

ACT IScene 1

*The outskirts of a devastated town.
A clear night, with a full moon.*

(CHESHIRE sits next to two hiking packs, whittling with a small knife. He also wears a sword.)

(VICTIM runs on-stage pursued by three ASSAILANTS and is caught by them. They beat, torture, and rape him. Victim screams until gagged.)

(KAT enters. She wears a revolver in a holster.)

KAT

Cheshire?

CHESHIRE

Kat?

KAT

Why aren't you helping him?

CHESHIRE

Helping who?

KAT

Him. The one being brutalized.

CHESHIRE

Oh. Him. I'm busy.

KAT

Doing what?

CHESHIRE

Whittling. Something. Something.

KAT

At this time of night?

CESHIRE

Sure. Why not? There's good light. Look at the moon.
Beautiful isn't it?

KAT

What are you making?

CESHIRE

I don't know.

KAT

He's suffering. Horribly.

CESHIRE

So?

KAT

Cheshire. Do I really need to answer that question?

CESHIRE

There're people suffering all over the world tonight. Under
this very same moon.

KAT

Sure. But none are as close to us as he is.

CESHIRE

It's irrelevant, Kat. Proximity is irrelevant.

KAT

How so?

CESHIRE

I could help the other people too but I choose to ignore
their suffering. The only difference is that he is harder
to ignore. Because he is so close. And so fucking loud.
Jesus.

KAT

He is close. It'd almost be effortless. It wouldn't even be
an inconvenience.

CESHIRE

I'm busy. Besides. The question of convenience is relative. Technically, it would have been much easier for us to give some bread to the refugee camp we saw three clicks back. They were all suffering. Suffering slowly. Painfully. But quietly. And we could have helped them. Effortlessly. You didn't even blink.

KAT

Food is precious. Our food is precious.

CESHIRE

So is time. Especially under a moon like this.

KAT

Fine. I take your point. But he's suffering. I can't abide it.

CESHIRE

The noise of it, maybe. The proximity of it, maybe. Suffering, however, you are fine with.

KAT

Whatever. I can't abide it.

CESHIRE

Hey, I'm not stopping you. It's your choice.

KAT

Fine.

(Kat shoots each assailant.)

It's alright. They're dead. I'm not here to cause you any more suffering.

(VICTIM speaks through gag.)

You are gagged. I can't hear you. That's kind of the point.

(Kat searches bodies.)

No fucking bullets! What the fuck?

(Kat notices VICTIM'S
indecision.)

Pants. Oh yes. Definitely the pants.

(VICTIM pulls up pants, then
removes gag.)

It's OK now. They're dead.

VICTIM

Thank you.

KAT

It was nothing. Practically nothing. They aren't carrying
any fucking bullets to replace the ones I've used.

VICTIM

They only had knives.

KAT

Fucking amateurs. What good are knives to me?

VICTIM

They're good for cutting people. They're very good for
cutting people.

KAT

There were others with you.

VICTIM

They held us for days. Made me watch.

KAT

Ugh. I don't like where this is going.

VICTIM

If I tried to close my eyes, they would cut me. I knocked
myself out once. They left her tied up. Waiting for me to
wake up. One of their dogs was tearing at her when I woke
up.

KAT

Cheshire! A little help. Please!

VICTIM

They cut her over and over. Raped her too. All of them.
Over and over again.

KAT
Cheshire, please.

CHESHIRE
I'm busy.

VICTIM
All of them. The children too. In front of my eyes.

KAT
I'm sorry.

VICTIM
They wanted me to run. For the sport. The last one. To run for their sport. I couldn't. Wouldn't.

KAT
Look. I'm sorry. Alright. I don't need to hear about it.

VICTIM
They started to do things. To the bodies. So I ran. So maybe they would stop. So at least I wouldn't see them do it. Do it to them again.

KAT
It's probably better not to think about it.

VICTIM
I can't help but think about it. It's all I can see. Behind my eyes. Behind my eyes.

(He cries.)

What am I going to do? What am I going to do? What the fuck am I going to do?

(Kat shoots him. As he dies, she look directly into his eyes, looking for something. He dies. She does not find what she was looking for. She searches the body.)

CESHIRE

That was unexpected.

KAT

I couldn't abide his suffering.

CESHIRE

The consistency of your logic is impeccable.

KAT

(She finds bullets in his
pockets.)

He had bullets. He still had bullets. How could a man let himself be taken and tortured while he still had bullets in his pocket. It doesn't make sense.

CESHIRE

These are interesting times we live in, Kat.

KAT

I love you, Cheshire.

CESHIRE

I love you too.

(They kiss.)

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

Scene 2

A dusty, broken road, which was once a highway. A clear, bright day. High Noon.

(KAT enters, wearing a large heavy hiking pack. She stumbles almost falls. Stops.)

KAT

Cheshire! Yo! Cheshire! Asshole. Hey! Cheshire!

CESHIRE [Off-stage]

What? What? Hey, Kat. What is it?

(He enters.)

What? Kat, what is it?

KAT

Let's rest here for a bit. OK, babe.

CESHIRE

What? Are you tired?

KAT

No. I only rest when I am wholly and utterly refreshed. You know that.

CESHIRE

You're being sarcastic.

KAT

You know sometimes you ask the stupidest questions.

CESHIRE

I'm not tired. It's hard for me to believe you're tired. You never get tired.

KAT

Look, we've been over this before. You can't do that. You can't make sense of me based on your understanding of yourself. We are different people!

CESHIRE

We have a lot in common.

KAT

Yes. But we're still different, OK. You've got to understand me from my perspective. It's hard I know but you can do it. You do do it. Just not all the time.

CESHIRE

I'm sorry. I forget.

KAT

It's alright. I forget too. We both do. Especially when we're tired.

CESHIRE

You're right. I am tired. Let's rest for a minute or two.

KAT

Or ten. I'm tired too easily these days. I don't like it. Something's wrong.

CESHIRE

Nothing's wrong. You're fine.

KAT

I'm tired too easily. Something's wrong. I know it.

CESHIRE

Nothing's wrong. You're fine. We'll be fine. We always are.

KAT

Whatever.

CESHIRE

(Shows her a small wooden
object.)

Look.

KAT

What is it?

CESHIRE

It's what I carved last night. What I whittled.

KAT

It's beautiful. What is it? What is it meant to be?

CHESHIRE

I don't know. It just came out like that.

KAT

Can I have it?

CHESHIRE

Of course. Everything I do ...

KAT and CHESHIRE

(Singing, together)

I do it for you!

(They laugh.)

KAT

Seriously, though. It's beautiful. Can I have it?

CHESHIRE

Everything I have. Everything I am. Is yours. Always.
Forever.

KAT

I love you.

CHESHIRE

I love you too.

KAT

Do you want to fuck?

CHESHIRE

Of course.

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

Scene 3

Light woodlands. Early Evening.

(CHESHIRE waits, with the two backpacks.)

KAT [Off-stage]

Fuck.

CHESHIRE

What?

KAT

Fuck, fuck, fuck. I knew it. I knew something was wrong.

CHESHIRE

What?

KAT

(She enters, holding pregnancy test.)

I'm pregnant.

CHESHIRE

What!?

KAT

I'm fucking pregnant. No wonder I've been feeling so tired lately.

CHESHIRE

When was your last period?

KAT

Don't you remember?

CHESHIRE

I'm attentive. Not that attentive.

KAT

Fine. Two months. Maybe more.

CHESHIRE

Why didn't you say something?

KAT

I didn't want to worry you.

CHESHIRE

Why would I be worried? This is what we want. What we've been planning for.

KAT

Fine. I didn't want to get your hopes up, then. Fuck.

CHESHIRE

Let me see.

KAT

Fuck.

CHESHIRE

This isn't a problem.

KAT

What are we going to do?

CHESHIRE

What we always do. You can still fight. For a couple of more months anyway. After that, you'll need to take it easy for a while. Then, when you're really close, we'll lay low, and I'll watch out for you. Everything's going to be fine. Good even. Great.

KAT

Lay low for awhile. Lay low for awhile. Cheshire this isn't a fucking flesh wound. We're going to have a baby. I think our days of laying low are over. For awhile? Forever.

CHESHIRE

Let me check the accounts.

(He produces a mobile
communications device.)

