

THE STRUCTURE OF AUDIO STORYTELLING AND BUILDING MULTIMEDIA
NARRATIVES IN THE FICTIONAL STORYWORLD OF GUERDRIC

A CREATIVE PROJECT

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Introduction

For my graduate creative project, I created a fictional multimedia *storyworld* using the digital space of a website. I used this website, titled *The Kingdom of Guerdric*, to compile all elements of my narrative. I produced content in audio, images, text, and video to form a multimedia experience for audiences. While each piece shaped the narrative, the audio was the main component, titled *The Secret of Guerdric Castle*. With just over thirty-six minutes of dialogue, music, and effects, my audio narrative was meant to create a unique aural experience for listeners. The video, text and images help to place the audience into the fictional world of Guerdric and learn more about the characters of the story. I expanded my narrative across multiple platforms in hopes to glean more interest in the fictional content and diversity in the experience.

With technology becoming more advanced, multimedia or “transmedia”¹ stories have been growing in today’s world of innovation. I began to wonder, because of their diverse nature in presenting content through numerous platforms, what kind of interest is there in this type of dispersive storytelling? The opportunities to create multimedia stories are expanding as more modes of digital devices develop and become available, such as the Internet, which has allowed information to be sent easily and widely throughout the world. As we can learn from literature and music in our culture, stories had been told through multiple means in the past, such as plays, poems, songs, and oral stories. Today, stories continue to develop and expand across media. Elizabeth Evans (2011) notes, “emerging new media technologies are leading to the creation of new forms of narrative content and audience engagement” (p. 19). Audiences seek a “richer entertainment experience” when moving their through a fictional world (Long, 2007, p.

¹ The terms “multimedia” and “transmedia” referring to content that is distributed across multiple platforms of media.

28). Multimedia stories therefore offer new forms of engagement and have the opportunity to compete with other media sources through multiple platforms.

Multimedia stories may range from fictional narratives to other areas, such as news stories or educational material. “In recent years, researchers in the fields of education and entertainment have started to give greater importance to the implementation of concepts related to storytelling and narrative in their work” (Nakasone, A., Prendinger, H., & Ishizuka, M., 2009, p. 634). This greater importance given to storytelling throughout these areas is one way in which multimedia storytelling has a chance to grow as a useful tool.

While it can be said that an interest in multimedia storytelling exists for scholars, why is interest in this type of storytelling important to the media? Scholars, such as Henry Jenkins, offer multiple reasons. Jenkins (2003) understand that multimedia will contribute a new layer of storytelling. “Such a multilayered approach to storytelling will enable a more complex, more sophisticated, more rewarding mode of narrative to emerge within the constraints of commercial entertainment” (Jenkins, 2003, para. 11). Jenkins says that media conglomerates more often compete than collaborate, but if each specialized area adopted a common language between them, then the media industry could be home to many successful and entertaining transmedia experiences. He expresses that the industry’s technology, economy, and audiences are ready and open to accept and consume these stories, but the industry has not yet done a good job of producing them (Jenkins, 2003, para. 5).

Elizabeth Evans (2008) also notices the readiness of the industry for multimedia storytelling to begin.

Television is changing. The Internet is becoming ever more widespread and culturally important. Governments are making plans to switch off analogue signals and cement existing digital, multi-channel environments as the norm for television viewing. Broadcasters such as the BBC are increasingly offering online gaming elements

connected to their television content. Mobile phones are becoming ever more pervasive and newer models are offering increasingly diverse, media-related features. These changes are having a rippling effect, not only on our understanding of the capabilities of technology but also on our expectations of what can and should be offered on them. What these changes indicate is the need for a new model of understanding audience engagement with audio-visual fictional entertainment. (p. 1)

She notes that audiences have developed expectations as to what their technology should offer and it is time to provide them with the multimedia experiences they are ready for. According to Evans (2011), we need multimedia storytelling to bring a new perspective to the media industry. Evans has also realized that current transmedia has “become less about promoting a central television programme or film, and more about creating a coherent, deliberately, cross-platform narrative experience” (Evans, 2011, p. 20).

Multimedia storytelling greatly affects the media industry because it impacts the way products are developed, produced, and consumed. “Reading across the media sustains a depth of experience that motivates more consumption. In a world with many media options, consumers are choosing to invest deeply in a limited number of franchises rather than dip shallowly into a larger number” (Jenkins, 2003, para. 11). Because of this, it would be beneficial for developers to focus on expanding the narrative of a franchise across multiple platforms. By doing so, they could be successful in appealing to consumers interested in that franchise.

For audio dramas, the industry has not just shifted, but also drastically changed. By using a search engine such as Google, anyone may find an endless array of audio narratives populating the Internet. Audio storytelling no longer belongs to radio dramas of the past, like classics such as *Abbott and Costello* (1940s) and *Encore Theater* (1946), but to any number of producers who choose to create the content. Forms of audio narratives range from interviews, historical archives, news podcasts, soundscapes, audiovisual presentations, audio books, children’s stories being read, to fictional web dramas. Much literature on “audio” cannot fit into this literature

review, ranging from the process of hearing, to how sound affects the ear, to how humans are born to react to certain sounds. As outlined in the next section, literature exists exploring the numerous radio dramas, the growth of audio, and the benefits that audio brings to video. Audio narratives are still popularly used with visual images. However, it is no longer tied exclusively to video.

Modern Western culture often features stories commonly expressed through visual images. However, sometimes a less common method of storytelling, such as a narrative told in an exclusively aural format, becomes the best way to express a narrative. In 1985, Rick Altman writes, “more than half a century after the coming of sound, film criticism and theory still remain resolutely image-bound. Early filmmakers skepticism about the value of sound has been indirectly perpetuated by generations of critics for whom the cinema is an essentially visual art, sound serving as little more than a superfluous accompaniment” (p. 44). With so much research placed on the visual, “It has become cliché to note that the sound track has received much less theoretical attention and analysis than the image” (Doane, 1985, p. 54).

Because of my choice to have an aural narrative as my main method of storytelling, I want to examine the role that audio plays for listeners in digital stories and how it can influence one’s perceptions. I plan to explore audio as a form of storytelling, and break down each component of an audio narrative to examine structurally what each piece of audio contributes to the story. For example, sound effects can make a story more believable, a voice actor can develop a relationship with the listener to gain the audience’s trust, and a music track can shape the audience’s perceptions. Each of these three aspects merges to create a realistic fantasy world.

My fictional story is significant to the discipline of film, television, and radio production because it utilizes both audio storytelling and multimedia platforms as the primary approaches in communicating a story to audiences. A new audio story will join today's world of podcasts and audio narratives. This project does not focus around the popular form of video, but instead like novels, requires the listener to create images within their minds. Today, the multimedia storytelling process is being used to break down boundaries in the creation of storytelling and keep audiences entertained by allowing them to engage in the story. It allows audiences to have greater freedom in experiencing a story the way they choose.

The purpose of my project is to contribute to multimedia storytelling by providing a story of my own to support the idea that stories may be best told through a number of mediums. I think that stories should not be confined to one sensory method of communication and that it may be beneficial for a story to branch out through today's developing technologies. I am not saying that *all* stories should be multimedia stories. As Jane Stevens (2013) says, "Not all stories make good multimedia stories. The best multimedia stories are multi-dimensional" (para. 1). I think adding a new dimension to a story can lead to positive growth among that story's characters as well as its audiences.

My primary goal in creating this *storyworld* is to test the ability of my multimedia narrative to engage and entertain audiences. I created my audio narrative to present a story in a medium not so commonly known to young people who did not grow up with radio. By using a medium they are familiar with such as the Internet, I hope to capture their interest in way that might not have occurred through radio. Because of the story's content, my target audience is primarily geared toward young audiences, probably thirteen years old and under, who already use the Internet and enjoy fictional stories.

For my project, I wanted to create a believable world with characters that an audience could relate to. My creative goal for this project was to entertain an audience and encourage them to use their imagination. By including multimedia platforms, I hope that listeners will enjoy the chance to interact with the website and feel like a part of the narrative's world. The technical goal of my project was the compiling of each component on a website, or more specifically, the preparation and creation of my content to be compiled so that each element would compliment each other. I had to visualize how it would all fit as I began planning out the use and functions of the audio, video, images, and text for my website. The theoretical approach I took toward this project was a mix of two: multimedia storytelling and audio storytelling. Researching the structure of audio storytelling was important because that was the form in which the main story was conveyed and took the most time for me to create. The aural story is what I want the audience to connect with the most. I also want to look at my project from the viewpoint of multimedia storytelling because this encompasses my whole project. I am creating a storyworld using audio, video, web, images, and text. I want the audience to learn more about the world and/or characters with each form.

This project also allowed to me to fulfill a personal goal: to test my skills and grow as a person by learning what it takes to complete such a project and using my imagination. Diving into my imagination was the part that made it the most fun. It was my own world that I could immerse myself in with my characters. I could work by putting my skills into practice to bring those characters to life. My goal was to exercise my abilities throughout this project, and use my imagination to create something that I could be proud of. I wanted this project to showcase my strengths and to accomplish this project as best I could. As creator of the whole project from beginning to end, I became personally attached, as each part developed as a result of my thoughts

and actions. My goal was to test myself to see what my first multimedia story would look like. As I produced my creative project, I also researched this topic to see what scholars had to say.

Literature Review

Defining “Transmedia”

Throughout my research on the existing literature on multimedia/transmedia, I have found a few similarities that are often covered among most researchers. Much of the discussion occurring in literature about multimedia storytelling emphasizes exploring what the definition of multimedia or “transmedia” means. Researchers such as Geoffrey Long (2007) and Elizabeth Evans (2011) build their base from Henry Jenkins, who began using the term in 2003. Many scholars, such as those in this literature review, often begin with using his name in their research. “Most explicitly theorized by Henry Jenkins (2003, 2006)” (Evans, 2011, p. 19). Henry Jenkins states “part of the problem is that many people are looking for simple formulas and a one-size-fits-all definition, trying to delimit what transmedia is” (Jenkins, 2011, para. 27). It can easily be debated what could or could not count as multimedia. For example, it could be argued that watching a movie could be considered an act of consuming transmedia because a person gains information from the visuals as well as from the audio to learn what is happening in a story.

Since then, more terms have surfaced and researchers have worked to flesh out the definitions. “Different groups of people are defining a still emerging concept differently for different purposes for different audiences in different contexts” (Jenkins, 2011, para. 5). “Transmedia” has morphed into such terms as *multiplatform*, *intermedia*, and

multimedia. Scholars, such as those in this literature review, explore the differences between the similar areas of transmedia branding, participatory culture, and convergence. Geoffrey Long (2007) talks for pages in his own research about the multiple terms and definitions. “This murky terminology is only one example of how far critical study of transmedia/cross-media/cross-site storytelling still has to go” (Long, 2007, p. 21). Long suggests that more research into the meaning of these terms should still be explored.

Although scholars such as Long (2007) acknowledge that many definitions exist, most can agree on a basic definition to use for the purposes of their research, and that is, “Transmedia, used by itself, simply means ‘across media’” (Jenkins, 2011). Jane Stevens (2013) defines a multimedia story as “some combination of text, still photographs, video clips, audio, graphics and interactivity presented on a Web site in a nonlinear format in which the information in each medium is complementary, not redundant” (para. 2). I want to highlight the words “interactivity”, “nonlinear”, and “complementary”, which are cornerstones in multimedia narratives. The user may choose how to navigate through the story, learning new information as they engage in the narrative.

A transmedia story is told from multiple platforms, with each platform contributing to the story in its own unique way. Elizabeth Evans (2011) uses Jenkins to say that storytelling should be about using the strengths of each medium, whether that platform is television, comics, or gameplay. “Transmedia storytelling represents a process where integral elements of a fiction get dispersed systematically across multiple delivery channels for the purpose of creating a unified and coordinated entertainment experience” (Jenkins, 2007, para. 3). Whereas an adaptation takes the same story from one medium and retells it in another, with the basic plotlines and recognizable characteristics staying the same, multimedia stories are built from a variety of

tools. They utilize “cross-platform construction of a fictional world” (Evans, 2011, p. 29). Multimedia narratives are made up of pieces that create context as the whole story develops. “Multimedia stories are wrapped in a story ‘shell’ that provides background information on the story. This could include everything from databases, timelines and infoboxes to lists of related stories, links to other resources and online forums” (Stevens, 2013, para. 4).

A slightly different area in multimedia study has scholars such as Marie-Laure Ryan (2013) delving into the meaning of similarly used terms like *storyworld*, a part of fictional multimedia storytelling, where she offers and explores her definition of a storyworld (p. 364). Scholars who focus on storyworlds talk more about story structure in multimedia and how to organize and present a story. For example, one study consisted completely of topics covering “story content and organization, story thematic, story characters, and story variability” (Nakasone, A., Prendinger, H., & Ishizuka, M., 2009, p. 644). They examine such things as storytelling models, strengths, and limiting factors when building a world. This development strengthens the base for storytelling creation.

Different types of transmedia also exist. I will describe two basic functions, the first of which is named the “snowball” effect by Marie-Laure Ryan (2013). This occurs when one separate story has received such recognition in culture that it “generates a variety of either same-medium or cross-media prequels, sequels, fan fiction, and adaptations. In this case, there is a central text that functions as a common field of reference to all the other texts” (Ryan, 2013, p. 363). This is seen more of as the franchising side of transmedia, or narrative branding, where numerous products are developed in relation to a story due to the success on its own. Some researchers have turned to study this side of multimedia. “This first use of the term ‘transmedia’ was as a primarily promotional practice involving merchandising, adaptations, sequels and

franchising” (Evans, 2011, p. 20). This side of multimedia storytelling can sometimes become more about the products and money, and less about the building of characters or creating quality material that complements the narrative. “Franchise products are governed too much by economic logic and not enough by artistic vision” (Jenkins, 2003, para. 7). *James Bond*, *Batman*, *Harry Potter*, and *Pokemon* are only a few of the franchises mentioned throughout transmedia research articles.

“The other pole is a much more recent phenomenon. It is represented by a system in which a certain story is conceived from the very beginning as a project that develops over many different media platforms” (Ryan, 2013, p. 363). I found this explanation simple and clear, clarifying that this form of multimedia was planned, and created through multiple platforms from the start. The results did not happen to fan out through many mediums as an effect of a one-platform story. This is the type where creators usually want each medium to contribute something of quality and importance to the story. Each piece of a story is introduced for audiences to learn more about the world and then expanded through platforms and made into an *experience*. Babar Suleman (2014) called this “integrated transmedia”, where “a single story is broken into pieces and spread across multiple conduits to the audience. So a piece of the story might be a YouTube video and another piece may be on a website and another piece may be hidden in a magazine advertisement. It relies on the audience to put all the pieces together to assemble the story” (p. 232).

These types of transmedia storytelling are more about “the art of world making” (Long, 2007, p. 28). The world almost becomes a primary character itself because of its extensive development. “Many transmedia narratives aren’t the story of one character at all, but the story of a world” (Long, 2007, p. 48). Evans (2011) agrees, saying that transmedia focuses on

developing more of a “coherent fictional ‘world’ delivered to audiences across an expanse of platforms” (Evans, 2011, p. 20). In this way, audiences better experience the content by moving into another time and place to explore on their own.

Marie-Laure Ryan talks about different storyworlds and how some creators link their fictional worlds with “real world” articles. She notes that “fictional novels always overlap to some degree with the real world, otherwise they would be so unfamiliar that we would be unable to process them” (Ryan, 2013, p. 374). She uses the example of *Alpha 0.7*, a German transmedia science fiction series, where the website provides links to real-world documents, that “exist independently of the show” (p. 374), but can be integrated into the world of the story. This use of nonfiction could be seen to disrupt the boundary between the fictional story and the stark realities of real life, but Ryan feels that this could be seen as a variation on the simple practice of “referring to real-world individuals and events in historical novels” (Ryan, 2013, p. 374). In being used this way, the documents can contribute knowledge or interest in the narrative and can make the fictional story more believable.

Other Multimedia Research

Multimedia stories can also be used in other ways without a focus on fictional world-building. Another area of media study has scholars focused on entertainment-education (EE) campaigns, such as multimedia use in classrooms to better keep interest in a topic to promote interaction with an assignment. Instead of simply having students listen to the radio or watch videos, this new version of storytelling can utilize “new media technology and provide a practical way to increase diverse audience exposure” (Sangalang, 2013, p. 128) to certain kinds of messages. Scholars express the opinion that this form of storytelling could help engage

students in the classroom, and teachers should use multimedia to help their students stay focused by expanding their methods of learning.

To test multimedia strategies, some researchers have worked their own trials. Angeline Sangalang (2013) ran a multimedia study, examining an interactive flash game that encouraged milk consumption.

Participants played a game designed to promote milk sales initially released as part of a state-wide transmedia campaign targeted at milk drinkers of all ages living in the United States. The transmedia campaign, spread across network television spots, web banners and grassroots marketing, was aimed at encouraging viewers to visit the website of the game. Thus, the game was the nucleus of the initiative, even allowing website visitors to compete against each other for high scores in order to win campaign-related prizes. (p. 136)

This study allowed them to evaluate narrative involvement. As a whole, Sangalang found in this study that participants enjoyed using transmedia with these sorts of entertainment-education campaigns because of the opportunity to now combine traditional media formats such as radio and television, with newer technology such as the web, and interactive video games.

Besides educational purposes and franchising/advertising, multimedia storytelling is also used in news stories. When a news story is distributed via the Internet, a reporter can shoot videos, take pictures, record audio, as well as create text and graphics. By collecting all of this information, the story can be experienced a number of ways. “In a converged newsroom, you can do a multimedia version of the story for the Web, but also produce different versions for a print publication like a newspaper, for a television newscast, for a radio program or even a pure text version for wireless applications” (Stevens, 2013, para. 12). Interviews written on paper are mainly used for print and if interviews are recorded on video, then they are usually just for television, but by capturing a news event multiple ways, audiences have a wider range of content they can explore.

Much of the researchers had chosen a few specific examples of multimedia stories to study as their focus and how audiences responded to a particular marketing ploy or idea. Frank Rose (2011) wrote *The Art of Immersion: How the Digital Generation Is Remaking Hollywood, Madison Avenue, and the Way We Tell Stories*, in which each chapter talks about an individual marketing or immersion campaign which involved audiences. Other articles also mention one or two distinct shows. For example, Elizabeth Evans (2008) turned to examples found in the British Broadcasting Company (BBC). “The drama series *Spooks*...is one of the most interesting and high profile examples of how multiple audio-visual media platforms are being used to create a variety of elements contributing to one trans-media drama text” (Evans, 2008, p. 2). Beginning as a TV series, there is also an accompanying drama website and video games that were created for promotional purposes. *Doctor Who* (1963 – present) was looked at, over its years of continued development, as well as shows like *Lost* (2004 – 2010) which included alternative reality games, a forum, fan sites, and webisodes.

A lot of the research I found overlapped or came close to research on the interactive narrative and interactive gameplay, or more specifically, video games. Interactivity being one of the cornerstones of multimedia, related to multimedia by discussing how to immerse audiences within a story. The research on video games, such as *Scripting Narrative for Interactive Multimedia* (Garrand, 1997) and *Digital Storytelling: A Creator’s Guide to Interactive Entertainment* (Miller, 2006) talked more about immersing audiences by the types of narratives built within a game. While video games in no doubt focus more on immersion and interactivity in their narratives, creators of multimedia stories also aspire to use some form of interaction in their narratives. This could be as simple as different menu selections, or as complex as traveling to a certain locations in real life, like the “Why So Serious?” marketing campaign promoting *The*

Dark Knight (2008), which required participants from all over the country to travel to certain bakeries (Rose, 2011). “Interactivity in storytelling has been implemented in several different ways. Some applications regard interactivity as a simple set of menu choices that are presented during the story, while others make use of more complex hardware in order to give users a true immersive experience” (Nakasone, A., Prendinger, H., & Ishizuka, M., 2009, p. 657). When discussing alternate reality games (ARGs), Marie-Laure Ryan (2013) addresses that characters are important when pitching the idea, which reminded me of Long’s comment about how a storyworld can oftentimes be just as important as a main character, even in multimedia.

Artists creating worlds of all types share some of the same considerations whether more interactive or less. Scolari (2009) mentions that comic artists must think carefully about how to construct their stories because they are catering to different readers on different days, as some people might not buy newspapers on the same days as others. Therefore, their storylines must be able to stand alone and yet share a continued arc that regular readers could appreciate. This situation relates to multimedia storytelling in the sense that both contain elements in their stories that should relate to a main storyline. As well as, much of the franchised transmedia is expected to be enjoyed separately as its own entity, just as comic artists can expect their work to be consumed in pieces. For example, someone may start off learning about Batman from a comic book and then learn more about his character from a movie, but the comic book and movie may be consumed just as easily on their own.

Future Multimedia Research

As the reviewed literature suggests, some scholars such as Scolari (2009) provided opinions of what future literature on transmedia should offer. I think Scolari (2009) makes a few excellent points on this.

