



**Lavinia Roberts**

**BIG DOG PUBLISHING**

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**BIG DOG PUBLISHING**  
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## V.I.L.L.A.I.N.S.

**FARCE.** V.I.L.L.A.I.N.S. is a support group for recovering villains who realize their lives have become unmanageable and that they won't live happily ever after unless they change their ways. Gisela, the evil fairy from "Sleeping Beauty" leads the group, which includes Snow White's vain stepmother, a pack of wolves, a troll, a wicked witch, Cinderella's evil stepmother, and many others. To motivate the villains to continue on their path to living happily ever after, Gisela has invited some inspirational speakers including a full-time fairy godmother, Prince Charming, and Jack from "Jack and the Beanstalk" fame. However, the meeting is interrupted by the Pied Piper, who offers transcendental music and hypnosis as a cure for villainy, and some fairies looking for their F.A.R.T.S. meeting.

**Performance time:** Approximately 30 minutes.

## Characters

(5 M, 8 F, 7 flexible)

**GISELA:** Evil fairy from “Sleeping Beauty” who serves as the V.I.L.L.A.I.N.S. group leader; female.

**BROMHILDA:** Evil stepmother from the story “Mother Hulda”; female.

**HAGATHA:** Wicked witch from “Hansel and Gretel” who had to sell her weekend gingerbread cottage to pay damages to Hansel and Gretel and is holding Rapunzel hostage in a tower; female.

**GERLOF:** Troll from “Three Billy Goats Gruff”; amiable troll who is terrified of most hoofed animals after a run-in with some goats; has warts; flexible.

**JEZEBEL:** Vain, evil stepmother from “Snow White”; female.

**HORTENSE:** Wicked stepmother from “Cinderella” who loves to complain about her stepdaughter; female.

**ICABELLA:** Snow queen; female.

**MARIJN:** Sea witch who wishes she had someone to love her other than her pet water snakes; female.

**BORIS:** Wolf from “The Three Little Pigs,” a hot-tempered, food-oriented mafia leader; male.

**IVAN/IVANA:** Not-too-bright wolf and Boris’s mafia henchman; flexible.

**VLADMIR/VLADMIRA:** Wolf who is one of Boris’s mafia henchmen; flexible.

**RUMPELSTILTSKIN:** Villain from “Rumpelstiltskin”; a strange little man; male.

**JACK:** Character from “Jack in the Beanstalk” who still lives with his mother in a humble cottage and is Rumpelstiltskin’s mentor; male.

**LUCINDA:** A full-time fairy godmother who serves as an inspirational speaker at V.I.L.L.A.I.N.S.; female.

**PRINCE CHARMING:** A charming prince and best-selling author; male.

V.I.L.L.A.I.N.S.

5

**ASSISTANT:** Prince Charming's assistant, a businesslike fairy or elf; flexible.

**PIED PIPER:** Seedy salesman who offers hypnosis and transcendental music as a cure for antagonistic tendencies; male.

**FAIRY 1:** Member of F.A.R.T.S.; flexible.

**FAIRY 2:** Member of F.A.R.T.S.; flexible.

**FAIRY 3:** Member of F.A.R.T.S.; flexible.

## Setting

A meeting room.

## Set

There are several chairs CS positioned in a half-circle facing the audience. A podium sits SR facing the audience. There is a table upstage that is set with water cups, a coffee-cup dispenser, and a doughnut box.

## Props

Water cups  
Coffee-cup dispenser  
Doughnut box  
Plate of gingerbread cookies  
Crossword puzzle  
Knitting needles and yarn  
Magazine with a sheep on the cover  
Nail file  
Hand mirror  
Purse  
Lipstick  
Book with a smiling picture of Prince Charming on the cover  
entitled, *Happily Ever After: How You Can be the Prince  
Charming of Your Own Fate.*

## Sound Effect

Magical twinkle sound



*"We are dastardly villains  
and our lives  
have become unmanageable,  
and we won't live happily ever after  
unless we change..."*

## V.I.L.L.A.I.N.S.

*(AT RISE: A meeting room. Boris and Ivan are seated. Hagatha is seated, knitting. Gerlof is seated and working on a crossword puzzle. Bromhilda enters, holding a plate of gingerbread.)*

BROMHILDA: Excuse me.

HAGATHA: Hello, dearie. How plump... *(Catches herself.)*  
...I mean, how pleasant to meet you, dearie.

BORIS: *(To Bromhilda.)* Hey there, dame. So what's a doll like you doing in a rundown joint like this?

BROMHILDA: Is this where the V.I.L.L.A.I.N.S. meeting is? *(Boris, Gerlof, Ivan, and Hagatha moan. Confused.)* What? I got it right, didn't I? This is V.I.L.L.A.I.N.S. You know, "Vitriolic Individuals Learning to Love, Assist Individuals, and be Nice Society," right?

HAGATHA: Yes, yes, this is V.I.L.L.A.I.N.S.

BROMHILDA: Then why are all of you so upset?

IVAN: 'Cause if you are a new member, that means we don't get to eat you. *(To Boris.)* Right, boss?

BORIS: Ivan, just a kidder, aren't you, kid? *(To others.)* He better learn to keep that mouth of his shut, or he'll be swimming with the fishes. Capish, Ivan?

IVAN: Won't happen again, boss.

*(Vladimir enters.)*

BORIS: Vladimir, you take care of that punk in the red cape?

VLADIMIR: Yeah, boss. I took her out. Last time she goes walking through the woods, if you catch my drift. *(Notices Bromhilda.)* Hey! Who is the dame? *(To Bromhilda.)* Let me guess...new member?

BROMHILDA: Yes. That obvious?

VLADIMIR: I'll say. You didn't come with any means to defend yourself.

*(Vladimir takes out a magazine with sheep on the cover. Gerlof jumps up and points to the magazine Vladimir is holding.)*

GERLOF: *(Frantic.)* Is that—? Get it away from me! Get it away!