KAT

Fuck, fuck, fuck. Why do I have to be so goddamn horny? And fertile! I thought it took months for the pill to wear off. Years even! Fuck.

CESHIRE

Look, Kat, don't worry. Things are fine. We're almost there. One more job and we can retire to our little house on the prairie.

KAT

What?

CESHIRE

One more job and we'll have all the money we need to settle down, retire, leave this life behind. Forever.

KAT

Say that again slowly.

CESHIRE

What? One more job. Settle down. Retire?

KAT

Yes. That. Don't you hear what you're saying?

CESHIRE

What?

KAT

Pretty fucking dangerous cliché to be saying out loud. Don't you think?

CESHIRE

I don't follow.

KAT

Don't play dumb, Cheshire. You know exactly what I mean.

CESHIRE

Ok, fine. You knew this day would come. You knew, some day there would be "one last job."

KAT

Yeah. I guess. I kind of hoped we wouldn't notice it. You know, it would just happen. One day we would check the accounts and the "one last job" would have already happened. You know what I mean?

CESHIRE

You ask me to check the accounts every other day! How could it happen without us knowing?

KAT

I know! I know! I always ask because I'm always hoping. You know, that you'll be like, oh, we can stop now, without us ever knowing we were on the "one last job".

CESHIRE

If I'd known it was such a big deal, I would have kept it secret.

KAT

Oh God! That would have been even worse! Brave husband knows but hides the fact of "one last job" from wife. In the final reel, while he is dying slowly, all is revealed. Why don't you shoot yourself in the head now!

CESHIRE

It's irrelevant anyways. The time is here. Now. One more job and we're home free.

KAT

Stop saying that. This is perfect. Just fucking perfect. And I'm fucking pregnant. Oh, that's beautiful. Oh that's really fucking beautiful. Do we really need to do this?

CESHIRE

Kat. We aren't going to let some narrative trope stop us from doing what we want to do.

KAT

Sure we can. We can stop right now. Right here. Retire with what we have. Walk away. For good.

CESHIRE

Kat. Even if there is something fated here, we can't avoid it by running away. Better to confront it head on and deal with it as it comes.

KAT

Oh God. Is this our fate? Death by cliché.

CESHIRE

That's life. Isn't it? A person is born, she lives, and she dies. The narrative is inevitable, the cliché transparent, and the end's always the same. And yet we carry on. Each and every day.

KAT

Some don't.

CESHIRE

Most do. We do.

KAT

Is this what we want? Is this really what we want? How do we know this is really what we want?

CESHIRE

Do you want to get a real job? Or do you want to spend the rest of our lives making babies and raising them without a care in the world?

KAT

I want to make babies with you and never worry about bills ever again.

CESHIRE

Ok, then. All my projections, calculations, and our financial analyst agrees, we need to do a least one more well paid job to achieve that. It's what I want. And I want it with you.

KAT

I want it with you too. More than anything.

CESHIRE

Good. Let's push on then. One more job. And we can retire. And leave this life behind. Forever.

KAT

Will you stop saying that.

CESHIRE

OK.

KAT

Kiss me. Tell me you love me. That you'll always love me.
That you'll always love me and our baby.

CHESHIRE

Your wish is my command.

(They kiss.)

I love you. I will always love you. I will always love you
and all of our babies.

(They kiss again.)

You know, Kat, for true love to survive, at least one of
the lovers has to die.

KAT

Shut up asshole.

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

(END OF ACT)

ACT 2Scene 1

Early morning, outside a gated community. Three men with swords guard the gate.

(CHESHIRE and KAT approach.)

CHESHIRE

This'll be easier than I thought.

KAT

It would be so much easier if you let me shoot them. Pop. Pop. Pop. No problem. One. Two. Three.

CHESHIRE

Some rules, even in these times, must be respected. Besides. We don't want to waste your bullets.

KAT

Whatever. You haven't had a chance to kill anyone for a while. That's all.

CHESHIRE

Don't be flippant, Kat. You know I take this seriously.

KAT

I'm sorry.

CHESHIRE

It's alright. I won't be hurt. If they know what they're doing, we won't fight. If we fight, it means they don't know what they're doing. And there won't be any fight at all.

KAT

Still. It always makes me nervous to watch.

CHESHIRE

One last time.

KAT

Shut up!

CESHIRE

I'm teasing. Now watch the bags.

KAT

Hey! If one of them challenges you, I want to watch him die.

CESHIRE

You know that makes it harder for me.

KAT

You're not the only one who likes to tempt fate!

CESHIRE

(He approaches the guards.)

We're looking for J. Edgar. We understand he is looking for some couriers. We're couriers.

1ST SWORDSMAN

You carry a sword.

CESHIRE

Is J. Edgar here?

1ST SWORDSMAN

I said, you carry a sword.

CESHIRE

We are couriers. Looking for work. May we speak with him?

1ST SWORDSMAN

I say for a third time, you carry a sword.

CESHIRE

Then, I say to you, I carry a sword.

1ST SWORDSMAN

I also carry a sword.

CESHIRE

I see you carry sword.

1ST SWORDSMAN

I'm willing to bet I can defeat you.

CESHIRE

I'm willing to bet you can not.

1ST SWORDSMAN

I'm willing to bet my life I will.

CESHIRE

I'm willing to bet my life you will not.

1ST SWORDSMAN

It's a bet then.

CESHIRE

It's a bet.

(The two men square off, out of striking range. They hold each other's gaze for a moment, assessing each other.)

You are outmatched. Stand aside. The bet does not stand. You are not capable of making such a bet.

1ST SWORDSMAN

I am not outmatched. The bet stands.

CESHIRE

I admire, respect, and honor your courage. But there is no bet here. There is nothing to be won.

1ST SWORDSMAN

The bet stands.

(He releases but does not draw his sword from the scabbard.)

CESHIRE

You are a ghost. You are already dead.

(CESHIRE releases but does not draw his sword from the scabbard.)

(1ST SWORDSMAN draws first and they fight.)

1ST SWORDSMAN

See. I am your match. There is a bet. I will win. You will die.

CHESHIRE

Three times I could have killed you instantly. My wife wants to watch you die. It makes the kill more challenging.

(They fight again. CHESHIRE fatally wounds 1ST SWORDSMAN. KAT goes to the dying man and looks him directly in the eye until he dies.)

Still haven't found what you're looking for?

KAT

Nope. Not yet. Not yet.

(She starts to hum the song by U2 and searches the body.)

Again! No fucking bullets!

CHESHIRE

(Addressing the two remaining guards.)

We are looking for J. Edgar. We understand he is looking for some couriers. We are couriers.

2ND SWORDSMAN

You carry a sword.

3RD SWORDSMAN

Don't be a fucking idiot. J. Edgar is here. He needs a courier. I'm sure he would like to meet with you.

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

Scene 2

*A greenhouse garden, early
afternoon.*

(J. EDGAR works among
tomatoes.)

(His personal assistant, JAMIE,
enters. She wears a sidearm.)

JAMIE

Excuse me, J. Edgar, sir. Are you ready to see the
couriers.

J. EDGAR

How did their credentials hold up, Jamie?

JAMIE

Fully licensed. Clean records. Customer satisfaction
ratings are pretty high. Too high almost.

J. EDGAR

Suspicious?

JAMIE

Yeah but for the fact they are registered on Northstar
Independents -- those guys are reliable and unhackable.
Plus, the swordsman made short work of one of our best men.
He didn't break a sweat.

J. EDGAR

Who was it?

JAMIE

Pion number 2. I don't know their names. They're Jacob's
business not mine. Jacob says he was good, that's all I
need to know.

J. EDGAR

Jamie, dear, you must try to remember their names. It's
important. That kind of callousness won't help you, even in
these times. It was probably Mickey. He was good but wasn't
smart enough to know when he was beat. What about the girl
with him?

JAMIE

He says she's his wife. She doesn't argue the point. Seems improbable to me.

J. EDGAR

Couriers rarely work together and never for very long.

JAMIE

According to the records, they each worked alone for a few years. Then they worked on a job together -- the only incomplete either of them have on their records -- and they've worked together ever since. Seven years.

J. EDGAR

Is she a trophy?

JAMIE

No. Good looking enough -- not your type -- but she's no trophy. Killer through and through. No question.

J. EDGAR

What are their names?

JAMIE

Kat and Cheshire.

J. EDGAR

I beg your pardon.

JAMIE

Kat and Cheshire. Kat is the girl.