Future research in this ambit should refine the definition of TS and analyze more TS experiences to establish the properties, limits, and possibilities of this specific kind of narrative structure. The set of categories and strategies proposed in this article should be applied to other examples of TS to check their analytical usefulness. (p. 601)

He also deduces that researchers should further investigate transmedia narrative structures. This should increase the possibility of creating new narratives and can help to offer clear explanations for “describing the internal dynamics of these complex textual networks. Studies like *Doctor Who and the Convergence of Media: A Case Study in ‘Transmedia Storytelling’* (Perryman, 2008) or *Transmedia Storytelling. Business, Aesthetics and Production at the Jim Henson Company* (Long, 2008) are good examples of this research path” (Scolari, 2009, p. 601).

Besides narrative structures, Scolari would also like to see more research in fictional world expansion strategies. Because producers as well as consumers are creating content, he thinks that the user-generated content created by these consumers and audiences should not be excluded, but taken into consideration. The cooperation between these two groups may procure beneficial ideas and boost economic interests.

Scolari (2009) applauds Evans (2008) in her research on consumers and thinks that more research should focus on consumers of transmedia. “Research should also expand the analysis of implicit consumers. This classical semiotic issue could be very helpful for producers, scriptwriters, and media programmers interested in producing complex textual structures targeted

at a broad spectrum of consumers” (Scolari, 2009, p. 601). Researchers do seem to agree that the constant stream of content being generated leaves much material to study.

Audio Storytelling

While researching among all the diverse content about audio narratives, I found results discussing the benefits of sound and a lot of content on audio in relation to video. Many critics who study audio storytelling focus on the audio-visual line of research, which still includes a partnership with the image. Though images may simply show the audience what is taking place, audio can portray a situation in numerable ways. Instead of turning in this direction when researching, I wanted to limit my findings specifically to the functions of sound in a narrative. More specifically, I wanted to look into what each element of dialogue, sound effects, and music contributed to these digital stories. The power of audio should be acknowledged for all the benefits it offers a narrative. Each segment of sound is important in holding the narrative together. Narratives could not be as seamless as they are without each contributing element. Audio does support the image, but it can also stand on its own to create a believable fictional world and connect with the audience.

Manipulating Perception

Even before birth, humans begin to respond to sounds. “Pictures speak to intelligence. Noise seems to by-pass the intelligence and speak to something very deep and inborn...” (Cavalcanti, 1985, p. 109). Sound is a natural part of life and humans learn early on the patterns of what sounds mean. People react naturally to certain sounds because of the way the human mind learns. “Psychologically, humans like to make sounds and surround themselves with them

to nourish the concept of perpetual life...” (Sonnenschein, 2001, p. 125). The way that humans can pick what they hear out of the natural din of the world, paying more attention to some sounds more than others, lets humans have the ability to choose what they perceive. “Normally, our perception filters out irrelevant stimuli and retains what is most useful at a particular moment” (Bordwell & Thompson, 1985, p. 186).

One reason that sound is a great tool for storytelling is its ability to manipulate a human’s perceptions and emotions. “Sounds have meanings to individuals or audiences depending on their context, and are considered symbolic when they stir in us emotions or thoughts beyond mechanical sensations or signaling functions” (Sonnenschein, 2001, p. 205). The inflection in someone’s voice is a natural key in distinguishing mood. “The ineffable, intangible quality of sound...requires that it be placed on the side of the emotional or the intuitive” (Doane, 1985, p. 55). Noise is therefore a useful tool because it speaks directly to a human’s emotions.

Because we know that humans have a natural reaction to certain sounds, these sounds can be tapped into and manipulated. Sound is used to create a specific vision in a human’s mind. “Throughout the thirties, nearly every important technological innovation can be traced back to the desire to produce a persuasive illusion of real people speaking real words” (Altman, 1985, p. 47). Sound creates a believable world, where we can suspend disbelief and accept the world, as it is, with natural sounds that humans would hear in their daily lives. By tapping into this tool, the sound designer can use our natural human responses to their advantage to elicit certain emotions from the audience. “Because normal perception is linked to our choices, the director’s selection of the sounds in a film can control the audience’s choices and thus guide the audience’s perception” (Bordwell & Thompson, 1985, p. 186-187). Sounds can make us feel a certain way, without us consciously realizing its occurrence. “The audience will be led down the

path in an integrated, yet most often subconscious manner toward the experience that is authentic and human, a metaphor for the life experience itself” (Sonnenschein, 2001, p.

xix). Disorientation may be caused by the “fragmentation of our perceptions and manipulation of our responses” (Mintz, 1985, p. 290), and not necessarily because of the narrative structure of a story.

Each element of a soundtrack is crucial in enhancing the listener’s experience. Initially the soundtrack was recorded without a complicated task of editing for the sound mixer, but now it is built in a careful and strategic presentation of three essential elements: dialogue/voice, sound effects, and music. “We must consider how speech, music, and noise are selected and combined for specific functions...” (Bordwell & Thompson, 1985, p. 186). These storytelling elements are used to create a reality that parallels our own. “Sound mixing no longer observes the integrity of any preexistent reality; it builds its own to match...” (Belton, 1985, p. 70). Each element is important in building the narrative of the fictional world and necessary to provide a seamless and believable story world. “Dialogue has the effect of taking us out of space and placing us in the realm of ideas. The transition is completed by the sound editor’s toning down of background noise” (Mintz, 1985, p. 291). Dialogue, sound effects, and music are combined and balanced into a fictional reality for the listeners to experience.

Dialogue and Voice

When editing, dialogue is the most important aspect of an audio narrative to consider. Since dialogue should be used sparingly to convey information in a fictional narrative, when it is used, it should be clear. Voice narrators and actors should be carefully selected for a specific type of voice, such as using a gruff voice for an older or rougher character. Each

dialogue actor has a certain role to play for the audience. For example, “the narrator is supposed to set the scene, and perhaps fill in some background” (Mintz, 1985, p. 293). Others use their voices to take on a persona of a character. “The moment a voice like this is heard it will give the audience the essential, the immediate cue to the character” (Halas & Manvell, 1968, p. 70). Even one voice has a huge impact on the audience. A voice actor is the one who makes the characters come to life. It is not about the words they read, but about how they project their voice and turn themselves into a character that makes them real. “When actors perform with complete visceral involvement, their sounds extend beyond the dialogue to the musicality of the voice and other nonverbal body sounds. The natural communication of the voice range... conveys something about who that character is at that moment in the scene” (Sonnenschein, 2001, p. 177). Whether a character sounds musical, nasal, rough, or smooth is determined by the timbre of their voice. When searching for a voice, the loudness, pitch, and timbre should be considered. “Loudness, pitch, and timbre usually interact to define the sonic texture of the film” (Bordwell & Thompson, 1985, p. 185). These three elements express a character’s mood and emotions in a scene. “The performer’s voice can give clues to the text and subtext of the scene, which can then be supported through other sounds” (Sonnenschein, 2001, p. 203). Once the type of voice has been chosen, the dialogue spoken by this character must be balanced with the sound effects and music throughout the narrative, otherwise it risks becoming dialogue heavy, which requires too much effort for attention from the listener.

Sound Effects

According to Marvin M. Kerner (1989), “The function of sound effects is threefold: (1) to simulate reality, (2) to add or create something off scene that is not really there, and (3) to help

the director create a mood” (p. 11). Because sound effects are a natural part of daily life, they are necessary to create a realistic and believable world. Sounds must be either gathered or created and shaped for the needed purpose. “What happens when you do not have the perfect effect? You either get it from another library, make it, or fake it” (Kerner, 1989, p. 43). While many sounds naturally happen in real life, sometimes a sound designer may choose to create a sound rather than record it. In this way, sounds may be captured that reflect an emotion for a particular scene. “Most apparent is the use of music tracks and sound effects tracks to establish a particular mood” (Doane, 1985, p. 55). For example, instead of recording the natural sound of an ocean, sound designers may create their own ocean sound, allowing them to manipulate the volume and pitch of waves, whether they wish the waves to sound peaceful or violent. Sound effects are essential in world building because of their natural existence. However, they can also be used creatively to convey a certain feeling.

Music

Music appears to fill the gaps in the soundtrack left open by dialogue and sound effects. “Music not only plays the obvious role of scoring for film soundtracks, but also is a nonverbal language that can reveal many insights” (Sonnenschein, 2001, p. 101). Working deeply with the emotions of the audience, music can easily translate the mood of a story. “The essence of all music is communication” (Sonnenschein, 2001, p. 101). By matching each scene with a corresponding type of music, the sound designer can express what mood the audience should be feeling at a particular moment.

Background music can anchor the audience in the facts of what is taking place and create a bond between the audience and the story’s characters. Music is emotional, creating a personal

experience within the audience members themselves. “When music allows the listener to relinquish control, peak experiences are invited – moments of great insight, surrender, wisdom, or awareness of profound human relationships” (Sonnenschein, 2001, p. 105). Music is the voice of the past and of memory, transporting listeners through time and moments previously experienced. So much so, that music can also function to lull the spectator into not being a difficult viewing subject. “Film music lessens awareness of the frame, of discontinuity; it draws the spectator further into the diageitic illusion” (Gorbman, 1987, p. 59).

Music can be informative or expressive, sometimes merely present to slow or quicken movements in a narrative. As Gorbman (1987) illustrates, music shapes our perception of a narrative by leading the audience to deep felt emotion. “It evokes a larger-than-life dimension which, rather than involving us *in* the narrative, places us in contemplation *of* it” (Gorbman, 1987, p. 68). In general, music is in service of the narrative. Music can be rewarding by conveying a stronger narrative line and “easing the spectator’s passage into subjectivity” (p. 69). Listening to a soundtrack without music would be less emotional and less personal. “Music enters to satisfy a need to compensate for, fill in, the emotional depth not verbally representable” (p. 67). Music is not bound by words. “Its freedom from the explicitness of language or photographic images, its useful denotative and expressive values easily comprehended by listeners... give it a special and complex status in the narrative film experience” (p. 55). While music can help by leading the flow of the overarching narrative, it can also support individual characters and the journey into their thoughts and feelings. Music can bring insight into the meaning of a character’s actions.

When building a narrative using dialogue it is wise to be cautious about becoming too dialogue-heavy. However, working with music should not have the same concern. “Dialogue

and sound effects are non-continuous elements; music is seldom absent, though it may withdraw momentarily in favour of these other elements” (Halas & Manvell, 1968, p. 169). Although “the most common nonliteral sound to accentuate character personality or emotion is music” (Sonnenschein, 2001, p. 178), sound effects and ambience are also becoming popular to support this area.

Ambience of a Soundscape

Spatial definition is a key contribution of sound to an aural experience. While “a certain amount of noise has become necessary to signify realism” (Belton, 1985, p. 67), sound designers have to be cautious. Too many sound effects or too much dialogue could make the narrative unrealistic, or take away from the core meaning behind the story by distracting the audience. A balance needs to be found between too much and too little sound. Sometimes the most important function for sound in a story is to disappear and let silence have moment of impact. One necessary piece in the creation of an audio narrative is actually the absence of sound.

That being said, sound should not recede entirely into nothingness. “Sound and space are immutably related whether they compliment one another or...they conflict” (Mintz, 1985, p. 289). A soundtrack should not be completely silent. The moments of “silence” need an ambience to help translate the space of the story world. “Ambience from the production tracks is mostly important for creating a seamless sonic landscape, helping to create the illusion that all the cuts of the scene are taking place in continuum” (Sonnenschein, 2001, p. 36). The ambience of a sound track works to bind all the elements of the world together. This ambience “is the voice of the outer world, of progress, of time” (Rubin, 1985, p. 280). This piece of a soundtrack is necessary to indicate the spatial presence of the world. Spatial sound makes us aware of our

environment. Lucy Fischer quotes Siegfried Kracauer when she says that ambient music, as well, “resembles natural sounds in its strong affiliation with the *environment*” (Fischer, 1985, p. 244). Ambient music and spatial sound give audiences the resonance of the world. This space can be created by placing voices and sounds a certain distance from the microphone so audiences can feel how open the space is. A story world contains an interaction between the visual space of the fictitious world and the sounds used to build that space.

Previous Multimedia Projects

A few creative projects have already been developed under the multimedia framework that I would like to compare to my project. Jenkins (2003) talks about multimedia stories and franchises by mentioning *The Matrix* (1999) and *The Lord of the Rings* (2001-2003) but I want to reference examples that are similar in structure to the story created for this creative project and that are not huge franchises. I found research on two projects in particular that I could link to my own. Both *Bolton Storyworld* (2013) and *Four Broken Hearts* (2014) were smaller projects created by collaborative work between staff and students at universities for the purpose of creating and studying a transmedia story.

“‘Bolton Storyworld’ is an online entertainment media environment that has been created and developed by students and tutors at the University of Bolton in association with Bellyfeel, a transmedia company based in Manchester” (Zaluczkowska & Robinson, 2013, p. 57). This story was produced and planned by those interested in media, education, and media production. These are the same fields of industry that are discussed in literature. The ideas that these fields of industry hope to explore with transmedia storytelling include, “the transmedia narrative form and its production possibilities, activity-based forms of teaching and learning across disciplines

using media technologies, to provide practice-based learning opportunities for students that will give greater experiences of working in industry settings” (p. 57). Also related to education, they wanted to explore the results on how effective this form of storytelling could be to market the University of Bolton itself.

This transmedia story began with the launch of a website, more specifically, a Facebook page. It plans to include many other platforms, such as an online game, a live student game, emails, text messages, and a model of the characters, to name a few. They wanted their project to begin on a website because, as they note, television programs are popularly being watch more on the Internet, so they wanted their project to develop with this trend. “It was therefore important to create stories that young people would be interested in and attracted to and distribute them through platforms and styles that would appeal” (p. 262). They wanted as many points as possible for their audiences to be able to enter the storyworld.

One key concept that the creators of *Bolton Storyworld* seemed to focus on the most was interactivity. “BSW is experimenting with the story structure and storytelling techniques to create new immersive ways to tell stories and make programmes that challenge audiences’ expectations” (p. 263). They especially wanted their audiences to be involved with their story, and focus more on the communication between their audience and the characters than the content they provided. “Audiences have been encouraged to upload their content to the BSW Facebook page, which currently acts as the interactive hub for the project. Audiences have also been able to post links to the characters or upload their own visual and audio responses to a character’s post” (p. 270). This story seems to encourage and promote interaction, yet it does not cross over into the interactive-narrative/video-game territory. Their article announces that the project is situated in “the ‘interactive frame’” (p. 261) while they chose multiple platforms to distribute their

information. “In September 2013, BSW will be releasing a number of emails, texts, video clips, posters and links over a ten-day period...The audience can choose to consume the supplied material...or to dig deeper to find a more complex story” (p. 267). They also had game development classes at the university helping to provide online and interactive games for the project. While it promotes interactivity via their webpage, it also calls for some real life participation, with their ending event being “a live event for students to attend and take part in” (p. 267).

Another example is the *Four Broken Hearts* (2014) storyworld being developed by a team of students in New York City. This project is “a hybrid storyworld encompassing film, live performance, location-based experiences and social media” (Suleman, 2014, p. 228). This project argues that the output of stories is “embodied better in one medium or the other – for instance, film manages to capture motion while language offers explication for what can only be implied through the visual” (Ryan, 2004, 15). “The inherent elements of fictional stories – such as character, setting, exposition and climax – can be more effectively expressed in different media to achieve a higher degree of mimesis” (Suleman, 2014, p. 229). The medium is often chosen depending on skills, people, and finances available. They argue that many transmedia stories often end up failing because of their structure, saying that some platforms end up being unnecessary or confusing, which detracts from the quality and audience interest.

The article on *Four Broken Hearts* actually mentions *Bolton Storyworld*, announcing how it is in fact quite different from their project.

It is important to distinguish FBH from that type of transmedia because of two main reasons. First, the primary objective of FBH is to build a storyworld that blurs the distinction between fiction and reality without a transmedia objective in and of itself. Second, the resultant output of FBH is a form of ‘integrated transmedia’, a category it shares with projects more like Pemberly Digital’s *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* rather than

The Matrix franchise or the above-mentioned Bolton Storyworld that has self-contained media components that can be consumed as whole separately from each other. (p. 232)

From Suleman's explanation, we can see that many different types of transmedia projects populate the web, sharing some characteristics, but differing in others. This is completely expected because multimedia storytelling allows creators to invest their own ideas in the structure they wish to use, resulting in numerous products.

Previous Audio Projects

Because so many audio narratives already exist, I chose only a couple to compare mine to the content already out there. To show some variety in what audio narratives can offer, I looked at *Nightvale* (2012 – present) a current audio podcast in which the characters act as if they are on a radio show in a fictional town. Another similar episodic show, *Serial* (2014-present), is actually a nonfictional use of audio podcasts. I also looked at a website of fictional audio narratives created by young people interested in the craft of audio, who call themselves *FinalRune Productions* (2006 - present). These two forms of audio storytelling offer more current examples of audio narratives, which match my project's goals about using the opportunity of today's technologies in the creation of audio narratives.

Nightvale began in 2012 and continues today with a series of 65 episodes. This is the first difference between *Nightvale* and my own project. They launched their audio stories as an ongoing series. If comparing this visually, they would be more like a television series, and *The Secret of Guerdric Castle* would be more like a movie. Each episode runs about twenty-five to thirty minutes, which is similar to my story. *Nightvale* usually has one person voicing the announcer with minimal sound effects, and sometimes another voice by a guest speaker joins them on the radio show. My narrative contains many more sound effects and characters'

voices. However, as can be seen with *Nightvale*'s popularity, sound effects do not instantly mean success.

Nonfictional podcasts are another area of aural narratives that have become popular, shown with the success of *Serial* (2014), which reports a murder mystery case from 1999. The show's host, Sarah Koenig, calls it a "multi-part documentary told over many weeks" (Raptopoulos, 2014, para. 14). The project allows Koenig and her crew to take an older news story with the podcast format to create a new way of reporting. "And this is not an original idea. Maybe in podcast form it is, and trying to do it as a documentary story is really, really hard. But trying to do it as a serial, this is as old as Dickens" (Raptopoulos, 2014, para. 5).

This audio narrative differs from others in that it is in more of a reporting style. The creators structure the story's content weekly, with constant work being produced as it broadcasts. The creators actually record real people to tell their version of events and carve each piece together aurally. I like what Koenig says about structuring the story, "You're structuring two things at once: you're structuring each episode so it's a self-contained thing that makes sense and has an internal logic and arc, but they're all a part of this much larger thing that you also have to keep in mind" (Raptopoulos, 2014, para. 8). As an episodic show, they must keep in mind the overall story arc as well as a weekly story arc.

The same person or group of people mostly writes the audio dramas offered on *FinalRune* (2006 – present). They vary in length and consist of a variety of topics. *FinalRune* seems to be more about on-location recording than creating and mixing a story in post, which is what I had done. I did not have my actors traveling to different locations to record their actions. I definitely wanted to talk about these creators because I could see my story on their website. They are aware of the difference in today's audio narratives. "FinalRune's modern

audio dramas honor the tradition of the 40s and 50s while propelling the art form into the 21st century” (FinalRune, 2015, para. 1). I do not think of my audio narrative as a radio drama because it was not made for the radio. It is not broadcasted live with a crew working sound effects. It is audio fiction, a short story for the ears. Radio dramas were more in-the-moment creation in sound studios. *FinalRune*’s productions are made for the web, similar to my project. Therefore, it is not accurate to call these stories “radio dramas” because the creators did not intend them to disseminate via traditional broadcast methods.

Methodology

The pieces that make up my project as a whole are the audio story, the website, and the additional website components. The audio narrative is called *The Secret of Guerdric Castle*, and follows a young girl, Muriel Wainwright, who lives with her father, a humble wagon-builder, just inside the gates of a kingdom. Dismissed by her father, Muriel must find another way to learn about the mysterious death of her mother. In the process of looking into her past, she accidentally stumbles onto a hidden plot in the kingdom, and realizes that those around her know more than they say. However, when no one listens to her, she must journey into a world of spies and secrets to learn more about her past and save the future of the kingdom, discovering who she is along the way.

Divided up into three sections, the audio narrative needs an audience’s interaction to continue. This encourages the listener to travel to the other pages of the website. The website is meant to transport the audience into the Kingdom of Guerdric by showing locations from the story. The images also help to display the settings that I have been picturing in my head because

sometimes audio can't do a breathtaking landscape enough justice. The web pages are divided into The Alcove (the location for Muriel and Tenney), The Cabin (the location for Hammond), The Castle (the location for Queen Mara and Annora), The Wall (the location for Warin), The Path (the location for common folk), and an About page, which actually just talks about my project without any inclusion in the storyworld.