VLADIMIR: Relax, Gerlof. It isn't a picture of a goat on the cover of "Wolf Weekly." It's a sheep.

*(Gerlof sits down and takes a few deep breaths.)*

GERLOF: I'm sorry. *(Gets progressively panicky.)* It just kind of looked like one...what with the hooves and the wet noses.

And horns—huge horns—that get closer to you...and closer.

Too fast. You can't move. And then water...lots of water—

HAGATHA: *(Soothing.)* Just take deep breaths, dearie. Nice deep breaths. There's a good troll...

BROMHILDA: Perhaps a gingerbread cookie would help?  
*(Holds up the plate.)*

HAGATHA: *(Upset.)* Get that wretched monstrosity away from me!

BROMHILDA: I'm sorry.

HAGATHA: *(Upset.)* Disgusting cookie! Makes my skin feel hot just smelling it!

GERLOF: *(To Bromhilda.)* Pardon Hagatha. Ever since she had to sell what was left of her weekend getaway gingerbread cottage to pay off the damages to Hansel and Gretel, she's been, shall we say, less than keen about gingerbread and children.

HAGATHA: That's not true! I happen to love little children...  
*(Dreamily.)* ...slowly roasted in rosemary...maybe drizzled with olive oil...

GERLOF: *(To Bromhilda.)* Hi, I'm Gerlof.

BROMHILDA: Bromhilda.

*(Queen Jezebel enters followed by Hortense.)*

JEZEBEL: Yes, yes, the meeting can start now! I'm here! Your bleak little lives have meaning again.

BORIS: (*Sarcastically.*) Sure thing, doll.

JEZEBEL: No bowing, lowly commoner scum, please. I do tire of simpering. And adore from afar. I'm too tired to have you kissing my feet.

HORTENSE: (*To others.*) Sorry we're late.

HAGATHA: Getting Jezebel out of the bathroom, Hortense, I presume?

HORTENSE: I don't know why they don't just take down that mirror. You know what Jezebel, here, is like if there is a mirror anywhere in her vicinity.

JEZEBEL: Well, hun, if you were the fairest of them all, you might want to spend more time admiring your unrivaled reflection. And it's *Queen* Jezebel, serf filth. Only my equals can call me Jezebel. And there aren't any of those here, or elsewhere, for that matter.

IVAN: What about that dame Snow White? I hear she's one looker.

JEZEBEL: What did you say, you filthy flea-infested fool?

HAGATHA: Nothing, puppet. (*To others.*) Dreadful weather we've been having lately, huh? (*Disgusted.*) Nothing but clear skies and sunshine for weeks!

HORTENSE: I didn't hear anything. You hear anything, Boris?

BORIS: I'm with the dame. Ivan didn't say anything, did you, Ivan?

IVAN: But, boss, I said—

(*Vladimir elbows Ivan to shut him up.*)

HAGATHA: (*To Ivan.*) Nothing! (*Sweetly.*) Have you lost weight, Jezebel? Really, I think you have.

IVAN: I said that Snow White—

HORTENSE: (*Under her breath.*) Here she goes again...

JEZEBEL: (*Angry rant.*) Snow White! Snow White! Why, that putrid princess, that—!

(*Gisela enters.*)

GISELA: (*Enthusiastically.*) Hello, group!

GROUP MEMBERS: (*Unenthusiastically.*) Hello, Gisela.

GISELA: You were saying, Queen Jezebel...?

JEZEBEL: Nothing.

GISELA: No, this isn't nothing, Queen Jezebel. These are your feelings. Your feelings are not nothing. Don't repress them. I am really sensing your negative energy right now. Why don't you just let it out, Queen Jezebel, whatever you are feeling?

HORTENSE: (*Under her breath.*) Here she goes...

JEZEBEL: (*Angry rant.*) That wretched little worthless brat of a stepdaughter of mine. That repulsive, sickeningly disgusting pustule of perfection, that nauseatingly chipper airhead, that toffee-nosed goody-two-shoes, that—

GISELA: My, yes, well, you certainly let that out. You know my motto, "Happily ever after can only start today, if positive things you do and say." Try and be more positive. Think happy thoughts.

JEZEBEL: Happy thoughts. Right. Like just squeezing all the air out of her perfect size-zero waist with a corset?

GISELA: Yes, well, that isn't exactly what I meant, but you have the general idea.

HORTENSE: (*To Queen Jezebel.*) You know, you aren't the only one with an annoying stepchild. My Cinderella is so insufferably irritating and self-righteous, let me tell you—

GISELA: Right, well, we really need to get started, Hortense. We have a super-duper fun V.I.L.L.A.I.N.S. meeting planned for today. I'm just full of rainbows and sunshine and happily-ever-after thoughts seeing all of your smiling faces. Makes me want to burst into song! But before we get started, let's recite our V.I.L.L.A.I.N.S. pledge, 'kay, 'kay?

BROMHILDA: But I don't know the pledge.

GI SELA: A new member! How exciting! Boris, why don't you recite the pledge for our new member?

JEZEBEL: (*Annoyed.*) Oh, I see...choose the wolf.

GI SELA: I am sensing some aggression, Jezebel. Would you like to talk about it? You can be open with us. Share your feelings. We are all friends here.

JEZEBEL: Well, you would rather choose a wolf than me, isn't it obvious? No one likes me.

GI SELA: That isn't true, Jezebel. We all like you. And we are all equal here. You aren't better or worse than anyone. You are special. I only asked Boris since he is the member who has been here the longest.

BORIS: Hey, I can say the first part, and the skirt... (*Indicating Jezebel*) ...can say the last half.

IVAN: That's a great idea, boss.

VLADMIR: (*To others.*) That's why he's the brains of the outfit.

GI SELA: Thank you, Boris. How very protagonist-like of you. That okay, Jezebel?

JEZEBEL: Whatever.