J. EDGAR

Say it again but say his name first and leave out the "and."

JAMIE

Ok. Cheshire. Kat.

J. EDGAR

Don't you hear it?

JAMIE

Hear what?

J. EDGAR

Never mind. Send them in.

JAMIE

One problem though, J.E.. They won't give up their weapons.

J. EDGAR

Oh well. At least we know they aren't amateurs. Can they be trusted?

JAMIE

According to Northstar's records, they've never harmed a client.

J. EDGAR

Consummate professionals, eh? Very promising. Please, bring them in, Jamie. Keep alert. I don't expect any problems but better safe than sorry.

(JAMIE exits. J. EDGAR pulls out a concealed pistol, cocks it, releases the safety, and conceals it again.)

(JAMIE, KAT, and CHESHIRE enter.)

JAMIE

J. Edgar, sir, the couriers.

J. EDGAR

Thank you, Jamie. Cheshire. Kat. It's a pleasure to meet you both. Your credentials are impressive and impeccable. I'm also, coincidentally enough, a great admirer of Lewis Carroll's work.

CHESHIRE

Thank you, sir.

J. EDGAR

I can assume, then, that you prefer *Alice in Wonderland* to *Through the Looking Glass*.

CHESHIRE

To be honest, sir, I don't know what you are talking about.

J. EDGAR

What do you mean?

CESHIRE

I beg your pardon, sir, but I don't quite follow.

J. EDGAR

But your names? It's the name of a character from the book. A very famous character. From a very famous book. These are classics of Western literature. Surely, this has come up before.

CESHIRE

Most of our clients aren't very keen to talk literature with us, sir.

J. EDGAR

Yes. Of course. I see. Here. A token of my goodwill.

(He plucks and gives KAT a
tomato.)

Thankfully, I'm not a serpent and this is not an apple.

KAT

Serpent? I don't follow, sir. But I thank you for the tomato. They're precious.

J. EDGAR

I guess you get what you pay for in this line of work, don't you?

CESHIRE

That's right, sir. We are the best.

J. EDGAR

Right. Now about the contract. It's class five. Highest risk, absolute secrecy. Do you accept these sorts of terms.

CESHIRE

We prefer them. Highest return for time and risk invested.

J. EDGAR

Good. At least you understand that. But I suppose one doesn't need to read literature to understand the concept of risk management.

CESHIRE

Yes, sir. I'm self-taught. How long is the journey?

J. EDGAR

Do you have horses?

CESHIRE

There's hardly enough food on the road for us, sir. If you want horses, call FedEx.

J. EDGAR

Right. I can't say that I've walked it. Jamie, what do you think? It's about 500KM, right. Fairly rough ground.

JAMIE

That's a generous estimate. Assuming they meet no trouble along the way. A week. Two weeks maximum.

CESHIRE

And what will we be delivering?

J. EDGAR

If I wanted to answer that sort of question, I would have called FedEx.

CESHIRE

Is it fragile? Bigger than a breadbox?

J. EDGAR

No. It isn't terribly fragile. It will fit in a standard courier bag.

CESHIRE

Ok. Where's it going and what sort of risks are involved?

J. EDGAR

It's going to our sister community. Greenville. My son's in charge there. The package is for his eye's only. The risk involved? I'm not totally sure. I don't think either of you will be in much personal danger. No one will be trying to prevent delivery as far as I know.

CESHIRE

Why pay for a high risk delivery?

J. EDGAR

Better safe than sorry. It's imperative the package arrives and I wouldn't want you to jettison it at the first sign of danger. If the rumors are true, where you're going won't be very pleasant.

CHESHIRE

Why only rumors?

J. EDGAR

There has been no communication for several weeks. All voice and data transmission has been cut. All signals in -- and presumably out -- are being scrambled.

CHESHIRE

Has no one gone to see what's happening?

J. EDGAR

No one who's also returned.

CHESHIRE

Dead?

J. EDGAR

Whereabouts unknown.

CHESHIRE

Why do you think we won't be at any personal risk?

J. EDGAR

You two are outsiders and what may -- and I say, "may" -- be happening is an internal matter best kept private. You understand. Jamie will provide you with all the necessary technical details. Are you interested?

CHESHIRE

(He looks to KAT, who nods.)

You had us at hello.

(BLACK OUT)

(END OF SCENE)

Scene 3

A bare room.

(CHESHIRE and KAT enter)

KAT

Hey Cheshire, is it me or is the air a bit stuffy in here?

CHESHIRE

It's alright. It's safe to talk. Privacy clause in the contract. They can't listen in now.

KAT

Thank fucking god. I was about to lose my fucking mind. God I hate that fucking act. Why do we always have to play dumb?

CHESHIRE

They prefer it that way. Especially the old ones. They prefer their dirty work to be done by illiterates.

KAT

Dumb stupid snobbish fuck. It's *Alice's Adventures In Wonderland*. Not *Alice in Wonderland*. That's the fucking cartoon. He probably hasn't even read the book.

CHESHIRE

Neither have you.

KAT

Yeah well. You read it to me and at least I know the difference between the cartoon and the book. That lame ass fucking reference to Genesis almost made me puke in his face.

CHESHIRE

Now that would have been a treat to see.

KAT

And I ain't no fucking lady. I'm a tramp! What about this?

(Indicates tomato.)

Is it safe to eat?

CESHIRE

Mutual security clause. He and his people can't touch us.
No one would ever do business with him again.

KAT

What the fuck, Cheshire? You know I'd rather have the money
than the fucking security.

CESHIRE

Me too. But it hasn't effected the price of the contract.
And he insisted. The customer's always right.

KAT

The customer can suck my dick.

CESHIRE

Hey! I don't want that old guy sucking my dick.

KAT

That's right baby. That's my fucking dick.

(She grabs his crotch and moves
in close to him.)

So. Now that business is taken care of. Are we going to get
down to business?

CESHIRE

Kat, you know I can't. Don't like to. When we're on a job.
I've got too much on my mind. I can't concentrate.

KAT

Yeah well. And you know I always try to tempt you.

CESHIRE

And you know I always say no.

KAT

And you know I always try harder.

CESHIRE

And I always still say no.

KAT

And it always drives me wild.

CESHIRE

And then I still say no.

KAT

And on and on it goes. And when the job is finally over. Oh my fucking god!

CESHIRE

That's right. Your fucking god.

(He reciprocates her advances.)

KAT

Hey! Why are you being so easy?

CESHIRE

Whatever do you mean?

KAT

You have never -- never -- given in on a job. Never.

CESHIRE

First time for everything.

KAT

Not for you Mr. Rules-are-my-existence. What gives?

CESHIRE

I don't know. I guess having the security and privacy clauses in the contract takes a lot off my mind. And it's been weeks since we've had a room to ourselves. And the job doesn't technically start till tomorrow.

KAT

We signed the contract. The job is on. We're on duty.

CESHIRE

True, but --

KAT

Hey, hey. No fucking way, mister. I've used the whole-job-doesn't-technically-start-until-tomorrow line a million times before and it's never worked. What gives? No. Stop thinking like that. Stop fucking thinking like.

CESHIRE

Yeah but what if?

KAT

No. No. No.

CESHIRE

Kat. It's not like that.

KAT

Cheshire. We are not fucking one last time just in case. It's not going to happen.

CESHIRE

It's not even about the job.

KAT

Oh yeah. What's it about then.

CESHIRE

Ok. Of course, the job is a factor. But forget that. It's incidental. Secondary. I mean, what if I drop dead of cancer tomorrow.

KAT

You don't even fucking drink.

CESHIRE

It doesn't matter. What I am saying is that anything could happen. Whether we're on a job or not.

KAT

Nothing is going to happen.

CESHIRE

Of course, it isn't. But that doesn't mean we shouldn't live each day -- every moment -- as if it matters in itself and isn't just one more transit point to some future moment that won't matter either.

KAT

It'll jinx it. It will so totally jinx it.

CESHIRE

Kat. It won't jinx it. This is love we're talking about. Our love. Our perfect love.

(They make love.)

KAT

Cheshire. You can't die. Don't die. Please don't die.

CHESHIRE

I won't die. Hey! What makes you think I'm the one who is going to die?

KAT

I don't care if I die, because I will be dead. But if you die, I --

CHESHIRE

I won't die. I promise.

KAT

Famous last fucking words.

