no doing of any sort in these halls.
Perhaps you need reminding of the hunter's oath, to which you have all sworn.
"Above all else hunters swear to protect the lands, the lords and the peoples"

WARDEN

The contract is set.
Should you wish to take it,
Then return us the head of the beast.

MAYOR

Now if you'd excuse us.
The Warden and I need to speak - alone.
Lieutenant, please see our guest out.

The HUNTERS and LIEUTENANT POWELL leave.

The NORTH exit stage right and the SOUTH exit stage left.

MAYOR walks upstage, making eye contact with WARDEN, then looking out to the audience.

WARDEN

Your grace?

MAYOR

I must say, I am a little uneasy about this all.

WARDEN

It is all under control, my Lord.
Rest assured and tend to your duties.
More than ever, the people need your gracious smile,
To light this darkness that has enshrouded us all.

MAYOR

You are right.
You are always right my friend.
Peace be with you.
Good night then.

The MAYOR exits stage.

WARDEN waits a while, moving downstage before talking.

WARDEN

I know you're there, Lieutenant.

LIEUTENANT POWELL enters from upstage, accompanied by the REGISTRAR and VIOLET.

WARDEN does not turn to meet them, instead gazes outward.

LIEUTENANT POWELL

Warden -

WARDEN

What is it, Lieutenant?

LIEUTENANT POWELL

I have the Registrar and his daughter, as you requested.

WARDEN

Good.

(pause)

You may leave us.

LIEUTENANT POWELL

Right, of course Warden.

Before I go might I ask why you need the girl too -

WARDEN

(turning)

No you *may* not -

Once we are done here.

You *will* return to your watch, Lieutenant .

Our guests will no doubt be causing havoc in town tonight.

You are to keep a close eye on them.

LIEUTENANT POWELL moves upstage, placing a hand on the shoulder of REGISTRAR.

REGISTRAR

Good evening Warden.

(An uncomfortable silence)

Might I ask what this is all about?

And why you summoned my daughter too?

WARDEN motions at VIOLET to move forward before leaning in.

WARDEN

Hello, my dear.

And what might your name be?

VIOLET

Violet Elwyn.

(pause)

Your grace.

WARDEN

Violet, my sweet.
I'm no grace.
Far from it in fact.
I am low born, like you.
And your pathetic father.

REGISTRAR

I'm sorry Warden, but have I offended you?
Because, if I have, in any way,
I can assure you it is a misunderstanding.
For which I deeply regret.

WARDEN

Somehow you ended up in charge of keeping the coin.
And look where that has gotten our beloved town.

REGISTRAR

I'm not sure what you're implying, Warden?

WARDEN

Violet, I am sorry to say,
But your father is a very bad man.
He has been stealing from the mayor and our townspeople.

REGISTRAR

That's ludicrous. And laughable.
You have no proof of such an accusation!

VIOLET

Warden Adri!
You must be mistaken!
This can't be true!

WARDEN

I'm sorry Violet, it is true.
Your father has betrayed us all.

REGISTRAR

Peace to your mother's soul.
Of course it is not true!
And on her grave, Violet.
I swear it!

WARDEN

Enough of this prevarication!
Lieutenant, place the Registrar in a dungeon cell beneath the church.

LIEUTENANT POWELL, reluctantly takes the REGISTRAR away.

REGISTRAR

What, what!
This isn't possible.
How is this happening?
Violet, I promise this it's not true!

**LIEUTENANT POWELL, draws his sword, leading the REGISTRAR off stage.
The REGISTRAR continues pleading as he is moved out of the room.**

VIOLET

Warden.
My father is a good and honest man!
He would never steal.
It must be a misunderstanding.
Please let him go!

WARDEN

(kneeling)

Listen Violet, the townsfolk will be very upset,
Once they discover what your father has been doing.

(pause)

It would be worse if you hide out of town for a bit.

VIOLET

I don't want to leave my father.

WARDEN

Fear nothing, my dear sweet Violet.
If your father is innocent, then he will be safe.

(pause)

I have given my guards directions to a private lodging in the Blackwood.
You'll be safe there.

