The City of Lost Angels

By Benn Bell

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Benn Bell

**Characters**

Bella – Leo’s sister, beautiful, innocent, and in a nunnery

Leo – Prisoner condemned to death for fornication, Bella’s brother

Deputy Dawg - Left in charge of the city by the Regent

Regent Vincent – Ruler of the city

Luke – Leo’s friend

Echo – Civil servant and Advisor to Deputy Dawg

Miss Julie – Leo’s lover who is impregnated by him

Anna Belle Lee – Was supposed to marry Deputy Dawg but was spurned by him

Missy Overstreet - Local madam who runs the local whorehouse

Scarlett Kneepads – Local Whore

Chuckles – Clown who works for Missy Overstreet

Jack Warden – Runs the prison

Mike Hammer – Chief of Security

Barnaby – Another prisoner, always drunk, sentenced to death

Friar Tucker – Clergyman

Friar Lawrence - Regent Vincent in disguise

Kevorkian - Executioner

Phil Roth – Unusual Suspect

Sister Mary Magaret

Flavius, Johnson, various lackeys and officers

**Setting**

City of Lost Angels, Asteroid Globulus M-17, sometime in the future

**Scene 1. City Hall**

*Enter Regent Vincent, Echo, and lackeys*

**Regent Vincent**: Echo?

**Echo**: Sir?

**Regent Vincent**: Is there an Echo in here?

**Echo**: Yes sir, I am right here!

**Regent Vincent**: Oh! There you are!

(*To lackey #1*) Go forth and fetch Deputy Dawg!

*Exit lackey #1*

**Regent Vincent**: What do you think his reaction will be, Echo, when I tell him that I have chosen him to take my place while I am away and have given him all my power to act in my stead?

**Echo**: He is a good choice, governor, and worthy of the honor.

**Regent Vincent**: Look! Here he comes now!

*Enter Deputy Dawg*

**Deputy Dawg**: How now brown cow? How may I be of service to you on this fine, fine day?

**Regent Vincent**: I am going away on business for a few days. Things are getting out of hand in Key Margo and I just can’t stay away from there any longer. I want to leave you in charge of the city while I am gone. I can think of no one else in all of Lost Angels or anywhere else on Globulus for that matter, who is better suited to the purpose. Echo, here, will be your right hand.

**Deputy Dawg**: But sir! I am unworthy…

**Regent Vincent**: Nonsense! I have given this a lot of thought and I just know you, Deputy Dawg, are the right man for the job! Your scope of power will be the same as mine. And I expect you to enforce the laws of the city while I am gone as you see fit. Give me your hand on it.

**Deputy Dawg**: Thank you, sir! Good luck!

**Echo**: Safe travels!

**Regent Vincent**: Thank you! Thank you very much!

*Exit Regent Vincent*

**Echo**: Vincent has left the building. Now that he has gone, may I speak candidly? If I may ask, sir, what power will I have?

**Deputy Dawg**: I don’t know yet. Let me think about it. We will have a conversation about this at another time.

**Echo**: I look forward to it!

*They both exit*

**Scene 2. A street**

*Enter Luke and two friends*

**Luke**: She was a real man-eater.

**Man# 1**: Aye sir, an oral surgeon you might say!

**Man #2**: Yeah, but she gave me a lethal dose!

**Luke:** She was only a grave digger’s daughter but you should have seen her under the sod.

**Man #1**: She was just seventeen if you know what I mean…

*All laughing and staggering*

*Enter Missy Overstreet*

**Missy**: Well, well, well! That one over there who has been arrested and hauled off to prison is worth five times what any of you are worth!

**Man #2**: Who?

**Missy**: Leo

**Man #1**: Leo is going to prison? No!

**Missy**: Yes! I saw him arrested with my own eyes! And in three days he will have his head removed.

**Luke**: Are you sure it was Leo?

**Missy**: Yes, I’m sure! And it was for getting Miss Julie in the family way.

**Luke**: We were supposed to meet up in a couple of hours. Let’s go see what happened.

*Exit Luke and friends*

**Missy**: Woooweeee! Between the war, the virus, and the beheadings, business is going down a hole!

*Enter Chuckles the Clown*

**Missy**: Hey Chuckles! How’s the clown business? What’s new?

**Chuckles**: That man over there is being hauled off to prison.

**Missy**: Yes, I know.

**Chuckles**: What’s he done?

**Missy**: A woman is to blame.

**Chuckles**: Yeah, but what’s he done?

**Missy**: A little of the old in-out, in-out, I should imagine.

**Chuckles**: What? Is the girl preggers?

**Missy**: You might say there was a maid that was made by him…if you receive my meaning.

**Chuckles**: Have you heard about the new executive order?

**Missy**: Executive order? What executive order?

**Chuckles**: The one that says that all whorehouses in the suburbs must be torn down.

**Missy**: What about the city?

**Chuckles**: They were up for grabs too but someone on the city council stepped in and saved them. At least for now.

**Missy**: Oh my! What will become of me?

**Chuckles**: Don’t worry. When one door closes another one opens. You will still have plenty of clients. You can go on Back Page and there is always the internet. And I’ll still be shilling for you and sending plenty of trade your way.

Oh, look! Here comes Leo now being led by the warden, and there’s Miss Julie and Hammer too.

*Enter Warden, Hammer, Leo, and Miss Julie.*

**Leo**: Why are you dragging me through town? Just take me to prison and get it over with!

**Warden**: I am under orders from Deputy Dawg.

*Re-enter Luke and friends*

**Luke**: Leo! Why are you in custody?

**Leo**: Because they don’t want me to be so free is why!

**Luke**: What did you do?

**Leo**: If I were to say I would be re-offending.

**Luke**: Was it murder most foul?

**Leo**: No.

**Luke**: Lechery?

**Leo**: Getting warmer.

**Warden**: Step away from the prisoner.

**Leo**: Just a moment. A word with my good friend Luke.

**Luke**: A hundred if it will do any good. I didn’t know lechery was a crime.

**Leo**: The straight of it is, I bedded Miss Julie good and proper and now I have to pay the price. The only thing is she is practically my wife for all intents and purposes, we just haven’t taken that last step. We were just waiting for the right time.

**Luke**: Is Miss Julie with child?

**Leo**: Yes, unfortunately, we were careless in that regard too. And now there’s a new sheriff in town who wants to make a name for himself by enforcing the fornication laws which haven’t been enforced for years. I just happen to be the one he wants to make an example of.

**Luke**: It sure looks that way. Your head is hanging by a thread. Why don’t you find the Regent and appeal to him for mercy?

**Leo**: I have tried. He is nowhere to be found. I beg you, Luke, do me a solid and find my sister. She is about to enter a nunnery; The Sisters of Mercy I think it is. Tell her about me. Entreat her to go to Deputy Dawg and plead with him to show me mercy.