Each page contains a few unique components. The Alcove includes Part 1 of the audio narrative, along with diary entries written by Muriel. These begin before the audio narrative begins, and lead into the inciting incident. I did plan to have a date on each one, but when I researched dates during that period, I learned that most people did not date things. If things were dated, it was in relation to approaching or passing festivals or the phase of the moon. The Alcove also includes a character description for Muriel and Tenney. The Cabin offers Part 2 of the audio narrative, two drawings of blueprints Hammond could be using in building his wagons, and a character description for Hammond. The Castle includes Part 3 of the audio narrative, the orb video, news stories from the castle, and character descriptions for Queen Mara and Annora. The Wall includes a map of Guerdric and a character description of Warin. The map seemed appropriate because Warin stands on the wall and can look out onto the kingdom from above. The Path includes a map of the queen's carriage route, a recipe for the explosives used on the carriage, and a list of suspicious actions noticed by Simon and Bertram. The About page, once again, has information about my project, as well as my sources. All of these elements are complementarily compiled together.

This project offers a unique experience for visitors. The website is colorful and fun, and offers many pieces to view and explore for something that does not focus on video. By exploring more than just one form of storytelling, I can spread my project across multiple

platforms. While my project is mainly made up of audio, that is not my entire project. Each component is important. My project promotes multimedia storytelling and story building using these tools. With changing technologies, my project remains simple and easy to navigate. It does not insist on participation, but offers enjoyment to those who might be interested.

For the construction of the actual project, I utilized the traditional three stages: pre-production, production, and post-production. My focus in pre-production was organizing, planning, and writing. I began by choosing what I wanted to include in my project, and how to get that done. While some of my decisions did change, most of the time I followed a straightforward path. I chose to manage my project on a simple website, which I thought was the best choice to house all of my digital content. I had no problem with making that decision. Writing the script was my first task. I soon began developing characters and plot points. I first thought that I wanted to create a murder mystery, with fun characters, hidden clues, in a who-dun-it style. However, the more I considered how many characters I would need to provide enough false trails and suspects, the more I did not think this story would fit best with audio. Listeners would have a hard enough time trying to figure out who was speaking with so many people. Reminded that if I used audio, I could set the location and time period where ever I liked, I then began thinking in the direction of fantasy. More of the script was coming together as I began to like certain characters and ideas. I received feedback from classmates and professors. I then began editing, which continued throughout production and post-production as things were cut and added in the recording studio and the edit bay.

Once I had the main structure of my story built, I began looking for voice actors. Because I had characters of all ages, I wanted actors of various ages. Even though I knew a bunch of college-age students, I did not want my story to be limited through this cone of

age. I knew I wanted a young girl for Muriel, so that she would be more believable as a thirteen year old. Luckily, I was able to obtain diverse ages throughout my actors. I wanted to give the option to any nearby voice actors to participate, so I posted casting calls on Indiana actor websites. I also posted fliers up around Ball State's campus asking for voice actors for the smaller roles. The month of January was filled with scheduling auditions and replying to, in the end, what would become an initial fifty-eight interested participants. This number dwindled after the first round of emails, however, to land on sixteen people interested in auditioning. These auditions were scheduled for mid-January, mostly via Skype. I continued to edit as auditions took place. After choosing my actors, I sent them the full script and scheduled the best weekend they all could be available to record. A few of my actors were dedicated enough to drive from an hour and a half to two hours away. I wanted this project to be fun, not just for me, but also for them. One actress was from New York, so I had her record her voice and send in her audio via email. The Narrator did not need to act with the other characters, so he emailed his audio in as well.

The rest of the dialogue was recorded in the Letterman Audio Studios on Ball State's campus. I used four AKG 414s to record the dialogue in the studio, in 24bit/48k format. Sound effects were gathered in the same file format from multiple locations using a boom microphone and an H4N Zoom Recorder. I also used many sound effects from Ball State's sound library located on the computers in the audio labs. The sounds I captured myself were: Tenney's bleats, cloth brushes and rustling, some rock scuffling, pats made on Tenney's body, Tenney tearing at bark and sniffing, the carriage rolling across rocky ground, thuds and thunks, and Warin biting into and chewing the apple. I made sure to record character huffs, sighs, gasps, crying and

laughing while the actors were present. I also used them to record the background townfolk dialogue that is heard in the street scenes.

After recording and gathering all the sound effects I thought I could use, I began the post-production process. I began by setting up my sessions in ProTools, one session for each scene. I then organized my audio files and listened through all the different takes, choosing which takes of each line I liked best and clearing out the rejected clips. I then went through each scene, trimmed the dialogue, and then placed them in the general areas they belonged. For example, if a conversation was occurring in the script, I placed the dialogue lines in the order of who was speaking to create the conversation. After the dialogue had been edited, I added sound effects to the scenes. I used sounds I originally had thought I wouldn't and took out others, depending on how I liked their fit in the story.

Also during this time I was searching for locations to take pictures for my background images. I searched through websites and maps all over Indiana, Ohio, and Kentucky for places I could possibly use for my locations. I ended up only capturing a few of the images myself because no matter where I looked, I could not find the terrain I wanted in this area. I used a Canon 7D to take the pictures that I did, and searched the web for the images I could not take myself. I realize that I could have just used all images from the Internet as my background images, but I had been searching for locations for so long, that I did not just want to give up all that time as wasted.

I also planned to shoot a short video, just a close up on a crystal ball with fog rolling through it. To do this, I bought a small crystal ball and rented out Studio D on Ball State's campus to record my video in. Upon looking into the crystal ball and seeing how it reflected every single thing from all directions around it, I was hoping the black curtain in Studio D would

help block most objects out. I wanted the background to be mostly dark with minimal light. To simulate the fog, I thought that dry ice would do the trick, so I bought dry ice. I rented out a Sony NX5 camera and simple 3-point light kit from the University Media Services Equipment Checkout to record my video, as the shot was nothing complicated, or so I thought. After much time spent maneuvering the ball, the curtain, and the light, I unleashed the dry ice with warm water, which I had setting in a cooler under the table on which the crystal ball was placed. While I was able to eliminate most of the reflections from the ball, the dry ice did not rise up over the crystal ball as I had thought it would. In fact, it hardly rose out of the cooler at all. I tried repositioning the items, but it would not work. Defeated, I decided dry ice was not the option I needed.

A few days later I tried again, this time with a borrowed fog machine. I rented out the same camera and brought it home. I used a bedside lamp, which worked perfectly fine for what I needed. I placed the ball in a black plastic tote which was laying on its side on the floor, covered the wall behind me with a black bed sheet, and draped a black T-shirt over half the tote's opening to reduce reflections. I then placed the light and fog machine best I could. It worked great! However, when I tried to edit the video a few days later, I saw the reflection of the bed light was larger on the ball than I had thought and that anyone could probably recognize the light bulb as what it was. Also, I had the camera placed in my lap, so it slightly moved. I wanted to correct these things, so I researched how to stabilize the footage in Adobe Premiere Pro CS6, the program I used to edit the video. This I accomplished pretty well. I then researched how to take out a reflection from a video. The best advice said to use Adobe After Effects. I had never used this program, so I began looking into how to do this. After days of frustration every time I

attempted to remove the light, I decided I could not work this way any longer. I was not expecting to deal with these issues. I would simply reshoot again.

Once more I checked out the same equipment and took it home to use. This time I used the tripod so no stabilization would be needed, and used a slightly different set up. I covered a chair in black T-shirts. I set the crystal ball on the chair and set the camera in front of it. I then draped the black bed sheet over the chair and the camera, like a tent. I had the light sitting next to me on another chair under the blanket, and I had someone helping me work the fog machine, pointing it from above at the crystal ball. After three attempts to film an unexpectedly very reflective crystal ball, this system seemed to work! I slightly color corrected the video in Adobe Premiere Pro CS6, and added the audio and music to the video. I recorded the video in 1080/24p and exported the video in H.264, Vimeo HD 1080p 23.976.

As far as my text components go, I wrote them as I went along, when I could not be on campus to edit. This also goes for the maps that I drew to place on my website. To create the maps, I bought parchment paper and an ink pen to draw them. I scanned them into the computer. I also created the navigation buttons in Adobe Photoshop CS6. As I completed my content, I sent it to Chris Flook, my committee chair, who also helped with the technical building of my website. I sent him the designs I wanted for my web pages and he was able to put them together for me. The website was constructed using HTML 5 and CSS coding languages and is available at <http://chrisflook.org/clients/wuestefeld/alcove.htm>, although I am considering buying a domain name for the future.

Returning back to my audio narrative, after adding all the sound effects, I went through each scene and tweaked the timing and volume of the clips to create a first draft, which I sent out to my committee. I then took the comments I received to go through and edit my project once

again. During this time I was also searching the Internet for free music I could legally use. Once I found some possibilities, I went into an audio lab and played my narrative on the main computer, while playing the music off my laptop to test which sections it sounded best with, or if it sounded any good at all, before I committed to it. I then added slight reverb to the dialogue in the scenes with voices indoors. After choosing, adding, and balancing the music, I combined my tracks from each scene into one track, and placed these tracks into the Part 1, 2, & 3 I needed for my website. I then exported the audio in MP3 format for the web.

For the most part, I followed the standard procedure of creating audio material. I recorded in the studio for dialogue, on location for sound effects, and used the expected equipment. I might have added reverb to my dialogue at a different time in the process than professionals might have, but I wanted to save that until I had added all of my sound effects in case they also needed reverb added. One thing that I did differently was that I wrote a film version of the script first, and then transferred it over to an audio script. I had planned this from the start because I was familiar with a film script, but had never written an audio script. Even though I was not using any visuals, I wanted to first write the story in a film format to develop my ideas. I knew that writing out the visuals of what I saw in my head would help me in creating the story, even if I would not use the visuals in the end. After the film script was written, I had to think about what noises each visual item would make and whether to include the written action in the final narrative or not. I sent both versions of the script to the actors to help them build their characters, but during recording they did read off of the audio scripts.

I did have a few slight differences compared to other audio narratives, although it is hard to say there is a standard format for audio narratives because of how many different kinds exist. One thing I did not do was to introduce my audio story with my own voice, and talk about how

this was an audio narrative created by me, etc. This would have taken listeners even further out of the story. As a listener, I was confused on multiple occasions when audio narratives would begin if we had already entered the story or not. I did not want to create this confusion. Also, some audio stories choose to shoot on location, in real time, with their actors actually doing the actions that are heard, but I chose to place all of my sound effects in later because I wanted my actors to concentrate on their voices and British accents, and not on the actions they were doing. Multimedia stories all vary slightly in their types of content, but I think mine fits in well with the others on the Internet.

I would say that this creative project does meet my goals because first of all, while not the most complex, it did develop into a multimedia storyworld, with the audio narrative being a big part of that. I also think that my audio narrative is built in a way to engage an audience's imagination, which was my creative goal. I was not too worried about time, but I had set out to have a story length of about thirty to thirty-five minutes, and at a little over thirty-six minutes, my audio narrative did end up meeting that goal. While small changes were made during the creation of the website components, the project ended up where I had hoped it would.

I chose this form of storytelling because I wanted to use multimedia. I felt the story I wanted to tell could benefit from it. I feel I can express myself more by using multiple platforms. I chose multimedia because it is a newer and diverse way to engage in my story. Within that, I chose to create an audio story because it allows me to bypass boundaries that I would otherwise be confined to if I had chosen video. By using audio, I am not restricted to keeping the story within the current time period. I can create a world in almost any location and not have to worry about budget for costumes or travel for locations. I can also save a lot of

time by not having to find the voluntary crew that would have been needed to set up loads of equipment. Audio seemed the best way to go because it offered a lot more freedom to the story.

I especially wanted my story to be put on a website not only because the Internet is one of the best ways to share information but because it is easily accessible and many people already use it. The Internet is used for entertainment in many ways already, whether for games, television, film, or other interactive websites. The main reason I want my audio story to be placed on a website is because the web pages can easily house the other components of my creative project all in one, manageable location. A website gives me the option to include images, text, and video to create the “world” of the story. These additional website components will be just as important in contributing to the story.

I came across many decisions while putting together this project for why something should or should not be included. Many I mentioned earlier as I described the process I went through. As I learned more, I changed my mind about a few additional things, and I am glad that I did. When I first began thinking about my project, I had thought about including a video trailer on the website. I thought that I could include some sweeping shots of landscapes, maybe some close up shots of a weapon, clothing, silhouettes, and lot of quick flashes, all put with some dramatic dialogue and music. I decided against this, however, because no matter how much I wanted it, I knew I wouldn't be able to capture enough content in this time period to make it look like medieval times. This was one reason I had strayed from video in the first place. I also had considered including the written script online. However, the more I researched and learned about multimedia, the more things said that each element should contribute information not already known, and should not be redundant, which is what the script would have been. If I had been savvier in web design and development, I would have included graphics of the

characters. Upon clicking them, the audience would hear random lines of audio read by that character. This was way beyond my reach, and I decided to focus my work elsewhere.

When first developing the script, I had a hard time deciding how the characters should talk, more specifically, in what dialect. I looked up many websites and was advised by others that I did not want to try to write in Old English. They were correct. I looked into how to write in a medieval dialect, and found it was more like Shakespeare. Writers talked among themselves about how fiction novels written about those time periods actually are not written in the Old English style at all, and for good reason! If they did, no one would understand what they meant, as the meanings of words have changed so dramatically since then. I also learned not to write normally and just throw in some “thees”, “thous”, and “thous” every once in while and call it good, because it would not be. It was best just to write normally, and be smart about it. For example, using today’s slang terms all over the place would have been a bad idea.

This tied into how I wanted my voice actors to speak. I really wanted a British accent in my characters. I decided during auditions that if I could get most of my actors to speak with an accent well enough that I was happy with, I would have them all use an accent. If hardly any of the actors could speak with an accent, I would remove it altogether. Luckily, enough of them were happy and willing to give it a try that it worked out.

Earlier I talked about how the story was edited all throughout pre-production, production, and post. Some of this stemmed from the sound effects. I had thought that some sound effects would work but didn’t. For example, I had recorded cloth-rustling sounds to be the queen’s gown whenever she walked because you would think if she were wearing a huge gown, it would make noise. However, when I was trying to edit the sounds in, it did not sound right. It kept muddying up the scenes and probably would have had more people asking questions about it

than adding to the story, so I decided against it. In another instance, my script had Hammond get up from a stool he was seated in and stand over Muriel as he spoke. In the editing booth, I found no reason or motivation for Hammond to get up again. His lines read perfectly fine as if he had stayed seated, so I left him there. These choices all came into play while making personal preference decisions.

Discussion of Project

Multimedia Critique and Comparisons

While I agree that more in depth research could be done on the definition of “transmedia”, I did not want that to be my focus because already so much research on the topic exists. Scolari (2009) thinks that more multimedia stories should be created and analyzed. As mentioned earlier, he says that scholars should “analyze more TS experiences to establish the properties, limits, and possibilities of this specific kind of narrative structure” (p. 601). If more narratives should be analyzed, then more should be created to analyze, which is what I hope to offer. I want to contribute to the world of multimedia stories that already exist, whether these stories are complete and ready to be consumed, or still projects being tested and developed.

I agree that plenty of material exists to study, not just on the definition of “transmedia”, but also research on multimedia in other areas such as the news or education. However, with my project, I did not want to dive into those areas. My focus, however, is on the fictional world-building route, relating most to articles like those from Ryan (2013) and Stevens (2013). While a lot exists on the topic, it does not seem to be the most researched topic out there compared to a few of the other categories. With so much to discuss and so many possible directions to turn,

researchers who get into specific areas no doubt have no room to detail other areas related to their own. My project is more in the realm of creating a fun and entertaining experience than studying the trend of media consumers or effects on students.

I feel that multimedia stories all slightly differ in their structures and what they offer, and mine is no different. A lot the structure depends on what type of story the creator wants to tell. I do have one main component to my multimedia experience, the audio narrative, with my other elements relating to the audio. However, I do not feel that this would fall into the category of “franchising transmedia” because I designed the project with multiple platforms from the start. *The Secret of Guerdric Castle* just happens to lean a bit more heavily on the audio side of things. Each of my elements still contributes a small piece to the storyworld.

Without the storyworld surrounding the audio, the story would not be as immersive for the audience. For example, *Bolton Storyworld* (2013) focused a lot on interactivity. I did not use that element as much as they designed their storyworld to, which was a key concept they revisited in their article. *Bolton Storyworld* ties more into the real world than my story does because their story could happen in a current location and time period. Therefore, they can use present day to their advantage. They have events happening in real life that relate to their story. I did not want my story to relate to the real world because I wanted my audiences to be immersed in the fictional storyworld in their minds. I did not want to remind listeners that they were on a website.

When discussing and exploring different storyworlds, Marie-Laure Ryan (2013) provides another slightly different version of multimedia stories, those that place “real life” articles within their storyworlds. I did not want mine to include “real life” articles placed on the website because I wanted my website to be as fictional as possible. The purpose of the website is to

allow the audience to suspend their disbelief, if only for a moment. Using links to nonfiction web pages would be doing the opposite of my goal. I considered including links to pages talking about such things as types of games played, or dances done in the Middle Ages, but that would take away from the story immersion. In my audio story I wanted to use a narrator as least as possible so that my audience wasn't constantly reminded that they were being told a story. The only thing on my website that does not take place in the story is the *About* page, which I purposely made as a step outside the story.

I do like the idea that *Bolton Storyworld* was trying to appeal to a younger audience, and in doing so; they used platforms commonly visited by the younger generation, such as Facebook. I wanted to appeal to younger audiences as well, which is why using a website was a necessity. While the younger generation isn't known for being avid radio listeners, I wanted to give them a new vantage point from which to experience an audio narrative without video, on a familiar platform.

Also, a collaborative team created many of these projects, then trialed and tested them over a long period of time with the purpose of using them for research or classes of media students. Mine is more personal and individualized. While I feel that I could have spent years developing and carrying out endless additions to my storyworld, I had to stop somewhere. The purpose I had decided from the beginning was to simply get my feet wet and blend my story throughout more than one medium.

Audio Critique and Comparisons

I found it difficult to describe the expressive power that sound carries, but I am of the opinion that Gorbman (1987) said it well. "It evokes a larger-than-life dimension which, rather

than involving us *in* the narrative, places us in contemplation *of* it” (p. 68).” I feel that I cannot emphasize enough the connection that audio has with its listeners. As one of its defining characteristics, audio can control the emotions of human beings, often without the audience consciously realizing they are being manipulated. The ability of a sound designer to use audio as a tool to manipulate an audience’s emotions gives audio a strong hidden power.

I agree that since sound is a natural part of the world, humans feel comfortable surrounding themselves with noises that feel like part of their every-day environments. If narratives contain these sounds, it enhances the believability of the story. Audiences have to fixedly watch a film, but as a natural part of life, sound envelops listeners. I think it is the relationship between a human’s instinct and their natural reaction to sound that allows audio to triumph the way it does.

When listening to old radio dramas, or current audio podcasts for download, they were usually either spoken by a narrator (*Nightvale* radio broadcast style) with few sound effects, which to me I think gives the listener the experience of being read to, or they were the older shows recorded live in a studio with sound effects being created on the spot. In the older shows, sometimes actors would need to speak dialogue on top of each other in a scene, whereas today, their lines can be recorded separately and then spliced together in post-production. The same goes for sound effects. Today, sound effects can be captured separately and added/layered in.

One thing that I dislike about current audio podcasts and fictional audio narratives is their location. When searching for audio stories to listen to on the web, I was often taken to pages containing a long list of story names to choose from. While I like the diversity, I was disinterested by the blank white page and wall of text. Each story offers a title and either a sentence or short paragraph description of the story. This made me feel like not much was

there. The visitor has to purposefully click on one name among many, differentiating one line of text from the similarly written ones above and below. I had to click on the name of these stories and set myself up to listen on a blank white screen while I worked elsewhere. I wanted to change that with my audio narrative. I felt that so much more could be offered. Instead of turning people away, I wanted to welcome visitors in. I wanted to create a fun, beautiful, and interesting world for people to visit and *experience*. If these directories quit offering audio standing alone next to walls of text, I think more people would go to these places and listen to the worlds we create. Many are housed on websites such as audio-drama.com or theaudiodramadirectory.com. Thankfully, one thing that I liked was that theaudiodramadirectory.com (n.d.) does offer a link from each title to go to a full website for that story if one is available. I think more of this should be done.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This project accurately reflects my education in the Digital Storytelling program at Ball State because I did not limit myself to one storytelling medium. I have taken classes in which I have worked with video, screenwriting, audio, and academic research. This project, I feel, encompasses all that I have accomplished. From the beginning, I have felt a freedom in having the ability to change my mind about how I want to tell a story and what tools to use. I have been able to use all of my skills in creating this project. The most important thing to me is that I was able to use my imagination to form the story myself. I was able to take a part of myself and using the tools that I have acquired and strengthened throughout my education, I could release

my ideas through a physical media and express myself in various ways by which I could not before.