The WARDEN leads VIOLET off stage.

The CHILDREN re-enter.

LOOSINDA

This is bad.

BUTTONS

Very bad.

LUNA

They took Violet.

We have to help her!

BUTTONS

Luna, I want to help her too, but we need to be smart about this.

We are just children after all.

LOOSINDA

You're right. We are just children.

And we need to use that to our advantage.

BUTTON notices a gold coin on the floor

BUTTONS

Praise the Gods!

Look, I found a gold coin!

I'm rich!

LOOSINDA

Buttons, focus!

LUNA

We need to speak to Violet's father.

I'm going to the Church.

BUTTONS

I'm coming with you.

LOOSINDA

Me, too.

LOOSINDA

Keep quiet and follow me.

Exit all.

SCENE 3 - THE TWINNED TAVERNS. BLACKBRIDGE.

SFX: TAVERN QUIET

DRAAGO, YOUSHI, OLGA, MADDALENA, ARTEMIS, centrestage right.

OLGA mid-story about a previous encounter, the others react accordingly.

OLGA

On the gods, I remember it like it was this morning!
I made my way through to that mirky, misty swap.
When suddenly I found myself surrounded by green skinned beasts.
A swarm of at least twenty goblins!

ARTEMIS

I seem to remember it being more like six.
Eight at most!

OLGA

Pah!
It was twenty!
Anyway, as they moved in, surrounding me.
Their yellow tongues, salivating with poisonous drool.
I'm not ashamed to admit,
That mi life flash before mi eyes!
And **it** spoke to mi. "Olga" it said.
"Bless'd is thy hammer."

ARTEMIS

What Olga was **actually** seeing was three flaming arrows.
I had accurately dispatched a trio of the goblins.

OLGA

(Standing and lifting her hammer)

As I lifted my hammer high above my head.
She shone as bright as the sun.

(Pause)

I brought her down with such ferocity,
It flattened the fattest one closest to me in one blow.
The rest of the goblins seeing this,
Turned tail and ran into the mists.

VIGO, SANGIUM, HERMIS, JACOB, CARMEN have entered stage left.

HERMIS

(Slow clap to a silence)

Actually!

I heard you soiled yourself, right there.

And that the smell was so grotesque,

That not even a goblin could withstand it!

VIGO, SANGIUM, JACOB laugh.

CARMEN makes eye contact with **MADDELENA**.

DRAAGO

Say it again, go on!

Say.

It.

Again.

CARMEN

Easy everyone.

You know the rules.

No fighting in The Twinned Taverns.

A room full of hunters,

Things can get messy.

Quickly!

JACOB

(Revealing a D20)

Of course, Carmen.

I wouldn't dream of fighting.

How about a simple dice game then?

MADDALENA

(Moving centrestage)

Jacob, was it?

(Quickly)

I accept your challenge.

Begin.

JACOB

(Smirking)

Ladies, first.

MADDALENA

(Unfazed)

My, what a gentleman.

JACOB

One gold?

MADDALENA

Let's make it two.

JACOB

Very well.

MADDALENA rolls dice first. A strong roll, the **NORTHERN HUNTERS** smile.

JACOB rolls now. A better roll, the **NORTHERN HUNTERS** jeer.

JACOB

Shall we have another go?

MADDALENA

Naturally!

MADDALENA rolls dice first. A strong roll, the **SOUTHERN HUNTERS** smile.

JACOB rolls now. A better roll, the **NORTHERN HUNTERS** jeer.

JACOB

(Smirking)

Looks like you owe me four gold, Bard

MADDALENA

Double or nothing?

JACOB

As you wish my lady.

VIGO rolls dice first. A strong roll, the **SOUTHERN HUNTERS** smile.

MADDALENA

Ha, nineteen!

Only twenty can better it!

SILENCE as **JACOB** rolls.

JACOB

Twenty!
A critical hit!

The **NORTHERN HUNTERS** jeer. The **SOUTHERN HUNTERS** stunned.

MADDALENA

Impossible. Impossible.
(after silence)
Impossible!