**Luke**: I will go to her. For your sake, I hope she can persuade the deputy.

**Leo**: Thank you, my friend!

**Luke**: I will return shortly.

*Exit Luke*

**Leo**: Come officers! Away!

*They all Exit*

**Scene 3. A Monastery**

*Enter Regent Vincent and Friar Tucker*

**Regent Vincent**: Don’t give it a second thought, father. The reason I need you to give me a secret hideout is of major importance to me but is of no concern to you.

**Friar Tucker**: Couldn’t you just give me a clue?

**Vincent**: Oh alright…I have given Deputy Dawg my full power here in the City of Lost Angels. He thinks I am traveling to Key Margo. And do you want to know why?

**Friar Tucker**: Yes, pray, tell.

**Vincent**: We have strong laws on the books but lax enforcement.

**Friar Tucker**: But sir, isn’t it your duty to enforce the law? I fear Deputy Dawg will be far harsher than your honor.

**Vincent:** That may be true, but I don’t have the temperament for it. I’d rather let Deputy Dawg do my dirty work while I sit back and watch. I will, however, as a brother in your order, visit Deputy Dawg and the people of the city. What I need from you now is a robe and a lesson on how to conduct myself as a monk. And then we will see just how corrupt this city really is.

*They exit*

**Scene 4. A nunnery**

*Enter Bella and a nun*

**Bella**: I look forward to the day when I say my final vows.

**Sister Mary Margaret**: It won’t be long now, my dear

**Luke**: (*off stage*) What ho!

**Bella**: Who is it who calls out, “What Ho?”

**Sister Mary Margaret**: It’s a man’s voice…. You can talk to him, but I cannot. You have not yet made your vows. He calls again. Answer him.

**Bella**: Who is it that calls?

*Enter Luke*

**Luke**: Hail virgin! If you are a virgin. I am looking for Bella, a novice of the Sisters of Mercy and sister to her unhappy brother Leo.

**Bella**: But why unhappy? I am Bella, Leo’s sister.

**Luke**: My fair lady…your brother greets you. It is my unfortunate duty to inform you that he is in prison.

**Bella**: In prison? What for?

**Luke**: He got his girlfriend pregnant.

**Bella**: Sir! Do not play with me!

**Luke**: I’m not playing. It’s true.

**Bella**: Someone impregnated by him? His girlfriend, Miss Julie?

**Luke**: Yes, she is pregnant with his child.

**Bella**: Well, let him marry her then!

**Luke**: Just so. You see, that’s the rub. The Regent has mysteriously disappeared and in his place, a hideous deputy has been appointed with the full power and authority of the Regent. This Deputy Dawg is a cold-hearted bastard bent on upholding the letter of the law, even laws that have not been upheld in years. And he intends to make an example of your brother. That is the very crux and meat of the matter that I have come to talk to you about.

**Bella**: Does he seek his life?

**Luke**: There is a warrant for his execution.

**Bella**: What can I do?

**Luke**: Use your powers.

**Bella**: Powers? What powers do I have?

**Luke**: Don’t sell yourself short…. go to Deputy Dawg. Make your best case. Use your powers of persuasion.

**Bella**: I’ll see what I can do.

**Luke**: You need to hurry.

**Bella**: I’ll go right away… I’ll just tell Mother Superior what I’m up to. Thank you, kind sir. Say hello to Leo for me. Later tonight I’ll get word to him of my success.

**Luke**: Ok. Bye for now.

**Bella**: Goodbye.

*They both exit.*

**Scene 5. City Hall**

*Enter Deputy Dawg, Echo, Warden, aides*

**Echo**: This young man we have incarcerated comes from a good family and has a very powerful father. Besides, who is to say, that if circumstances were the same, you yourself might find yourself in such a predicament?

**Deputy Dawg**: It is one thing to be tempted, Echo, quite another to fall prey to temptation. Just because I have my own faults doesn’t mean I can’t pass judgment on him. Leo must die!

**Echo**: As you like it, so you shall have it.

**Deputy Dawg**: Where is the warden?

**Warden**: Here your honor!

**Deputy Dawg**: See to it that Leo is executed tomorrow morning. Allow him to see a priest to hear his confession and to administer last rites.

**Warden**: Aye sir!

*Exit Warden*

*Enter Hammer, officers, Roth, and Chuckles*

**Hammer**: Bring the prisoners along.

**Deputy Dawg**: And who are you my good man and what is the meaning of this?

**Hammer**: If it pleases your honor, I am the Regent’s Chief of Security. My name is Hammer. Mike Hammer. I bring before you, two lawbreakers and trouble makers.

**Echo**: Yes, I will vouch for him, sir. He is indeed an officer of the court.

**Deputy Dawg**: Well, speak up, man! What do we have here? Who are you?

**Hammer**: He, sir, is a bartender at the local whorehouse! Or he was. That cathouse was torched. Now you might say it’s a hothouse if you receive my meaning.

**Echo**: How do you know that?

**Hammer**: My wife, sir! My wife told me.

**Echo**: Your wife? How did she know?

**Hammer**: Because, sir, she was there! And if she had been a disreputable woman, she might herself be accused of fornication!

**Echo**: By the madam of the whorehouse?

**Hammer**: Yes sir! By Missy Overstreet herself! But my wife spit in this man’s face!

**Chuckles**: Now hold on just a doggone minute! That’s not true!

**Hammer**: Prove it then! If you are so innocent where is your proof?

**Chuckles**: She came in here big as a house craving of all things prunes! We only had two left in the whole house. They were in a fruit dish. Not the best China mind you, but a pretty decent dish just the same.

**Echo**: Enough about the dish! What happened next?

**Chuckles**: Right, you are sir! Right to the point! As I say, she came in here big with child and craving prunes and having only two prunes in the dish, this man here, Mr. Roth, having eaten all the rest, having paid very generously for them, isn’t that right Mr. Roth? Do you remember Mr. Roth we were talking earlier about the prunes?

**Roth**: Yes, I do.

**Chuckles**: And I was telling you that eating prunes was very good for you and can cure virtually anything.

**Roth**: Yes, yes, that is true!

**Chuckles**: Very well then…

**Echo**: Come on you Goddam fool! Get to the point! What was done to Hammer’s wife that has caused him to file a complaint? Come on. Tell me!

**Chuckles**: Sir, I am getting around to it! Look at Mr. Roth here. A man who only makes 50 bits a year. His father died last Halloween and left him an inheritance. It was on Halloween wasn’t it, Mr. Roth?

**Roth**: Why, yes, yes it was!

**Chuckles**: We’re getting there, sir! We’re getting there! He was sitting there, as I say, in a chaise lounge at the Grapes of Wrath Tavern, where you like to sit and relax, don’t you Mr. Roth?

