

# Witch Slap!

a stage combat play

by  
Jeff Goode

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

CRONE - an elderly witch

NOVELLA - a novice witch; Crone's bumbling apprentrix

JEZEBELLA - an alluring gypsy fortune teller

GOODY BLUNT - a deranged Puritan housewife

MINERVA - a medieval dominatrix

THE WIDOW - a rugged, self-reliant sapphist

SYLVIA - Goody Blunt's teenage daughter

2013-14 Margaret Martin Award Winner  
Babes With Blades Theatre Company's  
Joining Sword & Pen competition

**WITCH SLAP!**

by Jeff Goode  
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*Witch Slap!* is a play designed to showcase fight choreography for female combatants. **OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMBAT** are highlighted in the script. The size and extent of each fight is entirely at the discretion of the choreographer and the production team.

**ACT ONE**

(SCENE: A COTTAGE cluttered with arcane and sorcerous paraphernalia. The walls are inexplicably made of gingerbread.)

(A haggard, **OLD CRONE** stirs a bubbling cauldron, cackling maniacally. She pauses to taste the concoction.)

CRONE

Feh. Needs salt.

(She seasons the cauldron and stirs again, cackling maniacally.)

(**NOVELLA**, an apprentice witch, rushes into the cottage in a panic. She hastily hangs her broom on a rack by the door and dashes over to the **CRONE**.)

NOVELLA

Mistress! Mistress! They're burning! They're burning them! Oh my newts and goiters, they're burning witches! They're burning witches!!

(**CRONE SLAPS NOVELLA** to shut her up.)

CRONE

No, they are not. Now calm down and fetch me some fennel off the shelf.

(**CRONE** points at a pottery jar perched atop a tall shelf.)

NOVELLA

But they are! The Parish Council is convening witch trials in the town square, even as we speak.

(**NOVELLA** gestures at the fennel jar, but it causes the whole shelf to start shaking uncontrollably.)

CRONE

The Parish Council couldn't convene a potluck if you spotted 'em two sides and a salad. And they wouldn't know a witch from a wardrobe if she bit 'em in the eyes.

*(The fennel jar finally tumbles off the quaking shelf into NOVELLA's hands. She pretends she did that on purpose.)*

NOVELLA

All the same, they're hauling women down to the river by the cart load and tossing 'em in to see if they drown.

CRONE

You see what I mean? You can't drown a witch in a freshwater spring. She'll just float herself to the top and swim away.

NOVELLA

I think that's why they're doing it. The ones that sink are innocent and the ones that float, they fish 'em out and burn 'em at the stake!

CRONE

Pah! That wouldn't work either. No witch worth her warts would be caught dead in a bonfire. Soon as they got 'er lit, she'd fly up out of there, turn 'em all into toads and that'd be the end of it. Now where's my fennel?

*(NOVELLA struggles to open the jar.)*

NOVELLA

But I'm just a novice! I don't know how to fly or turn things into things.

CRONE

Because you never practice, that's why! Do you want to be a novice forever?

NOVELLA

*(sheepishly)*

No.

CRONE

Walking around place to place like a halfwit? When there's dust mops'll get you there in half the time.

NOVELLA

*(pouts)*

I can't help it I'm dyslexic.

CRONE

You'll never be a real witch if you don't study. I told you that from day one.

NOVELLA

I know, I know! But there's no time for that now! The witch hunts are already under way!

CRONE

And what would a witch hunter want with you?

NOVELLA

They posted a bounty o' two dollar a head!

CRONE

Pah! You don't look like a witch. You don't act like one. You don't do any of the things a witch does to make herself useful.

NOVELLA

I made you that hat.

CRONE

You don't aviate. You don't amphibiamorph. You don't fetch me my fennel!!

*(NOVELLA frantically fumbles with the jar again, but it's definitely stuck.)*

NOVELLA

It's stuck.

CRONE

You see there? Useless! No one's gonna pay to burn a witch can't even magick her way out of a pottery jar.

NOVELLA

Well, I'm not actually in the jar.

CRONE

Not yet. But if you keep sassing me, you will be! Now get ahold of yourself.

NOVELLA

But what if they catch me?! I'll be cooked! Or drowned! Or both! Or worse!!

CRONE

That's it, you're goin' in the jar!

*(CRONE snatches the jar out of NOVELLA's hands and tries to open it, but it's stuck.)*

CRONE

Here, open this, it's stuck.

*(NOVELLA tries to open the jar, but with a lot less enthusiasm now.)*

NOVELLA

Yeah, wow. That's on there.

CRONE

I don't know what you're worried about. You're still my apprentice, aren't you? I'm not gonna let a bunch of Puritans get you. Not while there's dishes to be done. Now come sit by the cauldron and help me with my brew. It'll take your mind off being drawn and quartered.

*(NOVELLA pulls up a footstool and sits.)*

NOVELLA

What are you making? Love potion?

CRONE

Minestrone.

NOVELLA

*(relieved)*

Ah, good. The last time you made a love potion, I got some on my hands and I about never left the house.

CRONE

Keep your hands outta my soup.

*(A loud knock at the door.)*

NOVELLA

*(panicking)*

It's them! They're here!

CRONE

Oh, hognozzles! Why would they be here?

NOVELLA

Why would anybody be here? You never have visitors!

CRONE

Because I don't like people. Doesn't mean they don't all want something from me. And some of 'em are willing to wander off the beaten path to get it. Why, just last winter, there was a traveling snake oil pedlar stopped by to sell me a cure for what ails me. I told him the only afflictions I suffer from are hemorrhoids and traveling salesmen.

NOVELLA

I remember that. Whatever happened to him?

CRONE

Now he's a very comfortable footstool. I think you're sitting on him.

NOVELLA

*(standing up)*

Ew.

*(A louder knock at the door.)*

CRONE

Who is it?

JEZEBELLA

*(off)*

It's me! Jezebella! Open up!

*(CRONE opens the door to reveal:  
JEZEBELLA, a sultry gypsy witch with a  
crystal ball.)*

JEZEBELLA

I thought I'd find you here.

CRONE

Because I live here. What do you want?

JEZEBELLA

You called me.

CRONE

No, I didn't.

*(JEZEBELLA walks in and hangs her broom  
on the rack by the door.)*

JEZEBELLA

Not yet. But you're going to. And I thought I'd save you the trip.

CRONE

I'd appreciate if you let me make up my mind before you go reading it.

JEZEBELLA

I don't have that kind of time.

CRONE

So why did I summon you then?

JEZEBELLA

You don't know?

CRONE

Would I ask?

JEZEBELLA

You tell me.

CRONE

Y'know, maybe you should go away and come back when this is actually happening.

JEZEBELLA

Fine, I'll look it up.

*(JEZEBELLA consults her crystal ball.)*

JEZEBELLA

But if I had to guess, I'd say it's cuz they're burning witches in the square.

NOVELLA

*(to CRONE)*

You see?! I told you!

*(to JEZEBELLA)*

I told her they were burning witches.

*(to CRONE)*

I told you!

CRONE

They're not burning witches!

JEZEBELLA

Smells like witches.

CRONE

Those aren't real witches.

NOVELLA

How do we know that?

CRONE

Because we know all the local practitioners, don't we? And who is it you saw 'em haul into the square?

NOVELLA

Missy Markham the midwife for one. And Gloriana Fist.

JEZEBELLA

The town trollop? Aw, I'm going to miss her.

NOVELLA

And Widow Keller. And I think I saw Widow Goldberg with her.

JEZEBELLA

That's a shame. They were such a cute couple.

CRONE

But there's not a witch in the bunch. What they're burning are single women foolish enough not to have a husband to testify on their behalf, and fight their battles for them. And open jars when they need 'em. Can you get this?

*(CRONE hands the jar to JEZEBELLA, who can't get it open either.)*

JEZEBELLA

Nope, that's on there.

NOVELLA

But that's us! That sounds just like us. We don't have men.

CRONE

We don't need men.

JEZEBELLA

"Need" is very subjective.

NOVELLA

Nobody needs men, but the ones that don't have them are being accused as witches!

CRONE

Yes, but we actually are witches--

NOVELLA

Which means we're the ones they're really after!!

CRONE

Which means they can't hurt us. Those are just helpless widows and lesbians they're burning.

NOVELLA

Oh my glands! You're right. They're burning innocent women! For no reason! Why would they do that?!

JEZEBELLA

I'll give you a reason. It's called testosterone.

CRONE

No, it's called capitalism.

NOVELLA

Where's the profit in killing innocent witches?

CRONE

I keep telling you, they're not killing witches. We have sorcerous powers beyond the ken of any men. They can't hurt us.

JEZEBELLA

No, but they can hurt our cows and our pigs and our property and that's what this is about, isn't it?

CRONE

Aye. Wealthy, single women are being singled out for the witch trials so they can burn 'em and confiscate their land for the new parsonage.

NOVELLA

It all makes sense now! Missy Markham? Widow Keller? Widow Goldberg? What do they all have in common?



JEZEBELLA

Fat.

NOVELLA

They're all unmarried or widowed. And they all have cows!

JEZEBELLA

They all are cows.

CRONE

And they all have land, you ninny.

JEZEBELLA

That's right! And maybe they can't harm us directly, but they can burn our houses and our farms. They can burn our hemp fields. And I don't want to have to replant my north forty, just because somebody got it in their head I'm a witch.

NOVELLA

But you are a witch.

JEZEBELLA

They don't know that.

*(Suddenly, GOODY BLUNT, an irate housewife bursts in and points an accusing finger at JEZEBELLA.)*

BLUNT

Witch! Witch! Witch!

JEZEBELLA

Lucky guess.

CRONE

Good morrow, Neighbor Blunt. Jezebella, have you met Goody Blunt? She lives across the way.

JEZEBELLA

Don't think I've had the pleasure.

BLUNT

Don't you "pleasure" me! I know what you and your unholy ilk are up to!

CRONE

Do ye now? And what's that?

BLUNT

Well, I dunno. But it's unnatural, whatever it is! Arcane witchery and sorcerous dealings. Communing with spirits that were better left incommunicado. Dabbling in all manner of dark and sinful wickedness, just for the pure solid heck of it.

JEZEBELLA

Guilty as charged.

BLUNT

Aye, and you'll be brought up on charges, soon enough, if my husband has anything to say. There's trials in the works, you know, and he's on the Parish Council. And you'll all burn, when they find out what sort of business goes on in houses like this.

NOVELLA

Cottages?

CRONE

Now, there's no need to be unneighborly, Goody Blunt.  
Won't you come in and have a cup of tea?

BLUNT

Don't try to butter me up, callin' us neighbors. And  
I take my tea black. Just cuz we live a half a  
pasture apart doesn't make us neighbors.

NOVELLA

I think it does.

BLUNT

Baldercocky!

NOVELLA

No, I think that's the definition.

BLUNT

Aye, but I go by what the Good Book says, and if it  
tells me to "Love my neighbor", then I wouldn't admit  
to being yours if we shared a bunk bed in an all-  
girls dormitory.

NOVELLA

(to BLUNT)

What have we ever done to harm you?