This project has definitely met my goals when originally developing this idea. My story is available for any audiences interested in listening and exploring. My audio narrative does not fit the classic radio drama style, nor does it sit, unadorned, in an audio-drama directory, but it is placed in the world it belongs. My project was created to embrace the idea that mediums can work together to produce an interactive and fun experience. I think that if more industries worked together, no doubt could some grand stories of epic proportion be produced. Fictional multimedia stories are more about a world and an experience, and isn't life all about the experiences? I think my project is an experience, not the greatest, not the worst, but a personal one for me, and a place that I grew as an individual. If every person could create his or her own world, and not just one, we could hop over to another person's world for a while and maybe understand a bit more.

I relish the thought that I could finish this project and taking what I have learned, develop completely new worlds, with new characters who face new problems, and build more multimedia stories, one after the other, only stronger each time, learning and growing from what I've done with past projects. I hadn't done this much story development in a long time, and this project was a personal victory for me because I got to expand the usual "start-up ideas" a bit more and stay with a story longer than I have before. For future projects I would like to spend more time with each medium and develop each area out a bit more. I think multimedia stories developed by a team are working along the right line. Creating a multimedia story is like working on a film set. Each department has a specialty, with the directors and producers organizing and running the project. I think this could work the same for multimedia, with each department specializing

in what they do best, then all compiled into the originally conceived vision. This is what I hope happens to multimedia as more opportunities appear to shape stories and express the ideas of those developing them.

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Appendices

Scene Character Breakdown

Scene #1 – Muriel, Tenney

Scene #2 - Muriel, Tenney, Bertram

Scene #3 - Muriel, Tenney, Hammond, Simon

Scene #4 – Muriel, Hammond, Simon, Queen Mara, Carriage Driver, Spy #1, Spy #2, Village Man, Village Woman #1

Scene #5 – Muriel, Spy #1, Spy #2

Scene #6 - Muriel, Hammond, Village Woman #2

Scene #7 - Muriel

Scene #8 – Muriel, Warin

Scene #9 – Muriel, Tenney

Scene #10 – Muriel, Tenney, Nigel, Queen Mara

Scene #11 – Muriel, Hammond

Scene #12 – Muriel, Tenney, Nightfall Guard

Scene #13 - Muriel

Scene #14 - Muriel

Scene #15 – Muriel, Two Castle Guards

Scene #16 – Muriel, Queen Mara, Annora, Hammond, Tenney

Scene #17 – Muriel, Warin

Recording Schedule

Day 1

MURIEL, QUEEN MARA, HAMMOND, ANNORA, NIGEL, SIMON - Scenes #4, #10, #16

MURIEL, HAMMOND, SIMON - Scenes #3, #6, #11

MURIEL & WARIN - Scenes #8, #17

Day 2

MURIEL - Scenes #1, #7, #9, #12, #13, #14

MURIEL & BERTRAM - Scene #2

Day 3

HALLWAY GUARD 1 & HALLWAY GUARD 2 - Scene #15

SPY 1 & SPY 2 - Scene #5

Day 4

The rest of the cast spread out over time.

Sound Effects List

SCENE 1

1. EXT. ROCKY ALCOVE - DAY

Slight wind, slight trees rustle, small amount of birds chirp.

2. EXT. KINGDOM STREET - CONTINUOUS

Lots of footsteps on dirt and wood. Wooden cart wheels, carts creak. Horses hooves and neigh. People indiscernibly talking, some shouting.

3. INT. HAMMOND'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Fire crackling in background.

4. EXT. KINGDOM STREET - CONTINUOUS

Lots of footsteps on dirt and wood. Wooden cart wheels, carts creak. Horses hooves and neigh. People indiscernibly talking, some shouting.

5. EXT. ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Muffled street noise (Lots of footsteps on dirt and wood. Wooden cart wheels, carts creak. Horses hooves and neigh. People indiscernibly talking, some shouting.)

6. EXT. KINGDOM STREET - CONTINUOUS

Lots of footsteps on dirt and wood. Wooden cart wheels, carts creak. Horses hooves and neigh. People indiscernibly talking, some shouting.

7. INT. HAMMOND'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Fire crackling in background.

SCENE 2

8. EXT. TOP OF CASTLE RAMPART - NIGHT

Slight wind + night + crickets chirping.

9. EXT. ROCKY ALCOVE - DAY

Slight wind, slight trees rustle, small amount of birds chirp.

10. EXT. WOODED GROVE - DAY

Slight wind, trees rustle, birds chirp.

11. INT. HAMMOND'S HOUSE - DAY

Fire crackling in background.

12. EXT. ROCKY ALCOVE - EVENING

Slight wind, slight trees rustle.

SCENE 3

13. EXT. TRAPDOOR ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Slight wind, trees rustle, crickets chirp.

14. INT. TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS

Low humming.

15. INT. CASTLE HALLWAY - NIGHT

Torches crackling.

16. INT. ORB ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Low humming.

17. EXT. TOP OF CASTLE RAMPART - NIGHT

Slight wind + night + crickets chirping.

SCENE 1:

ALCOVE ATMOSPHERE SOUND:
PULSING ORB SOUND
CLOTH RUSTLE
GOAT BLEAT
MURIEL GASPS
ORB WOOSHES THROUGH AIR
ORB SHATTERS ROCK
PEBBLES SCATTER
GOAT BLEAT
MURIEL HUFFS
MURIEL STANDS
HANDS SMOOTH CLOTHES
GOAT BLEAT
HOOVES WALK OVER ROCK, STOP
MURIEL'S MUFFLED LAUGH IN FUR
RUBBING FUR
GOAT BLEAT
DISTANT WOODEN WHEELS APPROACH ON ROCKY GROUND
MURIEL'S FOOTSTEPS ON ROCKY GROUND STAND, RUN, AND FADE
GOAT BLEAT
HOOVES ON ROCKY GROUND RUN AND FADE

SCENE 2:

STREET ATMOSPHERE SOUND FADE IN
MURIEL'S FOOTSTEPS JOG
TENNEY'S HOOVES CLOP
MOVING THROUGH CROWD
BERTRAM'S NERVOUS CHUCKLE
WOODEN WHEELS APPROACH BUT STILL REMAIN DISTANT
GOAT BLEAT
MOVING THROUGH CROWD

SCENE 3:

HOUSE ATMOSPHERE SOUND FADE IN
GULPS FROM WOODEN CUPS AND PLACE ON WOODEN TABLE
WOODEN DOOR CREAKS OPEN
STREET NOISE
WOODEN DOOR CLOSES
MURIEL'S FOOTSTEPS ON FLOOR
MURIEL'S FOOTSTEPS PRANCE TO TABLE
GOAT BLEAT
WOODEN STOOL SCOOTS
HAMMOND PATS SIMON ON THE BACK
SIMON'S FOOTSTEPS TO DOOR
DOOR OPENS

DOOR CLOSES
 WOODEN STOOL SCOOTs
 HAMMOND STANDS
 WOODEN STAFF ROLLS AND FALLS
 GOAT BLEAT
 HOOVES ON WOOD
 HAMMOND'S FOOTSTEPS LUNGE
 SWAT
 HOOVES CLOP
 GOAT BLEAT
 FOOTSTEPS AND HOOVES
 DOOR OPENS
 DISTANT GOAT BLEAT
 DOOR CLOSES
 HAMMOND SIGHS
 MURIEL SIGHS
 A LOUD EXPLOSION OUTSIDE THE DOOR
 HAMMOND'S URGENT FOOTSTEPS WALK TO DOOR
 DOOR OPENS
 HAMMOND'S FOOTSTEPS
 DOOR CLOSES
 MURIEL'S FOOTSTEPS RUN TO DOOR
 DOOR OPENS
 MURIEL'S FOOTSTEPS
 DOOR CLOSES

SCENE 4:

STREET ATMOSPHERE FADE IN
 VILLAGER WHISPERS
 SCUFFLING
 QUEEN MARA & CARRIAGE DRIVER FOOTSTEPS
 HAMMOND, MURIEL, & TENNEY FOOTSTEPS RUN THROUGH CROWD
 MURIEL GASPS
 STREET ATMOSPHERE RISES
 MAN #1 AND MAN #2'S VOICES BECOME CLEAR AS HAMMOND AND SIMON'S
 CONVERSATION FADES

SCENE 5:

DISTANT STREET NOISE
 MURIEL'S FOOTSTEPS APPROACH
 WOODEN CRATE FALLS
 MAN #1 & #2 FOOTSTEPS RUN AWAY
 MURIEL'S FOOTSTEPS RUN AWAY

SCENE 6:

STREET ATMOSPHERE SOUND

MURIEL'S RUNNING FOOTSTEPS APPROACH.
 MURIEL BEGINS CRYING
 MURIEL'S FOOTSTEPS RUN AWAY

SCENE 7:

MURIEL APPROACHING CRYING
 STREET NOISE MUFFLED
 DOOR OPENS
 MURIEL'S CLEAR CRYING
 DOOR CLOSES
 MURIEL'S FOOTSTEPS RUN ACROSS FLOOR
 MURIEL FALLS INTO SLEEPING PALLET
 MURIEL CRIES INTO PILLOW
 MUFFLED STREET NOISE IS HEARD THROUGHOUT

SCENE 8:

CASTLE WALL AT NIGHT ATMOSPHERE SOUND
 WARIN HUMS
 SCRAPING POCKET KNIFE
 MURIEL SCUFFLES TO SIT ONTO STONE WALL
 SCRAPING POCKET KNIFE
 WARIN SHIFTS HIS POSITION AND SCRAPES HIS BLADE
 SCRAPING POCKET KNIFE
 WARIN SIGHS
 SCRAPING POCKET KNIFE
 SCRAPING POCET KNIFE
 MURIEL SIGHS
 SCRAPING POCKET KNIFE
 KNIFE SLIDES INTO HILT
 WARIN SIGHS AND SHIFTS HIS WEIGHT

SCENE 9:

ALCOVE ATMOSPHERE SOUND
 MURIEL'S FOOTSTEPS JUMPING AND CLIMBING ON ROCKS
 STICK SCRAPES MOSS BETWEEN CRACKS
 MURIEL HUMS
 WALKING HOOVES APPROACH
 FOOTSTEPS JUMP ONTO GROUND
 GOAT BLEAT
 GOAT NIBBLES STICK
 GOAT BLEAT
 STEPS AND SCUFFLING ONTO ROCK
 GOAT BLEAT
~~MURIEL PUSHES HERSELF OFF BOULDER~~
 MURIEL'S FOOTSTEPS RUN AWAY
 TENNEY'S HOOVES RUN AWAY

SCENE 10:

GROVE ATMOSPHERE SOUND
 RUNNING MURIEL AND TENNEY FOOTSTEPS ON GRASS
 MURIEL AND TENNEY FOOTSTEPS SLOW DOWN AND STOP
 MURIEL PULLS TENNEY BEHIND TREE, GRUNTING WITH EFFORT
 TENNEY CHEWS ON TREE BARK
 MURIEL RUNS AND PULLS TENNEY BEHIND HER, FROM TREE TO TREE
 SMALL BOTTLES CLINKING
 GOWN RUSTLE
 QUEEN FOOTSTEPS ON GRASS RECEDE
 NIGEL'S FOOTSTEPS RECEDE.
 GOAT BLEAT
 RUSTLE OF LEAVES
 CREAK OF A HEAVY WOODEN TRAPDOOR BEING OPENED
 FOOTSTEPS INTO THE TRAPDOOR
 TRAPDOOR CLOSES

SCENE 11:

HAMMOND'S HOUSE ATMOSPHERE SOUND
 DOOR OPENS
 MURIEL'S FOOTSTEPS RUN INSIDE
 DOOR CLOSES
 HAMMOND USES A CHISEL
 HAMMOND CHUCKLES
 TOOLS CLINK
 CHISEL SOUND STOPS
 HAMMOND SIGHS
~~HIS HANDS RUB HIS KNEES HAS HE STANDS~~
 HAMMOND'S FOOTSTEPS WALKS TO FIRE
 FIRE NOISE RISES
 HAMMOND GRABS METAL POKER
 POKER POKES FIRE
~~HAMMOND PICKS UP A PIECE OF WOOD AND PUTS IT IN THE FIRE~~
 HAMMOND WALKS OVER TO MURIEL AND KNEELS IN FRONT OF HER
 CLINKING OF TOOLS
 HAMMOND STANDS AND WALKS BACK TO HIS STOOL AND SITS
 HE BEGINS CHISELING
 HAMMOND STOPS CHISELING
 HAMMOND CHISELS
 MURIEL HUFFS
 HAMMOND STOPS CHISELING
~~HAMMOND STANDS AND WALKS TO MURIEL~~
 MURIEL'S FOOTSTEPS RUN OUT THE DOOR
 DOOR OPENS
 DOOR CLOSES

SCENE 12:

ROCKY ALCOVE EVENING SOUND
 MURIEL CRYING INTO HER LAP
 GOAT BLEAT
 HAIR CHEWING
 MURIEL SNIFFS
 HOOVES STUMBLE
 MURIEL SIGHS
 MURIEL STANDS AND BRUSHES OFF HER SKIRT
 GOAT HOOVES CLOP UP BESIDE HER AND STOP
 GOAT BLEAT
 MURIEL BENDS DOWN AND HUGS TENNEY
 GOAT BLEAT
 MURIEL STANDS
 MURIEL'S FOOTSTEPS RUN QUICKLY AND QUIETLY AWAY

SCENE 13:

TRAPDOOR ATMOSPHERE SOUND
 MURIEL'S RUNNING FOOTSTEPS APPROACH AND STOP, PAUSE
 MURIEL BREATHING
 MURIEL OPENS THE TRAPDOOR WITH EFFORT
 FOOTSTEPS ENTER TRAPDOOR
 TRAPDOOR CLOSES

SCENE 14:

TUNNEL ATMOSPHERE SOUND
 MURIEL BREATHING
 ONE FOOTSTEP DOWN STONE STEP
 SLOW FOOTSTEPS DOWN STONE STEPS
 TORCHES BURNING
 TORCH PICKED UP
 FOOTSTEPS CONTINUE

SCENE 15:

HALLWAY ATMOSPHERE SOUND
 WOODEN DOOR CREAKS OPEN
 WOODEN DOOR CLOSES
 MURIEL'S FOOTSTEPS MOVE INTO THE HALLWAY
 HALLWAY GUARD #1 SLAPS HIS LEG AND DRUNKENLY LAUGHS
 MURIEL'S FOOTSTEPS MOVE QUIETLY ALONG THE HALL
 HALLWAY GUARD #2 BURSTS INTO DRUNKEN LAUGHTER
 THE VOICES FACE
 MURIEL'S FOOTSTEPS LIGHTLY WALK TO DOOR
 MURIEL PLACES HER EAR ON THE DOOR
 A HOLLOW SOUND EMITS THROUGH THE DOOR
 MURIEL OPENS THE DOOR AND WALKS THROUGH
 THE DOOR CLOSES

SCENE 16:

ORB ROOM ATMOSPHERE SOUND
THE ROOM HUMS
MURIEL'S SLOW FOOTSTEPS
ORB SOUND INCREASES
MURIEL'S HAND SLIDES ALONG PEDESTAL
WIND AND STORM TINKLING SOUND PICKS UP THEN FADES
QUEEN'S FOOTSTEPS ON OTHER SIDE OF DOOR APPROACH
MURIEL GASPS
MURIEL'S FOOTSTEPS RUN THEN STOP
MURIEL CROUCHES
DOOR OPENS
QUEEN'S FOOTSTEPS WALK IN, SLOWING THE NEARER SHE GETS TO THE ORB
WOODEN CHAIR SCRAPES ON STONE FLOOR
MURIEL'S FOOTSTEPS SLOWLY CROSS THE ROOM AND STOP
QUEEN'S SLOW FOOTSTEPS, STOP
QUEEN'S SLOW FOOTSTEPS, STOP
QUEEN LEANS FORWARD, FACE INCHES FROM MURIEL'S
QUEEN'S SLOW FOOTSTEPS
QUEEN'S FOOTSTEPS QUICKLY WALK TO MURIEL, GOWN RUSTLING
STORM TINKLING SOUND SLOWLY ENTERS
UNEVEN PULSING MAGIC ORB SOUND
WOOSH
MAGIC CRASHES INTO WALL
PEBBLES SCATTER
LONGSWORD UNSHEATHED
MURIEL GASPS
MURIEL'S FOOTSTEPS SLOWLY BACK AWAY
PULSING ORB SOUND WAIVERING
QUEEN'S FOOTSTEPS APPROACH
SPELL WOOSH
SPELL CRASHES INTO WALL AND PEBBLES SCATTER
MURIEL'S FOOTSTEPS RUN
QUEEN'S FOOTSTEPS FOLLOW
SWORD SLASHES WOODEN CHAIR, CHAIR BREAKS AND FALLS
MURIEL'S FOOTSTEPS RUN ACROSS ROOM
STORM TINKLING SOUND GROWS
QUEEN'S FOOTSTEPS FOLLOW MURIEL
MURIEL GRUNTS!! - NEED TO PUT HERE
PULSING ORB WAIVERING
MURIEL BEGINS CRYING
PULSING ORB DEPLETES
QUEEN SLICES MURIEL ACROSS SHOULDER WITH SWORD
MURIEL IS HIT
MURIEL FALLS TO THE GROUND HOLDING SHOULDER
QUEEN'S FOOTSTEPS SLOWLY APPROACH

TINKLING STORM GROWS
THUNDER AND LIGHTNING ZAP
SWORD RAISES
BOLT OF LIGHTNING STRIKES QUEEN
QUEEN IS ZAPPED
QUEEN'S BODY FALLS TO GROUND
GLASS SHATTERS
HIGH PITCHED NOISE OF BRIGHT LIGHT BECOMES LOUDER THEN FADES
MURIEL BREATHES HARD
MURIEL CRAWLS ACROSS THE FLOOR AND MOVES THE QUEEN'S ARM
DISTANT COUGHING OCCURS
MURIEL STANDS AND SLOWLY MOVES ACROSS THE ROOM
ANNORA MOANS
MURIEL GASPS
MURIEL KNEELS NEXT TO ANNORA
MURIEL BRUSHES HAIR FROM ANNORA'S FACE
ANNORA CRIES WITH HAPPINESS
MURIEL AND ANNORA HUG
MURIEL'S NEXT LINE IS MUFFLED
ANNORA GRUNTS THEN MOANS IN PAIN
HAMMOND'S FOOTSTEPS AND TENNEY'S HOOVES APPROACH AND STOP
GOAT BLEAT
HAMMOND'S SPEAKS AS HIS FOOTSTEPS SLOWLY CROSS THE ROOM.
HAMMOND KNEELS DOWN
MURIEL HUGS ANNORA
HAMMOND SIGHS
MURIEL HUGS HAMMOND
ANNORA LETS OUT A LARGE BREATH
MURIEL CRIES
HAMMOND KISSES ANNORA'S HAND
MURIEL CRIES LOUDER
MURIEL HUGS HAMMOND

SCENE 17:

CASTLE WALL NIGHT ATMOSPHERE SOUND
STRONG PULSING MAGIC SOUND BACK AND FORTH
MAGIC SOUND SHOOTS INTO AIR AND HAPPILY EXPLODES
WARIN TOSSES APPLE IN AIR THEN CUTS IT WITH POCKET KNIFE
WARIN BITES INTO A SLICE OF APPLE
WARIN CUTS ANOTER SLICE OF APPLE AND TAKES A BITE
WARIN CUTS ANOTHER SLICE OF APPLE AND TAKES A BITE
WARIN CUTS ANOTHER SLICE OF APPLE AND TAKES A BITE
FADE ON ALL SOUND

THE SECRET OF GUERDRIC CASTLE

An original audio drama by

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THE SECRET OF GUERDRIC CASTLE

CAST

NARRATOR	The announcer.
MURIEL WAINWRIGHT	Young, adventurous girl.
HAMMOND WAINWRIGHT	Overly protective father.
WARIN HAYWARD	Older, peaceful watchman.
QUEEN MARA OF GUERDRIC	Power hungry queen.
ANNORA WAINWRIGHT	Strong, independent mother.
BERTRAM	Watchful town peasant.
SIMON	Watchful town peasant.
NIGEL	Queen's sneaky helper.
SPY #1	Spy in the streets.
SPY #2	Spy in the streets.
CARRIAGE DRIVER	Queen's carriage driver.
VILLAGE WOMAN #1	Common townswoman.
VILLAGE WOMAN #2	Common townswoman.
VILLAGE MAN	Common townsman.
NIGHTFALL GUARD	Protective guard.
GATE GUARD #1	Man loyal to kingdom.
GATE GUARD #2	Man loyal to kingdom.
HALLWAY GUARD #1	Drunk joker.
HALLWAY GUARD #2	Drunk joker.

The Secret of Guerdric Castle

1. **MUSIC:** ENGLISH MANOR THEME – UP. ESTABLISH.
CONTINUE UNDER.