**Roth**: Yes, I do, because they have a nice big fireplace, and it’s very cozy there in the winter.

**Chuckles**: Very good, I think we are getting closer to the truth here.

**Deputy Dawg**: This could take all night, and all night I don’t have. I’m leaving. Echo, I am going to let you get to the bottom of this and I hope you find a good reason to whip them all!

**Echo**: I’ll do my very best. Goodnight, sir!

*Exit Deputy Dawg*

Now, sir, come on, tell me once more, what happened to Hammer’s wife?

**Chuckles**: Once? Nothing happened to her once.

**Hammer**: I beg you, sir, ask him what this man did to my wife.

**Chuckles**: I beg you, sir, ask me.

**Echo**: Very well sir, what did this man do to her?

**Chuckles**: We’re coming to it. I beg you, sir, take a good look at this man’s face, Mr. Roth, look at his face. Does his honor see his face?

**Echo**: Yes, I do, very well!

**Chuckles**: No, I beg you, really study it.

**Echo**: Well, I am.

**Chuckles**: Do you see any harm in his face?

**Echo**: Why, no.

**Chuckles**: I swear to you that his face is the worst thing about him. And if his face is the worst thing about him, how is it possible that he could do any harm to this man’s wife? Can you explain that?

**Echo**: He’s right. Mr. Hammer, how do you explain that?

**Hammer**: First of all, this is a house of ill repute; second, this fellow has a bad reputation, and finally, his employer is a disreputable woman.

**Chuckles**: I swear, sir, his wife has the worst reputation of all!

**Hammer**: Liar! You low-life egg-sucking dog! How dare you disrespect my wife!

**Chuckles**: It’s true! He disrespected her before he married her!

**Hammer**: Oh, you, lowlife scum! You dirtbag! You scalawag! I respected her before I married her! If I ever disrespected her, or she disrespected me, I’m not the regent’s poor creature. Prove this, you dirty dog, or I’ll sue you for assault.

**Echo**: If he slapped you silly you could sue him for slander.

**Hammer**: Thank you, your honor. What would you like me to do with this miserable excuse of a man?

**Echo**: Well, captain, it seems he has committed some crime that is yet to be determined, hold him until you figure out what it is.

**Hammer**: Thank you, your honor. Now, you slimy bastard, you see what’s going to happen to you, we are going to hold you indefinitely.

**Echo**: Now, Mr. Roth. Where were you born?

**Roth**: Why, right here sir. In the City of Lost Angels.

**Echo**: Is it true you have an income of 50 bits a year?

**Roth**: Yes, it is.

**Echo**: Alright. What is it you do?

**Roth**: I am a bartender, sir. A poor widow’s bartender.

**Echo**: And your employer’s name?

**Roth**: Missy Overstreet.

**Echo**: And has she had more than one husband?

**Roth**: Nine, sir! She got the name Overstreet from the last one.

**Echo**: Nine! Come here, Mr. Roth. Mr. Roth, I’d prefer you not associate with bartenders. They’re bad company and liable to get you hanged. Now get out of here and don’t let me ever see you again!

**Roth**: Thank you, your honor, you won’t see me again!

**Echo**: Goodbye Mr. Roth. See to it that I don’t!

*Exit Roth*

Come here Mr. Bartender. What is your name?

**Chuckles**: Chuckles.

**Echo**: What are you. Some kind of clown? I heard you were a part-time pimp.

**Chuckles**: Honestly sir, I am just a simple clown trying to earn a living.

**Echo**: And how do you make that living, sir? By being a pimp? Is that legal?

**Chuckles**: If the law allows it.

**Echo**: But the law does not allow it.

**Chuckles**: Does your honor mean to castrate all the men and fix all the women?

**Echo**: No, Chuckles.

**Chuckles**: Then, sir, in my estimation, they’ll continue to get it on. And if you were to make all the arrangements for all the whores and the johns, you wouldn’t need pimps.

**Echo**: We have instituted some rather harsh penalties. Namely, beheading and hanging.

**Chuckles**: If you behead and hang everyone who breaks the law by having sex, in ten years this place will be a ghost town.

**Echo**: Thanks for your prediction. Now Chuckles, in return let me give you some advice: Don’t let me find you appearing before me again. If I do, I’ll have you whipped. Is that clear?

**Chuckles**: Yes, Your honor! I thank you for the good advice. You won’t see me again!

*Chuckles exits*

**Echo**: Come here, Mr. Hammer. How long have you been a policeman?

**Hammer**: You mean before I became Chief of Security? I’d say about seven years.

**Echo**: I thought you’d been on the job for quite a while seeing how good you are at it. There must have been others in the department that were your competitors. Is that right?

**Hammer**: Yes, sir, many competent individuals.

**Echo**: Well, bring me six or seven names of the best and the brightest.

**Hammer**. To your house sir?

**Echo**. Yes, to my house.

*Hammer exits*

What time is it?

**Aide**: Eleven, sir.

**Echo**: Come to lunch with me, won’t you my good man?

**Aide**: Aye. Thank you, sir. I would be most happy to.

**Echo**: Leo’s death saddens me, but I see no way around it.

**Aide**: Deputy Dawg is severe.

**Echo**: Unfortunately, it is necessary. A show of mercy is a sign of weakness and would only embolden other lawbreakers. Having said that I do feel sorry for poor Leo! But there is no way to prevent it. Let us go.

*Exit Echo and Aide*

**Scene 6. Another room in City Hall**

*Enter Warden and Deputy Dawg*

**Deputy Dawg**: What’s wrong now, Warden?

**Warden**: Are you still intent on executing Leo tomorrow?

**Deputy Dawg**: Did I not give the order? Do I need to say it again? Why do you ask?

**Warden**: I just wanted to make sure. You may regret a decision made in haste.

**Deputy Dawg**: You let me worry about that. Go and do your duty or I will find someone else who will.

**Warden**: Yes sir! I certainly will! Begging your honor’s pardon, what should I do with Miss Julie? Her time is almost here.

**Deputy Dawg**: Remove her to a more suitable location.

*Enter Aide*

**Aide**: Sir, the sister of the condemned is here to see you.

**Deputy Dawg**: He has a sister?

**Warden**: Yes, your honor. A very good and virtuous young lady who is about to join the sisterhood.

**Deputy Dawg**: Very well, send her in.

*Exit Aide*

*Enter Bella*

**Deputy Dawg**: Welcome. What can I do for you?

**Bella**: I have a brother who is condemned to die. I beg you, show mercy, and spare his life!

**Deputy Dawg**: The law is plain, and your brother broke the law.

**Bella**: The law is plain and just, but severe! Must he die?

**Deputy Dawg**: There is no remedy, my dear.

**Bella**: But there is! There must be. You might pardon him. Show mercy!

**Deputy Dawg**: I will not!

**Bella**: But you can if you want to!

**Deputy Dawg**: I will not do what I do not want to do!

**Bella**: But you could do it. There would be no harm in doing it.

**Deputy Dawg**: He is already sentenced to die. It is too late.

**Bella**: Too late? No! It is never too late. If I speak a word, I can call it back again and so can you. If the situation were reversed, believe me, he would pardon you.