BLUNT

Don't try to feign your innocence with me! I know  
what you're up to! Or if not, I can imagine. Oh,  
I've seen things. Things even I wouldn't believe.  
Things other people don't believe when I tell them.  
And call me "daft" and tell me to shut up about it  
and go make dinner.

CRONE

What kinda things?

BLUNT

(points at NOVELLA)

This one poisoned my cattle!

NOVELLA

What?! Why would I--? I love animals!

BLUNT

Then how come my best milking cow took ill and passed  
on but two days after you come by to borrow a cup of  
sugar?

NOVELLA

That's not fair! He was already sick when I got  
there. I heard him mooing in pain and I stopped by  
to give you some healing herbs might have eased his  
suffering!

BLUNT

I'm not gonna feed a sick animal your witch weeds.

NOVELLA

And he's not a milking cow!

BLUNT

He's got an udder.

NOVELLA

That's not-- Ugh!

BLUNT

He give me a gallon a day of the sweetest fresh creamery butter you ever tasted till you come along. Then all a-sudden his teat shriveled up dry and he dropped over dead in a week.

JEZEBELLA

Holy Saint Caligula. She milked the poor thing to death.

NOVELLA

Those "witch weeds" might've kept your cow alive.

BLUNT

Well, in that case, he's better off dead than owin' his life to the black arts. Or any arts for that matter. Oh, I've seen frescoes could make a seaman blush. And I know what a life in the theatre can do to a maid's reputation.

CRONE

Aye, it's bad reviews turned me to witchery.

BLUNT

And don't think I don't know you send your animal familiars to spy on me, crone. That old black cat of yours is always creeping around my dairy barn.

CRONE

You didn't let him drink any of that bull butter, did you?

BLUNT

Evil old puss always skulking about. Eying me like a piece of carrion.

CRONE

Well, he's a cat, he can't help it. They're naturally evil.

JEZEBELLA

Aye, they're devil spawns to a kitten.

NOVELLA

Cuddly, though.

BLUNT

Every time he crosses my path I feel a cold chill up my sinuses and my throat starts to close up like I'm being strangled alive.

CRONE

Now, that could be your allergies. You know, there's a poultice, I could give ye--

BLUNT

*(points at JEZEBELLA)*

And this one!

JEZEBELLA

What did I do? I only just met you.

BLUNT

You're the worst o' the lot! For you bewitched my husband's nether parts!

CRONE

*(groans)*

Oh, Jezebella.

JEZEBELLA

*(feigning innocence)*

I don't know what you're talking about.

BLUNT

I'm talkin' about his privy stick. His man handle. His love musket. Wee Willie Winkie. The one-eyed spelunker. Bawdy Bishop Johnson and the hairy fat altar boys.

NOVELLA

Ugh!

JEZEBELLA

Okay, stop. I know what you're talking about.

BLUNT

He hasn't been able to make marital with me for months. And it's your doing. I heard him confess as much to his drinking buddies. The deacons were over Thursday last for a cockfight and he told 'em he feels an unnatural tingling in his manhood whenever he sees you bend over to pick up a gold coin.

JEZEBELLA

Is that why he keeps dropping them? Tell him, "Thanks."

*(JEZEBELLA jingles a purse full of coins.)*

BLUNT

You get your clutches off him, ye she-vixen!

JEZEBELLA

If your husband's man staff is at half-mast, I'd look to my wardrobe, if I were you. You call that a frock? I've seen saucier burlap on a bag of potatoes. Usually with a lot more going on underneath.

BLUNT

What's that supposed to mean?

JEZEBELLA

And it's who does your hair, you oughta be pointing the finger o' blame at. For that coif is a hangin' offense.

BLUNT

How dare you!

***(FIGHT #1 - BLUNT ATTACKS JEZEBELLA, but NOVELLA gets caught in the middle.)***

*(BLUNT lunges at JEZEBELLA who deflects her into a bookshelf. BLUNT lunges again and JEZEBELLA deflects her toward NOVELLA. So she strangles NOVELLA instead.)*

NOVELLA

Agh! She has the strength of ten women! Ow! And a cat!

*(CRONE pours a cup of tea and hobbles over to break up the fight.)*

CRONE

All right, that's enough.

*(CRONE waves her hand and BLUNT freezes in mid-strangle.)*

BLUNT

Gack!

*(NOVELLA, gasping, pries BLUNT's hands off her throat. CRONE puts a cup of hot tea in BLUNT's hands and unfreezes her.)*

BLUNT

What the--?

CRONE

This isn't going to save your marriage, Goody Blunt. If your husband's shirking his conjugals, there's nothing you can do about it short of a love potion--

BLUNT

Never!

JEZEBELLA

Or an aphrodisiac--

BLUNT

Sinful!

NOVELLA

Beauty creams--

BLUNT

Harlotry!

JEZEBELLA

Or a makeover--

BLUNT

Gomorraah!

NOVELLA

Try a little romance--

BLUNT

Horticulture!

JEZEBELLA

Or a couples massage.

BLUNT

Get thee behind me, Satan!!

CRONE

Or you could just try talking to him about it.

BLUNT

Sweet Purgatory! You're right! It's hopeless! There's nothing can save my marriage now.

NOVELLA

Except all those things.

BLUNT

Well, ye may have ensorcelled my husband with your wickedness, but I'll not let you take my daughter in your thrall as well!

CRONE

(to JEZEBELLA)

What did you do to her daughter?

JEZEBELLA

Hey, whoa. First I've heard of it.

BLUNT

Don't try to deny it! She's fallen mute, she has. As if by *magic*. She hasn't spoken a word to me since her puberty.

NOVELLA

Since puberty? How old is she?

BLUNT

I didn't think anything of it, at first. She was such a loud and rambunctious tween. The peace and quiet was a blessing when she hit adolescence and started sulking in her room.

CRONE

And your daughter hasn't spoken a word since her comin' a woman?

BLUNT

Her door is locked up tight as chastity and she will nae speak to anyone. Except my husband when he calls her down to supper. Or asks her about her day. Or when she goes out with her friends.

NOVELLA

Come again?

BLUNT

Sometimes they go a-shoppin'.

JEZEBELLA

Uh huh.

BLUNT

But when I come in the room or bid her go pick up her things, she falls silent as death and gives me a withering stare would shiver the devil himself.

JEZEBELLA

I dunno if sorcery's your problem.

BLUNT

Why? What is it? What's wrong?

CRONE

It sounds like the trouble with your daughter is... the girl's a teenager.

BLUNT

My God, it's worse than I thought! So she hasn't fallen in with a band of necromancers?

CRONE

No, that's just how they're dressing these days.

JEZEBELLA

I think it's cute.

NOVELLA

If you like eyeliner.

BLUNT

Oh, the humiliation! You must think me a horrible failure as a mother.

JEZEBELLA

Well, if you're gonna put words in my mouth.

BLUNT

What? You take that back!

*(BLUNT lunges at JEZEBELLA, who sidesteps, and BLUNT STRANGLES NOVELLA instead.)*

NOVELLA

She's doing it again!

CRONE

Now stop it.

*(CRONE gestures and BLUNT is flung off of NOVELLA. Or vice versa.)*

BLUNT

How could this have happened? I'm a God-fearing homemaker!

JEZEBELLA

Well, you see, when a man and a woman love each other very, very much...

BLUNT

Yes? Yes??

JEZEBELLA

That's a fairy tale romance. And the rest of us can never hope to live up to those standards.

BLUNT

Noooo!!! No, it can't be! I won't believe it! This is more of your witchery. You think you can cloud my judgement with sorcerous double talk and enchanted words.

NOVELLA

No, these are just normal words.

BLUNT

Well, I'll break your vile spell. I'll haul you all before the Parish Court and force you to confess your misdeeds.

JEZEBELLA

All three of us?

BLUNT

*(realizes she's outnumbered)*

Well, maybe just one of you.

CRONE

Oh, juniper berries...

BLUNT

When I bring a witch to the burning, my husband will finally notice me! I'll be the talk of the townspeople! And my husband will stop his philandering and go back to ignoring me monogamously.

*(BLUNT grabs a rope.)*

BLUNT

Now come along, one of you!

JEZEBELLA

You're not touching me with that, it looks filthy.

CRONE

I'm too old to walk into town. I got bad ankles.

You'd have to drag me the whole way.

BLUNT

All right, I'll take the little one.

NOVELLA

Me!?

BLUNT

Come on, you!

*(BLUNT circles NOVELLA swinging the rope.  
She attacks.)*

***(FIGHT #2 - BLUNT VS NOVELLA - ROPE  
FIGHT)***

NOVELLA

Help me!

CRONE

Oh, for the love of Saint Lucifer, Novella, you don't  
need our help.

JEZEBELLA

Didn't you teach her anything?

CRONE

She won't study.

*(to NOVELLA)*

Zap her!

NOVELLA

Help! She's strangling me!

JEZEBELLA

With a rope, for goblin's sake! Turn it into a  
serpent and strangle her back.

NOVELLA

*Reptilium ropus factum--*

BLUNT

Oh, no, ye don't!

*(BLUNT stuffs a muff in NOVELLA's mouth.)*

CRONE

Well, now she's got your mouth.

JEZEBELLA

Didn't you teach her any nonverbals?

CRONE

I told you she won't study!

*(NOVELLA gouges BLUNT's eyes.)*

JEZEBELLA

There you go! Good old-fashioned eye gouge. Did I  
ever tell you that's how I lost my eye?

CRONE

Your eye looks fine.



JEZEBELLA

Oh not yet. But someday.  
*(points at her crystal ball)*  
I lose it in a bar fight, I think.

CRONE

With who?

JEZEBELLA

Minerva.

CRONE

Your old mistress? Is that why the two of you broke  
up?

JEZEBELLA

We didn't break up. We were never together.

CRONE

Not what I heard.

JEZEBELLA

I was an apprentice. She was my mistress.

CRONE

So that's why you've been avoiding her lately?

JEZEBELLA

Well, I figure "better safe".

NOVELLA

Help!

CRONE

Hit her!

*(BLUNT pins NOVELLA to the ground and  
climbs on top her.)*

BLUNT

You are under citizen's arrest for crimes against  
humanity, crimes against nature and crimes against  
our heavenly lord and father, may you rest in peace.

*(BLUNT pulls out a carving knife.)*

JEZEBELLA

Whoa, hey!

NOVELLA

Help!

CRONE

Zephyr, sic 'em!

*(At her command, CRONE's black cat leaps  
on BLUNT's face. BLUNT throws it off.)*

JEZEBELLA

*(zaps BLUNT)*

Sh-blam!

BLUNT

Ow!

CRONE

*Funis factus serpens!*

*(The rope coils itself around BLUNT,  
immobilizing her.)*

JEZEBELLA

Sorry, Goody Blunt. But you were about to commit an act of citizen's brutality.

CRONE

Y'know... when a woman's marriage is driving her to this kind of distraction, perchance it's time to consider the other options...

BLUNT

Yes? Yes?? I'll try anything!

JEZEBELLA

She means you might want to get a divorce.

BLUNT

Never! I would sooner writhe in the deepest bowels of Hades himself than sully the vows of holy matrimony! They mean more to me than happiness itself.

CRONE

Well, in that case, there's really only one thing you can do...

BLUNT

Yes? Yes?? I'll try anything!