2. **NARRATOR:** Welcome to the medieval kingdom of Guerdric, a place unassumingly tucked away on an alpine mountain, surrounded by wintry pines, stubborn shrubs, and rocky ground. Small yet strong, its powerful stone walls protect the castle and the homes of its people. (PAUSE) Guerdric is a place where townsfolk are loyal to the king, in a world where magic is an art to be mastered by those born with the gift. (PAUSE) The common visitor may venture into an alehouse for a tankard or visit the town square, which offers a variety of trinkets from tradesmen and craftsmen of all kinds. (PAUSE) But where *this* story begins is outside the kingdom walls. Down in a rocky alcove, a young girl, daughter of a humble wagon-builder, sits with her trusty alpine ibex. Her legs are

crossed, her eyes are closed, as she practices the art of magic...

1. MUSIC: ENGLISH MANOR THEME CONTINUE.

SCENE ONE: EXT. ROCKY ALCOVE – DAY
(MURIEL)

2. MUSIC: ENGLISH MANOR THEME FADE.

3. SOUND: ALCOVE ATMOSPHERE SOUND. PULSING ORB SOUND. FADE IN ON DIALOGUE.

4. MURIEL: (JERKILY RECITES) A mighty power rests upon this pedestal, a guardian against evil. Let those whose purpose be to harm, be wary of this fateful charm. Wherefore-

5. SOUND: CLOTH RUSTLE. GOAT BLEAT. MURIEL GASPS. ORB WOOSHES THROUGH AIR. ORB SHATTERS ROCK. PEBBLES SCATTER.

6. MURIEL: Tenney! You broke my concentration!

7. SOUND: GOAT BLEAT. MURIEL HUFFS. MURIEL STANDS. HANDS SMOOTH CLOTHES.

8. MURIEL: You almost became goat confetti, you know. Father would have made you into a stew.

9. SOUND: GOAT BLEAT.

10. MURIEL: Just be more careful. You've always been the best friend I could ask for.

1. SOUND: HOOVES WALK OVER ROCK STOP. GOAT BLEAT. MURIEL PATS AND RUBS FUR.
2. MURIEL: Let's face it. I'll never know what it means.
3. SOUND: GOAT BLEAT.
4. MURIEL: But it must mean something. I know it!
5. SOUND: MURIEL SCUFFS HER FEET.
6. MURIEL: Let me try it again. (JERKILY RECITING)
A mighty power rests upon this
pedestal...
7. SOUND: DISTANT WOODEN WHEELS APPROACH ON ROCKY GROUND. HORSE NEIGH.
8. MURIEL: Hey look! The queen's carriage is back! I wonder what news she has from outside the kingdom! Come on, let's go tell Father!
9. SOUND: MURIEL'S FOOTSTEPS ON ROCKY GROUND RUN, AND FADE. GOAT BLEAT. HOOVES ON ROCKY GROUND RUN AND FADE. ALCOVE ATMOSPHERE SOUND FADE.
- SCENE TWO: EXT. KINDOM STREET – MOMENTS LATER
(MURIEL, BERTRAM, GATE GUARD #1 & #2)
10. MUSIC: PLEASANT MUSIC–UP. ESTABLISH. CONTINUE UNDER.

1. **SOUND:** STREET ATMOSPHERE SOUND FADE IN:
FOOTSTEPS, SHOUTS, WAGONS, CHICKENS,
DOG, CAT. MURIEL'S FOOTSTEPS JOG.
TENNEY'S HOOVES CLOP.
2. **GATE GUARD #1:** Make way for the royal carriage!
3. **MURIEL:** Bertram! Over here!
4. **SOUND:** MOVING THROUGH CROWD.
5. **MURIEL:** Bertram! What brings you here?
6. **BERTRAM:** I'm waiting for Simon. He's inside meeting with your father.
7. **MURIEL:** About what?
8. **SOUND:** BERTRAM'S NERVOUS CHUCKLE.
9. **BERTRAM:** Nothing you need to worry yourself about.
10. **SOUND:** WOODEN WHEELS APPROACH BUT STILL
REMAIN DISTANT.
11. **MURIEL:** The carriage is coming!
12. **BERTRAM:** So it is. Best you get inside your father's house.
13. **MURIEL:** Okay. I'll see you around!
C'mon Tenney!
14. **SOUND:** GOAT BLEAT. MOVING THROUGH CROWD.
15. **GATE GUARD #2:** Move along!

1. SOUND: STREET ATMOSPHERE SOUND FADES OUT.

2. MUSIC: PLEASANT MUSIC FADE.

SCENE THREE: INT. HAMMOND'S HOUSE — MOMENTS LATER
(MURIEL, HAMMOND, SIMON)

3. SOUND: HOUSE ATMOSPHERE SOUND FADE IN:
FIREPLACE.

4. SIMON: ...and we saw them yesterday. It had to
be them.

5. SOUND: SIPPING FROM CUP. CUP PLACED ON TABLE.

6. HAMMOND: With Queen Mara? You're sure of this?

7. SIMON: Yes. No doubt.

8. SOUND: WOODEN DOOR CREAKS OPEN. STREET NOISE.
WOODEN DOOR CLOSES. MURIEL'S FOOTSTEPS.

9. MURIEL: Hi Father! The carriage is back! Hi
Simon!

10. SOUND: MURIEL'S FOOTSTEPS PRANCE TO TABLE.
GOAT BLEAT.

11. HAMMOND: Muriel. Where have you been?

12. SIMON: We'll speak later.

13. SOUND: WOODEN STOOL SCOOTs. SIMON STANDS.

14. HAMMOND: Goodbye, Simon.

15. SOUND: WOODEN CHAIR SCOOTs. HAMMOND STANDS.
HAMMOND PATS SIMON ON THE BACK. SIMON'S
FOOTSTEPS TO DOOR. DOOR OPENS. DOOR
CLOSES.

1. MURIEL: I was outside the gates with Tenney. He was leaping off thIS huge boulder down the mountain. He kept bumping into me and I almost blew him to pieces. Then we heard the carriage-
2. HAMMOND: You were playing with magic again, weren't you?
3. MURIEL: I was practicing, but I really wasn't harming anyone, honest. No one else was even around.
4. HAMMOND: Muriel, you're just a novice. Don't you know how easily you could have caused major damage?
5. SOUND: WOODEN STAFF ROLLS AND FALLS. GOAT BLEAT. HOOVES ON WOOD.
6. HAMMOND: And I thought I told you to keep that goat out of here!
7. SOUND: HAMMOND'S FOOTSTEPS LUNGE. SWAT. HOOVES CLOP. GOAT BLEAT. FOOTSTEPS AND HOOVES. DOOR OPENS.
8. HAMMOND: Out! Out!
9. SOUND: DOOR CLOSES. DISTANT GOAT BLEAT.
10. MURIEL: But Father! He doesn't harm anything.
11. HAMMOND: That was your mother's staff, you know.

1. MURIEL: I know.
2. SOUND: HAMMOND SIGHS.
3. HAMMOND: Listen. Magic is dangerous. Your mother found that out the hard way from the accident. I don't want that happening to you. Do you understand?
4. MURIEL: (EXASPERATED) Yes.
5. HAMMOND: Promise me. No more magic.
6. SOUND: MURIEL SIGHS.
7. MURIEL: I promise. But I just feel-
8. SOUND: A LOUD EXPLOSION OUTSIDE THE DOOR.
HORSE NEIGH. HAMMOND'S URGENT FOOTSTEPS
WALK TO DOOR.
9. HAMMOND: Stay inside, Muriel.
10. SOUND: HAMMOND'S FOOTSTEPS. DOOR OPENS. STREET
NOISE. DOOR CLOSES. GOAT BLEAT.
MURIEL'S FOOTSTEPS RUN TO DOOR. DOOR
OPENS. MURIEL'S FOOTSTEPS FADE. DOOR
CLOSES.
- SCENE FOUR: EXT. KINGDOM STREET – MOMENTS LATER
(MURIEL, HAMMOND, SIMON, QUEEN MARA, CARRIAGE DRIVER,
VILLAGE WOMAN #1, VILLAGE WOMAN #2, VILLAGE MAN, SPY #1,
SPY #2)
11. MUSIC: SUSPENSEFUL MUSIC-UP. ESTABLISH.
CONTINUE UNDER.
12. SOUND: STREET ATMOSPHERE FADE IN. SHOUTING.

RUNNING. VILLAGERS WHISPER.

1. **QUEEN MARA:** Who has done this? Who? Whoever has done this will pay!
2. **SOUND:** QUEEN MARA & CARRIAGE DRIVER FOOTSTEPS.
3. **CARRIAGE DRIVER:** Come on, your majesty. We must get you to your chambers.
4. **SOUND:** SCUFFLING.
5. **QUEEN MARA:** You did this! It was you!
6. **VILLAGE MAN:** No your majesty!
7. **QUEEN MARA:** (DISTANT) You!
8. **VILLAGE WOMAN #1:** (DISTANT) Never your majesty!
9. **SOUND:** HAMMOND, MURIEL, & TENNEY FOOTSTEPS
RUN THROUGH CROWD.
10. **HAMMOND:** Is he all right?
11. **MURIEL:** Bertram!
12. **SIMON:** I don't think so, Hammond.
13. **HAMMOND:** What happened?
14. **SIMON:** The explosion from the carriage got him! Sent him down in the dirt.
15. **HAMMOND:** Bertram, are you all right? Can you hear me?
16. **SOUND:** MURIEL GASPS.
17. **HAMMOND:** (OVER SHOULDER) Muriel, get inside!
18. **SOUND:** STREET ATMOSPHERE RISES. SPY #1 AND SPY

#2'S VOICES BECOME CLEAR AS HAMMOND AND
SIMON'S CONVERSATION FADES.

1. SPY #1: I knew it! I knew it! I told you this would happen!
 2. SPY #2: Shhh! Quiet! (PAUSE) This way!
 3. SOUND: SPY #1 AND #2 FOOTSTEPS RUN AND FADE.
 4. HAMMOND: Where was he standing?
 5. SIMON: Just over there. Rock got his head.
 6. SOUND: STREET ATMOSPHERE FADE.
 7. MUSIC: SUSPENSEFUL MUSIC FADE.
- SCENE FIVE: EXT. ALLEY — MOMENTS LATER
(SPY #1, SPY #2)
8. MUSIC: SNEAKY THEME—UP. ESTABLISH. CONTINUE
UNDER.
 9. SOUND: DISTANT STREET NOISE. MURIEL'S
FOOTSTEPS APPROACH QUIETLY.
 10. SPY #1: I knew that we couldn't keep this up.
It was asking for trouble!
 11. SPY #2: Keep your shirt on, Caleb. Nothing's
gonna happen.
 12. SPY #1: What do you mean nothing's gonna
happen? Something's already happened!
 13. SPY #2: Keep calm. We don't even know if they
were targeting Queen Mara, or if they
were, what they were targeting her for!

1. SPY #1: What else could anyone be targeting her for? Someone knows! I'm telling you! And soon, they'll be coming after us! It was only luck the queen wasn't killed! *That could be us!*
2. SPY #2: Nobody's found out, and nobody is going to find out, got it? So keep your mouth shut! We just need to find out who did this and why!
3. SOUND: WOODEN CRATE FALLS.
4. SPY #2: What was that? Come on, let's get out of here!
5. SOUND: DOG BARKS. SPY #1 & #2 FOOTSTEPS RUN AWAY. PAUSE. MURIEL'S FOOTSTEPS RUN AWAY.
6. MUSIC: SNEAKY THEME FADE.
- SCENE SIX: EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER
(MURIEL, HAMMOND, VILLAGE WOMAN #2)
7. SOUND: STREET ATMOSPHERE SOUND FADE IN.
MURIEL'S RUNNING FOOTSTEPS APPROACH.
8. MURIEL: Father! I just heard these two men. It sounded like they-
9. HAMMOND: Muriel! This is not the time! Get inside, now!!
10. VILLAGE

- WOMAN #2:** (WAILING) That man is dead!
1. **MURIEL:** What about Bertram?
2. **HAMMOND:** Bertram's dead, can't you see that? Now get inside the house and stay there!
3. **SOUND:** MURIEL BEGINS CRYING. MURIEL'S FOOTSTEPS RUN AWAY.

SCENE SEVEN: INT. HAMMOND'S HOUSE — MOMENTS LATER

4. **MUSIC:** SAD THEME—UP. ESTABLISH. CONTINUE UNDER.
5. **SOUND:** HAMMOND'S HOUSE ATMOSPHERE SOUND: FIREPLACE. MURIEL APPROACHING CRYING AND STREET NOISE MUFFLED. DOOR OPENS. STREET NOISE. MURIEL'S CLEAR CRYING. DOOR CLOSES. MURIEL'S FOOTSTEPS RUN ACROSS FLOOR. MURIEL FALLS INTO SLEEPING PALLET. MURIEL CRIES INTO PILLOW.
6. **MUSIC:** SAD THEME FADE.

**SCENE EIGHT: EXT. TOP OF CASTLE RAMPART — NIGHT
(MURIEL, WARIN)**

7. **MUSIC:** SCOTTISH MUSIC—UP. ESTABLISH. CONTINUE UNDER.
8. **SOUND:** CASTLE WALL AT NIGHT ATMOSPHERE SOUND: WIND, CRICKETS. WARIN HUMS. SCRAPING POCKET KNIFE.

1. WARIN: I thought you might visit tonight, Miss Muriel.
2. SOUND: MURIEL JUMPS DOWN AND WALKS OVER.
3. MURIEL: How's guard duty?
4. WARIN: Peaceful. Just how I like it.
5. SOUND: SCRAPING POCKET KNIFE.
6. MURIEL: You heard about the carriage today?
7. WARIN: Sure did. Horrible thing.
8. MUSIC: SCOTTISH MUSIC FADE.
9. SOUND: WARIN SCRAPES HIS BLADE.
10. MURIEL: They said the queen was all right. They said she ordered the culprit to be persecuted... What does persecuted mean?
11. WARIN: It means somebody's going to pay for what happened.
12. SOUND: SCRAPING POCKET KNIFE.
13. MURIEL: Warin, if I ask you something, will you be honest?
14. WARIN: To the best of my ability, little lady.
15. MURIEL: What do you think caused it? Do you think somebody really meant for that to happen?
16. WARIN: You mean do you think somebody

purposely tried to destroy the queen?

1. MURIEL: Yes.
2. SOUND: WARIN SIGHS.
3. WARIN: I suppose I don't know. But I can tell you that people know more than they let on.
4. MURIEL: What do you mean?
5. WARIN: I mean, it's possible someone tried to kill her. However, the queen has been traveling in that carriage for years.
6. SOUND: SCRAPING POCKET KNIFE.
7. WARIN: Every fortnight she visits King Gerald in the neighboring kingdom to keep peace. And I've been here on this wall to see it. If somebody did want to destroy the queen, why now?
8. MURIEL: King Aubrey left two days ago. What if someone tried to kill her while the king was away?
9. WARIN: Hmm... s'possible.
10. MURIEL: And I heard two men talking after the explosion! They were worried that somebody had found out about something. Do you think they could be involved?

1. WARIN: Perhaps.
2. SOUND: SCRAPING POCKET KNIFE.
3. MURIEL: I tried to tell Father, but he wouldn't listen to me... as usual.
4. WARIN: He just tries to do what he thinks is best for you.
5. SOUND: MURIEL SIGHS.
6. MURIEL: I wish my mother were here.
7. SOUND: SCRAPING POCKET KNIFE. KNIFE SLIDES INTO HILT.
8. WARIN: She was a good woman, your mother. Best magician the king ever had. She knew how to use her magic properly, and use it well, not like some magicians these days.
9. MURIEL: My mother was a magician for the king?
10. WARIN: Why yes, hasn't your father ever told you?
11. MURIEL: My father won't ever talk about her. It's like mentioning her name is a curse on the house. I wish I had gotten to know her better.
12. WARIN: Hammond loved her very much. That's for

sure. He always felt he wasn't worthy of her, which made him try even harder. He was devastated when she... well never mind.

1. MURIEL: (WHISPERS) Father said she died in an accident.
2. SOUND: WARIN SIGHS AND SHIFTS HIS WEIGHT.
3. WARIN: A horrible accident in the castle. They say she was casting a spell. Something went wrong, and she... she just disappeared. (PAUSE) But that was a long time ago. No sense dwelling in the past.
4. MURIEL: I read her spell again today, trying to figure it out. Father calls it a poem, but I know it's a spell. The parchment has my name on it, so I know Mother meant for me to have it, I just don't know why.
5. WARIN: You should talk to the queen.
6. MUSIC: FLUTE MUSIC – UP. CONTINUE UNDER.
7. MURIEL: The queen?
8. WARIN: Annora was the king's magician for

years. I'm sure the queen knew her well.

1. MURIEL: Okay. I'll do that.
2. WARIN: Just like your mother. Never give up.

SCENE NINE: EXT. ROCKY ALCOVE – DAY
(MURIEL)

3. MUSIC: FLUTE MUSIC CONTINUES UNDER.
4. SOUND: ALCOVE ATMOSPHERE SOUND. MURIEL'S FOOTSTEPS JUMPING AND CLIMBING ON ROCKS. STICK SCRAPES MOSS BETWEEN CRACKS. MURIEL HUMS. WALKING HOOVES APPROACH.
5. MURIEL: Tenney! You're back!
6. SOUND: TENNEY TEARING AT BARK.
7. MURIEL: Hey stop! That's not for you!
8. SOUND: GOAT BLEAT. MURIEL SIGHS AND SCUFFS HER FEET.
9. MURIEL: I'm sorry about Father. He doesn't understand. (PAUSE) Hey who's that?
10. SOUND: STEPS AND SCUFFLING ONTO ROCK.
11. MURIEL: It's the queen! Why is she out by herself?
12. SOUND: GOAT BLEAT.
13. MURIEL: Maybe I can ask her about my mother!
C'mon!

1. **SOUND:** MURIEL PUSHES HERSELF OFF BOULDER.
MURIEL'S FOOTSTEPS RUN AWAY. TENNEY'S
HOOVES RUN AWAY.
 2. **MUSIC:** FLUTE MUSIC FADE.
- SCENE TEN: EXT. WOODED GROVE – DAY**
(MURIEL, QUEEN MARA, NIGEL)
3. **SOUND:** GROVE ATMOSPHERE SOUND. RUNNING MURIEL
AND TENNEY FOOTSTEPS APPROACH.
 4. **MURIEL:** Queen Mara! Queen Mara!
 5. **SOUND:** MURIEL AND TENNEY FOOTSTEPS SLOW DOWN
AND STOP.
 6. **MURIEL:** Wait, what's that man doing there? He
was behind that tree! Quick hide!
 7. **SOUND:** MURIEL PULLS TENNEY BEHIND TREE,
GRUNTING WITH EFFORT. MURIEL AND TENNEY
FOOTSTEPS. TENNEY CHEWS ON TREE BARK.
 8. **MURIEL:** Shh! Stop eating that tree!
 9. **SOUND:** GOAT BLEAT.
 10. **MURIEL:** I can't hear anything! We need to get
closer.
 11. **SOUND:** MURIEL RUNS AND PULLS TENNEY BEHIND
HER, FROM TREE TO TREE.
 12. **QUEEN MARA:** ...and you are sure no one knows?
 13. **NIGEL:** No one.
 14. **QUEEN MARA:** Lucky for us I was able to save the

bottle from that explosion the other day. It almost ruined my whole outing. Here, take it.

1. **SOUND:** SMALL BOTTLES CLINKING.
2. **MURIEL:** (WHISPERS) A bottle of poison?
3. **NIGEL:** Thank you, your majesty. What of its potency?
4. **QUEEN MARA:** King Gerald assured it was of the best quality. Now, sprinkle a few drops in their tankards at dinner tonight and they'll be gone before morning.
5. **MUSIC:** SNEAKY THEME – UP. ESTABLISH. CONTINUE UNDER.
6. **NIGEL:** Yes, my lady.
7. **QUEEN MARA:** With the guards out of the way, I will finally have my chance. And King Aubrey will be out of town until tomorrow, making it the perfect opportunity.
8. **NIGEL:** Yes, your majesty.
9. **QUEEN MARA:** Ha, what a fool! No one has ever been allowed in that chamber, not even I! Only the king's magicians have ever been allowed to enter, to work on his

"secret weapon". What ever he is hiding, it's about time I find out.

1. NIGEL: Yes, my lady.
2. QUEEN MARA: (QUIETLY) I hope you know, Nigel, King Gerald and I have been planning this for quite some time. So if you pull this off, I am sure we can make it well worth your while. He's what is known as a real ruler, something King Aubrey will never amount to.
3. NIGEL: Thank you, my lady.
4. QUEEN MARA: Now, I expect you tonight at dusk, guarding that hallway. Make sure no one passes. And no one sees.
5. MUSIC: SNEAKY THEME FADE.
6. NIGEL: Yes, my lady. It shall be done.
7. SOUND: QUEEN FOOTSTEPS ON GRASS RECEDE.
8. QUEEN MARA: Remember, not a minute late!
9. SOUND: NIGEL'S FOOTSTEPS RECEDE.
10. MURIEL: Where's he going?
11. SOUND: GOAT BLEAT.
12. MURIEL: Shh!
13. SOUND: RUSTLE OF LEAVES. CREAK OF A HEAVY WOODEN TRAPDOOR BEING OPENED.