GI SELA: I am sensing you are still upset. I think you might have some unresolved entitlement issues, Jezebel. You need to think of others, too. Thinking of others first is a trait of a good little hero or heroine. Jezebel, you want to say something to the group? We are listening.

JEZEBEL: No.

GI SELA: Tell us whatever you are feeling.

JEZEBEL: Oh, all right. I feel sad. Boohoo. You happy? (*Takes out a nail file and begins filing her nails.*)

BORIS: (*Under his breath.*) This dame is beginning to rub me the wrong way.

GI SELA: (*Admonishingly.*) Boris...

BORIS: (*To Jezebel.*) I mean, I forgive you, doll face.

JEZEBEL: (*Correcting.*) "Your Majesty," not "doll face," you mangy mutt!

BORIS: Whatever you say, *doll face*.

GISELA: *(To Group.)* Well, wasn't that nice? Doesn't everyone feel better? Now, Boris, why don't you start?

BORIS: *(To Group.)* We are dastardly villains and our lives have become unmanageable, and we won't live happily ever after unless we change. We have the power to change into nice little heroes and heroines. We will make the decision to change into a good protagonist. We will make a fearless search of ourselves and find all the nasty bits of ourselves that make us reprehensible rogues. We admit our wrongs and seek forgiveness from our victims.

HAGATHA: I hate that part.

BORIS: *(To Group.)* Then there is...er...

JEZEBEL: Ha! See, the dopey dog doesn't even know the pledge!

VLADIMAR: Shut your mouth, dame, or I'll do it for you! No one talks to Alpha that way, sweetheart, capish?

BORIS: *(To Group.)* Next, we admit that we are ready to let go of these destructive and villainous tendencies to become more protagonist-like.

GISELA: Wonderful! Now you, Jezebel.

JEZEBEL: Next, is to...to...do something and...errr...

GERLOF: *(To Group.)* I think that Jezebel was going to say that we will let go of these destructive and villainous tendencies.

HAGATHA: I hate that part, too.

GERLOF: *(To Group.)* We will make amends, usually by singing an apology as a cheery show number. Use meditation, reflection, and magical potions as a means to become more insightful and stop our naughty ways from resurfacing. We will spread the news about this meeting to all our wicked henchmen and other antagonistic conspirators.

GISELA: And last but not least?

ALL: We will strive to live happily ever after.

GISELA: Wonderful! I'm sure all of you are just sitting there in uncontrollable anticipation of what we are going to cover at today's meeting, and do I have a super-duper treat for you. I have several *inspirational* speakers here to chat with all of you about living happily ever after, 'kay, 'kay?

JEZEBEL: Inspirational speakers? I'm far too tired for any inspirational speakers. Being the fairest one of them all is tiring work, believe me. *(Takes a hand mirror out of her purse and admires her reflection.)*

HORTENSE: That and coming up with inventive ways of murdering your stepdaughter.

JEZEBEL: That is rather a chore, too. But what's an evil stepmother to do? I suppose I should be thankful. At least, I don't have real daughters who are so utterly hideous and charmless to wear me down and prematurely age me.

HORTENSE: What's that suppose to mean?

*(Looking into her mirror, Jezebel applies some lipstick.)*

JEZEBEL: *(Admiring reflection.)* Stunning. Simply stunning. I am just so gorgeous, I am in awe of myself, really. How can all of you stand being so ugly?

BORIS: Stand being ugly, eh? I survive by eating insulting people, doll face.

GISELA: *(To Group.)* Well, now, everyone isn't here yet, but we better begin. Villains, please give a warm welcome to our first inspirational speaker! Spreading cheer and assistance to those in need, please welcome a full-time fairy godmother and protagonist Lucinda. Let's give her a hand.

*(A magical twinkle sound is heard and Lucinda twirls on, smiling and humming to herself.)*

LUCINDA: How can I be of assistance to you, dearies? I simply *adore* assisting others in need of my help!



GISELA: Perhaps you could speak with our group about being a protagonist. Some pointers maybe...

LUCINDA: I would just *adore* that! (*Annoying laugh.*) Well, being a true protagonist is all about thinking of others before yourself! I *adore* thinking of others!

IVAN: That's easy, chickadee. I mean, I think about succulent, fat pigs in straw houses and tasty little girls alone in the woods all the time!

LUCINDA: (*Annoying laugh.*) Well, not quite like that! I mean, doing something nice for others that won't necessarily benefit you, dear!

JEZEBEL: That's the most ludicrous drivel I've ever heard. People only help you if you threaten to eat out their hearts or give them great health care packages.

LUCINDA: (*Annoying laugh.*) Oh, no, dear! A true protagonist simply *adores* helping others' dreams come true with no thought of reward for themselves!

GERLOF: Lucinda, should your dreams come true by magic?

LUCINDA: Excuse me?

GERLOF: I know I'm only a simple troll, but I always thought that earning your aspirations through perseverance and hard work instead of being given goals created character. For example, Lucinda, I wouldn't want your magic to instantly make me a protagonist and deprive me the journey I began here at V.I.L.L.A.I.N.S. to become a better troll.

LUCINDA: I suppose that's true.

GERLOF: And, really, who are you to dictate what aspirations are really worthy of your assistance and whose aren't?

LUCINDA: Well, those who are virtuous and good, of course! (*Laughs nervously and twirls around the stage humming to herself.*)

GERLOF: But if you were a real protagonist, wouldn't you assist everyone, not just the few who meet your expectations of what is virtuous and good? And what is "good"? Aren't morals and values highly subjective to the standards of a particular society?

LUCINDA: Well, again, you have a very good point...

GERLOF: And aren't you reinforcing the notion that you should only be a protagonist for the sake of reward and not for the sake of being philanthropic itself? And that brings me to...why are you a fairy godmother? I mean, for the power of controlling others? What gives your life purpose or meaning if you weren't always waving your wand about and changing the courses of others' lives?