CRONE

Go home, make a nice pot of tea, and a good wholesome dinner.

BLUNT

Good, yes, I can do that.

CRONE

Then serve it to your husband, and go up to your room and cry yourself to sleep. Maybe you'll feel better in the morning.

BLUNT

You promise?

CRONE

Believe me, I never make promises I can't keep.

BLUNT

Oh, thank you, Neighbor Witch. I'll do just as you say. You'll see!

(to NOVELLA)

And you! You better watch your back, witchling!

NOVELLA

Me?!

(BLUNT exits.)

JEZEBELLA

Thank the black stars that's over.

NOVELLA

You see?! They blame us for everything!

CRONE

(to JEZEBELLA)

Why'd you have to go and bewitch her husband?

JEZEBELLA

I didn't do it on purpose. I don't think.

CRONE

Oh?

*(gestures at JEZEBELLA's outfit)*

So this just comes naturally?

JEZEBELLA

Jealous?

CRONE

If you don't watch your wiles, woman, you'll have every lust-addled husband in the Parish after you. And every husband-addled wife after him.

NOVELLA

It's no wonder they hate us. You're a threat to the institution of marriage.

JEZEBELLA

Cannot a woman go out in the street with a hint of her unmentionables showing without every man in town thinks she's flirting?

CRONE

But you are flirting!

JEZEBELLA

There's no proof of that.

NOVELLA

Sure there is. They toss you in the river and if you float you're a flirt.

JEZEBELLA

I am a very strong floater.

NOVELLA

This isn't funny! Cows have died. Crops have failed. That woman's hairstyle is a crime against nature. And they mean to blame it all on us, whether we're guilty or not!

CRONE

I hate to say it, novice, but you may be right after all. If this mass hysteria keeps up, we could have a problem on our hands. Summon the sisterhood! We've got to nip this in the bud.

JEZEBELLA

Way ahead of you.

*(There is a knock at the door.)*

*(JEZEBELLA grins.)*

CRONE

I wish you wouldn't do that.

JEZEBELLA

Something had to be done. And I don't have time for your doddering.

CRONE

Doddering, am I?

*(stumbles)*

Oops!

JEZEBELLA

Face it, crone, you're not as spry as you once was. And you don't need me to tell ye, witchin's a young hag's game. If you want to stay on top, you gotta stay one step ahead of the competition. And two steps behind 'em.

*(JEZEBELLA goes to the door and opens it to reveal: MINERVA, a tall witch in medieval dominatrix attire.)*

MINERVA

Well, hello, Jezebella.

JEZEBELLA

You! But how--?

CRONE

Good morrow, Minerva.

*(MINERVA hands JEZEBELLA her broom to hang up.)*

MINERVA

*(to JEZEBELLA)*

Crone's got you workin' the door now, has she? Oh, how the haughty have fallen.

JEZEBELLA

What? No. She was doddering, I just-- What are you doing here?

MINERVA

I came for the meeting.

JEZEBELLA

Meeting? What meeting? Who said anything about a meeting?

MINERVA

A little bird told me.

CRONE

His name is Chester. Come in.

JEZEBELLA

You invited her?

CRONE

You're not the only one who knows how to read a crystal ball. I called her as soon as I heard you heard I was going to summon a gathering.

JEZEBELLA

But you know we don't get along!

CRONE

Which is why I had to be the one to ask her. We all know you weren't gonna do it.

MINERVA

You didn't really think you were gathering the sisterhood without me, did you, apprentice?

CRONE

Of course not. She wouldn't think of it.

JEZEBELLA

I *did* think of it! That was exactly my plan!!

CRONE

But we need her.

JEZEBELLA

We don't need her! Why would you say that? It's gonna go straight to her head.

MINERVA

So you need me, eh?

JEZEBELLA

No. What we need is for you to leave before the others get here.

NOVELLA

Oh, who else is coming?

MINERVA

Nobody, I'm afraid. The Parish militia's got road blocks all up and down the main road lookin' for single women traveling alone. No one's gonna fight her way through that just to get to a staff meeting.

JEZEBELLA

What about Witch Hazel? And Grettie Cavendish? They live on this side of the creek.

MINERVA

I stopped by Grettie's place on the way here, but the witch hunters got to her first. And Hazel, too.

NOVELLA

Are you sure?

MINERVA

That's what her cat told me.

*(on second thought)*

He is a lying sack of fur, though.

NOVELLA

But Grettie and Hazel are real witches!

*(to CRONE)*

You told us they couldn't get real witches. You said we were safe.

MINERVA

These witch hunters are crafty. They've got a new weapon.

JEZEBELLA

A new weapon?

MINERVA

From the Amazon. It's called chocolate.

JEZEBELLA

*(aghast)*

No...

CRONE

They've got chocolate? Then it's worse than I thought.

NOVELLA

Wait, what's chocolate? Why haven't I heard of this?

CRONE

Because you never study.

NOVELLA

Well, what is it?

MINERVA

Worse than gingerbread. No witch can resist it.

NOVELLA

Where do I get some?

CRONE

You see?! You don't even know what it is and you want it! Don't you understand? They're using it as bait. It's a trap. To ensnare chubby little witches like you.

NOVELLA

I'm not chubby!

MINERVA

You haven't met chocolate.

NOVELLA

But how can I avoid it, if I don't know what it tastes like? Or where to get it?

CRONE

You really are the worst apprentice ever.

MINERVA

You didn't have to train this one.

*(MINERVA cocks a thumb at JEZEBELLA.)*

JEZEBELLA

I was a perfectly good apprentice!

MINERVA

*(to CRONE)*

You know how many men she turned into toads just so she could sneak them up to her room?

NOVELLA

Wait, that works?

JEZEBELLA

*(to MINERVA)*

You're just jealous because I never slept with you!

MINERVA

Didn't you?

JEZEBELLA

Not sober.

MINERVA

And you were awfully drunk at your graduation party.

JEZEBELLA

I had two virgin daiquiris.

MINERVA

Yeah, well, those daiquiris weren't the only things pretending to be virgins that night.

JEZEBELLA

I think I would remember-- No, wait. No, it's all coming back now.

MINERVA

Would you like me to tell you where you have an indecent mole?

JEZEBELLA

*(points at her mole)*

Oh, it's right here! Anyone can see that.

MINERVA

Good times.

JEZEBELLA

I thought that was a dream.

MINERVA

I get that a lot. All right, enough with the small talk, I call this meeting to order.

JEZEBELLA

Oh no. You're not the one in charge here.

MINERVA

I don't think I like your tone. Or the words coming out of it.

JEZEBELLA

I called this meeting.

CRONE

Technically, I think I called it.

JEZEBELLA

I predicted you'd call it. And premonition is 9/10 of the law.

CRONE

But it's my house.

MINERVA

She's right about that. Crone's got jurisdiction.

CRONE

That's right. And I'm the oldest, so I've got, uh...

NOVELLA

*(whispers)*

Seniorit--

CRONE

*(quickly)*

Seniority! I was gonna say it.

JEZEBELLA

Not for much longer, you don't.

CRONE

What's that supposed to mean?

JEZEBELLA

Did I say that out loud? Oh, beans. You know what? Never mind. I've probably said too much already.

CRONE

What do you know, Jezebella? You better spill it, or I'll spill you.

JEZEBELLA

*(delicately)*

Look, I don't mean to be insensitive, but I've seen quite a bit of the future and... Well, I don't see you getting much older than you are right now.

NOVELLA

Oh no...

JEZEBELLA

*(quickly)*

And your house is a smoking ruin by the end of the night.

CRONE

What?!

MINERVA

Wow.

NOVELLA

*(consoling)*

I'm so sorry, Mistress.

CRONE

Pah! We'll see about that.

JEZEBELLA

The ball never lies.

NOVELLA

Oh my glands! This is terrible news. If you die, Mistress... I'll never graduate! I'll be a novice forever!

CRONE

You little ingrate! This is going on your transcript!

MINERVA

Well, that settles it. If the crone's not long for this world, that means I'm next in line to lead the sisterhood.

JEZEBELLA

Since when?

MINERVA

Since now.

JEZEBELLA

Says who?

MINERVA

Says me.

JEZEBELLA

Like hell!

MINERVA

In all it's glory.

JEZEBELLA

*(outwitted)*

Oh, you're good.

MINERVA

Now the first order of business--

JEZEBELLA

I object!

MINERVA

I haven't said anything yet.

JEZEBELLA

I'm not taking orders from you! Anymore.

MINERVA

I'm sorry, but you don't have a choice.

JEZEBELLA

Apology accepted, but maybe I do. Bring out the bylaws!

CRONE

They're up by the fennel.

NOVELLA

I'll get it!



*(NOVELLA gestures at the book. The entire shelf shakes uncontrollably, until the book falls off into her hands. NOVELLA smirks and hands it to JEZEBELLA.)*

JEZEBELLA  
*(reading)*

Pursuant to subsection groon, paragraph ooze of the coven code book. Any witch may challenge the established pecking order of any other member of the sisterhood, by challenging said other to mortal combat, by hook or by crook, bedknobs and broomsticks, hexification, evisceration or binding arbitration.

CRONE

I forgot about arbitration. This could get ugly.

JEZEBELLA  
*(reads)*

Or she may poison her rival.

MINERVA

Good luck trying. But if you're poisoning me, I like my lamb chops medium rare.

JEZEBELLA

I'm through cooking for you! I demand a witch-off!

NOVELLA

I've never seen a witch-off!

CRONE

And you're not gonna see one now. Ladies!

MINERVA

Back off, hag. This is between me and the strumpet.

*(to JEZEBELLA)*

You really think you can take me? I taught you everything you know.

JEZEBELLA

I'm stronger now than when I was your apprentice.  
And more mature.

MINERVA

No you're not.

JEZEBELLA

Yes, I am.

MINERVA

No, you're not.

JEZEBELLA

Yes, I am, yes, I am, yes, I am!!

MINERVA

Witch-off it is! Brooms?

JEZEBELLA

Brooms.

*(MINERVA tosses JEZEBELLA a broom off the rack.)*

CRONE

(to JEZEBELLA)

What do you think you're doing? She's a champion broom fighter.

JEZEBELLA

(quickly)

No, wait. Not brooms.

MINERVA

Too late.

(MINERVA snatches a broom off the rack and attacks.)

JEZEBELLA

Watch the eye!

**(FIGHT #3 - MINERVA VERSUS JEZEBELLA BROOM BATTLE)**

(MINERVA is clearly the stronger fighter, but JEZEBELLA is scrappy and desperate.)

MINERVA

Still think you can best me, minion?

JEZEBELLA

I'm not your minion!

(Enraged, JEZEBELLA battles back, but with a deft maneuver, the tables are suddenly turned again and MINERVA comes out on top.)

MINERVA

You have learned much. But I am still the master. It looks like the student has become... the graduate student.

(MINERVA is about to deliver a coup de grace when JEZEBELLA zaps her.)

JEZEBELLA

Zap!

MINERVA

Ow! Hey, that's cheating!

JEZEBELLA

Ha!

MINERVA

Zam!

JEZEBELLA

Ow! Hey!

MINERVA

Ha!