1. MURIEL: (WHISPERS) A trapdoor!
2. SOUND: FOOTSTEPS ENTER TRAPDOOR. TRAPDOOR
CLOSES.
- SCENE ELEVEN: INT. HAMMOND'S HOUSE — DAY
(MURIEL, HAMMOND)
3. SOUND: HAMMOND'S HOUSE ATMOSPHERE SOUND:
FIREPLACE. HAMMOND CHISELING. DOOR
OPENS. MURIEL'S FOOTSTEPS RUN INSIDE.
DOOR CLOSES.
4. MURIEL: (OUT OF BREATH) Father!
5. SOUND: HAMMOND STOPS CHISELING.
6. HAMMOND: Muriel. What is it?
7. MURIEL: I just saw the queen outside the
kingdom. She was walking alone and this
man... this man approached her. They
kept looking over their shoulders, and
then she gave him a bottle of poison!
8. SOUND: HAMMOND CHUCKLES.
9. MUSIC: CALM MUSIC — UP. CONTINUE UNDER.
10. HAMMOND: What sort of story are you making up
now?
11. MURIEL: I'm not making this up! I just saw it
happen!
12. HAMMOND: It sounds like you see a lot of things.
13. SOUND: HAMMOND CHISELING.

1. MURIEL: I mean what I say, Father. And they were talking about this secret plan to meet in the castle tonight! Then the man disappeared into a trapdoor in the ground!
2. SOUND: HAMMOND STOP CHISELING.
3. HAMMOND: Darling, I doubt that the queen has anything bad in store for us. You need to stop thinking people are against us.
4. MURIEL: But I heard them!
5. HAMMOND: You heard their whole conversation? Every word?
6. MURIEL: Well, no... I missed the first part.
7. SOUND: HAMMOND STANDS. HAMMOND'S FOOTSTEPS WALK TO FIRE.
8. HAMMOND: Sometimes, things can be taken out of context. She could have easily just been chatting with one of Guerdric's hunters.
9. MURIEL: But she wasn't!
10. HAMMOND: You'll learn not to jump to conclusions when you're older.
11. MURIEL: But don't you think it's strange that she was outside the kingdom, alone?

1. **SOUND:** FIRE NOISE RISES. HAMMOND GRABS METAL
POKER. POKER POKES FIRE.
2. **HAMMOND:** She's the queen, Muriel. What business is that of mine? Besides, you just told me she wasn't alone, and she had quite a wreck yesterday. I wouldn't be surprised if she needed to clear her head. I surely would.
3. **MURIEL:** So you're not going to do anything about it?
4. **SOUND:** HAMMOND WALKS OVER TO MURIEL AND KNEELS
IN FRONT OF HER.
5. **HAMMOND:** Listen, if I challenged every wrong in this world, real or otherwise, I wouldn't have the home I have here. Nor would I have the bountiful food, or warm fire, or you. Now please just leave the world be, and try not to get into any more trouble. Can you do that?
6. **SOUND:** HAMMOND STANDS AND WALKS BACK TO HIS
STOOL AND SITS. HE BEGINS CHISELING.
7. **MUSIC:** CALM MUSIC FADE.
8. **MURIEL:** But what does the queen know about Mother?

1. **SOUND:** HAMMOND STOPS CHISELING.
2. **HAMMOND:** What makes you say that?
3. **MURIEL:** Warin said they knew each other.
4. **HAMMOND:** Oh, did he?
5. **MURIEL:** Yes. He said that she was a magician for the king, and that people know more than they say.
6. **HAMMOND:** Well, all Warin knows is what he sees up on that wall. Best not listen to him.
7. **SOUND:** HAMMOND CHISELS. MURIEL HUFFS.
8. **MURIEL:** But Warin is one of my best friends!
9. **SOUND:** HAMMOND STOPS CHISELING.
10. **HAMMOND:** Muriel, I understand that. But I'm getting tired of this. Everything I do is for your own good. Why don't you understand that? (PAUSE) Now, I told Phillip you'd help him with the horses today, so get along. (PAUSE) Muriel...
11. **MURIEL:** No!
12. **HAMMOND:** I told you, go!
13. **MURIEL:** Warin's more of a father than you are!
14. **SOUND:** MURIEL'S FOOTSTEPS RUN OUT THE DOOR.
DOOR OPENS. DOOR CLOSES.

**SCENE TWELVE: EXT. ROCKY ALCOVE — EVENING
(MURIEL, NIGHTFALL GUARD)**

1. **MUSIC:** SAD MUSIC—UP. ESTABLISH. CONTINUE
UNDER.
2. **SOUND:** ROCKY ALCOVE EVENING SOUND. MURIEL
CRYING INTO HER LAP. HOOVES APPROACH.
HAIR CHEWING. MURIEL SNIFFS.
3. **MURIEL:** Hey, hey, if you could get off my hair,
that'd be great.
4. **SOUND:** HOOVES STUMBLE. GOAT BLEAT. MURIEL
SIGHS.
5. **MURIEL:** What am I going to do?
6. **NIGHTFALL
GUARD:** (DISTANT) Nightfall! Close the gate!
7. **MURIEL:** Looks like we're locked out for the
night.
8. **SOUND:** MURIEL SIGHS.
9. **MURIEL:** Well if Father won't help me, I'll find
out for myself.
10. **MURIEL:** STANDS AND BRUSHES OFF HER SKIRT. GOAT
HOOVES CLOP UP BESIDE HER AND STOP.
GOAT BLEAT.
11. **MUSIC:** SAD MUSIC CHANGES TO ACTIVE THEME.
12. **SOUND:** GOAT BLEAT.
13. **MURIEL:** Don't worry. I'll be all right. Just

take care of yourself, you mangy goat!

1. SOUND: MURIEL PATS TENNEY. GOAT BLEAT.

MURIEL'S FOOTSTEPS RUN AWAY.

2. MUSIC: ACTIVE THEME FADES.

SCENE THIRTEEN: EXT. TRAPDOOR ENTRANCE — MOMENTS LATER
(MURIEL)

3. MUSIC: ADVENTURE THEME—UP. ESTABLISH. CONTINUE
UNDER.

4. SOUND: TRAPDOOR ATMOSPHERE SOUND. MURIEL'S
RUNNING FOOTSTEPS APPROACH AND STOP.
PAUSE. MURIEL BREATHING. MURIEL OPENS
THE TRAPDOOR WITH EFFORT. FOOTSTEPS
ENTER TRAPDOOR. TRAPDOOR CLOSES.

5. MUSIC: ADVENTURE THEME FADE.

SCENE FOURTEEN: INT. TUNNEL — MOMENTS LATER
(MURIEL)

6. MUSIC: CAUTIOUS THEME—UP. ESTABLISH. CONTINUE
UNDER.

7. SOUND: TUNNEL ATMOSPHERE SOUND. MURIEL
BREATHING. ONE FOOTSTEP DOWN STONE
STEP.

8. MURIEL: Hello?

9. SOUND: SLOW FOOTSTEPS DOWN STONE STEPS.
TORCHES BURNING. TORCH PICKED UP.
FOOTSTEPS CONTINUE.

1. **MUSIC:** CAUTIOUS THEME FADE.
- SCENE FIFTEEN: INT. CASTLE HALLWAY — NIGHT**
(HALLWAY GUARD #1, HALLWAY GUARD #2)
2. **SOUND:** HALLWAY ATMOSPHERE SOUND. WOODEN DOOR
CREAKS OPEN. WOODEN DOOR CLOSES.
MURIEL'S FOOTSTEPS ENTER. DISTANT
LAUGHTER.
3. **HALLWAY**
GUARD #1: You drank two tankards? I drank four!
4. **HALLWAY**
GUARD #2: Oh I'll never measure up to you ol'
chap!
5. **SOUND:** MURIEL'S FOOTSTEPS MOVE INTO HALLWAY.
6. **HALLWAY**
GUARD #1: Ol' chap!
7. **HALLWAY**
GUARD #2: You know, I'm not feelin' so good.
8. **HALLWAY**
GUARD #1: Me neither. Let's take a stop at the
ol' bucket hole, whatdaya say? Nobody
ever comes by this here door anyway.
9. **SOUND:** HALLWAY GUARD #2 BURSTS INTO DRUNKEN
LAUGHTER.
10. **HALLWAY**
GUARD #2: The ol' bucket hole!
11. **SOUND:** METAL CLANG FALLS TO FLOOR. GUARD'S
LAUGHTER AND FOOTSTEPS FADE.
12. **MURIEL:** The door!

1. SOUND: MURIEL'S FOOTSTEPS LIGHTLY WALK TO DOOR. MURIEL SIGHS. MURIEL OPENS DOOR, WALKS THROUGH. DOOR CLOSES.
- SCENE SIXTEEN: INT. ORB ROOM — MOMENTS LATER
(MURIEL, QUEEN MARA, ANNORA, HAMMOND)
2. MUSIC: DISCOVERY THEME—UP. ESTABLISH. CONTINUE UNDER.
3. SOUND: ORB ROOM ATMOSPHERE SOUND. THE ROOM HUMS. MURIEL'S SLOW FOOTSTEPS. HUMMING ORB SOUND INCREASES. MURIEL'S HAND SLIDES ALONG PEDESTAL.
4. MURIEL: (READING, WHISPERS) A mighty power rests upon this pedestal... A guardian against evil... Mother's spell!
5. SOUND: WIND AND STORM TINKLING SOUND PICKS UP THEN FADES. QUEEN'S FOOTSTEPS ON OTHER SIDE OF DOOR APPROACH. MURIEL GASPS. MURIEL'S FOOTSTEPS RUN THEN STOP. MURIEL CROUCHES. DOOR OPENS. QUEEN'S FOOTSTEPS WALK IN, SLOWING THE NEARER SHE GETS TO THE ORB.
6. QUEEN MARA: The orb. Yes... Finally.
7. SOUND: WOODEN CHAIR SCRAPES ON STONE FLOOR.
8. QUEEN MARA: You! What are you doing there?!
9. SOUND: MURIEL STANDS.

1. **QUEEN MARA:** Who are you?
2. **SOUND:** MURIEL'S FOOTSTEPS SLOWLY CROSS THE ROOM AND STOP.
3. **MURIEL:** My name is Muriel.
4. **SOUND:** QUEEN'S SLOW FOOTSTEPS AROUND ROOM.
5. **QUEEN MARA:** A simple village girl. And what reason could one such as yourself possibly have here? (PAUSE) Not going to tell me? All right, have it your way. Do you even know where you are? (PAUSE) No? You are in the king's chamber. The chamber that houses his secret weapon. And this...
6. **SOUND:** QUEEN'S SLOW FOOTSTEPS STOP.
7. **QUEEN MARA:** Is it.
8. **MURIEL:** What does it do?
9. **QUEEN MARA:** Something powerful no doubt. The only question is how to work it. (PAUSE) But plenty of time for that later. You do know that you will have to be punished for entering this room, do you not? And when dear Aubrey finds out... I am afraid of what he will do to you.
10. **MURIEL:** What about what he's going to do to

you?

1. **QUEEN MARA:** Excuse me?
2. **MURIEL:** You're not supposed to be in here either.
3. **QUEEN MARA:** Whatever gave you that idea?
4. **SOUND:** QUEEN'S SLOW FOOTSTEPS, THEN STOP.
QUEEN LEANS FORWARD, FACE INCHES FROM
MURIEL'S.
5. **QUEEN MARA:** The queen can go where ever she wishes.
6. **SOUND:** QUEEN'S SLOW FOOTSTEPS.
7. **QUEEN MARA:** No, you will definitely need to be punished... who told you about this place? No village girl could possibly know where this room is unless she was working for someone. Who told you?
8. **MURIEL:** You did.
9. **QUEEN MARA:** That is impossible. I do not speak with dirty little rats.
10. **MURIEL:** No, I saw you. In the forest. I think the king will be interested to hear what you've been up to while he's been away.
11. **MUSIC:** DISCOVERY THEME FADE. TENSE MUSIC-UP.
ESTABLISH. CONTINUE UNDER.

1. **QUEEN MARA:** Do you dare to tell me that you have been spying on the queen? (PAUSE) So we have a little snoop, do we not? (PAUSE) Well, no matter. Who would listen to you anyway?
2. **MURIEL:** I'll tell my father!
3. **QUEEN MARA:** You are a fool if you think that the king would listen to a common man's word against mine. King Aubrey is an imbecile, but he trusts every word I say. Even if your father did believe you, why would a king listen to a simple tradesman?
4. **MURIEL:** Because my mother was a magician for the king! She was the best magician the king ever had!
5. **QUEEN MARA:** Your mother? (PAUSE) Ohhh, you must be the Wainwright girl. Your mother was Annora, am I correct?
6. **MURIEL:** Yes!
7. **QUEEN MARA:** I remember. Before she died...in this very room nonetheless. (PAUSE) You mean you did not know? Yes, it was this room. She came in to work on this magic

orb, weaving some of her sorcery, and next thing we know, she had disappeared. (PAUSE) You might want to rethink calling her the best magician the king ever had.

1. MURIEL: She was the greatest magician in the entire kingdom! And you'll never be as great as she was in your entire life!
2. SOUND: QUEEN'S FOOTSTEPS QUICKLY WALK TO MURIEL.
3. QUEEN MARA: Your mother was nothing more than a tramp! A worthless little tramp who is lucky the king happened to favor her or she would be living in a ditch somewhere. She was a harpy and a sneak... no doubt you are her daughter!
4. SOUND: STORM TINKLING SOUND SLOWLY ENTERS.
5. MUSIC: SUSPENSEFUL MUSIC-UP. CONTINUE UNDER.
6. QUEEN MARA: Oh, how cute. And you can't do anything about it. Poor darling.
7. MURIEL: You're a monster!
8. SOUND: UNEVEN PULSING MAGIC ORB SOUND. WOOSH. MAGIC CRASHES INTO WALL. PEBBLES SCATTER.

1. **QUEEN MARA:** What do you think you're doing?
Sorcery! Little witch. Think you can
best me?
2. **SOUND:** LONGSWORD UNSHEATHED.
3. **QUEEN MARA:** You have messed with the wrong queen,
girly.
4. **SOUND:** MURIEL GASPS. MURIEL'S FOOTSTEPS SLOWLY
BACK AWAY. PULSING ORB SOUND WAIVERING.
QUEEN'S FOOTSTEPS APPROACH. SPELL
WOOSH. SPELL CRASHES INTO WALL AND
PEBBLES SCATTER. MURIEL'S FOOTSTEPS
RUN. QUEEN'S FOOTSTEPS FOLLOW. SWORD
SLASHES STONE. MURIEL'S FOOTSTEPS RUN
ACROSS ROOM. STORM TINKLING SOUND
GROWS. QUEEN'S FOOTSTEPS FOLLOW MURIEL.
5. **QUEEN MARA:** Come here, girly.
6. **SOUND:** PULSING ORB WAIVERING. MURIEL BEGINS
CRYING. PULSING ORB DEPLETES. QUEEN
SLICES MURIEL ACROSS SHOULDER WITH
SWORD. MURIEL IS HIT. MURIEL FALLS TO
THE GROUND HOLDING SHOULDER. QUEEN'S
FOOTSTEPS SLOWLY APPROACH.
7. **MUSIC:** SUSPENSEFUL MUSIC FADE. DANGER THEME-
UP. CONTINUE UNDER.

1. **QUEEN MARA:** How appropriate. That you should die in the same room as your mother. I wished I could have killed her myself, but I guess this will do!
2. **SOUND:** TINKLING STORM GROWS. THUNDER AND LIGHTNING ZAP.
3. **QUEEN MARA:** The orb is mine!
4. **SOUND:** SWORD RAISES. BOLT OF LIGHTNING STRIKES QUEEN. QUEEN IS ZAPPED.
5. **QUEEN MARA:** Nooo!!!
6. **MUSIC:** DANGER THEME FADES.
7. **SOUND:** QUEEN'S BODY FALLS TO GROUND. GLASS SHATTERS. HIGH PITCHED NOISE OF BRIGHT LIGHT BECOMES LOUDER THEN FADES. MURIEL BREATHES HARD. MURIEL CRAWLS ACROSS THE FLOOR AND MOVES THE QUEEN'S ARM.
8. **MURIEL:** Queen Mara? Queen Mara?
9. **SOUND:** DISTANT COUGHING OCCURS. MURIEL GASPS. MURIEL STANDS AND SLOWLY MOVES ACROSS THE ROOM. ANNORA MOANS.
10. **MURIEL:** Mother...?
11. **ANNORA:** Muriel? Muriel?! It's me, your mother!
12. **MURIEL:** Mother!!

1. **SOUND:** MURIEL KNEELS NEXT TO ANNORA.
ANNORA CRIES WITH HAPPINESS.
2. **ANNORA:** You're beautiful! So beautiful! Oh my baby!
3. **MUSIC:** SOOTHING MUSIC-UP. ESTABLISH. CONTINUE UNDER.
4. **MURIEL:** Mother, you're alive! Here, let me help you.
5. **SOUND:** ANNORA GRUNTS THEN MOANS IN PAIN.
6. **MURIEL:** What's wrong??
7. **SOUND:** HAMMOND'S FOOTSTEPS AND TENNEY'S HOOVES APPROACH AND STOP. GOAT BLEAT.
8. **HAMMOND:** Muriel! The queen... what have you done??
9. **SOUND:** HAMMOND'S SPEAKS AS HIS FOOTSTEPS SLOWLY CROSS THE ROOM.
10. **MURIEL:** Father! How did you know I was here?
11. **HAMMOND:** Your goat. Wandered in just before the gates closed. And when you weren't with him...I knew something was wrong. He wouldn't leave me alone about it either. Turns out he is good for something! (PAUSE) Muriel, your arm! Are you all right?
12. **MURIEL:** Yes, I think so.

1. **ANNORA:** She's amazing Hammond, you should have seen her.
2. **HAMMOND:** Annora?! Annora, how are you... alive?
3. **ANNORA:** The orb... was a trap. King Aubrey suspected a traitor in the castle but wasn't sure who. So he had the orb created, telling the whole kingdom of its power, knowing the tale would lure his enemy to steal it and try to use it as a weapon against him.
4. **HAMMOND:** But what does that have to do with you?
5. **ANNORA:** I was working for the king at the time. He needed my magic for the orb's real purpose, to destroy the one who betrayed him. To stay strong, the spell required my entire being. The king knew he could trust me.
6. **MURIEL:** So there was no accident?
7. **HAMMOND:** You sacrificed these past five years of your life for the good of the kingdom?
8. **ANNORA:** It was my duty as the king's magician. Unfortunately, it took more than five years of my life. (PAUSE) Because of the force of the spell, the orb must

self-destruct after the traitor has
been destroyed, taking me with it.

1. MURIEL: No!!
2. SOUND: ROCK SCUFFLE.
3. HAMMOND: Annora... please no..
4. ANNORA: I've been a part of the orb for so long. This is my purpose. I can't reverse it... I'm sorry.
5. MURIEL: Mother, you can't go, you can't! I love you!
6. ANNORA: I love you too. I love you both so much. Muriel, I wish I could have been there for you. You have grown into a beautiful young lady, inheriting my powers I see. (PAUSE) Promise me you'll never stop practicing. You will be the best magician this kingdom has ever seen. I know it.
7. MURIEL: I promise!
8. HAMMOND: But Annora, she's just a girl! Do you really think she should be mixed up in this?
9. ANNORA: It's all right, Hammond. Muriel is

growing up. She needs to learn how to control her powers properly. It's the only way to keep her safe.

1. **SOUND:** HAMMOND SIGHS.
2. **HAMMOND:** I'm sorry, Muriel. Your mother's right. I promise I won't stand in your way any longer.
3. **MURIEL:** Thank you, Father!
4. **SOUND:** ANNORA LETS OUT A LARGE BREATH.
5. **ANNORA:** (WITH EFFORT) Make me proud, my girl!
6. **Muriel:** Mother?
7. **ANNORA:** Hammond, I'm so sorry. I had to do it.
8. **HAMMOND:** I never stopped loving you, Annora.
9. **ANNORA:** (LETS OUT LONG BREATH) I know.
10. **MUSIC:** MUSIC INTENSIFIES.
11. **SOUND:** MURIEL CRIES.
12. **MURIEL:** Mother!! Mother! (PAUSE) Mother, come back, please! (PAUSE) Mother...
13. **SOUND:** MURIEL HUGS HAMMOND.
14. **HAMMOND:** (MUFFLED) It's all right. It'll be all right.
15. **MUSIC:** SOOTHING MUSIC FADES.