SANGUIM

No, improbable but certainly not impossible!
Yes, my good friend Jacob here,
Had a mere five percent chance of beating your roll of nineteen.
However, that's not how he won.
In fact, Jacob is a nestler.
(tickles Jacob)
I feel very proud really.
I believe he learned this trait from me.
(Finds Jacob's hidden dice and rolls it)
It appears that Jacob has been using a weighted dice!
He's a cheater!

SOUTHERN HUNTERS place their hands on their heads.

DRAAGO

(Drawing his weapon)
In the North,
We cut off the hands of cheats!

HERMIS

(Drawing his weapon)
Easy now Draago.
I wouldn't want you getting hurt.

OLGA

(Drawing her weapon)
He's a cheat!
Cheaters gonna learn!

SANGIUM

(Drawing his claws)

I'd like to see you try, Brute!
I'll crack your head like a fresh nut!

All HUNTERS suddenly draw their weapons.

SILENCE as tension builds.

YOUSHI stands on the blocks' centre stage and starts casting a spell as part of the movement.

YOUSHI

Enough!
Dur Konuşma!

YOUSHI releases the spell and **HUNTERS FREEZE**

YOUSHI

We forget ourselves.
We stand in the a room full of hunter history and mythology,
Hunters of the North and the South. East and the West.
Have for centuries travelled the passage,
To meet here at The Twinned Taverns!

(Pause)

Like them all, we have taken the Hunter's Oath.
And as someone who has sworn to protect the people.
I believe it is our duty to serve them
We have been contracted to hunt a violent vandalising troll.

YOUSHI moves to stand downstage centre.

YOUSHI

The issue is I know the troll we are hunting, *personally*.
And whilst Draatum can be a little abrasive at times.
He is not a thief.
He is not violent.
And he is certainly not a killer.
He is a travelling craftsman.
A very skilled builder.

(pause)

I believe that Blackbridge has been corrupted, from the inside.
I am not sure if the Mayor is in on it,
But I am certain of the Wardens malfeasance

All this makes me wonder if perhaps the recent refurbishments,
Of the town's bridges may have something to do with it?
Whether you like it or not.
We will need to work together.
(releases the spell and the HUNTERS fall to the floor.)
So, shall we get to work?

BLACKOUT

SCENE 4 - DRATUUM'S CAVE. THE BLACKWOOD.

DRATUUM is sitting in his cave and building a small wooden ship.

After twenty seconds **DROOT** returns from scavenging and attempts to sneak up on him.
DRATUUM continues working.

DRATUUM

(Head up, breathes in through nose)

How was the scavenge?

DROOT

Good. Very good!

I found many items and lots of food.

DRATUUM

Did you get the glue that I asked for?

DROOT

Yes

(Rummaging through her bag)

Here it is!

DRATUUM

(Grabs arm whilst taking the glue)

Did anyone see you Droot?

DROOT

No Baba.

I did as you said.

I had my hood up the whole time.

DROOT gestures with open arms and returns to rummage through her bag.

DRATUUM

Good.

DROOT sits and eats a piece of bread from her bag.

DROOT

Baba, why do we have to hide our ears above land?

DRATUUM

Droot, Blackbridge is not like the cities.
Here, and in other towns, we have to be especially careful.
Our kind is not as widely accepted in these parts.

DROOT

Why is that?

DRATUUM

Good question.

(Taps floor twice, gesturing for Droot to sit)

Well, I guess.

Mankind fears what it does not know.
When something looks different to themselves,
I imagine it probably confuses them.
Trying to speak or reason with the thing they are scared of,
Is probably too scary for them.

DROOT

So instead they choose fear?

DRATUUM

Yes, fear.

(Pause).

And hate.

BLACKOUT.

SCENE 5 - TOWNHALL. BLACKBRIDGE.

MAYOR is sitting on the blocks drinking and reading the ledger.

SFX: DOOR KNOCKING

MAYOR

Enter!

VIGO enters.

MAYOR

(Panicked and standing)

Vigo Bloodfist.

To what do I owe the pleasure?

VIGO

(Approaching the table)

Mayor Ramibaud, I assure you.