**Deputy Dawg**: Enough! The situation is not reversed and I doubt very much that he would pardon me. You are wasting my time. It is the law that condemns your brother, not I! Your brother dies tomorrow!

**Bella**: Tomorrow? But that is so sudden! Why the rush to judgment? Spare him! Spare him! He’s not prepared to die! Think about it! Who is it that has died for this offense? There are many who have done it and their name is Legion. Why must Leo die?

**Deputy Dawg**: The law has been asleep, but now it’s awake. There are many who may have done the deed and committed the act, but now they may think twice before they lie down again between a maid’s legs.

**Bella**: Show some pity! Please!

**Deputy Dawg**: I show it most of all when I show justice. Your brother dies tomorrow!

**Bella**: You sir, will be the first to pass such a sentence. It is unprecedented! It must be nice to have all that power that you can end a man’s life with the snap of your fingers. But look into your heart. Put yourself in his place? Is it not possible that you too could be guilty of such a crime? Can you not find it in your heart to show a little mercy?

**Deputy Dawg**: You make a degree of sense. Let me think about it. I have to go now.

**Bella**: Come back I beg you!

**Deputy Dawg**: Come again tomorrow.

**Bella**: Please…please…is there no way I can change your mind? Nothing I can do?

**Deputy Dawg**: Are you speaking of a bribe? Can you bribe me?

**Bella**: Yes, I’ll do anything!

**Deputy Dawg**: Well, come again tomorrow. Let me sleep on it.

**Bella**: What time tomorrow?

**Deputy Dawg**: Before noon.

**Bella**: Saints preserve you! I’ll be here!

*Exit Bella and Warden*

**Deputy Dawg**: Until tomorrow then. I do desire to speak to her again feast upon her beauty with my eyes.

*Exit Deputy Dawg*

**Scene 7. A room in the prison**

*Enter Regent Vincent disguised as a monk and the warden*

**Vincent/monk**: Good day Mr. Warden! You are the warden here are you not?

**Warden**: Yes, I am. What can I do for you?

**Vincent/monk**: I have come to visit the prisoners, to offer them some solace. Kindly let me see them and tell me what crimes they have committed so that I may know how to best minister to them.

*Enter Miss Julie*

Here comes someone in need of spiritual guidance now, a fallen angel from the looks of her. She is great with child and the young man who got her that way must pay the ultimate price. When is he to be executed?

**Warden**: Tomorrow.

**Vincent/monk**: Do you repent, young lady, of the sin you carry?

**Miss Julie**: I do. I bear my shame most regretfully.

**Vincent/monk**: I will show you the way to repent.

**Miss Julie**: I will gladly learn the way.

**Vincent/monk**: Do you love the young man that did you wrong?

**Miss Julie**: Oh yes, Father, as I love myself.

**Vincent/monk**: Then it would seem your evil deed was consensual.

**Miss Julie**: Yes, Father.

**Vincent/monk**: Was your sin worse than his?

**Miss Julie**: Yes, father, I do confess it and I do regret it.

**Vincent/monk**: Very well. Your partner in crime, I understand, is to die tomorrow. I am going to be with him in his final hours to prepare him for his death. Peace be with you, my child.

*Exit Vincent/monk*

**Miss Julie**: Dies tomorrow? I can’t bear to think of it. Oh! It is too horrible!

**Warden**: Yes, isn’t it a pity?

*They both exit*

**Scene 8. Deputy Dawg’s office**

*Enter Deputy Dawg*

**Deputy Dawg**: All I can think about is Bella. I seem to be obsessed with her. I can’t keep my mind on my work. I am swept away by my feelings for her. The righteous man casts off evil by reining in his lust, but then who wants to be righteous?

*Enter Aide*

Who is it?

**Aide**: Sister Bella is here to see you.

**Deputy Dawg**: Send her in.

*Exit aide*

Saints preserve us! Why am I all of a sudden weak as a kitten? I feel like I might faint…

*Enter Bella*

How are you, my pet?

**Bella**: I’ve come to find out what you are going to do.

**Deputy Dawg**: If only you knew and didn’t have to ask. Your brother must die.

**Bella:** Then I’ll say goodbye!

**Deputy Dawg**: But yet he might live a while.

**Bella**: By your say so?

**Deputy Dawg**: Yes.

**Bella**: Tell me how long he might live so that I can prepare him for his death and save his immortal soul.

**Deputy Dawg**: Hahaha! The hell with these foolish offenses! One might just as well pardon a common murderer as a fornicator! One takes a legitimate life and the other creates an illegitimate one.

**Bella**: Well, that’s one way to look at it. Unfortunately, the law doesn’t.

**Deputy Dawg**: You think so? Well then, let me ask you a question: which would you prefer, that the law takes its course, or that you save your brother’s life by giving up your body, in the same way, the girl that your brother ruined gave up hers?

**Bella**: I’d rather give up my body than my soul.

**Deputy Dawg**: I am not talking about your soul.

**Bella**: Then what are you talking about?

**Deputy Dawg**: Now, don’t hold me to it, I’m just putting it out there, but as the voice of the law, I can pronounce a death sentence on your brother’s life. Might it not be an act of charity rather than a sin to save it?

**Bella**: If you want to do it, I’ll take the risk, and say it’s not a sin, but charity.

**Deputy Dawg**: It seems to me that charity would cancel out the sin.

**Bella**: If begging for his life is a sin, well then, I am a sinner! If granting my request is a sin, I’ll pray each morning that you are forgiven for it.

**Deputy Dawg**: You’re not following me. Either you’re awfully dumb or you’re a damned fool!

**Bella**: Call me dumb then if that’s what you think!

**Deputy Dawg**: Pay attention! I’ll be more direct so that you can get it. Your brother is to die.

**Bella**: Yes.

**Deputy Dawg**: That is the penalty for his crime by law.

**Bella**: Yes.

**Deputy Dawg**: Suppose that there was another way to save his life, I’m not saying there is but just for the sake of argument, let’s say that you, his sister, were desired by someone who had the power to rescue your brother from the clutches of the law. And that there was no other way to save him than to surrender your virginity to this man, or else your brother dies. What would you do then?

**Bella**: I would do the same for my brother as I would do for myself, that is, I’d strip myself naked and go to my death as if I were going to my bed before I’d surrender to sin.