**SCENE SEVENTEEN: EXT. TOP OF CASTLE RAMPART — NIGHT
(MURIEL, WARIN)**

1. **SOUND:** CASTLE WALL NIGHT ATMOSPHERE SOUND:
WIND CRICKETS. MAGIC WOOSHES BY.
2. **SOUND:** MURIEL LAUGHS.
3. **WARIN:** Impressive! I see those magic lessons are already paying off.
4. **MURIEL:** Isn't it great? My father and King Aubrey arranged them. I've been up at the castle the past three days. The king's magicians said teaching Annora's daughter would be an honor.
5. **WARIN:** As well it should be. You'll get quite the education from them.
6. **SOUND:** MAGIC SOUND SHOOTS INTO AIR AND HAPPILY EXPLODES.
7. **MUSIC:** HAPPY THEME-UP. CONTINUE UNDER.
8. **MURIEL:** Are you coming to the ceremony tomorrow?
9. **WARIN:** I wouldn't miss it. Not enough goes on to honor your mother.
10. **SOUND:** WARIN TOSSES AN APPLE INTO THE AIR AND CATCHES IT.
11. **WARIN:** To think that she was trapped in that

orb for all these years.. I can't believe it. Everyone thought she was dead.

1. MURIEL: That's what the kingdom needed to think for the plan to work.
2. WARIN: The whole kingdom has been in quite a commotion since the queen's death. It's crazy to think she was smuggling spies into the kingdom right under our noses, right under my nose!
3. MURIEL: You couldn't have known! The queen was acting as a spy herself!
4. WARIN: I heard they found that one lad...
5. MURIEL: Nigel.
6. WARIN: ...and he confessed to the king. Told him the names of all the spies that've been hiding out in our streets. Was a chicken when it came down to it. Guess that's good for us though, eh?
7. MURIEL: King Aubrey's having them put on trial in the town square.
8. WARIN: Wouldn't want to be those fellows for nothin'.
9. SOUND: WARIN BITES INTO APPLE.

1. MURIEL: I feel bad for King Aubrey. He deserved better than Queen Mara.
2. WARIN: Even kings have to be careful about who they trust.
3. MURIEL: Queen Mara was traveling to Sirdere every fortnight to meet King Gerald. Who knew it was to act as a traitor.
4. SOUND: WARIN BITES INTO APPLE.
5. WARIN: King Aubrey's declared war on Sirdere. D'you hear of that?
6. MURIEL: Yeah so that means you'll have to be guarding the castle for real now, right?
7. WARIN: Beg your pardon little missy but I guard the castle right properly every night! I think we got a pretty good chance against 'em if you ask me, especially now that we've weeded out his web of spiders.
8. MURIEL: I think so too!
9. WARIN: I heard Simon is also being honored in

the ceremony tomorrow. Never in my day has a lowly peasant received such recognition.

1. MURIEL: Living in the streets, Simon and Bertram witnessed some suspicious characters, and I guess they heard enough to suspect the queen.
2. WARIN: I always thought there was more to those two.
3. SOUND: WARIN BITES INTO APPLE.
4. MURIEL: They rigged the carriage to blow up, hoping it'd draw her spies out of the woodwork. It worked, but the blast must have been more powerful than they suspected. Bertram was too close when it happened.
5. WARIN: They were honorable men. (PAUSE) How is your father? Losing not only a friend, but his wife all over again can't be easy.
6. SOUND: WARIN BITES INTO APPLE.
7. MUSIC: HAPPY THEME FADES.
8. MURIEL: He's healing slowly... He watches me

practice sometimes when I go out to Mother's grave. I think he's still afraid I'll get hurt, but he realizes that I can take care of myself.

1. WARIN: Down the mountain in that little alcove of yours?
 2. MURIEL: Yes. And I think he's actually grown a little fond of Tenney!
 3. WARIN: Ha! That's one special goat all right!
 4. MURIEL: I know now that when I practice magic, my mother is always with me.
 5. WARIN: That she is, Miss Muriel, that she is.
 6. SOUND: FADE ON WALL ATMOSPHERE SOUND.
 7. MUSIC: ENDING THEME-UP. ESTABLISH. FADE.
- THE END.

The Secret of Guerdric Castle

By

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EXT. KINGDOM - DAY

The medieval kingdom of Guerdric rests unassuming atop an alpine mountain, surrounded by wintry pines, rocky ground, stubborn shrubs, and thick patches of grass. Small yet strong, the kingdom presents its powerful stone walls to the sun.

EXT. ROCKY ALCOVE - DAY

Outside the kingdom's gate, MURIEL WAINWRIGHT, a 12-year-old girl with her hair loose down her back and simple, tattered clothing, sits in a rocky alcove with her eyes closed and legs crossed. By her side is her trusty alpine ibex, TENNEY, a wild young goat with spirit.

Muriel's hands hover around a glowing ball of magic.

MURIEL

(jerkily reciting)

A mighty power rests upon this
pedestal, a guardian against evil.
Let those whose purpose be to harm,
be wary of this fateful charm.
Wherefore-

Tenney bleats and rams his head into her elbow, seeking attention. The ball of magic goes flying from Muriel's hands with a woosh and crashes into a nearby rock, shattering it to pieces which scatter across the ground. Muriel opens her eyes and exclaims.

MURIEL

Tenney! You broke my concentration!

Muriel glares at the goat. Tenney bleats. Muriel huffs. She stands and wipes her hands on her clothing.

MURIEL (CONT'D)

You almost became goat confetti,
you know. Father would have made
you into a stew.

Tenney bleats and walks over the rocks toward her. Muriel smiles.

MURIEL (CONT'D)

Just be more careful. You've always
been the best friend I could ask
for.

Muriel kneels down and rubs Tenney's rough goat fur. Tenney bleats, pleased by the attention. Muriel sighs.

(CONTINUED)

MURIEL (CONT'D)
Let's face it. I'll never know what
it means.

Tenney bleats.

MURIEL (CONT'D)
But it must mean *something*. I know
it!

Muriel sits back down, crossing her legs.

MURIEL (CONT'D)
Let me try it again. A mighty power
rests upon this pedestal...

Meanwhile, an ornately decorated carriage travels up the
gravelly slope, approaching the kingdom's gate. Muriel
notices and stands.

MURIEL (CONT'D)
Hey look! The queen's carriage is
back! I wonder what news she has
from outside the kingdom! Come on,
let's go tell Father!

Muriel runs from her alcove toward the kingdom gates. Tenney
bleats and follows.

EXT. KINGDOM STREET - CONTINUOUS

A pathway of dirt and pebbles leads through the stone walls
and up toward the castle straight ahead. Along the path are
houses, shops, inns, and alehouses.

Muriel and Tenney run ahead of the carriage and through the
kingdom gates. Muriel sees BERTRAM, a town peasant and
friend of her father, standing on the other side of the
path, across from her father's house, which sits just inside
the kingdom's walls.

MURIEL
Bertram! Over here!

The kingdom GUARDS clear villagers from the kingdom's
entrance to make space for the approaching carriage.

GATE GUARD #1
Make way for the royal carriage!

Muriel waves at Bertram. Bertram gives half a smile, looking
distracted. Muriel runs across the street.

(CONTINUED)

MURIEL

Bertram! What brings you here?

BERTRAM

I am waiting for Simon. He's inside meeting with your father.

Bertram motions to Muriel's house.

MURIEL

About what?

Bertram chuckles nervously.

BERTRAM

Nothing you need to worry yourself about.

The carriage approaches closer to the gate.

MURIEL

The carriage is coming!

BERTRAM

So it is. (beat) Best you get inside your father's house.

MURIEL

Okay. I'll see you around! C'mon Tenney!

Tenney bleats. Muriel runs into her father's house with Tenney following close behind her.

GATE GUARD #2

Move along!

INT. HAMMOND'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

A modest wooden house, made up of two rooms, a straw-filled loft, and a small furnace. The front room is stacked with wheels, spokes, and planks. Out the window, a wagon sits half finished in the small yard.

40-year-old HAMMOND WAINWRIGHT sits at a wooden table talking with SIMON, a gray-haired town peasant. They sip out of wooden cups. Both have serious faces on.

SIMON

...and we saw them yesterday. It had to be them.

(CONTINUED)

HAMMOND

With Queen Mara? You're sure of this?

SIMON

Yes. No doubt.

Hammond and Simon look up as Muriel and Tenney enter.

MURIEL

Hi Father! The carriage is back! Hi Simon!

She prances over to the table. Her father and Simon exchange a serious glance.

HAMMOND

Muriel. Where have you been?

Simon stands.

SIMON

We'll speak later.

Simon and Hammond shake hands.

HAMMOND

Goodbye, Simon.

Simon walks out the door. Hammond turns back to Muriel.

MURIEL

I was outside the gates with Tenney. He was leaping off that huge boulder down the mountain. He kept bumping into me and I almost blew him to pieces. Then we heard the carriage-

Hammond stands, facing his daughter. His voice rises.

HAMMOND

You were playing with magic again, weren't you?

Muriel seems taken aback.

MURIEL

I was *practicing*, but I really wasn't harming anyone, honest. No one else was even around.

HAMMOND

Muriel, you're just a novice. Don't you know how easily you could have caused major damage?

Hammond sees Tenney begin to nibble at a wooden staff resting in the corner of the room.

HAMMOND (CONT'D)

And I thought I told you to keep that goat out of here!

Hammond lunges at Tenney and swats him away from the staff and out the door. Tenney bleats.

HAMMOND (CONT'D)

Out! Out!

Hammond closes the door and turns back to his daughter.

MURIEL

But Father! He doesn't harm anything.

HAMMOND

That was your mother's staff, you know.

MURIEL

I know.

Hammond sighs.

HAMMOND

Listen. Magic is dangerous. Your mother found that out the hard way from the accident. I don't want that happening to you. Do you understand?

MURIEL

(exasperated)

Yes.

HAMMOND

Promise me. No more magic.

Muriel sighs.

MURIEL

I promise. But I just feel-

A loud explosion is heard coming from the street outside the door. Hammond walks to the door and looks out.

(CONTINUED)

HAMMOND
Stay inside, Muriel.

He walks outside. Muriel peers out the door, then runs outside after him.

EXT. KINGDOM STREET - CONTINUOUS

On the street outside Hammond's house, pieces of wood are strewn all over the dusty ground. A carriage, the queen's carriage, has exploded into pieces. A few people are lying on the ground, thrown back from the explosion, one of which being Bertram. Simon crouches over him.

Villagers are running and shouting, some to get away from the explosion, others to see what has happened. Gasps and whispers of "the carriage" and "the queen" permeate through the crowd.

QUEEN MARA, her royal clothing singed and covered in dust, sits on the ground with a look of shock on her face. The shaken CARRIAGE DRIVER urgently takes ahold of her and helps her stand.

CARRIAGE DRIVER
Come on, your majesty. We must get
you to your chambers.

As she stands, she gets her wits about her and looks out at the crowd.

QUEEN MARA
Who has done this? Who? Whoever has
done this will pay!

She points to a man standing along the street watching in shock.

QUEEN MARA (CONT'D)
You did this! It was you!

The man shakes his head vigorously.

VILLAGE MAN
No your majesty!

The queen points accusingly to others as she is helped to the castle.

QUEEN MARA
(distant)
You!

(CONTINUED)

VILLAGE WOMAN #1
(distant)
Never your majesty!

Hammond runs over to Bertram and Simon. Muriel follows.
Simon looks up.

HAMMOND
Is he all right?

Hammond kneels down and puts Bertram's head in his lap.
Muriel stands behind him.

MURIEL
Bertram!

SIMON
I don't think so, Hammond.

HAMMOND
What happened?

SIMON
The explosion from the carriage got
him! Sent him down in the dirt.

HAMMOND
Bertram, are you all right? Can you
hear me?

Bertram does not move. Muriel gasps. Hammond yells over his
shoulder.

HAMMOND (CONT'D)
Muriel, get inside!

Muriel pauses and looks around at the commotion. Muriel
notices TWO MEN arguing nearby. Everyone else seems too
wrapped up in the explosion to notice them. SPY #1 is waving
his hands wildly in the air.

SPY #1
I knew it! I knew it! I told you
this would happen!

Spy #2 hisses and looks around nervously.

SPY #2
Shh! Quiet! (beat) This way!

Spy #2 pulls Spy #1 into an alleyway.

EXT. ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Unseen by anyone, Muriel follows them into the alley and hides behind a stack of wooden crates.

SPY #1

I knew that we couldn't keep this up. It was asking for trouble!

SPY #2

Keep your shirt on, Caleb. Nothing's gonna happen.

Spy #1 throws his hands into the air.

SPY #1

What do you mean nothing's gonna happen? Something's already happened!

SPY #2

Keep calm. We don't even know if they were targeting Queen Mara, or if they were, what they were targeting her for!

SPY #1

What else could anyone be targeting her for? Someone knows! I'm telling you! And soon, they'll be coming after us! It was only luck the queen wasn't killed! That could be us!

SPY #2

Nobody's found out, and nobody is going to find out, got it? So keep your mouth shut! We just need to find out who did this and why!

Muriel begins to back away when she accidentally knocks over a crate and freezes. Spy #2 starts.

SPY #2 (CONT'D)

What was that? Come on, let's get out of here!

The two men run off down the alley. Muriel stands and runs back to her father.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Muriel appears behind her father and Simon, who are still knelt over Bertram's unmoving body on the ground. Hammond rests his head in his hands.

MURIEL

Father! I just heard these two men.
It sounded like they-

Hammond barks at her.

HAMMOND

Muriel! This is not the time! Get
inside, now!!

A VILLAGE WOMAN walks by wailing and points at Bertram.

VILLAGE WOMAN #2

He's dead! That man is dead!

MURIEL

What about Bertram?

Hammond stands.

HAMMOND

Bertram's dead, can't you see that?
Now get inside the house and stay
there!

Tears form in Muriel's eyes. She runs to the house.

INT. HAMMOND'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Muriel runs into the house, fully crying. She falls onto her sleeping pallet and cries into the pillow. Commotion continues to be heard outside the house.

EXT. TOP OF CASTLE RAMPART - NIGHT

WARIN HAYWARD, a 55-year-old castle guard, leans against a wall at his post atop the castle rampart. He looks out over the night landscape as he sharpens his pocket knife and hums his favorite tune.

Muriel climbs out of a turret and appears next to him. Warin doesn't have to look up to know that Muriel is there.

(CONTINUED)

WARIN

I thought you might visit tonight,
Miss Muriel.

Muriel climbs onto the parapet next to him and sits, joining him in gazing out at the night landscape.

MURIEL

How's guard duty?

WARIN

Peaceful. Just how I like it.

Warin scrapes his knife's blade against a rock.

MURIEL

You heard about the carriage today?

WARIN

Sure did. Horrible thing.

Warin shifts his position and scrapes his blade.

MURIEL

They said the queen was all right.
They said she ordered the culprit
to be persecuted... What does
persecuted mean?

WARIN

It means somebody's going to pay
for what happened.

Muriel pauses. Warin examines his knife and scrapes it again.

MURIEL

Warin, if I ask you something, will
you be honest?

WARIN

To the best of my ability, little
lady.

MURIEL

What do you think caused it? Do you
think somebody really meant for
that to happen?

WARIN

You mean do you think somebody
purposely tried to destroy the
queen?

MURIEL

Yes.

Warin sighs.

WARIN

I suppose I don't know. But I can tell you that people know more than they let on.

MURIEL

What do you mean?

Warin scrapes his blade.

WARIN

I mean, it's possible someone tried to kill her. However, the queen's been traveling in that carriage for years. Every fortnight she goes to visit King Gerald in the neighboring kingdom to keep peace. And I've been here on this wall to see it. If somebody did want to destroy the queen, why now?

MURIEL

King Aubrey left two days ago. What if someone tried to kill her while the king was away?

Warin mumbles in thought.

WARIN

Hmm... s'possible.

MURIEL

And I heard two men talking after the explosion! They were worried that somebody had found out about something. Do you think they could be involved?

WARIN

Perhaps.

Warin scrapes his blade.

MURIEL

I tried to tell Father, but he wouldn't listen to me... as usual.

WARIN

He just tries to do what he thinks
is best for you.

Muriel sighs.

MURIEL

I wish my mother were here.

Warin becomes contemplative. He scrapes his blade once more
then slides it into its hilt.

WARIN

She was a good woman, your mother.
Best magician the king ever had.
She knew how to use her magic
properly, and use it well, not like
some magicians these days.

Muriel leans forward, interested.

MURIEL

My mother was a magician for the
king?

Warin seems surprised.

WARIN

Why yes, hasn't your father ever
told you?

MURIEL

My father won't ever talk about
her. It's like mentioning her name
is a curse on the house. I wish I
had gotten to know her better.

WARIN

Hammond loved her very much. That's
for sure. He always felt he wasn't
worthy of her, which made him try
even harder. He was devastated when
she... well never mind.

Warin becomes uncomfortable, remembering that Muriel is
present. Muriel just stares.

MURIEL

(whispers)

Father said she died in an
accident.

Warin sighs and shifts his weight.

WARIN

A horrible accident in the castle.
They say she was casting a spell.
Something went wrong, and she...
she just disappeared.

Muriel looks down at her hands.

WARIN (CONT'D)

But that was a long time ago. No
sense dwelling in the past.

MURIEL

I read her spell again today,
trying to figure it out. Father
calls it a poem, but I *know* it's a
spell. The parchment has my name on
it so I know Mother meant for me to
have it, I just don't know why.

Pause.

WARIN

You should talk to the queen.

Muriel looks up in surprise.

MURIEL

The queen?

WARIN

Annora was the king's magician for
years. I'm sure the queen knew her
well.

Warin winks. Muriel smiles.

MURIEL

Okay. I'll do that.

WARIN

Just like your mother. Never give
up.

Warin and Muriel sit on the wall and stare peacefully into
the night.

EXT. ROCKY ALCOVE - DAY

Muriel climbs over the boulders in her rocky alcove, stick in hand, scraping out moss from between the cracks and humming to herself. Tenney walks up the slope and appears below her.

MURIEL
Tenney! You're back!

Muriel jumps off the rock onto the ground below and hugs Tenney. Tenney bleats and sniffs the stick she carries.

MURIEL (CONT'D)
Hey stop! That's not for you!

Goat bleat.

MURIEL (CONT'D)
I'm sorry about Father. He doesn't understand. (beat) Hey, who's that?

Muriel climbs over the rock and spots a figure slowly strolling alone in the distance. Muriel squints and realizes that the figure is Queen Mara.

MURIEL (CONT'D)
It's the queen! Why is she out by herself?

Tenney bleats. Muriel watches the queen strolling toward a patch of trees.

MURIEL (CONT'D)
Maybe I can ask her about my mother! C'mon!

She pushes herself off the boulder and runs toward the queen in the distance. Tenney follows.

EXT. WOODED GROVE - DAY

Queen Mara strolls through the edge of the woods, glancing over her shoulder every few steps. Muriel and Tenney run toward her, unseen. Muriel calls out.

MURIEL
Queen Mara! Queen Mara!

Suddenly, a DARK-FIGURED MAN steps out from behind a tree toward the queen. Muriel stops in her tracks.

(CONTINUED)

MURIEL (CONT'D)

Wait, what's that man doing there?
He was behind that tree! Quick
hide!

Muriel throws herself on Tenney and pulls him behind a huge oak. She grunts with effort.

The man approaches the queen. She sees him and smiles. The pair begin to have a serious conversation.

Muriel watches intently. Tenney begins chewing on the tree bark.

MURIEL (CONT'D)

Shh! Stop eating that tree! I can't
hear anything! We need to get
closer.

She moves closer, from tree to tree, pulling Tenney close behind her.

QUEEN MARA

...and you are sure no one knows?

NIGEL

No one.

QUEEN MARA

Luck for us I was able to save the
bottle from that explosion the
other day. It almost ruined my
whole outing. Here, take it.

The queen takes a small bottle of liquid out of her dress and hands it to Nigel.

MURIEL

(whispers)

A bottle of poison?

NIGEL

Thank you, your majesty. What of
its potency?

QUEEN MARA

King Gerald assured it was of the
best quality. Now, sprinkle a few
drops in their tankards at dinner
tonight and they'll be gone before
morning.

(CONTINUED)

NIGEL

Yes, my lady.

QUEEN MARA

With the guards out of the way, I will finally have my chance. And King Aubrey will be out of town until tomorrow, making it the perfect opportunity.

NIGEL

Yes, your majesty.

QUEEN MARA

Ha, what a fool! No one has ever been allowed in that chamber, not even I! Only the king's magicians have ever been allowed to enter, to work on his "secret weapon". What ever he is hiding, it's about time I find out.

NIGEL

Yes, my lady.

The queen steps in closer to Nigel. Muriel peers around the tree and listens closer.

QUEEN MARA

I hope you know, Nigel, King Gerald and I have been planning this for quite sometime. So if you pull this off, I am sure we can make it well worth your while. He's what is known as a *real* ruler, something King Aubrey will never amount to.

NIGEL

Thank you, my lady.

She pulls away.

QUEEN MARA

Now, I expect you tonight at dusk, guarding that hallway. Make sure no one passes. And no one sees.

NIGEL

Yes, my lady. It will be done.

The queen picks up the edge of her gown and begins sauntering back toward the kingdom's gate.

(CONTINUED)

QUEEN MARA
Remember, not a minute late!