LUCINDA: I've never thought it that way. I suppose that—

GERLOF: But what do I know? I'm only a dull troll.

*(Long pause. Lucinda hangs her head and begins to exit.)*

GISELA: *(To Lucinda.)* Where are you going? Come back!

LUCINDA: *(Distraught.)* My life has no meaning! Who am I?

*(Crying, Lucinda runs offstage.)*

HORTENSE: *(To Group.)* Well, I certainly *adored* that speaker.

*(Cackling, Marijn and Icabella enter followed by Rumpelstiltskin.)*

MARIJN: *(To Group.)* Sorry Icabella, Rumpelstiltskin, and I are late.

JEZEBEL: Why should anyone care about an old sea witch and a snow woman—?

ICABELLA: *(Correcting.)* Snow *queen*, not woman.

JEZEBEL: *(Dismissive.)* Whoever you are. How could anyone possibly give a pixie about you when the fairest of them all is already present?

IVAN: What? Snow White here or something?

JEZEBEL: What did you say?

VLADIMIR: He said nothing, doll face. *(Aside to Ivan.)* And you better pipe down before you land yourself in a wooden kimono, you sap.

IVAN: Sure thing, Vladimir.

ICABELLA: Look, Jezebel...

JEZEBEL: (*Correcting.*) Queen Jezebel.

ICABELLA: Marijn lives in the deepest depths of the ocean surrounded by lethal whirlpools, and my new ice palace is fabulously located but rather far north. We're not conveniently situated in a nearby castle like you.

HAGATHA: And why are you late, Rumpelstiltskin? You can magically appear wherever and whenever you like!

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: Me? Yeah, I just didn't want to come, that's all.

BROMHILDA: My, you *are* a strange little man.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: I get that a lot.

BROMHILDA: Would you like a gingerbread cookie?

JEZEBEL: Cookie? That is caloric homicide! No way is one of those cookies going onto these fairest-of-them-all thighs. Can't stay on top gorging on gingerbread cookies.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: (*To Bromhilda.*) No thanks. I can turn straw into gingerbread cookies whenever I want.

BROMHILDA: Really?

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: Yeah, I'm pretty gifted with straw, actually.

GISELA: (*To Bromhilda.*) You brought cookies! How very thoughtful! Bringing cookies to others is a very protagonist-like thing to do, everyone!

HAGATHA: What? Making people fat or giving them diabetes is an act of kindness? Man, I hate cookies.

JEZEBEL: Maybe I should bring Snow White some cookies.

GISELA: That is real heroine-thinking.

JEZEBEL: Maybe I could make Snow White do a little thigh expansion...turn Snow White to Snow *Wide!* (*Evil laugh.*)

GISELA: Beauty comes in all sizes, Jezebel. (*To Bromhilda.*) Now, thank you for bringing the cookies. That was so sweet. Let's say thank you, everyone, like a nice protagonist would.

ICABELLA: We don't have to sing, do we? I hate when protagonists sing. It's really irritating.

GISELA: Oh, very well, we won't sing. *(To Group.)* On the count of three, say "thank you." One, two, three...

ALL: *(Reluctantly.)* Thank you.

MARIJN: *(To Gisela.)* You are just scared to eat a cookie after that prune bar Hagatha, here, brought in two weeks ago turned you into a frog.

HAGATHA: *(To Gisela.)* I can't imagine how that potion got in that batch, dearie. And that it worked, too! That frog potion usually only works on princes. My kitchen is such a mess! Really, you would think that Rapunzel would tidy up once in awhile, not like she has anything else to do in the tower, but there you have it. Sing, sing, sing! That's all she ever does. Teenagers! I am so sorry about that, dearie, really.

GISELA: I know it was an accident, Hagatha. There is nothing to forgive. Now, let's bring out our next speaker.

*(Jack enters.)*

JACK: Excuse me, but is this where the V.I.L.L.A.I.N.S. meeting is?

MARIJN: What a nice voice you have, my dear.

JACK: Um, thanks, I guess.

ICABELLA: So, you got a piece of the magic mirror stuck in your heart, making your heart turn to ice. You want my help. Well, you're not getting any mercy from me, sonny. Move along.

JACK: *(Confused.)* Huh?

MARIJN: What do you need, my dear? I'll help you out, but it will cost you your voice.

JACK: Look, I don't need any help. Rumpelstiltskin?

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: I'm sorry, Jack. Let me introduce you to everyone. V.I.L.L.A.I.N.S. members, this is Jack. He is my protagonist mentor, right, Gisela?

GISELA: That's right.

JACK: Yeah, you told me to stop by to discuss the progress Rumpelstiltskin and I have made in our sessions.

GISELA: Wonderful! Please be seated!

*(Jack sits down.)*

ICABELLA: Rumpelstiltskin soooo needs a mentor. Asking for someone's first-born child in exchange for turning straw into gold! Inhumane!

HAGATHA: Quite right. Now, trading a child for stolen lettuce is an entirely different matter.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: Jack, this is Hagatha; Bromhilda, our new member; Boris; Vladimir; Ivan; Gerlof; Hortense; Jezebel—

JEZEBEL: *(Correcting.)* Queen Jezebel. But you can call me Your Most Magnanimous and Magnificent of Majesties, you commoner filth.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: *(To Jack, continuing introductions.)* Icabella, also known as the Snow Queen; Marijn, the sea witch; and Gisela, our leader.

JACK: Pleasure to meet all of you.

MARIJN: You do have a wonderful voice.

JACK: Thanks, I guess.

MARIJN: I just want to cut out your tongue and rip your voice box out of your throat and—

JACK: *(Uncomfortable.)* Er...maybe I should be going. I don't want to interrupt your little meeting.

ICABELLA: Nonsense! Stay! Tell us about yourself!

MARIJN: *(To Jack.)* Yes, speak to us with your most honeyed of voices!