**Deputy Dawg**: Then your brother dies!

**Bella**: So be it! It is better a brother dies once than a sister to suffer eternal damnation.

**Deputy Dawg**: Then aren’t you as cruel as the sentence you lament?

**Bella**: A disgraceful deliverance and a clear pardon are two different things. The quality of mercy is not strained.

**Deputy Dawg**: You have been arguing that the law is brutal while your brother’s actions were just light-hearted fun.

**Bella**: Sometimes we say things we don’t mean in order to get what we want. If I have made excuses, it was to help my brother.

**Deputy Dawg**: We are all weak.

**Bella**: Yes, and my brother especially.

**Deputy Dawg**: Women are weak too.

**Bella**: Yes, fragile as the glass our mirrors are made of and as easily broken. We are ruined by men who take advantage of us. We make the mistake of trusting men but we are soft and easily taken in. It’s a man’s world.

**Deputy Dawg**: I agree. And based on what you just said, you are only as strong as your weakest link. Let me be bold. I say, be what you are, be a woman. Show it now, by being weak.

**Bella**: I beg you, speak plainly as before.

**Deputy Dawg**: In plain words, I am in love with you.

**Bella**: And my brother was in love with Miss Julie, yet you tell me he must die for it.

**Deputy Dawg**: He won’t if you give me your love.

**Bella**: You speak boldly just to test me.

**Deputy Dawg**: Believe me, on my sacred honor, I speak the truth.

**Bella**: Ha! Sacred honor my eye! What honor do you possess with such evil intentions? You’re a charlatan! A carnival barker! Sign a pardon right now for my brother or I’ll scream out to the entire world to let them know what kind of a man you are!

**Deputy Dawg**: Scream all you want. No one will believe you. I have a sterling reputation, a disciplined way of life and besides, it’s my word against yours. My position outweighs yours. You will be dragged through the mud, accused of lying, and branded a harlot. My desire for you is red hot! Stop this false modesty you little prick teaser! Save your brother by sleeping with me or he will be put to death! And not only that, I’ll have him tortured. You have until tomorrow to make up your mind.

*Exit Deputy Dawg*

**Bella**: Who can I complain to? Who would believe me? What a double-talking low-life reptile he is! He holds the power of life and death in his hands! He puts his own lust ahead of any idea of right and wrong. I’ll go to my brother; he is an honorable man and I am sure he would rather lose his head than let his sister lose her virginity. So, Bella, you will live a life of innocence, and your brother shall die. My chastity is worth more to me than my brother. I will tell him Deputy Dawg’s request and then prepare him for death and for the salvation of his soul.

*Exit Bella*

**Scene 9. A room in the prison**

*Enter Regent Vincent in the costume of a monk with Leo and the Warden*

**Vincent/monk**: So, are you hoping for a pardon from Deputy Dawg?

**Leo**: Hope is all I have left, father. I hope to live but I am prepared to die.

**Vincent/monk**: Be ready to die, my son. If you lose your life, well, that is something only fools want to keep, anyway. You are just a breath in a body, a ghost in a machine. You are just a pipe for fortune’s fingers to play what stop she pleases. So, sleep. That is the best remedy, and you do that very well. It’s basically the same thing as death. To sleep, perchance to dream, and all that stuff. When you’re young, you’re poor, trying to scrape together a few coins for lunch and by the time you’re old and rich, you have lost all your passion for life. You’re feeble, you can’t make love anymore, you can’t enjoy your wealth. What is life worth living for anyway? Death fixes all these problems.

**Leo**: Thank you for your words of wisdom, but I am looking to live.

**Bella** (offstage): Hello!

**Warden**: Who’s there? Come in!

**Vincent/monk**: Dear sir, I will come to visit you again.

**Leo**: Yes, father, thank you.

*Enter Bella*

**Bella**: I’d like to speak to Leo, if I may.

**Warden**: But of course. Look here Leo, it is your sister who comes to see you.

**Vincent/monk**: Warden, I’d like a word with you.

**Warden**: As you like….

**Vincent/monk**: Take me to a place where we can hide and I can overhear their conversation.

*Vincent/monk and Warden conceal themselves*

**Leo**: Hey sis! What’s up?

**Bella**: I’ll tell you what’s up! Deputy Dawg is going to send you on a one-way ticket to paradise, that’s what’s up! So, better get ready. Tomorrow you are off!

**Leo**: Is there no way out?

**Bella**: There is one way which would save your head but would break my heart.

**Leo**: What way is that?

**Bella**: Yes, brother, you can live. If you beg Deputy Dawg, he will offer you a Devil’s bargain that will set you free yet keep you in chains for the rest of your life.

**Leo**: Life imprisonment?

**Bella**: Yes, exactly. A type of freedom that would hold you down even if you roamed the earth.

**Leo**: But what type?

**Bella**: The type that, if you agreed to it, would rob you of your honor and leave you naked and afraid.

**Leo:** Get to the point.

**Bella**: I’m afraid of you, Leo. I fear you would trade what’s left of your piddling integrity for six or seven more years of life. Do you fear death that much?

**Leo**: Why are you shaming me like this? If I have to die, I will meet my death like a courtesan of the darkness and hold her to me in my embrace.

**Bella**: Now, that’s my brother talking, that’s what I want to hear. Yes, you must die. You are much too good a person to save yourself in a dishonorable way. The outwardly pious Deputy Dawg is the devil in disguise. A trickster who uses clever words to trap his victim. He is nothing more than a strawman in an empty suit, as slick as slime on pond scum.

**Leo**: The “priestly” Deputy Dawg!

**Bella**: Oh, it’s a clever disguise, used by wicked people in priestly clothes. Believe it or not, if I give him my virginity, he will set you free.

**Leo**: Saints! It can’t be true!

**Bella**: Yes, but it is! in exchange for this awful sin, he’d free you to keep on sinning. Tonight’s the night I have to spread my wings, or else you die tomorrow.

**Leo**: Then, you must do it!

**Bella**: Oh, if it were just my life, I’d throw it away like a used tissue to save you.

**Leo**: Thanks, Bella!

**Bella**: But be ready to die, Leo.

**Leo**: Death is a fearful thing.

**Bella**: And a disgraced life a hateful one.

**Leo**: Yes, but to die, and go who knows where? To lie in the cold ground to rot. This conscious, warm body returns to the earth, and the spirit swims in hell’s fiery floods or resides in a frigid lake of ice. To be like an ill wind perpetually blown all around the world or hanging in space. Or be one of those tortured souls howling in a river of boiling blood! It’s too horrible! All the ravages of old age and imprisonment cannot compare to the fear of death.

**Bella**: No, no, a thousand times, no!

**Leo**: Ah, sweet little sister, let me live. Any sin you commit saving your brother’s life will be forgiven as though it were a good deed.