(BLACK OUT)

(END OF SCENE)

(END OF ACT)

ACT THREEScene 1

A broken road that was once a highway. Late afternoon. Three corpses.

Are we there yet? KAT [Off-stage]

Not far now. CHESHIRE [Off-stage]

Are we there yet? KAT [Off-stage]

Not far now. CHESHIRE [Off-stage]

Are we there yet? KAT [Off-stage]

Not far now. CHESHIRE [Off-stage]

(Cheshire enters, Kat follows.)

Are we there yet? KAT

Not far now. CHESHIRE

Hey, Cheshire. Look, bodies. KAT

Not far now. CHESHIRE

No, Cheshire, I said, "look, bodies." Dead bodies. KAT

Yeah. So. We see bodies on the road all the time. CHESHIRE

KAT

Jesus. You know. Even I remember a time when people made an effort to bury the dead.

CHESHIRE

Times have changed. Different priorities. Let's keep moving. We need to make good time to make up for yesterday, Miss I-want-to-soak-in-the-lake-all-day.

KAT

You loved it, Mr. Cherish-the-time-we-have. It looks like a pretty fresh kill too. Maybe I should search them.

CHESHIRE

It could be booby trapped.

KAT

You've been saying that for eight years and a body has never been booby trapped.

CHESHIRE

First time for everything. Poke them with a stick or something.

KAT

I'll be careful. Don't worry. Yeah look. They aren't even stiff yet. Where did you even get the idea? Booby trapped!

CHESHIRE

I don't know. I saw it in a movie or something.

KAT

Why would anyone want to booby trap bodies? Hey look!

(She finds a portable media player.)

Man, I haven't seen one of these in ages. Come on have power. Pretty please, pretty please. Yes! Ah, wow. Awesome. Look, Cheshire, it has pictures. Yes, yes, yes. So cool. Looks like he might have had kids. Beautiful kids. Wow. Where did this guy live? Man, gorgeous. Look at the grass. And the trees. Man. It looks like he lived in paradise. I wonder if these pictures were taken from before. Oh wait. I get it. He is one of the kids. Crazy. It's like he is

growing up right before my eyes. Look the ocean! Lucky fucking bastard. I never went to the ocean when I was kid.

CHESHIRE

Things change.

KAT

Jackpot! Videos! Sweet as. Wish I had sound. Everyone looks so happy. Must be his wedding. Wow. She's gorgeous. He doesn't look so bad in his tux either. Nice smile. Blah, blah, blah. Who cares about the guests. Fast forward, fast forward, fast forward. Food! Food looks good! Oh wait. Rewind, rewind, rewind. Aha! First dance! Ooooo. Ok. Enough of that. Fast forward, fast forward, fast forward. Aha! Honeymoon! Snow! Look snow, Cheshire. Snow! Wicked. So cool. Oops. There we go. She's all fat with baby now. What!? That's it? Awww. That's it. No. More, more, more. I want more. What? There's a ton of space left on here. What gives? What gives? Fuck. That's it? That's it, isn't it? That's fucking it.

CHESHIRE

Alas, poor Yorick, I knew him, Horatio.

KAT

And when the battery dies, there won't even be that.

CHESHIRE

Maybe his kid's still alive. Maybe the wife and kid remember him.

KAT

Maybe. That might be worse though.

CHESHIRE

Why?

KAT

His kid. His wife. They'll never know. They'll always wonder if he's alive or not. God. I couldn't live not knowing. Ugh. Maybe knowing would be as bad.

CHESHIRE

Maybe they're already dead. Maybe that's why it ends so abruptly.

KAT

It would have been so hard for him. To carry on. How would you carry on? How could you? I couldn't.

CHESHIRE

You'd remember the good times. Bad times too. All the time you had.

KAT

Cheshire. Why don't we ever take pictures or videos.

CHESHIRE

You hate having your picture taken.

KAT

I've changed my mind.

(BLACK OUT)

(END OF SCENE)

Scene 2

Night, in a sheltered spot. A glowing lamp.

(Cheshire reads out loud from *Watership Down*.)

CESHIRE

El-ahrairah, your people cannot rule the world, for I will not have it so. All the world will be your enemy, Prince with a Thousand Enemies, and whenever they catch you, they will kill you. But first they must catch you, digger, listener, runner, prince with the swift warning. Be cunning and full of tricks and your people shall never be destroyed.

KAT

Cheshire?

CESHIRE

Kat?

KAT

Do you remember what it was like? Before? You know, before?

CESHIRE

Some, I suppose. I was pretty young. It's a bit of a haze.

KAT

You don't think about it or try to remember.

CESHIRE

No. Not really. I guess it comes into my head every now and again but I don't dwell on it.

KAT

Why not?

CESHIRE

No reason. That I can think of. Just doesn't seem that important. I guess, I'd rather think about now. You. Tomorrow. Us.

KAT

What was it like? You know when every thing went to hell.

CHESHIRE

Why all this sudden interest in ancient history? What? Afraid I won't be around much longer to ask.

KAT

Shut up, asshole. Don't joke about that. I don't know. I don't know. Maybe it was finding that guy's photos and videos that got me thinking about it.

CHESHIRE

The cat will mew, and dog will have his day.

KAT

Whatever. What was it like?

CHESHIRE

I don't really remember it being like anything. It was what it was.

KAT

That doesn't make any sense.

CHESHIRE

It's not like anything suddenly happened. It wasn't like there was a big explosion and society as we know it collapsed. It was kind of gradual. Lots of little things that finally added up to what we have now. I guess that's why it happened. No one saw it coming.

KAT

Like boiling a frog.

CHESHIRE

I guess. To be honest, most of my memories are pretty happy. Despite what was slowly happening all around me. Sure, when I think about it now, as an adult, I can't make sense of how a little kid could deal with it but when I remember it as I was, as I lived it, it wasn't so bad. It was life, you know. Sure, life with a lot of death and misery, but still life. You must know what I am talking about. You were a kid once too.

KAT

I don't.

CESHIRE

What do you mean?

KAT

I don't. I close my eyes and try and I can't really get much farther back than ten or eleven. There are snatches. Images. Most of them are pretty ugly though. Angry. Hate filled. The memories from ten or eleven aren't so good either.

CESHIRE

I know.

KAT

Here there be dragons.

CESHIRE

And here we fear to tread.

(BLACK OUT)

(END OF SCENE)

Scene 3

Morning, in the same sheltered spot.

(CHESHIRE packs the bags.)

CHESHIRE

If you keep spying on us from the bushes like that, you're going to end up dead. Very soon. It's impossible to make friends lurking in the shadows, you know.

(BILLY enters. She's dressed like a boy.)

There you go. Not so difficult is it. Why don't you tell me your name? Or stand there and fidget. While you think about it.

BILLY

Billy.

CHESHIRE

There you go. Nicely done, Billy. So. How can I help you, Billy? Did you lose my number? You've been lurking in our shadows for a few days now. You must want something.

(BILLY brandishes a 9 mm pistol.)

Billy, Billy, Billy. That's no way to say hello. In fact, it's a much better way to say goodbye.

(KAT enters.)

KAT

Oh look. You've made a friend.

BILLY

Stop. Stay there. Or I'll shoot.

CHESHIRE

It seems our little shadow has decided to make himself visible.

KAT

Him? Cheshire, are you blind? She's a girl.

BILLY

I am not!

CHESHIRE

Really? He said his name was Billy.

KAT

She can call herself Jack if she wants to. It won't change the fact she's a Jill.

BILLY

I'm a boy!

KAT

Look, girly. Put your gun away. You might get yourself hurt.

BILLY

No, I won't.

CHESHIRE

Kat. That's a pretty impressive firearm she's waving around.

KAT

Sure is. Glock. Nine mill.

CHESHIRE

What are the chances there's any nine mill ammo still floating around?

(He moves towards Billy.)

KAT

Zero. Unless --

BILLY

Don't touch me. Don't you fucking touch me.

(BILLY fires the whole clip.
Kat draws, takes aim, but does
not fire.)

KAT

Unless she got her hands on some blanks.

CHESHIRE

Jesus Christ, Kat. I almost pissed my pants. I'm going to kill that little fucker.

KAT

No, you're not. You're too principled to kill a defenseless young woman. I, on the other hand, am quite happy to do it. I'm allowed. Because I myself was once a defenseless young woman. Don't try to run, Billy. I promise you my aim is true and my bullets very real.