JACK: Well, let's see...I live with my mother in a humble cottage—

HORTENSE: *(Snorts.)* A cottage, how quant...

JACK: One day, I traded our cow, our last possession, for some beans.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: That's about as stupid as trading your first born for produce.

HAGATHA: No, it isn't. Depends on the produce. Now, my Rapunzel, for instance –

MARIJN: What he lacks in IQ points, he more than makes up for in his mellifluous voice. Speak again for me, Jack, dearest.

JACK: Hey, these weren't normal beans. They were magic beans. They grew into a giant beanstalk that reached to the heavens.

MARIJN: Tell me more with your lovely voice, dear one.

GISELA: *(To Group.)* How exciting! An adventure that likely will build character through hardship and produce reward for meritorious behavior! How very protagonist-like!

JACK: I climbed to the heavens and was able to acquire amazing treasures from an evil giant.

IVAN: It sure was nice of that giant to give you treasure, eh, boss?

BORIS: Did he give them to you, Jackie boy?

JACK: *(Sheepishly.)* Not exactly...

BORIS: Hold on there, Mack! If he didn't give them to you, does that mean you took the liberty of acquiring the goods for yourself? That it, chump?

JACK: Well, sort of, I –

IVAN: Why, you dirty, double-crossing rat! I ought to nail you right in the mug, you hoodlum!

JACK: Look! This giant had it coming! He wanted to eat me, okay!

VLADIMIR: I'd want to do more than just eat you if you were sneaking around, trespassing on my joint, and looting my goods, you dirty thug.

BORIS: *(To Jack.)* I see. So stealing is fine if the sap you are pinching from isn't hardboiled, is that it?

JACK: Well, yes. I mean, no. I mean, I don't know...

IVAN: But, boss, isn't stealing not very hero-like? I mean, I'm not of this outfit, but this thug, here... (*Indicating Jack.*) ...seems like nothing but a ragamuffin to me!

JACK: Now, see here! Let me explain.

MARIJN: Yes, let him speak with that alluring voice of his.

GISELA: You know, Jack, if you wanted to join V.I.L.L.A.I.N.S. –

JACK: (*Insulted.*) I am most certainly not a villain!

HORTENSE: (*Matter of fact.*) Denial.

ICABELLA: I remember when I was still at that stage...

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: (*To Jack.*) The first step to recovery is admitting you have a problem.

JACK: I do not have a problem because I am not a villain!

BORIS: What about we ask the giant you were hightailing treasure from? Why don't we ask him if you are a villain?

JACK: You can't!

VLADIMIR: And why is that?

JACK: Well...he's dead.

VLADIMIR: Really? How convenient. And how did he kick the bucket, might I ask?

JACK: Well, I chopped down the beanstalk while he was climbing down... (*Everyone gasps.*) ...but that does not make me a villain, okay?

VLADIMIR: So, let me get this straight: The poor mug was after you for bootlegging his possessions, and you bumped him off?

JACK: He would have killed me!

VLADIMIR: You got any proof for that assertion?

ICABELLA: (*To Jack.*) How utterly ghastly! How completely dastardly! How simply marvelous! Really, I have to congratulate you on an excellent piece of villainy. Misanthropic antagonism at its highest! (*Thinks.*) Or would that be lowest?

HORTENSE: (*To Jack, self-righteous.*) I've made Cinderella into a slave, but at least I've never killed anyone.

MARIJN: *(To herself.)* Surprising that the owner of such a fabulous voice can be completely devoid of any human decency...

IVAN: *(To Jack.)* You outta be in the slammer, you thug!

*(Jack starts to exit.)*

JACK: *(Angry.)* You know what? I don't have to listen to this! I am not a villain, I tell you! I am *not* a villain!

MARIJN: I love the timbre in your voice when you get mad! It's really divine.

VLADIMIR: *(To Jack.)* You pinch loot that doesn't belong to you and then murder the innocent owner. *(Sarcastic.)* Sure, sure, you're nothing like us, kid. That what you tell yourself to sleep at night?

JACK: *(Shouts.)* I hope all of you live unhappily ever after! *(Exits.)*

ICABELLA: Well, that was certainly an antagonistic thing to say.

GISELA: *(To Group.)* Well, that was a learning experience. Being a protagonist is all about learning from your mistakes. What have you learned here?

IVAN: Don't climb down beanstalks because some thug might bump you off.

GERLOF: *(To Gisela.)* Being a protagonist or antagonist is subjective depending on the sympathies of the audience.

GISELA: Yes, well, those were certainly insightful comments. I would say we learned how terrible denial can be. Now, why don't we move on to our next inspirational speaker? He's rescued princesses, defeated dragons, crushed ogres, and broken evil curses with a single kiss. He's dashing, dapper, dote-worthy, and all-around delightful. Presenting none other than the utterly fabulous...Prince Charming! Let's give him a hand!



*(They clap. Waving and smiling, Charming enters followed by his Assistant.)*

CHARMING: *(To various Group Members.)* Hello! Good afternoon! Wonderful to see you! Love the dress! You look fabulous! Thank you, thank you! *(To Marijn, Icabella, and Hagatha.)* Hello, ladies.

MARIJN/ICABELLA/HAGATHA: Hello, Prince Charming!

JEZEBEL: Talk about conceited.

HORTENSE: Well, you're the expert.

ASSISTANT: *(To Gisela.)* About time we started, hun.

GISELA: I am so, so, so, so, so, so, so sorry we are running so late. We had an unexpected guest.

ASSISTANT: Well, look, Gisela, hun, Charming, here, is on a tight schedule. He has a damsel to rescue at two, an evil enchantress to duel at four, and a book promotion at the palace this evening.

ICABELLA: A book promotion?

PRINCE CHARMING: *(Holding up a book with a smiling picture of himself on the cover.)* That's right! "Happily Ever After: How You Can be the Prince Charming of Your Own Fate." From the bestselling author of "Charm Yourself Skinny," none other than me, Prince Charming. This self-help book contains everything you need to know to turn your life into a fairy tale come true. Defeat the trolls inside yourself.