**Bella**: Oh, you dog! You double-crossing mangy dog! You, disgraceful little worm! I disown you! Die you, miserable toad! I wouldn’t lift a finger to save you now!

**Leo**: No, listen to me, Bella!

**Bella**: No! Damn you to hell! Your sin was not just a one-off, you just roll that way! Setting you free would be pimping you out. You would just go out and do it again! Oh, no! It’s best that you die right away.

**Leo**: Listen to me, Bella!

*Vincent/monk re-enters from hiding place*

**Vincent/monk**: May I have a word, with you, young lady?

**Bella**: What do you want?

**Vincent/monk**: If you have just a minute, I’d like to talk with you in a little while. You’d be doing yourself a favor.

**Bella**: I really don’t have time, but I’ll wait for you a little while.

*Bella moves off*

**Vincent/monk**: Son, I couldn’t help but overhear what transpired between you and your sister. Deputy Dawg never meant to seduce her. He was only testing her. Being a person of virtue, she refused him, and he was glad for it. As a priest, I have heard Deputy Dawg’s confession, so I know what I am talking about. It is my duty to advise you to prepare for your death. Don’t rely on false hope. Tomorrow you must die. Now, get on your knees and let me hear your confession.

**Leo**: First let me ask my sister to forgive me. I’m so sick and tired of living I am ready to shuffle off this mortal coil.

**Vincent/monk**: Good! Keep thinking that way! Goodbye.

*Leo exits*

Warden, a word with you.

*Warden re-enters*

**Warden**: What is it, father?

**Vincent/monk**: Leave me alone with the girl awhile. My intentions are good and the fact that I’m a priest guarantees her safety.

**Warden**: Very well.

*The Warden exits. Bella comes forward.*

**Vincent/monk**: You are beautiful both inside and out, my child. Physical beauty doesn’t last, but virtue is eternal and lasts a lifetime. I know about Deputy Dawg’s little sexual scheme. Knowing him, it’s probably not the first time he has made such a proposal. What are you going to do to satisfy his arrangement and save your brother?

**Bella**: I’m going now to give him my answer: I’d rather my brother die by a legitimate execution than have an illegitimate baby. But I’ll tell you one thing, the Regent was wrong about Deputy Dawg! If he ever comes back, I am going to give him an earful.

**Vincent/monk**: I don’t blame you. Only thing is, he’ll deny your accusation. He’ll say he was only testing you. I have an idea that might work. Listen to this. I think there’s a way you can help a deeply hurt and broken woman and rescue your brother at the same time all the while keeping your own innocence pure, and greatly please the missing Regent to boot.

**Bella**: Tell me more, father. I am willing to do anything, as long as it doesn’t sting my conscience.

**Vincent/monk**: Good! That’s the spirit! Have you ever heard of Anna Belle Lee, the sister of Cedrick the Great?

**Bella**: I’ve heard of her. She has a good reputation.

**Vincent/monk**: She was supposed to marry Deputy Dawg. They were engaged, and the wedding day was all set. But right before the ceremony, her brother Cedrick was lost in space. His starship exploded somewhere near Antares. Onboard the ship was his sister’s dowry. She suffered a terrible loss: a loving brother and her dowry. And when she lost that dowry, she lost her future husband, the dastardly Deputy Dawg.

**Bella**: Really? Did Deputy Dawg really leave her?

**Vincent/monk**: Yes, he did! He backed out entirely. Came up with some cock and bull story about her being unfaithful. He broke her poor heart and then he left her high and dry.

**Bella**: It’s kind of like a little death to take this poor girl away from the world! Where is the justice, that this man should live while she pines away? But how can she profit from all this?

**Vincent/monk**: It’s a situation that you can easily remedy, and by doing so you not only rescue your brother, but you can save your innocence as well.

**Bella**: Tell me how, father.

**Vincent/monk**: Anna Belle Lee still loves Deputy Dawg. His barbaric treatment of her would have ended most romances but for her, it only intensified her feelings for him. It’s hard to understand, but the heart wants what the heart wants. Go to Deputy Dawg. Feign interest in his little scheme. Follow his directions completely. But stipulate these four conditions: One, you do not spend much time together, second, it should be in the dark, third, there be complete silence, and finally, it should be in a convenient place. When he agrees, here’s the most important part, we’ll tell the poor brokenhearted girl to go in your place. If it’s found out later, he may be compelled to compensate her. The result of all this: your brother is saved, your honor is maintained, Anna Belle Lee is helped, and Deputy Dawg is punished. I’ll prepare the girl and make her ready for the rendezvous. If you can do this, the good that comes out of this far out outweighs the bad. What do you think?

**Bella**: I like it! Let’s do it!

**Vincent/monk**: A lot depends on your ability to pull it off. Hurry over to see Deputy Dawg. If he asks you to sleep with him tonight, say you will. I’ll go to Saint Martin’s to make contact with Anna. Set things up with Deputy Dawg, then meet me at St. Martin’s as soon as you can.

**Bella**: Thank you for your help, father. Farewell.

*Bella exits*

*Enter Hammer, Chuckles, and officers*

**Hammer:** No, but if you go on selling men and women on the open market the world will be full of bastards.

**Vincent/monk**: What foolishness is this?

**Chuckles**: All the fun has been drained out of life now that prostitution has been outlawed and the moneylending is condoned.

**Hammer**: Come along sir. Bless you, father.

**Vincent/monk**: And you too, brother. How has this man offended you?

**Hammer:** Actually, sir, he has offended the law. And, sir, we also take him to be a thief. We found this skeleton key in his pocket.

**Vincent/monk**: (to Chuckles) Shame on you, you wicked pimp! You support yourself by doing evil. Did you ever stop to think that the food you eat and the clothes you wear come from the degradation of human bodies? Do you call that a way of life when it depends on stinking acts of sexual intercourse? You need to change your evil ways!

**Chuckles**: Yes, sir it does stink in a certain way sir, but if I may say…

**Vincent/monk**: No, I have heard enough! Take him to prison, officer. Punishment and scripture must both be used on him if he is to be saved.

**Hammer**: He has to appear before Deputy Dawg, sir, who’s already given him a warning. Deputy Dawg can’t stand pimps, and if he is a pimp, and appears before him, he’s likely to be dancing at the end of a rope without music.

**Chuckles**: I see help coming and bail. A friend of mine…

*Enter Luke*

**Luke**: Oh!Hey there, Chuckles! What’s up boy? You are being paraded around here like some sort of perpetrator! Aren’t there any more girls out there who can turn tricks for you? Ha, you don’t know? The world has changed! Well, what’s the plan, man?