BILLY

Please. I'm sorry. I'm so hungry. I didn't know what else to do. I'm sorry. I'm so hungry.

KAT

And now you're dead. Unless you convince me otherwise. With your story. Right now. Let's hear it, Billy. Your little sob story. In sixty seconds or less. Come on, Billy. You've got my undivided attention. Where's the waterworks. Aren't you going to break it out. Isn't that how you normally get out of these little jams? By bawling your little girly eyes out. Or do you wave your ass in the face of whoever is in charge. And take it like a man. That's it, isn't it, Billy. You've clearly never handled a firearm before. If you don't know how to kill, that means you only know how to fuck. Tired of fucking for your supper, Billy? Is that it? Is that why you're so hungry? Tired of being filled up -- end to end -- with hate just because they can? Tired of being a lump of meat? A mother fucking chew toy, Billy? Is that it? Are you tired of being a girl? Is that it, Billy?

BILLY.

Yes.

KAT

And do you think that'll make your life better? As a boy? As a man? Do you really think that, Billy? Do you really?

BILLY

Yes.

KAT

Well, guess what, Billy? It doesn't really work that way. It doesn't matter if you're a boy or a girl. Man or a woman. What they want is weakness. They feed on it, Billy. Fear. Weakness. Fragility. They smell it. They breathe it. They live off it. Over and over again. And they'll take it wherever they can find it. Boy or girl. Man or woman. You've got a choice, Billy. You can live as victim or you can be strong. It isn't a man-thing or a woman-thing. It's a power thing. An inside power thing. If you're strong, they can't feed off you. They'll do all kinds of horrible things to you but they can't feed off you. It won't do anything for them, if you're strong. And eventually they get bored of you. And when they're bored, they get lazy. And then you can kill them. You kill enough of them and, eventually, they leave you alone. You got that. You think you can remember that, Billy? Kill enough of them and, eventually, they leave you alone. Got it, Billy?

BILLY

Yes.

KAT

Good. That's my little gift to you. Cheshire?

CHESHIRE

Kat?

KAT

Give her some food. And you girly girl. If I ever see you again. If I ever catch a whiff of your spineless fear again. I won't kill you. I'll sell you to a pimp. The meanest, nastiest, dirtiest pimp I can find. And trust me. I know where to find them. You understand me. Billy?

(BILLY nods. Cheshire gives
food to her.)

Now get the fuck out of here.

(BILLY runs.)

CHESHIRE

What the fuck was that all about? Kat?

KAT

I guess she reminds me of someone.

CHESHIRE

Oh yeah. Who?

KAT

Me.

(BLACK OUT)

(END OF SCENE)

Scene 4

A clearing, between the forest and the river. The sun is setting.

(4TH SWORDSMAN guards the bridge. CHESHIRE and KAT approach.)

KAT

I don't like the look of him. Something isn't right.

CHESHIRE

We need to cross the bridge. There's no other way to cross the river.

KAT

Let me shoot him.

CHESHIRE

Impossible, Kat. He has a sword. I need to respect the traditions.

KAT

Look at him. There's something wrong with him. He doesn't look like any kind of a swordsman I've ever seen before. He looks rabid.

CHESHIRE

Traditions matters Kat. More than appearances.

KAT

The promise you made to me matters more than traditions.

CHESHIRE

Wait here.

(CHESHIRE approaches 4TH SWORDSMAN.)

Hello. My wife and I would like to pass. Use the bridge. Cross the river.

4TH SWORDSMAN

Nope. Not going to happen.

CESHIRE

Why not?

4TH SWORDSMAN

Because I'm going to kill you. And her. Unless.

CESHIRE

Unless what?

4TH SWORDSMAN

Unless you're a good little boy and pass your little piece of ass on to me. Maybe, I'll let you live long enough to watch.

CESHIRE

I see you carry a sword, my friend.

4TH SWORDSMAN

No need to bother with those niceties out here, mate. No one cares anymore.

CESHIRE

I said, I see you carry a sword.

4TH SWORDSMAN

Like I said, it doesn't matter. Either you want to die or you don't want to die. That's it. That's all.

CESHIRE

I'm willing to bet my life I will defeat you.

4TH SWORDSMAN

Shut the fuck up. Shut the fuck up and fight.

(He draws his sword.)

CESHIRE

You don't honor our ways my friend. We have traditions for a reason.

4TH SWORDSMAN

Fuck you. Fuck her. Fuck tradition.

CESHIRE

Kat. He's yours.

(KAT shoots 4TH SWORDSMAN. He falls. She approaches, looks into his eyes, and immediately shudders.)

KAT

Ugh. Disgusting.

(She shoots him again.)

Better safe than sorry.

(She searches him.)

What's up, Cheshire. Why the change of heart?

CHESHIRE

Careful, Kat. Especially the blade. There's something broken about him. Something rotten.

KAT

I could have told you that. From looking at him. Again! What's with the total lack of bullets on everyone.

CHESHIRE

You can't always judge a book by its cover, Kat. There was something in his gaze. Like he didn't care. He knew he wasn't going to lose.

KAT

You've walked away from fights before. When you knew were you beat.

CHESHIRE

This is different. He wasn't confident. He was fearless. It's an important difference. And he had no regard for the traditions.

(He inspects sword.)

There it is. Poison.

KAT

A poisoned blade. That's pretty fucked up for a swordsman, isn't it?

CESHIRE

Yes. I can't imagine anything lower. No greater betrayal.
A swordsman with a poisoned blade.

KAT

What do you think it means?

CESHIRE

Something very bad is happening over there.

KAT

Worse than life normally?

CESHIRE

Worse than life normally.

KAT

I'm not sure I want to know what that looks like.

CESHIRE

I don't think it's going to be pretty. We should leave our
packs here. Travel light from here on. And Kat?

KAT

Yes?

CESHIRE

If anyone offers you wine, please don't drink it.

(BLACK OUT)

(END OF SCENE)

(END OF ACT)

ACT IVScene 1

Early morning. Another broken highway.

(MARYLYN and MEREDITH sit huddled together by the side of the road. MEREDITH cradles an infant.)

MARYLYN

Strangers! Meredith, look! Strangers at last!

(She stands and approaches CHESHIRE and KAT)

What a welcome site! We've almost made it, Meredith! We've almost made it. Look, strangers! Thank God! Thank heavens! What a time we live in, when the road to strangers is the road to safety and peace. Away from home and onwards to strangers and safety! Strangers at last!

CHESHIRE

Stay where you are. Don't come any closer.

MARYLYN

What? Me? What do you mean? What could you possibly mean? I can't harm you. How could I possibly harm you? Why would I want to harm you? I don't even know you. You're a total stranger. You're safe among strangers.

CHESHIRE

We can't take any chances.

MARYLYN

Chances! Bah! What harm could I do? To you two? What harm?

KAT

People aren't always as they appear.

MARYLYN

And sometimes they are. Exactly as they appear! Look at me. I can barely walk I'm so broken. Not old. Just broken. Very

recently broken. Very very recently. Do you have any food? Please. Any food will be very welcome.

KAT

None that we can spare.

MARYLYN

Ah! None to spare. What a tragedy. What a heartbreaking tragedy. What ever happened to the custom of breaking bread with a stranger? As a common courtesy. As a sign of trust! Of friendship!

KAT

Food is precious. Our food is precious.

MARYLYN

All the more reason to share. It's more meaningful. Like the mite. Like the widow's mite. We could meet with bread. Broken bread. Meaningfully. We could break bread. Precious bread! And become friends. Like brothers and sisters. Wait a minute. I wouldn't want that. No. I wouldn't want that. At all. Perhaps it's for the best. That you won't break bread with me.

CHESHIRE

Is this the road to Greenville?

MARLYN

Oh dear, God, no. Thankfully. No. It is not the road to Greenville. No, it is the road from Greenville.

CHESHIRE

That's the same thing.

MARYLYN

Oh no, it isn't. Not at all. Not at all. It's very different. Very different.

CHESHIRE

If this road comes from Greenville, it will also take us to Greenville.

MARYLYN

Oh! It may take you. Yes, it certainly may take you. To Greenville? I can't be sure. But, if you stay on it, it will certainly take you. But to Greenville? That's a

different matter all together. All together. This road takes many things. Has taken. Too many things. In its day. In its weeks and months and years. It may yet take us. And you, too. Because it will most certainly take again. Yes. Fortunately, for us. Meredith and I. This road today and hereafter is from Greenville. Isn't that right, Meredith?