GERLOF: What if you *are* a troll?

PRINCE CHARMING: This book comes with a happily-ever-after guarantee. Copies go on sale starting next week. Receive 15 percent off when you order your copy in advance.

ASSISTANT: *(Suddenly remembers.)* Oh, pixie dust! Prince Charming, Your Majesty! I forgot that I penciled in a pedicure before tonight's gala. We better gallop into the sunset, if you take my meaning!

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: *(To Charming.)* But what about your inspirational speech?

PRINCE CHARMING: Huh?

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: You know, inspirational speakers typically give inspirational speeches...

PRINCE CHARMING: Everything you need to inspire yourself is in my book.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: A sales pitch doesn't count as an inspirational speech.

PRINCE CHARMING: You know, you really *are* a strange little man.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: Tell me something I haven't heard before.

ASSISTANT: Look, your nails are disgraceful, Charming! Sorry, villains, we have to head out!

PRINCE CHARMING: Goodbye, ladies. And, remember, "Happily Ever After: How You Can be the Prince Charming of your Own Fate" is coming to bookstores near you!

*(Prince Charming and Assistant exit.)*

GERLOF: Hold on here!

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: Well, I feel thoroughly uninspired.

*(Pied Piper enters.)*

PIED PIPER: Excuse me, is this the V.I.L.L.A.I.N.S. meeting? You know, "Vitriolic Individuals Learning to Love, Assist Individuals, and Be Nice Society"?

MARIJN: Why, yes, yes, it is.

PIED PIPER: Excuse me, folks, but this won't take a minute of your time. I'm the Pied Piper, and do I have an extra special deal for you folks! Do you have a problem that most conventional treatments don't work for? Are you at your wits' end on how to reach your happily ever after?

JEZEBEL: *(Excited.)* What? You knock off stepdaughters?

PIED PIPER: I'm here to offer you a new, safe, and affordable treatment option. That's right...hypnosis. Using the latest

in transcendental music, I can hypnotize any and all of your antagonistic tendencies away! Poof! Like that!

MARIJN: Sounds dodgy.

ICABELLA: *(To Pied Piper.)* I don't know if I speak for the rest of the group, but we aren't interested.

HORTENSE: *(To Pied Piper.)* Hey! I think I've seen you in the news before. Aren't you that Pied Piper guy who exterminated all those rats?

PIED PIPER: I used to be in the extermination business, yes.

HORTENSE: Didn't you kidnap all those little kids, too?

PIED PIPER: I can't make a statement regarding that particular allegation without my lawyer present.

HAGATHA: I wouldn't mind a few children... *(Dreamily.)* ...lightly sautéed with lemon juice and thyme...

GISELA: *(To Pied Piper.)* Look, only a certified fairy godmother is qualified to recommend treatment options. I think you should leave.

PIED PIPER: Just a minute, folks, allow me to demonstrate!

BORIS: *(To Vladimir and Ivan.)* Hey, boys, why don't you assist this dumb Dora with finding the door?

VLADIMIR: Happy to oblige, boss.

IVAN: But the door is right there, boss... *(Realizes.)* Oh, I get it.

*(Ivan and Vladimir pick Pied Piper up or start to forcefully escort him off.)*

PIED PIPER: *(To Vladimir and Ivan.)* How dare you! Unhand me, you thugs! *(To Group.)* Just you wait till I get my pipe out, all of you!

*(Ivan and Vladimir exit with Pied Piper. Fairies 1, 2, 3, enter.)*

FAIRY 1: Where is he?

MARIJN: Who are you?

FAIRY 2: Oh, we're members of F.A.R.T.S.

ICABELLA: Did you just say "farts"?

FAIRY 2: Yes, you know...F.A.R.T.S.: Fairies Assisting and Reducing Trouble Society. We have this room after you guys.

GISELA: (*Annoyed.*) F.A.R.T.S. isn't scheduled for another hour.

HORTENSE: (*To Fairies.*) Whoa, whoa, hold on here. Let me get this straight. You guys are really from a society called "F.A.R.T.S."?

FAIRY 2: Yes, Fairies Assisting and Reducing Trouble Society: F.A.R.T.S.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: And I thought *my* name was unusual.

ICABELLA: (*To Fairies.*) You might want to think up a new acronym.

FAIRY 1: Yeah, yeah. Look, we came early. Is it true that *the* Prince Charming is here?

GISELA: Yes!

FAIRY 3: Wonderful! Do you think he would mind autographing my copy of "Charm Yourself Skinny"? It really changed my life.

HORTENSE: Prince Charming already left.

JEZEBEL: (*To Fairy 3.*) But I wouldn't mind autographing something for you...since I am the fairest of them all, after all!

FAIRY 3: (*To Fairy 1, 2.*) Come on, F.A.R.T.S. members! He couldn't have gotten far!

(*Fairies 1, 2, 3 rush off.*)

GISELA: (*To Group.*) Well, now that we have listened to our wonderful inspirational speakers, why don't we get to know our new member!

BROMHILDA: Hi, everyone. I'm Bromhilda

GISELA: "Bromhilda"? Interesting name. I've never heard of you before.

BROMHILDA: A lot of people haven't. I'm from the story of "Mother Hulda." You know, the evil stepmother.

BORIS: Never heard of it.

BROMHILDA: (*In disbelief.*) Surely, you have.

JEZEBEL: Listen, I have a magic mirror that can show me the winning lottery number for the day – anything I want – and I haven't seen or heard of any Mother Hulda.

BROMHILDA: Well, basically, I have a stepdaughter and a real daughter. And I am...well, rather antagonistic to the stepdaughter.

JEZEBEL: Good. I hate stepdaughters.

HORTENSE: Me, too.