(They zap each other back and forth. Then JEZEBELLA air-chokes MINERVA - like Darth Vader. MINERVA air-chokes her back. MINERVA wins. She air-throws JEZEBELLA to the ground.)

*Then she pounces on her and throttles her for real.)*

MINERVA

Who's your mama?

JEZEBELLA

You are!

MINERVA

Who's your nanna?

JEZEBELLA

You are!

MINERVA

Who's your maiden aunt with all the cats?

JEZEBELLA

That's also you!

*(MINERVA finally relents and gets up off JEZEBELLA. When MINERVA turns her back, JEZEBELLA grabs a broom and tries to whack her with a cheap shot, but MINERVA easily deflects this last desperate attack, as well.)*

JEZEBELLA

Ow!

MINERVA

Anybody else want to take a shot at me?

NOVELLA

*(shaking her head)*

No, ma'am.

CRONE

I'm good.

*(Suddenly a shot rings out and MINERVA falls over, dead.)*

WIDOW

Thought you'd never ask.

*(Enter a **LONE WIDOW** with a smoking musket. She looks more a man than a woman. And more a fur trader than a man, with a wide-brimmed hat and a heap of animal pelts piled on her back like a buffalo's hump.)*

CRONE

Oh, Goody Gumdrops! Come in. Novella, won't you see to our guest?

NOVELLA

But she-- She killed Minerva.

CRONE

That's no reason to be inhospitable.

NOVELLA

*(to WIDOW)*

Why did you do that???

WIDOW

Why does a woman do anything that leads to bloodshed?  
Because she broke my heart.

NOVELLA

So you're a...?

WIDOW

That's right.  
*(removing her hat)*  
I'm a woman.

NOVELLA

Right. That's what I meant.

CRONE

Do come in, Goody Gumdrops.

WIDOW

That's Widow Gumdrops.

NOVELLA

What happened to Mr. Gumdrops?

WIDOW

Who do you think she broke my heart with?

*(WIDOW reloads her musket.)*

JEZEBELLA

You don't mean Horace Gumdrops? The wealthy  
landowner and inventor of a certain chewy confection  
which bears his name.

WIDOW

Yes, my husband was in soft candies.

NOVELLA

Gumdrops? Are they any good?

JEZEBELLA

Ugh! Tried some once. Too rubbery for my taste.  
All they're really good for is roofing material.

WIDOW

Which is how he made his fortune. Re-thatching burnt-  
out cottages during the Restoration housing boom.

CRONE

Well, thank you for coming. You're just in time.

JEZEBELLA

*(to CRONE)*

You invited her? To a gathering of witches?!

CRONE

Of course not. That would be a violation of our  
sacred bylaws to betray the secrecy of our  
sisterhood.

NOVELLA

Paragraph trog, subsection grendel.

CRONE

I invited Minerva.

*(to WIDOW)*

But I knew you'd take the bait.

WIDOW

This better not be a trap, old woman. I'm starting  
to feel a bit too welcome here.

JEZEBELLA

I can fix that. Get out.

CRONE

Now, don't be rude, Jezebella. Novice, fetch the lady a chair.

WIDOW

I'll stand if it's all the same. I once had a traveling salesman try to sell me some snake oil. And that footstool is giving me déjà vu.

CRONE

Suit yourself.

JEZEBELLA

But she can't be here!

(to WIDOW)

You have to go. Now. Before you kill again.

WIDOW

I'll be on my way, then.

CRONE

Please stay.

*(CRONE magically slams the door shut.)*

WIDOW

Your hospitality's really startin' to feel a-spider-to-a-fly.

JEZEBELLA

(to CRONE)

Why did you invite her?

CRONE

Because we need every able-bodied she-hag we can get.

NOVELLA

She's not even a real witch!

CRONE

That makes two of you.

JEZEBELLA

And she just killed one of us.

CRONE

Water under the bridge.

NOVELLA

And she's secretly a spy for the Parish Court!

JEZEBELLA

What?!

NOVELLA

It's true! I saw her go in. They had her in front of Judge Percy's tribunal.

CRONE

Persecution Q. Granville? The man's a hangin' judge!

JEZEBELLA

And his sentences are also unusually stiff.

CRONE

(to WIDOW)

They brought you in for questioning, did they, Widow Gumdrops?

WIDOW

I'd rather not talk about it.

CRONE

That's understandable. Probably just a routine inquisition. Lots of uncomfortable queries about your hobbies and your net worth. And of particular interest in these troubled times, the fact that you are a woman of sinful appetites.

WIDOW

I do like chocolate.

CRONE

But we're not talking about your sweet tooth.

WIDOW

How are my personal predilections anybody else's business?

JEZEBELLA

They ought to be nobody's business. But try telling that to every dirty-minded deacon in the district. For the Good Book says that a woman who lusts in her heart has already committed adultery in the eyes of men. And a man who lusts with his eyes is already way ahead of her.

CRONE

The imagination of men is a place of unspeakable bugbears. And the thought of two women in a carnal embrace is an unnatural temptation.

WIDOW

If an appreciation for the female form is unnatural, then half the men in the province is against nature. And two thirds of the clergy.

JEZEBELLA

Aye, but that's the problem. Your libertine lifestyle incites their own lust for misadventure. And that's what this is really all about. The Parish Council isn't ridding the world of witches. They're purging their consciences of bogeymen. And more to the point, bogeywomen. And they'll succeed, if we don't work together.

WIDOW

All right, I'm listening. What's your plan?

JEZEBELLA

No, that's it, that's all I had to say.

WIDOW

You don't have a plan?

JEZEBELLA

My plan is: Why don't we get together and somebody come up with a plan?

WIDOW

And that's it?! They're burning your kind in the village square and the best you can do is call a coffee klatch?

CRONE

I've got a plan.

NOVELLA

You do?

JEZEBELLA

Why didn't you say so?

CRONE

Cuz I'm old and I don't like shouting over people, so I thought I'd wait till the caterwauling died down.

WIDOW

Well, what is it, then?

CRONE

Oh, is it my turn?

WIDOW / JEZEBELLA / NOVELLA

Yes!!

*(CRONE pours herself a cup of tea.)*

CRONE

Well, I don't usually trouble myself with local politics--witch hunts and lynchings and bashings and pinchings. They start one of these little kerfuffles every time one o' the landowners needs a tax break. And I find it's best to just keep to myself and stay indoors till it all blows over. I've got spells in place could keep an army off my property. So there's really nothing they can do to me.

*(glances into her tea cup)*

But if these tea leaves are correct, the rest of you won't be so lucky. They'll pick you off one by one, and before you know it, I'll be the last of my kind, and they'll have me surrounded. And then I'll have to listen to their music! All night prayer vigils and chanting outside my windows till the wee hours of the morning. When I'd rather just be left alone.

WIDOW

That's a touching story, but I don't hear how it helps me.

CRONE

I'm not trying to be helpful. But the surest way to protect my privacy is for you to protect yours. And all this talk of working together has got me thinking...

*(CRONE pulls a tome off the shelf and leafs through it. She beckons them closer.)*

CRONE

I know of an arcane incantation - an ancient spell of melding - that allows one witch to combine her assets and energies - even her very life force - with those of others in an enchantment of mutual protection.

*(to NOVELLA)*

Fetch me a sheet of vellum.

NOVELLA

Right away, mistress!

*(NOVELLA fetches a sheet of parchment.)*

CRONE

With a single invocation and a carefully-worded blood oath, we can pool our resources into one power under one name.

*(CRONE draws concentric circles on the parchment.)*

CRONE

The defenses on my property are the strongest, so I can act as a nexus on which all of your powers hinge. If each of you temporarily signs her property over to me - strictly as a formality - all of the enchantments on my land will automatically extend to yours and yours to each other, rendering all of us impervious to any assault the Parish Militia can muster.

JEZEBELLA

I'm not signing my property over to you. I already made a deal with one devil. I know better than to trust a witch.

WIDOW

And I don't trust what don't trust itself. You must think me a pair of drawstring knickers to believe I'd be so easily taken in.

CRONE

I'm not your enemy! You think I want a half dozen properties scattered across the countryside? Novella will tell you, I haven't left my acreage in a decade.

NOVELLA

Aye, she never goes anywhere fun.

CRONE

I'm looking to make less work for myself, not more.

JEZEBELLA

I'll believe you're a shut-in when I see the bed sores with my own AIYYY! Put them away.

*(CRONE has shown JEZEBELLA her bed sores. She puts them away.)*

CRONE

I can't believe you'd sooner take your chances with the criminal justice system than trust your own sisterhood.

JEZEBELLA

All right, fine. How do we do this?

CRONE

I guess you'll never know now. My charitable moods don't come round often enough to be taken lightly.

*(CRONE tears up the parchment.)*

CRONE

Now, go on, get out!

JEZEBELLA

Wait, hold on!



CRONE

I'm too old for waitin'. Get out, all of you! It's every hag for herself.

WIDOW

*(rattles the doorknob)*

You locked the door.

NOVELLA

You don't mean me, too, do you, mistress?

CRONE

Aye, every last one o' ye. You think you can go it alone, be my guest. And by "guest" I mean, "person who is thrown out of my house onto the cold ravages of public opinion."

*(CRONE waves her hand and the door swings open.)*

CRONE

Go and see who you can trust when you're in the throes of an angry mob lookin' for a sympathetic ear.

*(In the distance, they hear hysterical cries of "Witches! Witches!")*

NOVELLA

They're coming! That's them!

JEZEBELLA

Bolt the door!

CRONE

Oh, now you trust me? Are you sure you want to be locked in here with me? I might try to refinance your mortgage.

JEZEBELLA

Just do it!

CRONE

What's the magic word?

JEZEBELLA

Stop dawdling!

CRONE

No, seriously, what's the magic word? I'm having a senior moment.

NOVELLA

Please?

CRONE

No, the *magic* word!

JEZEBELLA

Presto?

CRONE

No, no, the other magic word!

NOVELLA

Abracadabra?

*(The cries of "Witches! Witches!" are very close now.)*

CRONE

No! The one for when you want to turn a roomful of people invisible so they aren't massacred!!

JEZEBELLA

Alacaz--?

CRONE

*(quickly)*

Alacazam!!

*(CRONE gestures and the door slams shut, as the LIGHTS SHIFT BLUE.)*

*(Just then, GOODY BLUNT bursts through the door with a bloody carving knife.)*

BLUNT

Witches! Witches!!

*(but she can't see them)*

...Witches? Oh, no, you're gone. They already got to you! Oh, what am I to do?!

NOVELLA

It's just Goody Blunt again.

JEZEBELLA

Was she followed?

WIDOW

*(looking out the door)*

I don't see anyone.

BLUNT

*(hearing them)*

What's that? Who's there?

*(BLUNT wheels about and almost stabs JEZEBELLA.)*

JEZEBELLA

Whoa! Hey!

BLUNT

I hear you, but I can't see you. Are ye but ghosts now? Are ye dead and but spectres of your former selves? The lingering embers of what's left when they strapped you to a stake and set you a-scorch?

NOVELLA

*(snickers)*

She called us "butt spectres".

BLUNT

Answer me, spirits!

*(BLUNT turns and almost stabs JEZEBELLA again.)*

JEZEBELLA

Hey! Watch it!