KAT

She's out of her head.

CHESHIRE

Indubitably. What's happened in Greenville? That makes you so eager to leave. That's where we're heading. What can you tell us?

MARYLYN

No. You're not heading to Greenville. You are being taken to Greenville. No one heads to Greenville. Everyone is taken to Greenville. Taken in Greenville.

KAT

What's wrong with that child? There's something wrong.

MARYLYN

Oh no. There's nothing wrong with her. Not now. Not now she's dead. No, there's nothing wrong with her now that she's dead.

CHESHIRE

Why?

KAT

How'd she die? The child?

MARYLYN

Died? Oh no, she didn't die. Meredith killed her, of course. That Meredith is a good woman. A good mother. The best of mothers. Who else in this world should kill a child but the mother? Strangers! Do you know nothing?

CHESHIRE

Why? Why did she kill the child?

MARYLYN

Why does a mother do anything for her child? For love, of course. For mercy. For salvation.

CESHIRE

For who's salvation?

KAT

Cheshire, I don't think I want to know. This is bad. Very bad. Let's get the hell out of here. Let's leave now.

CESHIRE

Why did she kill the child?

MARYLYN

Now. Let me think. Now, if I remember correctly. And I will admit, my memory is a bit hazy. But I'm fairly certain the child was. Um. Violated. Before her mother's eyes. Before my eyes too for that matter. For the record. Rather. If I remember correctly. And it's so hard to remember. Some times. It was her uncle. My uncle. Our Uncle. By marriage, of course. So, technically, despite the legal kinship, we weren't really relatives. Or related. Biologically speaking. But we certainly weren't strangers. We were always so fond of reminding him too. That he wasn't really family. One of us. Kind of a family joke really. I guess that's what we get for letting his kind into our family. I mean really. Who rapes an infant? An infant. A tiny little precious infant. I mean isn't that the most absurd thing you've ever heard. In the world. I mean, really. To rape a woman. Well, that's one thing. Common. A fact. A way of life even. To rape a man. That is another thing. Less common but not without precedent. Similar means to similar ends. But to rape an infant! It's like a mistake. An error. Of possibility. Like wearing shoes on your hands. Sure, it can be done. But it doesn't mean you should do it. That it makes any possible sense to do it. The curious thing. No. The peculiar thing. The truly peculiar thing. Is that the man. The uncle. Our uncle. Who did it. He did it to protect himself. He had heard. It is now often said. That sex with a virgin will protect a man from the woman he rapes. Protect the man from the woman he rapes. Protect the man from the woman he rapes. The diseases, you see. There are so many diseases now. Because so many women. Raped by so many men. Over and over again. With so many diseases. Because of all the raping. It's become a problem. For the men. They need protection. But you see there's another problem. Because of all the raping. There are so few virgins. No real virgins. I mean no children old enough to

be thought of as virgins. In that sense. In that sense of virgin. Unless you are willing to make a mistake. An error. Of possibility. Do you see this. I'm always wet now. Always. Because I can't stop the urine. I can't hold it. Anymore. I can't.

CHESHIRE

I'm sorry.

MARYLYN

Why the hell should you be sorry? What does it matter to you? I'm a broken piece of trash by the side of the road. A prop. A sideshow.

CHESHIRE

I see you. I hear you.

MARYLYN

Who cares? What difference does it make? What difference does your seeing and hearing make? To me? To Meredith? To all the others being raped and murdered and raped again? Right now. Meredith and I are the lucky ones. We got away. We got out. From Greenville. We are on the road from Greenville. That's all that matters. That and food. Do you have any? Food?

KAT

None that we can spare.

MARYLYN

Then spare me your sympathy. I don't need it. I need food. Get up, Meredith. We're moving on. There's something familiar about these two. Something familiar. I don't like it. We best not get to know them any better. Onwards to strangers. Strangers and safety. Let the road take these two to our dear friends and family in Greenville. To our dear dear Greenville.

(MARILYN and MEREDITH exit.)

KAT

Cheshire, please don't say anything. Please. For a long long while. Please just don't say anything. Ok.

(CHESHIRE nods.)

(BLACK OUT)

(END OF SCENE)

Scene 2

*A road, heading into town.
Dismembered corpses and body parts
are everywhere.*

(KAT and CHESHIRE pick their way through the corpses carefully, trying not to step on them.)

(CHESHIRE appears unaffected. KAT is clearly affected. Eventually, she stops in disgust)

KAT

Cheshire.

CHESHIRE

(He continues on carefully)

Kat?

KAT

Let's go back. I can't deal. I can't fucking deal. Fuck the delivery.

CHESHIRE

We've come this far. Let's finish it.

KAT

This is too much, Cheshire. Too much. Even for me. Look around you.

CHESHIRE

I see it, Kat. I see it. I smell it, too. Ugh.

KAT

Please. Cheshire. It's too much. It's not worth it.

CHESHIRE

Whether or not we see it. Whether or not we walk through it. It won't change the fact that it's already happened. Not looking won't make it disappear.

KAT

You're not looking.

CHESHIRE

Of course, I'm looking, Kat. How could I not look? I don't want to step on anything. Them. I mean. Them.

KAT

Then, you're not fucking noticing. You'd stop, turn around, and walk away, if you were.

CHESHIRE

Trust me. I'm noticing.

KAT

I don't want to see this. I don't want to feel this. I don't want to be a part of this.

CHESHIRE

Feel and release, Kat. Feel and release.

KAT

Cheshire, it's not that fucking easy for me. Ok.

CHESHIRE

I know. It's not that easy for me either. I'm more practiced, that's all. You need to practice more. That's all.

KAT

Why the hell would I want to do that?

CHESHIRE

Running away is not going to erase the memory of it. Ever. See it, feel it, let it go.

KAT

This is too much, Cheshire. This is too much.

CHESHIRE

(He notices something on the ground and stops.)

Hey look.

(He crouches. Plucks something.
Stands.)

A strawberry!

KAT

Cheshire, no!

CHESHIRE

(He pops it in his mouth,
savors it and smiles.)

Delicious. Sweet and delicious.

(After a moment, he exhales
deeply.)

Are you coming? You don't have to, I suppose. You could
wait back by the bridge. It's fine. I understand. I can
finish the delivery on my own.

KAT

(She stares at CHESHIRE for a
long time, deciding.)

Fuck you.

(After another moment, she
starts to move through the
bodies.)

Ashes to ashes, dust to dust; ashes to ashes dust to
dust ...

(As she moves through the
corpses quickly but carefully,
she repeats "Ashes to ashes,
dust to dust.")

CHESHIRE

(He watches her progress for a
moment.)

We fat all creatures else to fat us, and we fat ourselves
for maggots.

KAT

Cheshire. Shut the fuck up.

(BLACK OUT)

(END OF SCENE)

Scene 3

A residential area, corpses are scattered here and there.

(DENNIS sits against a wall. He has a long stick with which he pokes a corpse absentmindedly.)

CHESHIRE

Hey. Hello. Hey.

(DENNIS looks up)

What's happened here?

DENNIS

Ah yes. That's an excellent question. You see. That's exactly the question I'm asking myself. Right now. Thinking it through. Trying to puzzle it out. Figure it in. Out. Through. From beginning to end. Considering the cause and the effect, the effect and the cause. See? Do you see how it works? Now, at first, I thought, aha, the human condition. That's what happened here. The human condition has happened here. It makes perfect sense. We are born in sin and condemned always to live in sin. But then I thought. But then I thought. No. This doesn't always happen. This. Does not always happen. Not everywhere. Anyway. Not everywhere there are humans. Which one would reasonably predict. If it. This. Were a part. Of the. Human. Our. Condition. Oh, sure, don't get me wrong, I know it happens. A lot. Often. More than enough. Probably more than it should. But not everywhere. Not always. Not everywhere and always where there are humans. So. Then. I thought. Human error! Maybe human error is what happened here? Maybe, it's all a matter of human error. That's it, I thought. That must be it. Human error has happened here. That's what this is. That's what this is. That's what this is. But. It didn't seem right. Somehow. Either. This was no accident. No slip of the tongue. No spilt milk. No. People meant for this to happen. People planned. People prepared. People premeditated. And this certainly isn't a case of good intentions gone bad. No, no, no. No. The outcome matches the intention. Almost exactly. If you could see what we had imagined, this is what you would have seen.