The pleasure is all mine.

VIGO uses her staff to force **MAYOR** back into seated position.

MAYOR

Guards!

Lieutenant!

VIGO

Mayor, I wanted to discuss the recent restoration of the town Bridges.

MAYOR

Well, Warden Adri deals with that area.

I have my hands full, keeping up the morale of my people.

Guards!

VIGO

Mayor, your guards can't hear you.

They are sleepwalking.

Just - like - you.

(Casting spell)

Yatmak!

The MAYOR becomes suddenly still.

Eyes open, but still.

VIGO

Now let's find somewhere more private.
And, have a chat shall we.

VIGO leads the MAYOR out with her magic.

**The stage is silent for a moment, before DRAAGO enters.
DRAAGO finds the ledger and opens it, scanning the pages.**

LIEUTENANT POWELL (O/S)

Where's the Mayor!
Search his chamber!

DRAAGO hearing this noise, stand and leaves quickly, taking the ledger with him.

BLACKOUT

SCENE 6 - CHURCH. BLACKBRIDGE.

REGISTRAR sat in his cell, head down and crossed leg centrestage, in a spot-light.
The **CHILDREN** enter, creeping in standing in four corners.

LOOSINDA

Be quick!

BUTTONS

And be quiet!

The **CHILDREN** nod in agreement and search the four corners of the stage.
LUNA finds the **REGISTRAR**.

LUNA

Guys

(pause)

I think I found him.

LOOSINDA

(Listens with one ear)

Hello?

Mr Elwyne?

REGISTRAR

(Lifting his head)

Who goes there?

LUNA

It's Luna, your neighbour.

I'm here with Loosinda and Buttons.

REGISTRAR

Children, it's best you go.

If you are caught here you will be in big trouble.

BUTTONS

We want to help Violet.

And you, Mr Elwyne.

LOOSINDA

We know you're innocent.

BUTTONS

We heard the Warden talking about it with the Mayor.

REGISTRAR

Without proof your claims will fall upon deaf ears.

It's best you stay out of it.

There is a dangerous game being played here in Blackbridge.

CHILDREN exchange eye contact.

LUNA

No!

If we need proof.

Then we will find proof!

LIEUTENANT POWELL

(O/S)

Hello?!

Who goes there?!

REGISTRAR

Quickly children

The stairs at the end of the corridor lead to a tunnel beneath the town.

You can get back above land via the well.

Go, now!

The CHILDREN exit quickly.

LIEUTENANT POWELL enters.

LIEUTENANT POWELL

Lucius, who were you speaking with?

REGISTRAR

Just the Gods, Lieutenant.

Just the Gods.

BLACKOUT

SCENE 7 - NORTHERN RIVERBANK. THE BLACKWOOD.

NORTHERN HUNTERS have set up camp.

DRAAGO is sat upstage, examining the ledger.

ARTEMIS

Something doesn't feel right about this all?
Working with the South!

OLGA

You're telling *me*!
A member of our *own* party!
Casting a freeze spell on *us*!

YOUSHI

It was a petrification spell, *actually*.

MADDALENA

And you deserved it.
Drawing your weapon in a protected tavern.
We could have been thrown out of the hunters guild -
Or worse.

YOUSHI

One thing that I've learned being a hunter.
There are moments in which one should use their brain and not their brawn.

MADDALENA

(pause)

You are right on one thing for sure, Youshi.
We need to work with the South.

OLGA

(Scoffs)

You would say that.
To protect your sister!

MADDALENA

Believe me,
Carmen does not need protecting -
From anybody.

DRAAGO sat reading the ledger.

ARTEMIS whistles to the others and motions his head to **DRAAGO**.

ARTEMIS

Draago?

You okay there pal?

DRAAGO silent, turns neck.

MADDALENA

(Stands)

I thought you despised literature.

(mocking tone)

“Adventure lies on the open road, not in a book”

(Pause to examine book)

What are you reading?

DRAAGO

It appears to be the town's ledger.

(Tapping page)

Look here!

A payment of five thousand gold.

To be paid to a Dratum Vizduum.