CRONE

*(waves her hand)*

Annnd... Presto!

*(The lights shift back to normal. BLUNT sees them and lets out a blood curdling scream!)*

JEZEBELLA

Hey! Whoa! It's okay! Calm down!

*(BLUNT recovers, joyful to see them.)*

BLUNT

Witches! You're here! You're safe! Oh, it does my heart good to see your hideous visages.

JEZEBELLA

Uh huh. What do you want?

BLUNT

You have to help me! You have to hide me--us! You have to hide both of us!

JEZEBELLA

You and your knife?

BLUNT

Me and my daughter!

*(looks around)*

Oh, no, where'd she go? Sylvia!! She was right behind me. Oh no, I've lost her!

*(BLUNT rushes outside.)*

JEZEBELLA

That's not the only thing she's lost.

WIDOW

*(to CRONE)*

Is she one of yours?

NOVELLA

That's Goody Blunt from across the pasture.

WIDOW

Seems a bit batty.

NOVELLA

Well, she's been the victim of a long and horrible matrimony.

*(BLUNT enters, dragging SYLVIA, her daughter, who looks not unlike a necromancer.)*

SYLVIA

No, Mama, leggo! I wanna go home! I wanna stay with Papa! Lemme go to Papa!

BLUNT

Here she is!

*(to SYLVIA)*

Here you are. You're safe.

*(to the others)*

We're not safe.

*(to SYLVIA)*

It's gonna be okay.

*(to the others)*

They'll kill us if they catch us.

*(to SYLVIA)*

There's a good girl.  
(to the others)  
Good as dead if you don't help us!

CRONE

With that? Who's after you, Goody Blunt? And where's your husband?

BLUNT

It's the witch hunters! They're right behind us! We have to hide!

JEZEBELLA

What do you mean "they're right behind you"?

*(Sound of an ANGRY MOB approaching, hounds baying and cries of "Witch! Witch!" The light of their torches flickers in the windows.)*

SYLVIA

*(pointing outside)*

There they are!

NOVELLA

They're coming this way! How did they find you so fast?

SYLVIA

*(waving)*

Hi! We're over here!

NOVELLA

What are you doing?! Get away from the door!

SYLVIA

Don't touch me! Mama, people are touching me! Witch! Witch!

JEZEBELLA

Would you shut her up?

BLUNT

She won't listen to me!

SYLVIA

You're not the boss of me!

WIDOW

Those aren't witch hunters. It's just an angry mob with torches and pitchforks.

JEZEBELLA

Oh, well, that's a relief.

WIDOW

Looks like they've got us surrounded.

CRONE

All right, everyone into the coal cellar.

*(BLUNT tries to pull SYLVIA into the cellar.)*

SYLVIA

No, Mama, no! It's black as pitch. I won't go in it! Don't make me go back in the dark place!

*(Loud pounding at the door.)*

BLUNT  
Suit yourself.

*(BLUNT scurries down into the cellar.)*

WIDOW  
It's all right, I've got her.  
*(to SYLVIA)*  
Here you are, child. Fancy a sweetie?

SYLVIA  
Ooh!

*(WIDOW tosses a handful of gumdrops into the cellar.)*

SYLVIA  
Sweeties!!

*(SYLVIA rushes in after them.)*

CRONE  
Everyone, go! Now!

*(The other witches crush into the cellar. With a wave of her hand, CRONE extinguishes all the lights and ducks into the cellar, as well.)*

*(The noise of the mob becomes louder, deafening. The flames outside leap higher, engulfing the building, as the cottage is set ablaze.)*

*(SYLVIA screams - a keening wail.)*

**END OF ACT ONE**

**ACT TWO**

*(SCENE: THE CRONE'S COTTAGE, as before. After awhile, the noise subsides and the mob trails away.)*

NOVELLA

Are they gone?

CRONE

Somebody look and see.

BLUNT

I'm not goin' out there.

JEZEBELLA

I'll check. *Puppet, puppet, up and rise! Gaze about with two dead eyes!*

*(MINERVA rises from the dead. She looks exactly like she did when she was alive, but her complexion is more pallid and she moves a bit slower. Y'know, like a zombie. She looks around. She lumbers to the door and peers out.)*

WIDOW

*(to JEZEBELLA)*

Well? What's going on?

JEZEBELLA

*(to MINERVA)*

Do you see anything?

MINERVA

Wuzzah?

NOVELLA

I don't think she can hear you.

JEZEBELLA

*(louder)*

I said, do you see anything?!

MINERVA

Uh...

*(She checks again.)*

MINERVA

Nuh. Nummina seema nonny.

WIDOW

I didn't understand that.

NOVELLA

I think she said something about "sea monsters".

*(louder)*

Are there sea monsters up there?!

WIDOW

Why would there be sea monsters?

CRONE

Actually, they're drawn to bright lights. That's how you catch 'em.

*(louder)*

Do you see any sea monsters?!?

MINERVA

Nuh! Yuh monna cumma!

*(MINERVA beckons. Cautiously, the others emerge from the cellar to survey the damage.)*

JEZEBELLA

Ugh! Look at this mess!

CRONE

It looks exactly the same as when we went below.

JEZEBELLA

I know. But I forgot to mention it when I first came in. Ugh! Disaster. Have you thought about taking on a housekeeper?

NOVELLA

*(defensive)*

I'm doing the best I can!

CRONE

She won't do her homework. I can't expect her to do housework.

NOVELLA

Witchcraft is hard!

CRONE

Pah! It's just math. You think math is hard?

NOVELLA

No comment.

BLUNT

My daughter! Where's my daughter?

WIDOW

It's okay, she's right here.

*(to SYLVIA)*

Come on out now. There's a good girl. You're safe now.

SYLVIA

*(cautiously)*

Mama? Where's my mama?

BLUNT

I'm right here, sweeting.

*(BLUNT tries to hug SYLVIA, but she screams and runs away from her.)*

SYLVIA

There she is! Keep her away from me!!

NOVELLA

Ah. So it runs in the family.

WIDOW

Is everyone all right?

BLUNT

Why, yes, thank you for asking.

JEZEBELLA

No, we're not all right! We barely survived an act of civic arson. What was that all about? Why were they after you?

CRONE

Does a mob need a reason?

WIDOW

There's always a reason. Just never a good one.

CRONE

What's going on, Goody Blunt? Why are you here?

NOVELLA

Have you finally left your husband?

BLUNT

Of course not. I would never leave my husband! Not in the biblical sense.

JEZEBELLA

You know he'll come looking for you. Soon as meal time rolls around.

BLUNT

No, he won't. He can't. Not this time. Not ever again. (*cackles*) I'm free! My God, I'm free! My God, what have I done?

NOVELLA

What have you done?

BLUNT

It's not what I've done, it's what you lot egged me on to. You goaded me into it, you did! All of you! (*to WIDOW*)

Except you. You're new. Hello.

CRONE

All right, what happened?

BLUNT

(*to witches*)

Well, I did as you told me, didn't I? I swallowed my pride and went home. Swallowed my dignity, too, and made him a nice home-cooked meal. Turkey. Yams. Stuffing. Peeled some potatoes. Creamed some corn. Loaf of fresh-baked bread. Washed his hands and feet with my hair.

JEZEBELLA

Ugh.

BLUNT

And then when he was all fat and happy and a glass of mead in him. I sat down to enjoy a plateful of scraps he'd tossed on the floor.

SYLVIA

(*butting in*)

I was up in my room, making a corn cob doll of my mother and stabbing it with needles!

BLUNT

Get back, you! This is my story!

(*to witches*)

And just when I was starting to think it was all going to be okay--we are man and wife, after all: a bond, no infidelity can break. Nor cruelty, nor verbal abuse alter.

NOVELLA

Yikes.



BLUNT

And as we sat there all tranquility and bliss, just like the Good Lord intended, my husband got that faraway look in his eye. You know the one a man gets when you can tell he's trying to find the words to tell you how much he loves you with all his heart and soul, but he just needs a little nudge. So I leaned in close, and I whispered, sweet as you please, "Husband," says I, "Whatcha thinking?"

*(They all groan and roll their eyes at her.)*

BLUNT

And he did that!! He groaned and rolled his eyes at me!

JEZEBELLA

Oh boy...

BLUNT

Well, I could take it no more! He pushed me too far, he did. So I grabbed the carving knife out of the turkey and I cleaved him right in his wiggly parts! Over and over. Till they stopped wigglin'. And when I looked up... He wasn't wigglin' much either.

NOVELLA

Oh, my goddess...

BLUNT

And then my daughter come runnin' in with her witchery dolls and we both knew at once what had happened.

SYLVIA

Oh my God, I killed him! It's all my fault! Mama, I'm sorry! I'll never play with needles again.

BLUNT

You're a sinful girl and ye'll burn for what ye've done!

CRONE

All right, let's not confuse the child any more than she already seems to be.

BLUNT

But she murdered her own father!

WIDOW

No, I'm pretty sure that was you.

BLUNT

How can you say that?

WIDOW

Well, I'm no trial judge, but there's the knife in your hand. The blood on your knife. And the fact that you pretty much confessed to it just now.

BLUNT

Sweet Temperance, you're right! It all adds up. I'm the one killed him. I murdered my own husband. I did it. I finally did it!

JEZEBELLA

May he rest in peace and good riddance.

*(BLUNT turns on JEZEBELLA.)*

BLUNT

That's my dead husband you're speakin' ill of!

JEZEBELLA

Whoa!

CRONE

All right, I think you've had enough bloodshed for one day.

WIDOW

So where's the angry mob come in?

BLUNT

Right at that very moment! For the neighbors heard him squealing like a stuck pig and they come a-runnin' to see if we was havin' a cockfight. But when they saw what I done, and how many times I done it... Well, it was as if they would listen to no reason. They started saying how it was murderous what I done.

NOVELLA

Well, it kinda was.

BLUNT

They said I might be demon-possessed. Or on my monthlies. And worst of all, they started whisperin'...

*(whispers)*

That I might be a witch.

WITCHES

A what?

BLUNT

*(whispers)*

A witch!

WITCHES

*(ad lib)*

No, I'm sorry, I still can't--

BLUNT

A witch!! A witch!!

SYLVIA

*(hysterical)*

Witch! Witch!! Witch!!!

WIDOW

Calm down, little one. Have a gumdrop.

*(WIDOW gives SYLVIA a gumdrop and she immediately pops it in her mouth and burbles contentedly.)*

CRONE

You told them that was preposterous, didn't you? That you're not a witch. That you don't have magical powers. And if you did your husband would be dead of seemingly natural causes.

*(glaring at JEZEBELLA)*

Or at the hands of another, apparently acting on her own volition.

JEZEBELLA

I was here the whole time. You saw me.

BLUNT

There wasn't time to explain! They saw Sylvia hid under the table with that horrible corn cob doll and they knew exactly what had happened.

CRONE

No, see, no. That's not what happened.

BLUNT

So, of course, they all did their Christian duty and took up torches and pitchforks and come after us at once. We barely had time to run away.

JEZEBELLA

Oh for the love of blasphemy! And you ran here??

BLUNT

As fast as my legs could carry me. If I didn't have to drag this one kicking and screaming the whole way.