**Vincent/monk**: This is going from bad to worse.

**Luke**: How’s my sweet little honey babe, your boss? Is she still running a cat house?

**Chuckles**: Truth be told she has worn out all the girls and she’s being treated herself for a lethal dose.

**Luke**: Well, that’s the way it goes. One day you are a fresh-faced whore and the next it’s powder, rouge, and a wig. Are you going to jail, Chuckles?

**Chuckles**: Yes, I am afraid so.

**Luke**: For what? Debt?

**Hammer**: Pimping, sir. For being a pimp!

**Luke**: Well, it’s hard out there on a pimp! Put him in jail. He deserves it! He’s been a pimp for a long time. Born a pimp, die a pimp. Goodbye, and good luck Chuckles! Give my regards to prison.

**Chuckles**: I was hoping you might bail me out, sir.

**Luke**: Oh no, I won’t, Chuckles. I’m not going to do it! I will pray for you though. Be strong, Chuckles. Goodbye. Saints preserve you, father.

**Vincent/monk**: And you too, my son.

**Hammer**: Come along now sir.

**Chuckles:** You won’t bail me out then?

**Luke**: Sorry, No. Go along now like a good little clown. What’s happening, father? What’s the latest?

**Hammer**: Come along, sir.

**Luke**: Off you go now! Off to jail with you!

*Hammer, Chuckles, and officers exit*

Any news, father, of the Regent?

**Vincent/monk**:I haven’t heard anything, have you?

**Luke:** Some say he’s in the Russian Federation. Others say that he’s in Beijing. Where do you think he is?

**Vincent/monk**: I don’t know where he is, but wherever he is, I wish him well.

**Luke**: Yeah, me too. You know, it was pretty wild of him to sneak away from the city like that. Deputy Dawg has been running things pretty well while he’s been gone, though. He’s definitely tough on crime, I’ll say that.

**Vincent/monk**: Yes, he is doing a good job of it.

**Luke**: It wouldn’t hurt him to go a little lighter on lechery, Father. He’s overly strict in that regard.

**Vincent/monk**: It’s a widespread vice. He needs to be severe to deal with it.

**Luke**: True. A lot of people engage in it, that’s for sure! But it’s impossible to get rid of it entirely, father. It comes as naturally to people like breathing and eating. They say Deputy Dawg wasn’t naturally conceived. Do you believe that?

**Vincent/monk**: How was he conceived, then?

**Luke**: Some say a mermaid gave birth to him. Some say he pees, ice water. And I heard he’s impotent to boot!

**Vincent/monk**: You’re a regular comedian, aren’t you?

**Luke**: Well, it’s a cruel thing to do, don’t you think, to take a man’s life just because his penis rises up in rebellion against him! Would Regent Vincent do something like this? He has some understanding of prostitution. He knows the score. I think he would be willing to show mercy.

**Vincent/monk**: I never heard of the Regent being accused of womanizing. He wasn’t inclined that way.

**Luke**: Oh, sir, you’re wrong.

**Vincent/monk**: That’s not possible.

**Luke**: Who, the Regent? Yes, he had his regulars. He was a little kinky too, and I might add he liked his liquor!

**Vincent/monk**: Surely, you’re being unfair to him.

**Luke**: Sir, I was a close friend of his. The Regent is a shy fellow, and I believe I know the reason for his sudden departure.

**Vincent/monk**: What, please tell me, was the reason?

**Luke**: No, sorry. My lips are sealed. But I’ll tell you this: the majority of his supporters think he is a very smart man and can do no harm.

**Vincent/monk**: A smart man! Well, there’s no doubt that he is.

**Luke**:But, in reality, he’s a very superficial, ignorant, and thoughtless man.

**Vincent/monk**: You’re either jealous, mad, or mistaken. The way he conducts his life and the way he rules the city speaks for itself and his reputation is spotless. Sir, you don’t know what you’re talking about and you obviously don’t know him.

**Luke**: I do know him, and I love him.

**Vincent/monk**: If you loved him, you wouldn’t talk about him in this way.

**Luke**: Look, sir, I know what I know.

**Vincent/monk**: I can hardly believe that. But, when the Regent returns, I ask that you repeat your charges to his face. May I ask your name?

**Luke**: Sir, my name is Luke, and I am well known to the Regent.

**Vincent/monk**: He’ll know you even better, once I report you.

**Luke**: I’m not afraid of you.

**Vincent/monk**: You will probably end up denying this.

**Luke**: I’ll be hanged first. But enough about me! Tell me this, father, is Leo going to die tomorrow?

**Vincent/monk**: Why should he die?

**Luke**: Why? For plugging a hole. I wish the regent were back. Deputy Dawg’s abstinence policy will depopulate the whole asteroid. Regent Vincent should punish sexual acts privately, not publicly. I wish he were back! Leo is condemned for nothing more than taking his clothes off. Farewell, father, I must be off. Pray for me. I tell you again, the Regent is no angel, you could find him at Missy Overstreet’s any given Friday night, and I tell you, he’d French-kiss a pole dancer if she smelled of cheap perfume. Say I said so. Goodbye.

*Exit Luke*

**Vincent/monk**: Everybody is a critic! Who’s coming now?

*Enter Echo, Warden, and officers with Missy Overstreet*

**Echo:** Go on, take her to prison!

**Missy Overstreet**: My kind sir, please be good to me. You have the reputation of being a merciful man.

**Echo**: You’ve been warned several times already and here you are back for the same crime. Your pleas for mercy will fall on deaf ears.

**Warden**: She’s been a madam for eleven years, your honor.

**Missy Overstreet**: Your honor, Luke has informed on me hoping to get a lighter sentence. He got Scarlett Kneepads pregnant and promised to marry her. Now his child will be fifteen months old on the Fourth of July. I kept the kid myself, just look at how he abuses me!

**Echo:** That fellow is a dangerous man. Bring him before me. Take her away to prison! No more talking.

*Officer exits with Missy Overstreet*

Deputy Dawg won’t change his mind. Leo must die tomorrow. See to it that he has a priest to give him spiritual consolation. If Deputy Dawg had any sense of compassion, this wouldn’t be happening.

**Warden**: This monk has been with him, and helped him prepare for death.

**Echo**: Good evening, father.

**Vincent/monk**: Good evening, my son.

**Echo**: Where are you from, father?

**Vincent/monk**: Not from around here. I belong to a holy order of monks and have just come from Rome, on special business from the Vatican.

**Echo**: What’s the news from across the galaxy?

**Vincent/monk**: None, except wars, continue to rage on earth, greed and avarice continue to have the upper hand, and the truth is nothing but a trap for fools. In other words, some old, same old. Tell me, what sort of man is the Regent?

**Echo**: Someone who was beyond reproach and given to self-reflection.

**Vincent/monk**: What sort of things does he enjoy?

**Echo**: He enjoys seeing others happy. He’s, an even-tempered man. But enough about, him, tell me about Leo. I understand you’ve visited him.