The job is marked completed.

(Raises one eyebrow)

But the payment was never collected?

YOUSHI

As I said.

There is more to this, than meets the eye.

ARTEMIS

As usual Youshi, you're over complicating things.

We find the troll.

We kill the troll.

We collect our ransom.

OLGA

Sorry, but I'm with Artemis on this.

The trolls gotta get smashed!

(Pause)

Now let's get some shut eye.

We can continue the hunt at first light.

I'll take the watch.

ARTEMIS

I'll take the second watch.
Wake me when you get tired.

The HUNTERS begin settling for the night.

OLGA on lookout, downstage right.

After some time, OLGA begins to yawn, eventually falling asleep.

VIOLET creeps in and begins looting.

Whilst looting from OLGA, suddenly ARTEMIS sits up, bow and arrow drawn.

ARTEMIS

I wouldn't do that if I were you.
Put it down.
(Standing)
Hands where I can see them.

VIOLET stood still and hands in the air.

ARTEMIS begins waking the others, finally moving to wake OLGA who is snoring loudly.
ARTEMIS gives OLGA a kick, she wakes suddenly.

OLGA

(Sits and wakes suddenly)
I wasn't asleep!
Promise!
(To Violet)
Who are you?

ARTEMIS

She was looting,
Whilst you were sleeping.

MADDELENA

Whoever you are,
Consider the fact you're still breathing,
As your one and only chance tendered.
I suggest you start by telling us why you're out in the Blackwood this late at night.
(pause)
Or, if you prefer, my friend Draago here, can do things his way.

DRAAGO draws his weapons and smirks.

VIOLET

Okay! Okay!

The Warden of Blackbridge has me locked up and guarded in a cabin,
It's not far from here.

I ran out of food so I snuck out and went foraging.

(Seeing the mushrooms and pointing to them)

Those look yummy!

OLGA

They're nunya.

VIOLET

What's a nunya?

OLGA

(quickly leaning in)

Nunya business!

MADDELENA

Girl.

What is your name?

VIOLET

Violet Elwyn.

DRAAGO

As in Elywn?

(Holding the ledger)

The town's Registrar?

VIOLET

That's right.

The Registrar is my father.

YOUSHI

Why would the Warden have you, the Registrar's daughter,
Hidden and guarded out here in the Blackwood?

VIOLET

He was thrown into a cell.

For theft. Except -

DRAAGO
(Drawing weapon)
Except what?

VIOLET
Except.
He didn't steal anything.

MADDELENA
Where is your father now?

VIOLET
The Warden has him locked away in a dungeon cell.
Somewhere beneath Blackbridge.

YOUSHI
We need to find him.
Before it's too late.

The HUNTERS nod in agreement.

OLGA
Move!

Exit all.

SCENE 8 - SOUTHERN BORDER. DRATUUM'S CAVE.

SOUTHERN HUNTERS, led by **HERMIS** tracking **DRATUUM** through the cave.
One by one they vault over the blocks and move downstage, looking out to the audience.
CARMEN dramatically rolls into space.

VIGO

Show-off!

HERMIS

(Kneeling down to inspect footprints on floor)

We're close.

The beast was here.

CARMEN

Youshi said Dratum wasn't violent.

SANGIUM

I wouldn't believe a word a northerner says!

CARMEN

We should sheath our weapons.

We don't want Dratum to feel threatened.

VIGO

My conversation with the Mayor,
Would suggest Youshi is right about the Warden.

Which begs the question.

What if she is right about the troll too?

JACOB

Shhhhhh!

Quiet.

(Silence)

Do you hear that?

SANGIUM takes a long sniff in and realises.

SANGIUM

Troll!

DRATUUM appears suddenly on the raised stage, in a furious rage.

DRATUUM

(Roars)

Why have you come here?!

SANGIUM

(stepping forward)

To fight!

JACOB

(stepping forward)

To hunt!

HERMIS

(stepping forward)

To kill!

DRATUUM

Then, you have come to die!

SANGIUM, HERMIS and JACOB slowly move in on DRATUUM.

VIGO

(releases a spell)

No!