BROMHILDA: Anyway, this stepdaughter falls into a well and meets some character who goes by Mother Hulda, who makes her fabulously wealthy because she is so good. Seeing how rich she is, I shove my own dear daughter in the well, but this Mother Hulda figure covers her with pitch and sends her back out because my own dear puppet is so greedy and evil.

GERLOF: What is pitch?

HAGATHA: Black, sticky stuff. Very flammable. Good in poisons.

GERLOF: I like sticky stuff.

JEZEBEL: Well, pitch is generally thought of as unpleasant by the masses...especially those of noble blood and a genial constitution such as myself.

BORIS: Where is this Mother Hulda? Want me to eat her?

GISELA: Now, Boris, protagonists don't eat everyone who makes them cross. They openly discuss their feelings with those who have offended them.

BORIS: So can I talk to her...then eat her?

BROMHILDA: I can't believe you have never heard of me!

GISELA: Bromhilda, it is perfectly fine, dear, that you are an obscure villain. We want to reach out to antagonists everywhere. I mean, we can't all be infamous villains like the Evil Fairy.

HAGATHA: Why, dearie, who was the Evil Fairy?

GI SELA: (*Proudly.*) Why, me...back in the old days when I was an antagonist. Surely, you must have heard of me. Why, I was the most dastardly, evil villain of all time, if I may say so.

JEZEBEL: I beg to differ. If there is a competition for the most wicked, cruel, and deprived villain here, that would be me!

GI SELA: Could you put a curse on people making them sleep for hundreds of years? No! Can you bewitch a spindle on a spinning wheel? No! Can you make huge thorn bushes spring up everywhere? No! I could! I was the Evil Fairy. Some less-dastardly villains—need I say names—are too busy making potions to reduce the size of their pores and trying to kill their stepdaughter to hatch any really sinister plots.

BORIS: Wait a minute! I think I heard something about you. In the “Ever After Times”...in the marriage section. Doesn’t that involve that doll...what’s her name? I think the “Times” nicknamed her “Sleeping Beauty.” Recently married to a Prince Something-Or-Other?

GI SELA: And I issued a very nice apology to her, yes. Although she is still...well, let’s just say I can’t legally get within 100 feet of her person anytime soon.

BORIS: Evil Fairy, you say? Funny, I mean, for this super-iniquitous villain you claim to be. I mean, you don’t even have a proper-noun name. You are just the “evil fairy.”

GI SELA: So?

BORIS: I mean, I was the Big Bad Wolf. (*Proudly.*) I had a reputation.

JEZEBEL: (*To Gisela.*) That’s true. You don’t have a proper-noun name like me. It’s not like anyone is going to remember Snow White at all. It will be Queen Jezebel and her not-very-remarkable, homely stepdaughter, whatever her name was.

BORIS: *(To Gisela.)* Anyways, yeah, I mean you weren't really that villainous. You were just a bad sport for not being invited to a baby christening.

HAGATHA: *(Angry rant.)* I hate baby christenings! All those silly games where you have to try different baby food and eat cake. Who wants cake when there is a plump, delicious baby present? Really!

BORIS: *(To Gisela.)* Honestly, the whole situation was kind of juvenile.

GISELA: You think I sentenced a whole castle of people to sleep for a hundred years because I was being juvenile?

BORIS: Well, yeah. And then there is the fact that only one little smooch by a prince and *ba-da-bam* everything was happily ever after.

GISELA: *(Defensive.)* The curse was over!

BORIS: But the point is your curse wasn't that vindictive. That's kind of tepid villainy, if you don't mind my saying. I mean, you were, like, well, wishy-washing around. Hmmm, I'll curse you for a bit...then you can live happily ever after. I don't play around with my victims. I either eat them or I don't—simple, straightforward, wicked behavior. Villainy at its simplest and purest form, if I may say so.

GISELA: Well, you got defeated by a pig!

BORIS: Hey! That wasn't a happily-ever-afterish comment!

GISELA: Shut your trap, you mangy mutt! You think I like hearing about your pathetic escapades? *(Mimicking him.)* "I feel so bad for eating Henny Penny, Cocky Locky, Goosey Loosey, Turkey Lurkey, Ducky Lucky and then incriminating Foxy Loxy in their grisly poultricide, blah, blah, blah." I used to be the evil fairy, you fleabag! Do you understand me?! The evil fairy!

BORIS: Yeah, you and every other "evil" fairy out there. Do you have conventions? Or are there too many of you to find a place to house you?

GISELA: I am the one, the only, evil fairy, I tell you! And I've wasted my magical prowess and cunning evil schemes on

listening to you pathetic-excuses-for-villains talk about your pointless, inconsequential, little lives!

BORIS: Oh, yeah, real evil scheme. Oh, no, I've fallen asleep and am awaking to a handsome prince kissing me! How terrible my life is! Oh, yeah, you really punished her! I bet her life really sucks now!

GISELA: You are such a...a...wretched, drool-dripping bottomless pit! Do you think about no one but yourself?

BORIS: (*Reflective.*) Sometimes I think of chickens...mostly because I really like eating them.

GISELA: What about me, huh? I listen to all of your whining and confessions, but what about what I want, huh? Anyone care about that?

JEZEBEL: Not really.

GISELA: Well, you're going to listen, you vain, wrinkled old fraud. Yes, fraud! Your blood isn't any more royal than that bumbling blockhead of a troll's over there! (*Points to Gerlof.*) I know the truth! You, Queen Jezebel, were nothing but a flamenco dancer once upon a time! Admit it! Admit it!

HAGATHA: Really, Gisela!

GISELA: Keep that wart-covered chin of yours shut, you old witch.

GERLOF: But, Gisela, aren't you suppose to be...well...nice? You aren't antagonistic anymore, are you?

GISELA: (*Fuming.*) I could really kill something cute and fluffy right now.

BORIS: (*Dreamily.*) Me, too...