SYLVIA

I wanna go home!

BLUNT

There's nothing at home for you now!

SYLVIA

Papa promised me a pony!

BLUNT

Your papa shouldn't be making deathbed promises.

NOVELLA

That's a little disturbing.

BLUNT

(to CRONE)

Then I remembered what you said about protecting me from justice if my husband ever turned on me--

CRONE

I never said that.

BLUNT

No? Then where did I hear it?

(to the voices in her head)

I'm not talkin' to you! Well, you should've gone before we left!

JEZEBELLA

So you let an angry mob with torches and pitchforks follow you to a house full of witches? What were you thinking?

BLUNT

I tried to lose 'em in the cornfields. But those bloodhounds are crafty.

NOVELLA

Especially when you're covered in blood.

JEZEBELLA

You led them right to us!

NOVELLA

I think she did it on purpose.

BLUNT

I didn't know where else to turn.

JEZEBELLA

How about east? Or you could've turned north or south. Or how 'bout west? There's all kinds of places you could have turned without turning up on our doorstep.

CRONE

It's not your doorstep she turned up on.

JEZEBELLA

No, but I'm the one she almost got killed. Well, and some of you. But you're missing the point...

(to BLUNT)

You almost got me killed!

WIDOW

Leave her be. She was scared.

NOVELLA

We're all scared!!

MINERVA

Nah mer. I'munna nerbs ub snee.

JEZEBELLA

Well, of course, you're not afraid. You're already dead as you're gonna get.

WIDOW

(dubious)

I don't know if that's entirely true.

JEZEBELLA

(to CRONE)

And you! Hiding us in a coal cellar? We're lucky we're not broiled alive. Why does anybody even need a coal cellar in this day and age? You never heard of kerosene?

CRONE

You know that hasn't been invented yet.

JEZEBELLA

Not officially. But I know a guy.

CRONE

(shrugs)

I like coal.

JEZEBELLA

You like diamonds. She's making diamonds is what it is.

CRONE

I like diamonds.

JEZEBELLA

Nobody lives that long. Especially you.

CRONE

There's always a first time.

WIDOW

(to JEZEBELLA)

And what about you? Luring us all here like sitting ducks.

JEZEBELLA

I was trying to help!

WIDOW

You keep trying, you're gonna help us all to an early grave. What if they'd caught us all together?

JEZEBELLA

Besides, I didn't trick you into coming here.

*(points at CRONE)*

She did!

CRONE

After you predicted I would. And tried to beat me to it.

JEZEBELLA

Sure, blame the ball.

MINERVA

Veegonna ginonna meer.

NOVELLA

*(panicking)*

She's right! We can't stay here, it's not safe!

They know where we are now!

JEZEBELLA

*(points at BLUNT)*

Thanks to her. Murdering her husband right in the middle of the biggest witch hunt in living memory!

You couldn't have waited till the holidays?

BLUNT

*(points at SYLVIA)*

She's the one plays with dolls!

SYLVIA

*(points at NOVELLA)*

She looks fat in that dress!

NOVELLA

I'm not fat! It's this dress. Nobody looks good in black.

SYLVIA

Not with that attitude.

JEZEBELLA

What are you talking about? Black is slimming.

MINERVA

Imunna sesame! Linen amin! Me ganna-me fighning eanunna.

NOVELLA

Is she supposed to be having opinions like that?

JEZEBELLA

No, the zombie's right. We can't go pointing the finger of blame at each other.

*(to BLUNT)*

Not when it's obviously you that did this!

BLUNT

Me? But I'm the victim here!

*(BLUNT realizes she's holding a bloody carving knife. She puts it down.)*

BLUNT

Please! You have to believe me. I never would have done it, if you hadn't filled my head with thoughts of aphrodisiacs and single motherhood.

JEZEBELLA

We never told you to kill him.

NOVELLA

He probably deserved it, though.

BLUNT

What else was I to do? Let him live with the shame of divorce?

JEZEBELLA

Don't get me wrong, you did the right thing, congratulations. Now get out of here before you take the rest of us down with you.

WIDOW

You're not gonna help her? I thought this was a sisterhood.

JEZEBELLA

If we help her, they'll think we condone her actions.

(to BLUNT)

Which we do. Brilliant.

(to WIDOW)

But they can't know that.

(to BLUNT)

Now get out.

CRONE

Now, Jezebella, we're not Puritans. We can't just throw a hapless widow to the wolves. Not without due process. Let's put it to a vote. All in favor of helping Widow Blunt escape her fate?

WITCHES

Aye!

CRONE

All in favor of watchin' her burn?

WITCHES

Aye!

CRONE

The ayes have it.

BLUNT

Have what?

CRONE

I think we'd all like to help you, if we could.

JEZEBELLA

But we'd also kinda like to see you burn.

NOVELLA

It's not that we don't like you...

JEZEBELLA

Because we don't.

NOVELLA

You're terrible.

CRONE

But with your murderin' ways and your unkempt appearance. Folks are like to start thinking witches are murderous and unkempt.

JEZEBELLA

And could use a good makeover.

CRONE

And then we'll have the whole town after us.

WIDOW

The whole town's already after you. They just didn't know where to find you till now.

NOVELLA

So maybe that was her plan all along!

BLUNT

What? No! I didn't have a plan. Tell them, Sylvia!

SYLVIA

I have no mother.

JEZEBELLA

Not half an hour ago she tried to drag us all in front of the Puritans.

(to *BLUNT*)

And now you conveniently show up with a whole posse at your heels?

BLUNT

I didn't mean to. It was an accident. I swear it on all that's holy!

NOVELLA

And how are we to believe you?

BLUNT

(*puzzled*)

I just swore it on all that's holy. What more proof do you need?

JEZEBELLA

In my experience the pious are liars as often as not. They see the Commandments as more of a "do as I say" proposition.

NOVELLA

That's true! How do we know you're not just pretending you murdered your husband in cold blood to gain our trust?

WIDOW

Why would that make you trust her?

CRONE

Have you met her husband?

BLUNT

I wasn't conspiring to get you all killed. Honest.

JEZEBELLA

Exactly what someone who *was* conspiring to get us killed would say.

NOVELLA

I knew it!

BLUNT

But I'm not!

JEZEBELLA

And she'd say that, too.

NOVELLA

It's no use trying to fool us. You might as well confess it now.

BLUNT

Confess what? I don't even know what I've done!

NOVELLA

Oh, she's good.

JEZEBELLA

If she won't admit it herself, I say we *make* her confess.

CRONE

How?

NOVELLA

We could boil her toes. Or pinch her black and blue.

JEZEBELLA

Or dunk her in the well outside.

MINERVA

Weebudda punnin inna raggin snabbinin off.

WIDOW

You're talkative for a dead woman.

CRONE

We're witches, not Puritans. We're not gonna torture the truth out of her.

NOVELLA

Why not?

CRONE

Because first of all, that's not where you get it.

NOVELLA

How do we know till we try? It's like the old saying: The only way to fight fire is with fire.

CRONE

Or water.

WIDOW

Or a bucket of sand.

MINERVA

Drummina bubbina. Foof!

CRONE

Matter of fact, fire is about the worst way to fight fire.

JEZEBELLA

Fine, we don't have to torture her. We just have to wait for her to confess on her own.

BLUNT

Good idea. I'm for that. Slow and steady wins the race.

JEZEBELLA

You don't get a vote.

NOVELLA

And if she doesn't?

JEZEBELLA

We torture her daughter instead. Minerva, grab her!



SYLVIA  
No!

*(MINERVA chases SYLVIA around the cottage, until she has to stop and catch her breath.)*

MINERVA  
Sheema fass. Myma remma camma breff.

JEZEBELLA  
Do I have to do everything myself?

MINERVA  
*(mocking)*  
"Dymadoo debby seema seff?" Mleh mleh mleh mleh.

*(FIGHT #4 - SYLVIA PURSUED BY WITCHES)*

*(JEZEBELLA chases and catches SYLVIA, who fights like a hellcat.)*

JEZEBELLA  
She's like a hellcat.

CRONE  
Hell cats are quieter.

NOVELLA  
And cuddly.

JEZEBELLA  
Minerva, give me a hand!

*(MINERVA slaps JEZEBELLA.)*

JEZEBELLA  
Ouch! What'd you do that for?

MINERVA  
Yoosemma gimminy ham.

JEZEBELLA  
That's not what I meant!

MINERVA  
Yoomina meemma smussifif.

JEZEBELLA  
Well, be careful! You wanna put somebody's eye out?  
Ow. Gadflies, that stings!

*(NOVELLA pounces on SYLVIA.)*

NOVELLA  
I got her! Ow! Hey!

*(SYLVIA bites NOVELLA and gets away. But she runs right into the arms of JEZEBELLA.)*

JEZEBELLA  
Gotcha! Ow!

*(SYLVIA bites JEZEBELLA and gets away again. MINERVA grabs SYLVIA.)*

MINERVA  
Gobba! Agh!

*(SYLVIA bites MINERVA, but it doesn't do any good.)*

SYLVIA  
Yuck! Ugh!

*(SYLVIA tries to spit the zombie taste out of her mouth.)*

MINERVA  
*(laughs)*  
Huh huh huh.

JEZEBELLA  
Bring her over here.

*(MINERVA drags SYLVIA across the room.)*

SYLVIA  
Mama, save me! Save me, you crazy old bat!! Mama?

*(CRONE examines JEZEBELLA's eye.)*

CRONE  
You're gonna have a shiner.

JEZEBELLA  
I'm fine.

CRONE  
Well, don't scratch it, you'll get it infected.

*(MINERVA brings SYLVIA over to JEZEBELLA.)*

JEZEBELLA  
*(to SYLVIA)*  
Now, what are we gonna do with you?

NOVELLA  
Oo! Do the nipples!

*(They all glare at her.)*

NOVELLA  
What? That really hurts.

WIDOW  
Amateurs.

JEZEBELLA  
What's that?

WIDOW  
I called you amateurs. You think just cuz you're scared out of your wits, that now you know a thing or two about torture. Pinching and poking and dunking and choking. You really want to make someone suffer? Try breaking their heart. Or giving them hope and taking it away again. Try making them listen to gynecological advice from a male physician. Or the bunch of you whining about the plight of women. Or the word "moist". Moist. Moist. Moist.

NOVELLA / JEZEBELLA / CRONE  
*(ad lib)*

Oh-- No, just-- Yuck.

WIDOW

Or tickling!

BLUNT & SYLVIA

Uh oh.

WIDOW

There's a thousand things worse than a bunch of frightened little girls running an inquisition.

JEZEBELLA

Tickling it is!

NOVELLA

Yeah, let's do that.

*(JEZEBELLA and NOVELLA turn on their captives, but they haven't even touched them when SYLVIA and BLUNT burst out giggling and squealing uncontrollably.)*

BLUNT

Wait, all right, I did it!

NOVELLA

I didn't even touch you.

JEZEBELLA

Did what, Widow Blunt?

BLUNT

Whatever you say I did! I swear!

NOVELLA

Aha! I knew it, she's guilty!

CRONE

She's just saying what she thinks you want to hear.

BLUNT

I am, I'll say anything, I promise!

NOVELLA

Okay, but that's perjury, at least. Can we put her down the well, now?