Yukara!

SANGIUM, HERMIS and JACOB suddenly come to stand on their toes, fingers and arms stretched out. Their necks turned to the sky.

VIGO

(holding the spell)

We've come to talk!

CARMEN

Dratum.

We've come to help.

To understand.

DRATUUM

How do you know my name?!

VIGO

We are acquaintances of a friend.
Youshi, Cleric of The North.

CARMEN

Release them.

VIGO

(releases the spell)

Aşa!

HERMES, JACOB and SANGIUM move back to their spots.

JACOB

Tell us why you've been vandalising the merchants trail?

HERMIS

Stealing people in the night?

DRATUUM

Lies!

All Lies!

CARMEN

I believe you.

I sense goodness within you Draatum.

(Hand softly on Dratum's shoulder)

Mankind can be cruel at times.

Dratum, you will get what you are owed.

(pause)

Whatever that may be.

BLACKOUT.

SCENE 9 - THE WELL. BLACKBRIDGE.

The CHILDREN enter quickly, they climb over the blocks and then move downstage.

LUNA

I don't think the Lieutenant saw us!

BUTTONS

Here's the well opening!

(pointing upwards)

Let's climb up and get back to town!

LOOSINDA

Wait what's that!

(looking and shouting upstage)

Hello?!

Is someone there?

DROOT enters quickly, stops and hides behind the blocks.

LOOSINDA

It's okay.

We won't hurt you.

DROOT climbs on blocks.

LUNA

You're the troll girl!

DROOT

What does it mean?

Troll girl?

LUNA

We don't mean you any harm.

Sorry if we frightened you.

My name's Luna.

And, these are my friends, Loosinda and Buttons.

DROOT

Friends?

Droot have no friends.

No one wants to friend with Droot.

BUTTONS

Why?

DROOT

Because, my ears.

(Pause)

Because, my race.

(Pause)

Because -

Droot different.

LUNA

Well, I think your ears

(Pause)

Are beautiful.

DROOT embarrassed by the compliment.

LOOSINDA

Where are you from?

DROOT

Everywhere.

(Pause)

And, nowhere.

Baba and Droot move around for his work.

LOOSINDA

Who's Baba?

DROOT

Baba cares for Droot.

Makes Droot laugh.

Protects Droot.

(pause)

Baba in trouble.

BUTTONS

(Steps forward)

Trouble?

What happened?

DROOT

Hunters.

Came to home.

With weapons,

And magics!

Droot wanted to stay and help Baba.

Baba say go!

Run!

(pause and sits sad)

So Droot ran away!

The CHILDREN watch on in SILENCE.

BLACKOUT.

SCENE 10 - TOWN CENTRE. BLACKBRIDGE.

SFX: BUSY TOWN CENTRE

The MAYOR, WARDEN and LIEUTENANT POWELL stood on the raised stage watching on.

SOUTHERN HUNTERS enter stage right with DRATUUM chained, who is led centre stage and pushed to both knees.

MAYOR

What is the meaning of this?!

WARDEN

The terms of the contract were quite clear.
You were to bring us the head of the beast!

JACOB

(Climbs the block centre stage)

People of Blackbridge.

Mayor.

I present to you the monster that has tormented your town!

(pause)

Though, many of you believe that the life of a hunter is like a circle with no ends.

Ever repeating.

I can tell you it is not.

No day is ever the same.

No quest or hunt is ever the same.

(to Mayor and Warden)

Warden it seemed very odd to me,
That the bounty for just one beast was set at such a heavy price.

NORTHERN HUNTERS enter with DRAAGO leading who is holding the ledger above his head.

DRAAGO

And so I took a closer look at the town's ledger.

And in doing so I learned that Dratum here,

(pause to announce)

Was in fact commissioned by the Warden.

Commissioned to repair and restore the two bridges of this town.

A payment of five thousand gold.

Was promised to a Dratum Vizduum.

(Tapping book aggressively)

The job marked completed,
But the payment was never collected!

SANGIUM

(Climbs the block centre stage)

People of Blackbridge.

I spent the first half of my life,

Living in the privileges of a human.