This is very much what was intended. Had they. We. Erred in our intentions. Perhaps we wouldn't have such a mess to deal with now. To deal with. Now. Then, at last, and finally, I thought, you know what this is? This. This! Is the opposite of human spirit. This is the opposite of human spirit. This is the opposite of human spirit. That's what happened here. The opposite of human spirit. The problem now. Is that I don't know what to call it. What the word for it is. That's what I've been doing. Here. Now. For so long it seems. I've been sitting here trying to remember what the name for it is. For the opposite of human spirit. It's on the tip of my tongue. You know? It feels like it's sitting right there. Hanging. Right there. Waiting. Hiding. Well, not hiding because I can feel my tongue. See it. If I stick it out far enough. But I just can't remember the name for it. Do you know? Can you tell me? It would be such a relief, if you could tell me the name for it. I've been sitting here for so long, trying to remember it. For a long time now. For a very long time.

KAT

Genocide?

DENNIS

(He stands abruptly in his excitement)

That's it. That's the word. That's exactly the word I've been looking for. That what's happened here. Genocide is what has happened here. Genocide is what has happened here. Well, there you go. That's the answer to your question. And my question. You answered both our questions. How efficient of you. Now, you know and I know. Together. The both of us. We know. To think. If you had never turned up, I might never have known. Thank you so very much!

CHESHIRE

When did all of this happen?

DENNIS

Two days ago. Two weeks ago? Two centuries ago! Doesn't matter really? Depends on who you ask, I guess. Who you are talking to. Who's keeping track.

KAT

We're asking you aren't we.

DENNIS

Right. I suppose you are. OK. Well. OK. Once upon a time, one of their people killed one of our people. Or was it the other way around? I'm not sure. Wait. It certainly couldn't have been one person. Killed. Otherwise, we wouldn't have killed so many of their people. That wouldn't make any sense. Let me try again. Let me start again. OK. Once upon a time, we killed many of their people. Ah! I screwed it up again. Damn. I got it mixed up. I always get it mixed up. See. This is the part that always confuses me. Over and over again. Who killed who first? And why? And why who? And who why? Look. All I know. All I can say. With any certainty. Is that someone. Some people. Killed someone. Some people. First. But I don't know who. Or why. I can't be sure. Who or why? Who did it first. Why they did it first. Who got the ball rolling. Why they got the ball rolling. Because this ball has been rolling for a long time. This titting for the tatting. It's hard for the mind not to get muddled. To lose track of who and why it started. It's so hard to keep straight. Who's who? Why's why? In a town this small. The lines are so easily blurred.

KAT

At this point, does it even matter?

DENNIS

Why, of course, it does?

KAT

It shouldn't matter.

DENNIS

Of course, it should matter. It's all that matters. Now especially. Now more than ever. Because of this. Because of what's happened. Here. If they started it. Then, this was self defense. This was self defense. Well, maybe not self defense. But, at the very least, it was retribution. A just retribution. A righting of wrongs. A balancing of scales. If they started it, they deserved it. If we started. If we started. Well. That's a very different story. A story of perseverance perhaps. Seeing something through to the end. The bitter end. But that's a totally different story. To tell ourselves. To tell.

CHESHIRE

Either way. I suppose you've won. You and your people.

DENNIS

Not so. Not necessarily so. See. I thought the very same thing at first. But then. I had a look around. Have you had a look around? Yet? Look. See. Over there. Much of my family lived on that once beautiful and now devastated street. My wife's family anyway. So. Letting me live to see this. It could be a kind of torture. A final insult. One more turn of the screw. It's something I would certainly consider doing. To them.

KAT

Where's your wife now?

DENNIS

Oh, long since dead. She's been dead for years. Years and years. And years. At least. It seems that way. Anyway. Yes. Dead for years. Good thing, too! She wouldn't have been able to endure a thing like this. No. She was too fragile. Too empathetic. Too loving. She was no victor. No victor in her. She had no love of spoils, you see. The spoils of victory. To the victor go the spoils. And we've got plenty of that now. To go around. Don't we? Spoils that is. Not victors. Not in the traditional sense. No. I don't think we have many of those around. Yes. It's for the best she died. Before all this happened. It's strange, you know. For me. There's really no precedent. You see, for me, there really is no precedent. For all this. Normally. It is we who are littered. The littered rather than littering. Or at least that's how I remember it. That's how I seem to remember it. It's sad really. To see all these dead and no one mourning for them. We certainly won't. And there aren't any of them left to mourn. Who will mourn for them? Will you? Will you mourn for them?

CHESHIRE

No. We're couriers. We're here to make a delivery. Nothing else.

DENNIS

Isn't that wonderful. Couriers. Here to make a delivery. That's wonderful. That's exactly what we need. Oh, I hope

it's a gift. A gift of the magi. Something special to mark the occasion. Who's it for?

CESHIRE

J. Edgar, Jr.

DENNIS

The big little man himself. The junior man, that is! You're in luck. He's still alive. Not for long I'm sure. But he's alive. He's being punished as we speak. Or rewarded. Again, I'm not sure which. But I know he is getting his just deserts. Whatever the verdict may have been.

CESHIRE

Can you bring us to him?

DENNIS

Of course. It would be a pleasure! Couriers! Finally, something that makes sense again. Couriers have arrived. They have a delivery. For J. Edgar, Jr.. That's clear, simple, understandable. All is right in the world again. All is right. The world continues on. As it should. The world continues on. Even after all this. And there is sense to it. Couriers arrive to deliver packages. Packages are delivered by couriers. Even after all we've been through. Couriers still deliver packages. Right this way, dear couriers. Harbingers of sense, peace, and normality! Please follow me. Right this way.

(He exits.)

KAT

I've got a bad feeling about this.

CESHIRE

If it be now, 'tis not to come. If it be not to come, it will be now. If it be not now, yet it will come -- the readiness is all.

KAT

Jesus Christ, Cheshire. Enough with the *Hamlet* already.

(BLACK OUT)

(END OF SCENE)

Scene 4

A corporate boardroom. Instruments of torture are visible.

(J. EDGAR, JR. is tied to an executive chair. He has been brutally tortured but there is a hard defiance in his stare.)

CESHIRE

Lock the door, Kat.

KAT

Why, Cheshire? Leave the package and let's get the fuck out of here.

CESHIRE

Lock it, Kat, please. J. Edgar. Can you hear me? J. Edgar?

KAT

Leave the package and let's go.

CESHIRE

We need to get his signature, Kat. I don't want any interference before we do. Lock it.

KAT

Fuck the signature. Fuck this delivery. Let's get the fuck out of here.

CESHIRE

Lock it. Please.

(KAT locks the door)

(The sound of the lock rouses J. EDGAR JR..)

J. EDGAR, JR.

Who are you? Why are you here? Why did they let you in?

CESHIRE

We're couriers. They had to let us in.

J. EDGAR, JR.

Couriers?

CHESHIRE

Yes. We have a package for you.

J. EDGAR, JR.

A package? What the fuck do I need with a package? Are you fucking crazy? Have you had a look around? Here? The town? At me? The last fucking thing I need right now is a fucking package.

CHESHIRE

We need your signature.

J. EDGAR, JR.

Isn't that fucking beautiful? You've come all this way to deliver a package. To collect a signature. You two are a pair of fucking saints, that's what you are.

CHESHIRE

We need your signature.

J. EDGAR, JR.

Why? Who sent you? Who sent it?

CHESHIRE

J. Edgar. Senior.

J. EDGAR, JR.

My father? My father sent you? My father asked you to deliver me a package? At a time like this? Why didn't he send someone to help me?

CHESHIRE

We didn't ask. We only deliver.

KAT

Cheshire, let's get the fuck out of here.

J. EDGAR, JR.

What the fuck is dear old Dad sending me at a time like this?

CHESHIRE

Do you think you can sign? Make a mark of some kind?

J. EDGAR, JR.

Sure. Why the fuck not? I've still got my fingers. I think they're saving them for the final act.

(CHESHIRE produces an electronic device and puts a stylus in J. Edgar, Jr.'s hand.)

CHESHIRE

Sign here.