CRONE

Not in my house. I have to drink from that well. And so do you.

NOVELLA

Oh, yuck! Yeah, never mind.

CRONE

Widow Gumdrops is right. You're acting like a bunch of hysterical church mice. This is a coven of witches. We're better than that. Now everybody calm down. The villagers are gone. We're perfectly safe here.

NOVELLA

For now. But what happens when they come back later to finish the job?

CRONE

They won't be coming back. They think they burned this cottage to the ground. And there's no need to torch a place twice.

WIDOW

Why would they think that?

CRONE

Because it's what I want them to think. This cottage is enchanted against vandalism. Go outside and see for yourself.

*(NOVELLA and WIDOW go outside to look at the exterior of the cottage.)*

NOVELLA

Krakens and jackals! She's right! It's normal inside, but out here there's nothing but a smoking ruin.

JEZEBELLA

A smoking what?

*(JEZEBELLA runs outside to look, as NOVELLA and WIDOW come back in.)*

WIDOW

It's just ashes and an incinerated door frame out there. But in here it's still a house.

NOVELLA

That's incredible. How did you do that?

JEZEBELLA

*(entering)*

Now, ladies, a sorceress never reveals her secrets.

*(aside to CRONE)*

But, seriously, you can tell me. Is it mirrors?

It's smoke and mirrors, isn't it?

CRONE

I know how to protect my property. That's all you need to know. And if you like, I can protect yours, as well.

BLUNT

Yes! I'd like that, please. How do we start?

CRONE

I just need your thumbprint on this parchment.

*(CRONE dramatically whips out the parchment, which is magically still intact.)*

WIDOW

But this parchment is blank.

CRONE

We have to fill in the details as we go. I just need to know who's with me. You first, Novella.

NOVELLA

Why me?

CRONE

Goody Gumdrops, did you see which way the mob went when they left here?

WIDOW

Judging by the trail of footprints and candy wrappers, they headed off in that direction.

NOVELLA

My house!

CRONE

Your hovel is just down the road. They could be on their way there right now.

NOVELLA

You have to stop them, Mistress!

*(NOVELLA cuts her thumb and presses a bloody thumbprint onto the parchment.)*

BLUNT

And me! They've already been to my house! They know where I live!

*(BLUNT cuts her palm with her bloody knife and presses her whole hand onto the parchment.)*

CRONE

No, just-- I just need the thumb.

BLUNT

I'm sorry.

*(She tries to sop it up with a handkerchief.)*

CRONE

Okay, that's not helping. Just--

SYLVIA

I wanna play, too!

*(SYLVIA giggles and cuts both her palms and finger paints on the parchment.)*

CRONE

Ugh. Okay, no, never mind, it's fine. That's enough.

*(CRONE takes the parchment away from BLUNT and SYLVIA.)*

CRONE

Anyone else? Minerva?

MINERVA

Myma simon.

JEZEBELLA

You don't have any blood. Get out of the way.

*(JEZEBELLA shoves MINERVA out of the way and signs the parchment.)*

*(Other witches step forward and sign the parchment, too.)*

NOVELLA

That's everybody.

CRONE

Except the most powerful woman in the province.

Goody Gumdrops? It's time to choose sides.

NOVELLA

But she's not one of us.

WIDOW

And more to the point, I'm not one of you.

CRONE

No, but you are a woman. Like us. Single.

JEZEBELLA

Like us.

WIDOW

Widowed, actually.

CRONE

Aye, but that was self-inflicted, wasn't it?

WIDOW

Well, he wasn't gonna shoot himself.

JEZEBELLA

And now you're the wealthiest widow on the eastern sea board. Which makes you a threat to the self-esteem of every under-endowed man in the Parish.

NOVELLA

But there could be thousands of those!

CRONE

It's times like these, women like us have to stick together. Or we'll be torn apart. Quite literally, in some cases.

WIDOW

You stick together, you're a bigger target.

CRONE

Or a bigger bullet. And you don't strike me as the kinda gal who runs from trouble. No, you're more the hunt-it-down-and-skin-it type.

WIDOW

Trouble makes a nice pair of boots.

CRONE

Aren't you tired of being called in for questioning and forever looking over your shoulder, wondering what the Parish Council will think of you? Taking your life in your hands every time you read the wrong book?

NOVELLA

Or wear the wrong dress.

JEZEBELLA

Or fall in love.

CRONE

They're not gonna keep ignoring your indiscretions forever.

JEZEBELLA

Especially when one of those indiscretions is Mrs. Judge Percy.

WIDOW

What? How could you know that?

JEZEBELLA

Ball never lies.

CRONE

The way I see it, you're next in line to be hanging from a line. Unless we do something about it.

You may not be a witch, but that won't stop them lumping you in with us when the time comes. So why not put aside our differences and beat them to the lumping?

WIDOW

All right.

*(WIDOW slices her thumb and signs the parchment)*

CRONE

Perfect.

BLUNT

So that's all there is to it?

CRONE

Simple as that.

BLUNT

And you'll save us now? You'll protect us all.

CRONE

That's the idea.

BLUNT

That's amazing.

SYLVIA

It's like magic!

NOVELLA

Pff! It's just math.

BLUNT

If only I could work such wonders. What a life it must be! Never to rely on a man. Or a woman. Or a lazy milking cow!

NOVELLA

Lazy was not that cow's problem.

BLUNT

Spending your days as you please. And your nights even more so. Dancing naked in the forest in the moonlight. Flying over treetops like a wicked butterfly.

JEZEBELLA

Your fantasies are very specific. And unsettling.

BLUNT

*(to CRONE)*

I want to be a witch, too. Can you make me one?

CRONE

I'm sorry, Goody Blunt. Being a witch takes years of practice.

*(to NOVELLA)*

Longer, if you don't.

NOVELLA

All right! I can take a hint!

BLUNT

I could start right now. I'll start right away. I could be your apprentice.

NOVELLA

What?

CRONE

My apprentice? Hmm...

BLUNT

I'd give anything to be like one of you. Like any of you.

*(aside to CRONE)*

Except the fat one.

NOVELLA

Now hold on... She can't be an apprentice! She's not qualified!

*(to BLUNT)*

You're too old.

BLUNT

I'll do whatever it takes. Slaughter a goat. Strangle a cat. Get a saucy back tattoo. Square dancing.

NOVELLA

Can I say something?

BLUNT

I'd work very hard. Harder than any apprentice you ever had.

CRONE

That wouldn't take much.

NOVELLA

Am I not right here? Am I still invisible?

*(gesturing at herself)*

Presto! Presto!

BLUNT

I'll practice night and day. You won't be disappointed. And I can cook. I'm a very good cook. Just ask my husband. You speak to the dead, don't you?

CRONE

Well, I could certainly use a little help around here

NOVELLA

I'm a little help!

CRONE

You're of little help. There's a difference.

BLUNT

So you'll do it? You'll teach me?

CRONE

I like your enthusiasm, Goody Blunt, but I'm afraid Novella's right. You're much too old to start a career in the arts.

NOVELLA

Ha!

CRONE

But if enthusiasm runs in the family, I think your daughter might do.

BLUNT

My daughter?

NOVELLA

The daughter? Now, hold on!



CRONE

Quiet, or I'll turn you into something unmentionable.

(to BLUNT)

What's her name again, your daughter?

BLUNT

Come here, Sylvie, tell her your name!

CRONE

Is it Sylvie? Sylvia?

BLUNT

How did you know that?! You are truly magical.

NOVELLA

Oh, cod whiskers.

BLUNT

Come here, Sylvie, and say hello to the nice lady.

Don't be afraid.

*(BLUNT preemptively slaps SYLVIA's hand.)*

SYLVIA

Ow!

BLUNT

And don't bite!

*(CRONE scrutinizes SYLVIA.)*

CRONE

Well, she looks healthy enough.

BLUNT

And she's got all her teeth.

(to SYLVIA)

Show 'em your teeth!

*(SYLVIA takes out a jar of teeth and rattles it.)*

CRONE

Yes, I think you'll do just fine. I'll take her on as my new novice.

SYLVIA

Yes! Bow before me, sniveling mortals!

NOVELLA

But what about your old novice?

JEZEBELLA

"Old novice" is an oxymoron.

NOVELLA

I am not!!

CRONE

You knew this day would come, Novella. Or you would if you'd read the syllabus.

NOVELLA

But I'm not ready. You haven't taught me everything.

CRONE

I taught you what I could. I'm not a miracle worker. Except in the literal sense.

NOVELLA

But there's still so much to learn. And I'm such a slow learner. You said so yourself.

I don't know how to fly or turn things into toads or open jars. I'll be helpless.

CRONE

Switch from jars to jugs, you'll be fine. And if you don't want to keep being helpless, you'll let go of me and let me get back to work. We've still got a spell to cast. Look after our guests now, will you, Sylvia?

SYLVIA

Yes, Ma'am.

*(CRONE goes into an alcove and pulls up her hood to cover her head, as she begins to mumble and chant over the parchment.)*

SYLVIA

*(to JEZEBELLA)*

Can I get you some tea, milady?

JEZEBELLA

Yes, please. Cream and sugar.

SYLVIA

Get it yourself!!

*(to WIDOW)*

Tea for you, ma'am?

*(WIDOW shakes her head.)*

WIDOW

No, thank you.

SYLVIA

More for me, then.

BLUNT

I take my tea black.

SYLVIA

You are dead to me.

WIDOW

*(to JEZEBELLA)*

So now what happens?

MINERVA

Nob ee dunna tay duh pahbin en gibbin a dingadation.

JEZEBELLA

Nobody's talking to you.

*(to WIDOW)*

Now we wait.

WIDOW

I'm tired of waiting.

*(WIDOW tries to leave, but the door is still magically sealed.)*

WIDOW

Argh! She locked the door again.

JEZEBELLA

It's not locked, you just have to pull.

*(JEZEBELLA tries to pull. It's locked. She pretends she left it closed on purpose.)*

JEZEBELLA

But we mustn't disturb the spell. If you break the circle, all the magic will be undone. It's an aura thing. It's very technical.

WIDOW

You can't get it open either, can you? Just like a witch.

JEZEBELLA

What's that supposed to mean?

WIDOW

I've had dealings with your kind before. Always delving in deviltry you know nothing about. And too stubborn to admit when you're in over your head.

JEZEBELLA

And I suppose you got to be the richest widow in the Parish by playing it safe all the time.

WIDOW

No, I got to be the richest widow in Christendom by marrying young to an elderly businessman with a high risk of diabetes.

JEZEBELLA

I thought you said you shot him.

WIDOW

To put him out of his misery. Nobody likes to drag things out.

JEZEBELLA

What kind of dealings have you had with our kind exactly?

WIDOW

One doesn't like to kiss and tell.

JEZEBELLA

I guess we'll just sit quietly and enjoy each other's company, then.

WIDOW

Fine! If you're gonna badger me about it... In the town where I was born, there lived an old woman who fancied young girls. And I was young enough and girlish enough at the time to catch her fancy.

NOVELLA

Oh... "dealings".

WIDOW

She taught me things I'll never unlearn. And I guess I'll always thank her for that. But I won't be so naïve a second time.