Yet, in recent times, I have been subjected to much discrimination.

(pause)

Since my transformation,

I have been scorned, feared and hated.

Simply because of the way I look now.

Yet, beneath this skin I am still the same man I once was.

(climbs down and helps Dratum to his feet)

Dratum, I have learned that you and I are not too dissimilar.

And you deserve to tell your story,

Here amongst the eyes and ears of the Blackbridge community.

A community who has already judged you for the way you look.

DRATUUM

(downstage to audience)

The Warden offered me a fair payment for my craft.

Which I did aptly and proficiently provide.

I restored both the Northern and Southern bridges, as instructed.

Yet in exchange for my labours,

I have received threats, violence and ruin.

(To Warden)

Warden, you have had me hunted.

You sullied my name.

But, the worst of it all.

(pause)

You have taught my daughter to fear mankind.

That we trolls must walk this world alone.

MAYOR

Warden?

Is this true?

WARDEN

Enough of this!

You have no proof to these claims!

REGISTRAR enters with the CHILDREN.

REGISTRAR

I'm the proof!

(Climbs the block centre stage)

Lord Mayor, I have served the community of Blackbridge,

As the town's registrar, for the last two decades.

Just last moon, I met with the Warden,

To query the payment of five thousand gold to a Dratum Vizduum.

A job marked completed,

But payment was never marked as collected.

For my inquisition, The Warden

(brief turn to warden)

Had me thrown in a cell.

And stole my daughter from me!

WARDEN

This man should still be in a cell!

He has no proof!

Lieutenant, apprehend the Registrar - Immediately!

MAYOR

No, Lieutenant remain at your posts!

OLGA enters with VIOLET.

OLGA

Warden,

Perhaps you should explain why you had this girl

Separated from her father

And stowed away in the Blackwood.

SFX: AMBIENT FEELINGS

VIOLET stands looking at The **REGISTRAR**,

The **CHILDREN** begin pointing upstage right to **VIOLET**.

The **REGISTRAR** is last to turn.

REGISTRAR

(Falls to his knees)

My dear sweet Violet.

VIOLET

Father!

(They meet centre stage and hold hands)

REGISTRAR

Thanks to the Gods that you are safe

VIOLET

Father, these last two days have been so frightening.

Because I feared for you.

(long pause to face audience)

The Blackwood was dark.

And full of terror.

In the night I heard sinister sounds of creatures lurking in the shadows.

In the day, the west winds softly carried my cries.

(Pause)

But within that terror, I found kindness.

And kindness found me.

(pause)

A troll girl.

She visited me in secret.

She gave me food when I was hungry.

And compassion, when I felt alone.

DROOT stands next to VIOLET

VIOLET

She is my friend.

DRATUUM

Droot.

DROOT

Baba.

DROOT moves to hold hands with DRATUUM

VIGO

Mayor, you have been deceived.

Finessed by the Warden's charm.

MAYOR

No more shall this treachery persevere!

(approaching Warden)

Warden for all your misdeeds you are banished from Blackbridge.

(pause removes pin/badge of office)

You will never hold a title of office in these lands again.

LIEUTENANT POWELL draws his sword and holds it to the WARDEN.

MAYOR walks downstage to DRATUUM.

MAYOR

And Dratum.

(hand on shoulder)

You are to be paid five thousand gold for your work.

And another five thousand for your troubles.

You are a friend of Blackbridge and are always welcome hither.

MAYOR walks downstage centre.

MAYOR

(announcing to audience)

One and all, hear my decree.

From this day forth,

The town of Blackbridge will welcome any and all.

None shall be discriminated against.

Regardless of background, race, gender, language or religion.

(Pause)

This is how we restore Blackbridge to her former glory!

MADDELENA and CARMEN close with Linden Lea.

MADDALENA + CARMEN

Within the woodlands, flow'ry gladed

By the oak trees' mossy moot

The shining grass blades, timber shaded

Now do quiver underfoot

And birds do whistle overhead

And water's bubbling in its bed

And there for me, the apple tree

Do lean down low, to shelter me.

BLACKOUT

- END -