GISELA: You know what I want? Why I started this stupid Vitriolic Individuals Learning to Love, Assist Individuals, and be Nice Society? Why I've lived the last two years of my life more golden than Goldilocks? Why? Why give up my power...my reputation? Well, the answer is--this sounds stupid even to me, but it's true--to be happy! That's right! To be happy! Crazy, huh? I was never happy! Oh, no. Never happy. Not one vindictive minute. And now? Am I happy, you may ask? Spending my Friday nights with you



novices, you tyros at the fine and exacting science of villainy? I'll tell you how I am! I am miserable! Miserable! How do you become happy anyway?! How?

BORIS: (*Dreamily.*) Lamb chops...

HAGATHA: (*To Gisela.*) You could try inflicting misery on others. That usually cheers me up when I'm grumpy.

GISELA: I have. Even that doesn't work!

GERLOF: You know what kind of makes me happy?

GISELA: What?

GERLOF: Coming to V.I.L.L.I.A.N.S. meetings. It's kind of like having friends.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: (*Confused.*) Friends? What are those?

BORIS: (*To Gerlof, excited.*) Are they tasty?

GERLOF: I don't know what friends are exactly, but protagonists always have a lot of them. They are generally thought of as pleasant things. They are individuals who do things for you, I guess.

HORTENSE: So kind of like a servant?

GERLOF: Not really. I mean, you don't pay them...they just do stuff for you.

HORTENSE: So you mean a slave.

GERLOF: No, they do stuff for you for free just because they like you.

JEZEBEL: (*Evil laugh.*) Nonsense!

GERLOF: May all my warts fall off if I am lying!

BORIS: I might like one of those. It would be nice to have somebody to hang out in the woods with.

GERLOF: You wouldn't be able to eat them.

BORIS: Never mind.

GISELA: Maybe you eat people to keep them close to you.

HAGATHA: (*To Boris.*) I think Gisela might be right.

BORIS: But if you don't eat someone, you'll lose them forever, right? "Seize the moment! Seize the unsuspecting prey!" That's what my mother always told me.

GISELA: I think you just have a hunger for love and acceptance that manifests itself as your desire to consume others.

BORIS: I think you might be right, Gisela. *(Cries.)* Nobody loves me!

IVAN: I love you, boss!

VLADIMIR: *(To Boris.)* Yeah, me, too, boss!

JEZEBEL: Love?! Phooey! I'd like to see love wake somebody from one of my poisoned apples!

MARIJN: I think it would be pretty nice to have somebody who loves me...who wasn't one of my pet water snakes.

GISELA: You think I would be happy if I got a friend...if I found someone to love me?

JEZEBEL: No. People who love you, they can hurt you, too. My mother she said she loved me! Ha! All she ever did was yell at me. "Not good enough! Not good enough!" she would say. "Jezebel, you pudgy little dumpling of a girl, you're too stupid, Jezebel, too ugly. You'll never be much of anything!" After that beautifying potion, not to mention plastic surgery— *(Realizes.)* I mean, everything you see is all natural. All natural, I tell you!

GISELA: Maybe you are taking your frustrations with your own dysfunctional relationship with your mother out on Snow White.

JEZEBEL: Impossible. I don't care about what my mother thinks, anyway. She was nothing but an old witch. No offense intended, Hagatha!

GISELA: Come on, Jezebel, begin the process. Tell us how you feel about your mother.

JEZEBEL: A little hurt. Angry. I feel angry. I mean, why didn't my mommy love me?! *(Cries.)*

GISELA: There, there, Jezebel. Let go of the past. You don't have to be an old witch like your mother. You can be the witch to Snow White you always wanted to have growing up, do you understand me?

JEZEBEL: I feel better.

GISELA: Are you ready to go and be a true mother to Snow White?

JEZEBEL: Maybe in a few days. I kind of almost finished her off earlier today with this magic comb. (*Holds up comb.*) She might not want to see me for a while.

HAGATHA: Well, I don't need a friend or anyone. I have Rapunzel.

GISELA: But she's a hostage.

HAGATHA: But if I don't keep her, she'll leave me...and...and...I would miss her horribly. She's my little girl...

GISELA: No one likes a jailer, even one who professes to love them. You have to let her go, Hagatha. Let her go.

HAGATHA: But I might end up all alone!

VLADIMIR: You would still have us here at the V.I.L.L.A.I.N.S. meetings.

HAGATHA: I suppose so...

GERLOF: (*To Group.*) So does that mean...we are friends?

JEZEBEL: I don't know. You are a smelly wart-covered troll.

GISELA: Well, a troll or a narcissistic, selfish, and generally unpleasant sorceress, we all have our faults but that shouldn't stop us from seeing the best in each other.

JEZEBEL: Hagatha isn't narcissistic.

GERLOF: (*To Group.*) I never really thought of why it would be worth it to get to the final step of the V.I.L.L.A.I.N.S.'s process, but I think I know now. The reason is to have friends, don't you think?

HAGATHA: I think you might be right.

BORIS: Whatever. Is this meeting almost over? There is a...sheep flock...er... (*Realizes.*) ...this shepherd I need to go teach a little lesson to in why not to lie.

GISELA: Yes, well... (*Looks at watch.*) Oh, my! Look at the time! We need to bring this meeting to a close. I feel like we have really made some progress today! Now, remember, as you go along this week another one of my favorite V.I.L.L.A.I.N.S.'s mottos:

“If I feel the urge to eat, poison, or maim,  
Think I can be a protagonist and refrain.”  
Repeat it once, everyone!

ALL: *(Half-heartedly recite.)*

“If I feel the urge to eat, poison, or maim,  
Think I can be a protagonist and refrain.”

GISELA: Wonderful, everyone! Remember that you, too, can live happily ever after! And I’ll see all of you the same time next week at V.I.L.L.A.I.N.S.! *(Group Members grumble. To audience.)* Hope you live happily ever after, everyone! *(Blackout.)*

Curtain