JEZEBELLA

*(cocks her thumb at MINERVA)*

Wasn't she your second time?

WIDOW

I won't be naïve a third time!

*(Awkward silence.)*

MINERVA

Yummina plame a name a nards?

*(MINERVA takes out a deck of tarot cards.)*

WIDOW

I deal.

*(WIDOW takes the cards and deals. BLUNT joins them.)*

WIDOW

Five card wench. Cups are wild.

*(NOVELLA notices SYLVIA staring at her.)*

NOVELLA

*(to SYLVIA)*

Stop it! Stop staring at me.

SYLVIA

Wasn't staring.

NOVELLA

You're looking right at me.

SYLVIA

Why do you hate me?

NOVELLA

I never said I hated you.

SYLVIA

Don't have to say it.

NOVELLA

So now you're a mind reader?

SYLVIA

I've been hated before. I know what it looks like.

NOVELLA

Let me tell you something. Mind reading is hard! You have to practice. A lot. Till you get headaches. *Migraines* from thinking too much about what's going on in someone else's head. Not enough room in your own head for all those thoughts running around giving you nightmares. Sleepless nights being chased by wolves and brambles and giant shears come to shave off your wool and make you into a sweater.

JEZEBELLA

Have you been mind reading on sheep?

NOVELLA

She won't let me practice on people!

SYLVIA

Maybe she doesn't think you can handle the material.

*(The others laugh.)*

NOVELLA

You only think you're funny cuz you're young and pretty. But nothing lasts forever and she'll cast you aside soon enough. They always do. And then you'll know what it's like to be in my shoes.

SYLVIA

Oh, I could never hope to fill your shoes.

NOVELLA

Thank you. That's--

SYLVIA

Because they're huge.

NOVELLA

My feet are not--

SYLVIA

Do they even make those in women's sizes?

*(The others laugh.)*

NOVELLA

Y'know, there's a reason your mum was so quick to get rid of you.

BLUNT

What? That's not true, Sylvie. I never said that. Not out loud. Not in front of her. Why is everyone looking at me?

NOVELLA

*(to SYLVIA)*

Ha!

SYLVIA

Witch!

NOVELLA

Novice!

*(They lunge at each other.)*

***(FIGHT #5 - NOVELLA AND SYLVIA CAT FIGHT)***

JEZEBELLA

Witch fight!

*(The others look on and ad lib encouragement.)*

JEZEBELLA

Pull her hair!

WIDOW

Rip her top!

BLUNT

Use your teeth!

MINERVA

Grummin inna pigga!

***(NOVELLA AND SYLVIA WRESTLE until CRONE finishes the parchment and hobbles over.)***

CRONE

All right, that's enough of that. Haven't we got enough trouble with the whole world looking to burn us to soot without you tearing each others eyes out?

NOVELLA

She started it!

SYLVIA

She was disparaging my mistress.

CRONE

I know, dearie. Now, go clear off a table for me.

NOVELLA

You don't believe her???

CRONE

She hasn't lied to me yet. And that makes one of you.

*(SYLVIA knocks over a table and sets it back up again empty.)*

NOVELLA

But you've known me since I was barely sixteen.

CRONE

*(consoling)*

You had to grow up someday.

NOVELLA

But I'm not growing up. You're just dumping me for a younger model.

CRONE

Now why would I do that? I still need someone to read the incantation, don't I?

*(CRONE hands NOVELLA the parchment.)*

NOVELLA

Me?

JEZEBELLA

You're finished?

WIDOW

Good. Can I get out of here?

CRONE

Not just yet. Sylvia, fetch me a candle. Novella, take the scroll.

NOVELLA

You want me to cast the spell?

CRONE

Consider this a promotion. You're a real witch now and it's time you acted like one. Everyone, join hands in a circle.

*(The women gather in the middle of the room.)*

CRONE

We can't keep fighting each other. If this witch hunt has taught me anything, it's that this is a man's world. But only because we women are too busy pulling each other's hair - or stealing each other's husbands - or squabbling over quibbles men don't give a hoot about - to beat them at their own game. But not anymore. They want to manipulate the court systems to victimize innocent women? Well, today, let's show them that women can do the same. Take each other's hands. And don't let go no matter what happens. No matter what you see or hear or think or feel.

*(JEZEBELLA, SYLVIA, WIDOW and BLUNT and join hands in a circle. CRONE lights some candles and uses MINERVA as a candle holder. NOVELLA reads from the parchment.)*

NOVELLA  
*(reads)*

We, the undersigned, summon ye spirits to witness this blood covenant of our mutual protection. Each to the other bound and beholden. Each to the other impune and impervious. One sisterhood under one sister united. We pledge to our Mistress our faith and fidelity. Our wealth and prosperity. Our land, our love, our life to her use and protection in perpetuity.

JEZEBELLA  
*(suspicious)*

Wait a minute...

NOVELLA

We vow and affirm this...

JEZEBELLA

Stop her! It's a trick!

SYLVIA

It's a magic trick!

*(JEZEBELLA lunges at NOVELLA, but SYLVIA won't let go of her hand.)*

***(FIGHT #6 - SYLVIA VERSUS JEZEBELLA AND WIDOW)***

*(JEZEBELLA and WIDOW struggle to get at NOVELLA to interrupt the incantation while SYLVIA holds them back.)*

SYLVIA

Mistress said don't let go!

JEZEBELLA

Let go!

NOVELLA

What's happening?

CRONE

Keep going. You mustn't stop. Even for a moment.

NOVELLA

From now till forever. Unbreakable. Irrevocable. Immutable. So be it!

*(Sparks shoot dramatically out of the parchment. CRONE cackles maniacally.)*

JEZEBELLA

What have you done, you monstress?

CRONE

Exactly what I promised to do. I've made what's yours mine, so that I can protect it all.

WIDOW

What was that about "lives to your use"?

CRONE

Just being thorough. I simply gathered all of your worldly and otherworldly possessions under my deed of protectorship.

WIDOW

You stole our lands.

JEZEBELLA

No, it's worse than that. She stole our lives.

BLUNT

What?!

CRONE

And more importantly, your youth.

*(CRONE throws back her hood, revealing herself to be young and beautiful again!)*

CRONE

Not all of it, of course. Just a couple years off the end. You won't even miss them.

*(to WIDOW)*

Well, you might.

*(WIDOW lunges at CRONE.)*

WIDOW

Yaarrhh!

JEZEBELLA

Get her!

***(FIGHT #7 - EVERYBODY VS. CRONE)***

*(The women all attack the CRONE. She single-handedly fends them all off. SYLVIA fights on the CRONE's side.)*

CRONE

Fools! You can't hurt me. You've sworn a pact against it. An unbreakable vow of impunity. Sealed in your own blood. You've sworn to love and defend each other. But especially me. I, on the other hand, conveniently neglected to sign the agreement. So I have no such obligation.

*(CRONE kicks all of their butts.)*

JEZEBELLA

Maybe we can never harm you. But she can! Minerva, sic 'em!

MINERVA

Mime nonna gog.

JEZEBELLA

Just do it!

*(MINERVA attacks CRONE. JEZEBELLA and NOVELLA struggle to keep SYLVIA from joining in.)*



**(FIGHT #8 - MINERVA VERSUS CRONE)**

*(CRONE is spry and powerful, but MINERVA is stronger and manages to gain the upper hand. CRONE is beaten almost senseless. MINERVA grabs a wand and is about to stab CRONE in the eye with it.)*

CRONE

*(quickly)*

*I'm rubber, you're glue, what happens to me bounces off onto you.*

*(LIGHTS SHIFT RED. MINERVA stabs CRONE in the eye, but JEZEBELLA is the one who recoils, clutching her face.)*

JEZEBELLA

*My eye!!*

*(MINERVA punches CRONE in the stomach. WIDOW doubles over in pain and collapses in a corner.)*

WIDOW

*Oof!*

*(CRONE staggers to the cauldron and thrusts her own hand into the bubbling brew.)*

BLUNT

*Ow, my hands! It burns like minestrone!*

*(MINERVA picks up the footstool and is about to smash it over CRONE's head. NOVELLA jumps between them to stop the fight.)*

NOVELLA

*No, wait! I surrender! Put him down!*

*(MINERVA stops. Lights shift back to normal. CRONE gets up, dusts herself off.)*

CRONE

*Well, I'm glad that's settled. Nothing restores common sense like being beaten senseless.*

*(CRONE smugly picks up the pottery jar, easily pops the lid off and fennels her soup, cackling maniacally.)*

CRONE

*And now that things are back to normal, I'll be making some changes around here. Starting with I'm gonna hear a lot less complaining about how nothing ever changes. All in favor?*

*(CRONE gestures and the other witches are forced to raise their hands against their wills.)*

CRONE  
The ayes have it.

*(Suddenly, a shot rings out.)*

CRONE  
AIYYYY!

*(CRONE, looking very surprised, crumples to her knees.)*

CRONE  
Oh, this is upsetting.

*(WIDOW steps out of the shadows with a smoking musket.)*

WIDOW  
You're right. It's better to be the bullet.

CRONE  
What? How?

WIDOW  
I told you. I've dealt with your kind before.

NOVELLA  
Witches?

WIDOW  
Women.

CRONE  
But this is impossible... You signed a blood oath...

WIDOW  
When I was just a girl, I succumbed to the seductions of an eccentric older lady. She taught me how to love. She was a tigress in bed. Sometimes literally. That's how I lost my hand. She felt terrible about it afterward. She gave me a monkey's paw to replace it.

*(WIDOW pulls back her sleeve to reveal that she has a monkey's paw for a hand.)*

WIDOW  
That's who signed your parchment. Somewhere out there is what's left of a monkey who will defend you to the death. But as for me, I'm still my own woman. And always will be. Because I know better than to form alliances with people who don't seem to know the meaning of the word. That's why I could never join the Parish Council. They invited me, of course. But I find it more lucrative to freelance for them as a bounty hunter.

*(WIDOW takes out a bar of chocolate and takes a bite.)*

WIDOW

I'll be going now. But I'm taking this parchment with me.

*(WIDOW takes the parchment.)*

WIDOW

It should be all the evidence I need to have you all declared witches. And then I'll be back. With a warrant. You'll forfeit your property, of course. But you won't need it for a life on the run.

*(to SYLVIA)*

Sylvia, why don't you come along with me? This is no place for an impressionable young lady. I can't promise you a better life where we're going, but there'll be plenty of gumdrops and chocolate.

*(WIDOW hands SYLVIA the bar of chocolate. She takes a bite.)*

SYLVIA

*(orgasmic)*

Uhhh, it's so good!

JEZEBELLA

*(to WIDOW)*

You'll never be safe. They'll come after you, too.

WIDOW

They would if they could. But as you know, Goody Percy has a secret that Judge Percy doesn't want the world to know. So I wouldn't worry about me. These scares come around every generation or so. And those of us who know how to manage a panic, pick up a few extra acres each time around. But as for you, I'd pack my things and get as far from here as my broom will carry me. Foreclosures start in the morning.

*(WIDOW takes SYLVIA by the hand and slowly backs out the door, leaving the dazed witches to their fate, as the lights fade to black.)*

**END OF ACT TWO**

**END OF PLAY**