As the queen disappears in the distance, Nigel walks a little further into the trees.

MURIEL
Where's *he* going?

Tenney bleats.

MURIEL (CONT'D)
Shh!

Nigel clears off leaves from a wooden trapdoor in the ground. Muriel gasps.

MURIEL (CONT'D)
(whispers)
A trapdoor!

Nigel enters through the trapdoor. He looks around and closes the door behind him.

INT. HAMMOND'S HOUSE - DAY

Muriel runs into her father's house, out of breath. Hammond is busy carving a piece of wood. He looks up when she enters.

MURIEL
Father!

HAMMOND
Muriel. What is it?

MURIEL
I just saw the queen outside the kingdom. She was walking alone and this man... this man approached her. They kept looking over their shoulders, and she gave him a bottle of poison!

Hammond chuckles, nonchalant.

HAMMOND
What sort of story are you making up now?

(CONTINUED)

MURIEL

I'm not making this up! I just saw it happen!

HAMMOND

It sounds like you see a lot of things.

Muriel grabs the tools from her father's hands. He looks at her.

MURIEL

I mean what I say, Father. And they were talking about this secret plan to meet in the castle tonight! Then the man disappeared into a trap door in the ground!

Hammond sighs and puts his hands on his knees, seeing that he's not going to get anything else done. He gets up and tends to the fire with the metal poker.

HAMMOND

Darling, I doubt that the queen has anything bad in store for us. You need to stop thinking people are against us.

MURIEL

But I heard-

HAMMOND

You heard her whole conversation? Every word?

MURIEL

Well, no... I missed the first part.

HAMMOND

Sometimes, things can be taken out of context. She could have easily just been chatting with one of Guerdric's hunters.

MURIEL

But she wasn't!

Hammond ignores her.

HAMMOND

You'll learn not to jump to conclusions when you're older.

(CONTINUED)

MURIEL

But don't you think it's strange
that she was outside the kingdom,
alone?

Hammond takes pieces of wood from the pile next to the fire
and puts them in.

HAMMOND

She's the queen, Muriel. What
business is that of mine? Besides,
you just told me she wasn't alone,
and she had quite a wreck
yesterday. I wouldn't be surprised
if she needed to clear her head. I
sure would.

MURIEL

So you're not going to do anything
about it?

Hammond kneels next to Muriel and takes her hands in his.

HAMMOND

Listen, if I challenged every wrong
in this world, real or otherwise, I
wouldn't have the home I have here.
Nor would I have the bountiful
food, or warm fire, or you. Now
please just leave the world be, and
try not to get into any more
trouble. Can you do that?

Hammond takes the tools out of her hands and walks back to
his seat. He sits down and begins working again. Muriel is
getting desperate.

MURIEL

But what does the queen know about
Mother?

Hammond looks up. He was being patient with Muriel, but now
he is clearly distressed and cautious.

HAMMOND

What makes you say that?

MURIEL

Warin said they knew each other.

HAMMOND

Oh, did he?

(CONTINUED)

MURIEL

Yes. He said that she was a magician for the *king*, and that people know more than they say.

HAMMOND

Well, all Warin knows is what he sees up on that wall. Best not listen to him.

Muriel huffs.

MURIEL

But Warin is one of my best friends!

Hammond stops working and walks over to Muriel.

HAMMOND

Muriel, I understand that. But I'm getting tired of this. Everything I do is for your own good. Why don't you understand that?

He looks at Muriel dismissively.

HAMMOND (CONT'D)

Now, I told Phillip you'd help him with the horses today, so get along.

Muriel does not move.

HAMMOND (CONT'D)

Muriel...

MURIEL

No!

HAMMOND

I told you, go!

MURIEL

Warin's more of a father than you are!

Muriel rips her hands away from him and runs out the door.

EXT. ROCKY ALCOVE - EVENING

Muriel sits crying on the ground, knees to her chest, arms wrapped around her, head down. Tenney sits beside her. Peaceful night. Tenney bleats and begins chewing on the girl's hair affectionately. Muriel stops crying and sniffs. She pushes Tenney away.

MURIEL

Hey, hey, if you could get off my hair, that'd be great.

Tenney stumbles to the side. Muriel sighs.

MURIEL (CONT'D)

What am I going to do?

In the distance we hear the call of the gate being shut for the night.

NIGHTFALL GUARD

Nightfall! Close the gate!

Muriel lifts her head.

MURIEL

Looks like we're locked out for the night.

Muriel stands and brushes off her skirt. Tenney clops up beside her. Muriel sighs.

MURIEL (CONT'D)

Well if Father won't help me, I'll find out for myself.

Tenney bleats.

MURIEL (CONT'D)

Don't worry. I'll be all right. Just take care of yourself, you mangy goat!

Muriel bends down and hugs Tenney, burying her face in his rough fur. Tenney bleats again.

Muriel runs quickly and quietly off toward the woods.

EXT. TRAPDOOR ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Muriel arrives at the trapdoor entrance. She hears nothing except the sounds of the forest. She finds the door, clears it off, pulls it open with some effort, and enters.

INT. TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS

After she shuts the door she freezes, seeing nothing in the darkness. All she hears is her own breathing. She places her hands against the stone walls and takes a step forward down a stair.

MURIEL

Hello?

Muriel cautiously moves forward, walking light on her feet. She moves through the darkness until she gets to a small opening with torches along the wall. She picks one up and continues her journey.

At the end of the tunnel she sees a door.

INT. CASTLE HALLWAY - NIGHT

The wooden door creaks open. Muriel peers through the crack into the castle hallway. Torches line the walls but no one is in sight. She hears two GUARDS approaching from down the hall, clearly drunk.

HALLWAY GUARD #1

You drank *two* tankards? I drank four!

HALLWAY GUARD #2

Oh I'll never measure up to you ol' chap!

Closing the door, Muriel looks around then moves along the walls in the opposite direction.

Hallway guard #1 slaps his leg and drunkenly laughs.

HALLWAY GUARD #1

Ol' chap!

Muriel hides against the wall as they draw near.

HALLWAY GUARD #2

You know, I'm not feelin' so good.

(CONTINUED)

HALLWAY GUARD #1

Me neither. Let's take a stop at
the ol' bucket hole, whatdaya say?
Nobody ever comes by this here door
anyway.

Hallway guard #2 bursts out into drunken laughter once
again.

HALLWAY GUARD #2

The ol' bucket hole!

The guards pass Muriel, unnoticed.

MURIEL

The door!

Muriel creeps up to the door and places her ear against it.
A hollow sound emits through the door. Muriel enters.

INT. ORB ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The stone-walled room is dark and empty except for a
glowing, glass orb placed on a pedestal in the middle of the
room, and a wooden chair in a corner.

Muriel slowly steps up to the orb. The orb seems calm but
once Muriel approaches, it begins to spark and swirl inside.
She slides her hands along the pedestal and begins reading
the inscription carved into the shiny brass.

MURIEL

(reading, whispers)

A mighty power rests upon this
pedestal... A guardian against
evil... Mother's spell!

A wind picks up and blows Muriel's hair away from her face.

Muriel hears a clattering on the other side of the door and
gasps. She rushes to hide behind the only place she can
find, the chair.

She ducks behind the chair just before the queen enters. The
queen does not see Muriel, her eyes transfixed on the orb.

QUEEN MARA

The orb. Yes... Finally.

The queen reaches out to pick up the orb, which has returned
to its quiet state.

(CONTINUED)

Muriel accidentally nudges the chair. The queen hears her and realizes she's not alone. She spots Muriel in the corner.

QUEEN MARA (CONT'D)

You! What are you doing there?!

Muriel steps out from behind the chair, approaching the queen and the orb. The queen glares at the girl.

QUEEN MARA (CONT'D)

Who are you?

Muriel stands in front of the queen.

MURIEL

My name is Muriel.

The queen smirks and saunters casually over to the girl, towering above her.

QUEEN MARA

A simple village girl. And what reason could one such as yourself possibly have here?

Muriel stands silently.

QUEEN MARA (CONT'D)

Not going to tell me? All right, have it your way. Do you even know where you are?

Muriel shakes her head.

QUEEN MARA (CONT'D)

No? You are in the king's chamber. The chamber that houses his secret weapon. And this... is it.

The queen approaches the orb and looks at it in mischievous delight.

MURIEL

What does it do?

QUEEN MARA

Something powerful no doubt. The only question is how to work it.

Muriel still doesn't answer. The queen turns back to Muriel.

(CONTINUED)

QUEEN MARA (CONT'D)

But plenty of time for that later. You do know that you will have to be punished for entering this room, do you not? And when dear Aubrey finds out... I am afraid of what he will do to you.

MURIEL

What about what he's going to do to you?

The queen looks at Muriel and raises her eyebrow.

QUEEN MARA

Excuse me?

MURIEL

You're not supposed to be in here either.

QUEEN MARA

Whatever gave you that idea?

The queen leans over, putting her face inches from Muriel's.

QUEEN MARA (CONT'D)

The queen can go where ever she wishes.

The queen stands back up and moves away.

QUEEN MARA (CONT'D)

No, you will definitely need to be punished... who told you about this place? No village girl could possibly know where this room is unless she was working for someone. Who told you?

MURIEL

You did.

QUEEN MARA

That is impossible. I do not speak with dirty little rats.

MURIEL

No, I saw you. In the forest. I think the king will be interested to hear what you've been up to while he's been away.

(CONTINUED)

QUEEN MARA

Do you dare to tell me that you
have been spying on the queen?

Muriel is silent.

QUEEN MARA (CONT'D)

So we have a little snoop, do we
not?

Muriel stares at her defiantly.

QUEEN MARA (CONT'D)

Well, no matter. Who would listen
to you anyway?

MURIEL

I'll tell my father!

QUEEN MARA

You are a fool if you think that
the king would listen to a common
man's word against mine. King
Aubrey is an imbecile, but he
trusts every word I say. Even if
your father did believe you, why
would a king listen to a simple
tradesman?

MURIEL

Because my mother was a magician
for the king! She was the best
magician the king ever had!

The queen is actually surprised by this.

QUEEN MARA

Your mother? (beat) Ohhh, you must
be the Wainwright girl. Your mother
was Annora, am I correct?

MURIEL

Yes!

QUEEN MARA

I remember. Before she died...in
this very room nonetheless.

Muriel looks at the room in a new light. The queen notices.

QUEEN MARA (CONT'D)

You mean you did not know? Yes, it
was this room. She came in to work

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

QUEEN MARA (CONT'D) (cont'd)
on this magic orb, weaving some of
her sorcery, and next thing we
know, she had disappeared.

The queen scoffs.

QUEEN MARA (CONT'D)
You might want to rethink calling
her the best magician the king ever
had.

MURIEL
She was the greatest magician in
the entire kingdom! And you'll
never be as great as she was in
your entire life!

The queen whips her gown around, facing Muriel. Her nostrils
flare.

QUEEN MARA
Your mother was nothing more than a
tramp! A worthless little tramp who
is lucky the king happened to favor
her or she would be living in a
ditch somewhere. She was a harpy
and a sneak... no doubt you are her
daughter!

Muriel's anger grows. Fog begins to form in the orb, unseen
by the queen. Muriel notices.

QUEEN MARA (CONT'D)
Oh, how cute. And you can't do
anything about it. Poor darling.

The queen approaches with menace.

MURIEL
You're a monster!

Muriel closes her eyes. A small glowing orb of magic
develops between her hands. She launches it at the queen.
The ball of magic misses and crashes into the wall, smashing
the stone to pieces.

QUEEN MARA
What do you think you're doing?
Sorcery! Little witch. Think you
can best me?

The queen pulls out a gleaming silver sword from her waist.

(CONTINUED)

QUEEN MARA (CONT'D)

You have messed with the wrong
queen, girly.

Muriel looks frightened. She gasps and backs against the wall. She tries to concentrate and form another spell, but it waivers. The queen approaches her. She fires the spell too soon, and it misses the queen once again as the queen advances. Muriel runs behind the wooden chair. The queen slashes the chair, which breaks and falls to the side. Muriel runs across the room.

The storm around the orb grows. The queen pulls her sword from the broken chair and approaches Muriel.

QUEEN MARA (CONT'D)

Come here, girly.

Muriel tries to form another spell. The spell falters. She's crying now and too upset to form the ball of magic. The queen slices the girl across the shoulder with the sword. Muriel falls to the ground, holding her shoulder.

The queen approaches, standing over her.

QUEEN MARA (CONT'D)

How appropriate. That you should
die in the same room as your
mother. I wished I could have
killed her myself, but I guess this
will do!

Muriel watches the storm growing around the orb with tears in her eyes. Storm clouds form and thunder and lightning begin to sound.

QUEEN MARA (CONT'D)

The orb is mine!

The queen raises the sword and is about to pierce Muriel through the heart.

Suddenly, the orb sends out a bolt of lightning. It electrocutes the queen through the heart. The queen screams and falls to the ground.

QUEEN MARA (CONT'D)

Nooo!!!

A bright light encompasses the whole room. Muriel shields her eyes. When the light dissipates, the orb is shattered on the floor and the body of a WOMAN is laying on the ground in the middle of the room. The queen lays dead, eyes staring at the ceiling. Muriel breathes hard.

(CONTINUED)

Muriel cautiously crawls over to the queen's body.

MURIEL
Queen Mara? Queen Mara?

The woman moans. Muriel cautiously approaches the body, a beautiful woman in her 30s, ANNORA, wearing a blue robe. The woman's eyes open half way. Muriel begins to recognize the woman from her memory.

MURIEL (CONT'D)
Mother...?

Annora sees Muriel.

ANNORA
Muriel? Muriel?! It's me, your
mother!

MURIEL
Mother!!

Muriel kneels down over her mother's body and brushes hair out of her face. Annora is crying with happiness. She reaches an arm up and touches her daughter's face.

ANNORA
You're beautiful! So beautiful! Oh
my baby!

Muriel hugs her mother.

MURIEL
Mother, you're alive! I thought you
were dead! Here, let me help you.

Muriel tries to lift her mother into a sitting position, but her mother falls back, moaning in pain.

MURIEL (CONT'D)
What's wrong??

Suddenly Hammond's voice fills the room.

HAMMOND
Muriel!

Hammond enters the room, out of breath. He sees the queen laying dead on the floor. Tenney appears behind him and bleats.

HAMMOND (CONT'D)

The queen... what have you done??

MURIEL

Father! How did you know I was here?

HAMMOND

Your goat. Wandered in just before the gates closed. And when you weren't with him...I knew something was wrong. He wouldn't leave me alone about it either. Turns out he is good for something!

Hammond sees Muriel's injured arm.

HAMMOND

Muriel, your arm! Are you all right?

MURIEL

Yes, I think so.

ANNORA

She's amazing Hammond, you should have seen her.

He approaches Muriel and sees Annora.

HAMMOND (CONT'D)

Annora?!

Hammond kneels down next to them and takes Annora's hand.

HAMMOND

Annora, how are you... alive?

ANNORA

The orb... was a trap. King Aubrey suspected a traitor in the castle but wasn't sure who. So he had the orb created, telling the whole kingdom of its power, knowing the tale would lure his enemy to steal it and try to use it as a weapon against him.

HAMMOND

But what does that have to do with you?

(CONTINUED)

ANNORA

I was working for the king at the time. He needed my magic for the orb's real purpose, to destroy the one who betrayed him. To stay strong, the spell required my entire being. The king knew he could trust me.

MURIEL

So there was no accident?

HAMMOND

You sacrificed these past five years of your life for the good of the kingdom?

ANNORA

It was my duty as the king's magician. Unfortunately, it took more than five years of my life. (beat) Because of the force of the spell, the orb must self-destruct after the traitor has been destroyed, taking me with it.

Hammond and Muriel realize what she's saying.

MURIEL

No!!

Muriel hugs her mother, still laying on the ground.

HAMMOND

Annora... please no..

ANNORA

I've been a part of the orb for so long. This is my purpose. I can't reverse it... I'm sorry.

MURIEL

Mother, you can't go, you can't!! I love you!

ANNORA

I love you too. I love both of you so much. Muriel, I wish I could have been there for you. You have grown into a beautiful young lady, inheriting my powers I see.

Annora smiles.

(CONTINUED)

ANNORA (CONT'D)

Promise me you'll never stop practicing. You will be the best magician this kingdom has ever seen. I know it.

Muriel glances at her father.

MURIEL

I promise!

HAMMOND

But Annora, she's just a girl! Do you really think she should get mixed up in this?

ANNORA

It's all right, Hammond. Muriel is growing up. She needs to learn how to control her powers properly. It's the only way to keep her safe.

Hammond sighs and looks at Muriel reluctantly.

HAMMOND

I'm sorry, Muriel. Your mother's right. I promise I won't stand in your way any longer.

Muriel hugs her father.

MURIEL

Thank you, Father!

Annora's breath is fading. She speaks with more effort.

ANNORA

Make me proud, my girl!

Muriel cries. Annora turns to Hammond.

ANNORA (CONT'D)

Hammond, I'm so sorry. I had to do it.

Hammond holds her hand to his face and kisses it, tears in his eyes.

HAMMOND

I never stopped loving you, Annora.

Annora smiles.

(CONTINUED)

ANNORA

I know.

Annora's head falls back. Muriel gasps and hugs her.

MURIEL

Mother!! Mother!

Annora doesn't respond. Muriel cries, realizing that she has died.

MURIEL (CONT'D)

Mother, come back, please!

Mother...

Muriel continues to cry. Hammond hugs her, tears in his own eyes. He quietly speaks into her shoulder.

HAMMOND

It's all right. It'll be all right.

EXT. TOP OF CASTLE RAMPART - NIGHT

Warin and Muriel stand together at Warin's post on the castle wall. Muriel controls a glowing ball of light dancing between her hands. It moves easily back and forth through the air as Muriel handles the magic confidently.

WARIN

Impressive! I see those magic lessons are already paying off.

Muriel begins to speak but keeps her eyes on the spell.

MURIEL

Isn't it great? My father and King Aubrey arranged them. I've been up at the castle the past three days. The king's magicians said teaching Annora's daughter would be an honor.

WARIN

As well it should be. You'll get quite the education from them.

Muriel throws the ball of light into the sky, where it bursts open like a firework and fades to the ground.

MURIEL

Are you coming to the ceremony tomorrow?

(CONTINUED)

WARIN

I wouldn't miss it. Not enough goes on to honor your mother.

Warin takes an apple out of his pocket and tosses it.

WARIN (CONT'D)

To think that she was trapped in that orb for all these years.. I can't believe it. Everyone thought she was dead.

MURIEL

That's what the kingdom needed to think for the plan to work.

WARIN

The whole kingdom has been in quite a commotion since the queen's death. It's crazy to think she was smuggling spies into the kingdom right under our noses, right under my nose!

MURIEL

You couldn't have known! The queen was acting as a spy herself!

WARIN

I heard they found that one lad...

MURIEL

Nigel.

WARIN

...and he confessed to the king. Told him the names of all the spies that've been hiding out in our streets. Was a chicken when it came down to it. Guess that's good for us though, eh?

MURIEL

King Aubrey's having them put on trial in the town square.

WARIN

Wouldn't want to be those fellows for nothin'.

Warin takes a bite of the apple.

(CONTINUED)

MURIEL

I feel bad for King Aubrey. He deserved better than Queen Mara.

WARIN

Even kings have to be careful about who they trust.

MURIEL

Queen Mara was traveling to Sirdere every fortnight to meet King Gerald. Who knew it was to act as a traitor.

Warin takes another bite.

WARIN

King Aubrey's declared war on Sirdere. D'you hear of that?

MURIEL

Yes. So that means you'll have to be guarding the castle for real now, right?

WARIN

Beg your pardon little missy but I guard the castle right properly every night! I think we got a pretty good chance against 'em if you ask me, especially now that we've weeded out his web of spiders.

MURIEL

I think so too!

WARIN

I heard Simon is also being honored in the ceremony tomorrow. Never in my day has a lowly peasant received such recognition.

MURIEL

Living in the streets, Simon and Bertram witnessed some suspicious characters, and I guess they heard enough to suspect the queen.

WARIN

I always thought there was more to those two.

Warin takes another bite of apple.

(CONTINUED)

MURIEL

They rigged the carriage to blow up, hoping it'd draw her spies out of the woodwork. It worked, but the blast must have been more powerful than they suspected. Bertram was too close when it happened.

WARIN

They were honorable men.

Muriel nods.

WARIN (CONT'D)

How is your father? Losing not only a friend, but his wife all over again can't be easy.

MURIEL

He's healing slowly... He watches me practice sometimes when I go out to Mother's grave. I think he's still afraid I'll get hurt, but he realizes that I can take care of myself.

WARIN

Down the mountain in that little alcove of yours?

Warin bites into the apple.

MURIEL

Yes. And I think he's actually grown a little fond of Tenney!

WARIN

Ha! That's one special goat all right!

MURIEL

I know now that when I practice magic, my mother is always with me.

WARIN

That she is, Miss Muriel, that she is.

Warin and Muriel stare out into the night landscape.

FADE OUT.