J. EDGAR, JR.

Isn't this civil? Thousands lay slaughtered all around you and you get it in triplicate.

CHESHIRE

This too shall pass. Paperwork lasts forever.

(He produces the package from his sack and places it on the table near J. EDGAR, JR.)

J. EDGAR, JR.

Open it.

CHESHIRE

It's not something we normally do.

J. EDGAR, JR.

Well, it's not like I can do it myself. Please. Open it.

KAT

No, Cheshire. It's time to go. We have the signature. We've done what we came here to do. The contract is fulfilled. Our involvement in this is over. Done. Let's go.

J. EDGAR, JR.

Please. Open it.

CHESHIRE

I have to know, Kat. I've never wanted to know so badly. What we've delivered? After all of this, I think I need to know.

KAT

Cheshire, no.

J. EDGAR, JR.

Please. Open it.

CHESHIRE

Curiosity killed the cat.

(CHESHIRE open the package. It contains a small music box. J. EDGAR, JR. recognizes it immediately and is noticeably upset. CHESHIRE places it near him on the table.)

J. EDGAR, JR.

Open it.

(CHESHIRE opens it and it plays "Moon River". J. EDGAR JR.'s defiance shatters. He cries.)

KAT

What is it? What does it mean?

CHESHIRE

I don't know.

J. EDGAR, JR.

That mother fucker. I can't believe he sent this to me. Now. Of all the times to send this to me. I can't believe it. What the fuck does she have to do with any of this? What the fuck does she have to do with any of this?

KAT

What did we do, Cheshire. What the fuck did we do? What did we deliver? What have we done?

CHESHIRE

I don't know. I don't know.

J. EDGAR, JR.

Jesus mother fucking Christ. That mother fucker! That mother fucker.

(He weeps uncontrollably.)

KAT

Cheshire. I can't leave him like this.

(She draws her revolver and aims it at J. EDGAR, JR. He is too distraught to notice.)

CHESHIRE

What difference does it make to us?

KAT

We did this to him. We brought the package. This is our fault.

CHESHIRE

And you think killing him will help?

KAT

They're going to come back and torture him more. We can prevent that. It's the least we can do.

CHESHIRE

If you kill him, they kill us. It's that simple. We only deliver. That's the deal.

KAT

They might let us go. Otherwise we fight our way out. We've done it before.

CHESHIRE

No, Kat. You've seen what I've seen. You've seen what's happened here. That's not going to happen.

KAT

I can't abide it. Cheshire. I can't abide his suffering.

CHESHIRE

What's the point of our dying to end his suffering? He's a faceless stranger. Nobody to us. No one. Not even a ghost. Barely a memory. If we leave, now, he'll barely be a memory.

KAT

The point is to end the suffering. His suffering. The suffering we caused too.

CHESHIRE

It's all going to be over for him very soon. And all his suffering won't make a difference. To him. To us. To everyone. It doesn't matter if it happens now or then. It will happen. Eventually, this suffering won't mean anything.

KAT

I can't abide it. I can't abide it.

(She's pulls the trigger but the hammer falls on an empty casing. She pulls the trigger several times. All the chambers have empty casings. She searches her pockets.)

CHESHIRE

The consistency of your logic remains steadfast.

KAT

I'm out. I'm out of bullets. Fuck.

(BLACK OUT)

(END OF SCENE)

(END OF ACT)

ACT 5Scene 1

Night, in a sheltered spot.

(CHESHIRE lies close to the light of a warm-glowing lantern, reading out loud from *Watership Down*. KAT listens, staring into the lamp.)

CHESHIRE

I have learned that with creatures one loves, suffering is not the only thing for which one may pity them. A rabbit who does not know when a gift has made him safe is poorer than a slug, even though he may think otherwise himself.

KAT

Cheshire?

CHESHIRE

Kat?

KAT

I can't do it, Cheshire. I can't do it. Not after what I've seen. What we've seen. It's too much.

CHESHIRE

Do what?

KAT

Have this baby. Bring a baby -- another life -- into this world. I can't do it. I won't be responsible for doing that.

CHESHIRE

Why not?

KAT

Why not? Because there is too much fucking suffering. Too much horror. Too much suffering. Too much. There's just too much.

CHESHIRE

Her life. His life. Will be better. Better than ours.

KAT

How do you know? How can you possibly know?

CHESHIRE

I don't know but I believe it. And I will do everything in my power to make sure our child's life is better than ours was.

KAT

So fucking what? What can you do? You can't do anything. To change this fucking world. This heartless fucking world of perpetual suffering. What can you possibly do?

CHESHIRE

I can do everything in my power. That's all I can do.

KAT

And you think that's enough? You think that's fucking enough?

CHESHIRE

It's a start anyway. Only time will tell if its enough. At least we will have tried.

KAT

Cheshire, you were alive before all of this. You can even remember what it was like before. Do you think life is better for you now then it was? Do you really think that?

CHESHIRE

I found you didn't I?

KAT

You are such a fucking sap sometimes.

CHESHIRE

Look, Kat. I understand. Yes. There's a lot of suffering in the world. Nothing will ever make up for it. Ever. But it works both ways. All that suffering, all that horror, it can't erase the beauty either. Yes. Suffering and horror is everywhere. But so is beauty. Beauty is everywhere and it is inextinguishable. Your beauty alone. The beauty in your eyes, when you see the light of the setting sun reflecting off the clouds in a new way. Your gesture, when you point it out to me. The way you smile, when you take delight in

it. I would go through everything again. Every horror we've ever seen and experienced. A hundred million times over and again, for the beauty of your smile. And you? You are only one tiny drop in a world of endless beauty.

KAT

Stop it. Don't argue with me. This is my decision.

CHESHIRE

Yes, it's your decision. And I'm not arguing. You asked me a question. I'm answering it.

KAT

Stop trying to convince me.

CHESHIRE

Kat, I stopped trying to convince you of anything a long time ago. I tell you what I feel, what I want, and I leave it to you to do the same. We work it out from there.

KAT

I want to live in a world without suffering. I want to live in a world where I make babies with you and we never need to worry if they will end up in a pile of chopped up bodies by the side of an empty road.

CHESHIRE

I want that too. Who doesn't want that? Even the murderers want it I think. We all get sidetracked. In our own way, I guess. But you and me. We will work each day, in our own way, to make the lives of our children better than our lives were. And so will they. If we raise them right. We will do what we can to make the world a better place. And little by little, it will be a better place.

KAT

Do you really believe that? Do you really believe that? Because I don't believe it. I don't fucking believe it.

CHESHIRE

You don't have to believe it, Kat. You only have to trust me.

KAT

I love you. More than anything. More than anything.

Then, you trust me. CHESHIRE

Yes, I trust you. KAT

Then, we can do this. We can do anything. CHESHIRE

(BLACK OUT)

(END OF SCENE)

Scene 2

*The outskirts of a devastated town.
A clear night, with a full moon.
The stage is littered with dead and
dying Assailants.*

(KAT stands in shock, coming down off the adrenaline rush of combat. She holds CHESHIRE'S bloodied short sword, breathing heavily. She has minor cuts and bruises.)

(CHESHIRE is sitting up against a wall, mortally wounded. His sword covered in blood, lies nearby.)

(KAT shakes herself out of her state. She sees that CHESHIRE is still breathing. Then, she stabs and kills two wounded assailants.)

(She goes to CHESHIRE.)

KAT

You promised.

(CHESHIRE tries to speak, but his wounds prevent him.)

No. It's OK. I understand. Are you going now?

(He nods.)

Can I watch?

(He nods. She moves closer, puts her hand against his heart and holds his cheek in her hand, and looks into his eyes. The moment before death, he takes a sharp inhalation, smiles at her, and as he

releases it, he is happy. KAT
finds what she has been looking
for.)

Oh baby. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you, thank you, thank
you.

(She covers his face with
kisses. Eventually, she stops
and slumps down next to him.)

What am I going to do?

(She puts her hand on her belly
and considers killing herself
with the short sword. After a
moment, she sets the sword
aside and weeps, painfully,
horribly, uncontrollably for
some time. Not just for
Cheshire, but for everything
and everyone. Eventually, she
stops and she a feels a little
better.)

What am I going to do? What the fuck am I going to do?

(She stands and considers the
carnage.)

First. I bury the dead.

(BLACK OUT)

(END OF SCENCE, ACT, AND PLAY)