**Vincent/monk**: He makes no claims of ill-treatment and willingly yields to the law’s verdict. At first, he had hoped for a reprieve but I gradually persuaded him there was nothing to be done and now he is ready to die.

**Echo**: You have fulfilled your duty, father. I pleaded for the poor man myself, as far as I could go, but Deputy Dawg is so severe, he just wasn’t having it.

**Vincent/monk**: If his own behavior is as strict as his judgments, it’s to his credit. But if not, he has set himself up for failure.

**Echo**: I’m going to visit the prisoner. Goodbye.

**Vincent/monk**: Peace be with you, my son.

*Echo and Warden exit*

**Vincent/monk***: (to himself):* To be a leader one must lead by example. He should be a model of good behavior and treat others as he would want to be treated. Shame on him who punishes others for what he himself has done. Shame on Deputy Dawg ten times over for enforcing the very laws that he is willing to break. Oh, what evil an innocent face can hide. I must fight fire with fire. Vice with deceit. Tonight, Deputy Dawg will sleep with the spurned Anna Belle Lee. By this deception, Deputy Dawg will have to pay for his evil demands on the innocent Bella and at the same time settle up a previous debt.

*Exit Vincent/monk*

***Scene 10. A farmhouse in the country***

*Enter Vincent still disguised as a monk and Anna Belle Lee*

**Anna Belle**: I beg your pardon sir, but I wish you hadn’t found me listening to music. I am not taking much joy in it these days.

**Vincent/monk**: It’s OK, my child. Sometimes music has the power to soothe the savage breast. Please tell me, has anybody been asking for me here today? I promised to meet someone here about this time.

**Anna Belle**: No father, no one’s been asking for you. I’ve been here all day.

*Enter Bella*

**Vincent/monk:** Ah! Here she is now! May I ask you to leave for a little while, my child? I’ll be with you in a moment. I just want to chat with this young lady for a bit.

**Anna Belle**: Not a problem father. I will always be in your debt.

*Anna exits*

**Vincent/monk**: Welcome. Perfect timing. What’s the news from Deputy Dawg?

**Bella**: He has a garden surrounded by a brick wall. On the backside is a vineyard. Leading up to the vineyard is a gate that you open with this large key. This other smaller key opens a little door that leads from the vineyard to the garden. I promised to meet him there, in the middle of the night.

**Vincent/monk**: Can you find your way there?

**Bella**: Yes, I think so. He told me twice how to get there.

**Vincent/monk**: Are there any other signs she is supposed to give?

**Bella**: No, none, only a visit in the dark. And I let him know I can only stay a short time.

**Vincent/monk**: You’ve done well. I haven’t told Anna Belle yet. I’ll let you do that. Anna! You can come in here now!

*Anna re-enters*

(*To Anna*) Let me introduce you to Bella. She is here to help you.

**Bella**: Yes, that is what I want to do.

**Vincent/monk**: Do you believe that I’ve got your best interests at heart?

**Anna Belle**: Yes, father, I know you do, and that you’ve found a way to help.

**Vincent/monk**: Then take the hand of your new companion. She has a story to convey. I’ll wait for you until you’re ready, but hurry, the night is falling fast.

**Anna Belle**: Will you walk with me?

*Bella and Anna exit*

**Vincent/monk**: Oh, you high-ranking fools of Globulus! A million false eyes are upon you! You will hear of wars and rumors of war. A thousand lies in the skies will make you realize you are the one true source of all the empty fantasies and desperate delusions that torture your collective souls.

*Bella and Anna re-enter*

Welcome back. What did you decide?

**Bella**: She’ll do it, father, if you recommend it.

**Vincent/monk**: Recommend it? I not only recommend it but I implore her to do it!

**Bella**: When you leave him, all you have to whisper is, “Now remember my brother.”

**Anna Belle**: Don’t worry about me.

**Vincent/monk**: And, don’t you worry my child. He is your husband by a previous agreement, so it’s no sin for you to sleep together. You have a valid claim to be his wife which allows this deception. Come on now, let’s go. We have work to do before we can claim victory.

*They all exit*

**Scene 11. A room in the prison**

*Enter Warden and Chuckles*

**Warden:** Come here, you. Can you cut off a man’s head?

**Chuckles**: I believe I can sir. Once you get the timing down, it’s all in the execution.

**Warden**: Spare me the funny talk and give me a straight answer. Leo and Barnaby are to die tomorrow. We have an executioner, but he needs a helper. If you’ll take on the job, you’ll earn early release. If you don’t, you’ll have to serve your full sentence, and you will be whipped to boot.

**Chuckles:** Sir, I believe that is what is known as a no-brainer. When do I start?

**Warden**: (he calls out) Hey Kevorkian! Where are you?

*Kevorkian, the executioner enters*

**Kevorkian:** Did you call sir?

**Warden:** Here’s a man to help you with tomorrow’s executions. If he works out, negotiate a salary and let him stay here with you full-time. If he doesn’t, use him just for now and then get rid of him. He can’t claim to be too good for the work since he was a pimp in his last line of work.

**Kevorkian**: A pimp? Ha! The hell with him then! He will be a discredit to our profession!

**Warden**: Go on the both of you! You are both the same. Not a nickel’s worth of difference between you!

*Warden exits*

**Chuckles:** Sir, tell me, do you really consider your job a profession?

**Kevorkian:** Yes, a profession.

**Chuckles**: I’ve heard it said that painting, is a profession, and since whores, who are in my field, paint their faces, they prove my occupation is a profession. But I’ll be hanged if I can imagine how hanging, is a profession.

**Kevorkian**: It is a profession!

**Chuckles**: Prove it!

**Kevorkian:** Sir, I have studied for many years to be a hangman and I know the ropes! I have a professional degree and I am certified by the Asteroid of Globulus M-17 to carry out state-sponsored executions!

*Warden re-enters*

**Warden:** Well,have you two reached an agreement?

**Chuckles:** Yes sir, I’ll do the job!

**Warden**: Very well then! Have your block and ax ready by four am tomorrow morning.

**Kevorkian**: Come on pimp! I’ll show you how it’s done! Follow me!

**Chuckles**: I am eager to learn, sir. And, if you ever need to use me for your own execution, you’ll find me ready. One good turn deserves another!

**Warden:** Call Barnaby and Leo in here.

*Chuckles and Kevorkian exit*

I pity the one, but not the other, Barnaby is a lowly murderer.

*Enter Leo*

Look here, Leo, this is your death warrant. It’s now midnight straight up, and by 8 a.m. tomorrow you will be a grave man. Where’s Barnaby?

**Leo**: He’s fast asleep and I can’t wake him up.

**Warden**: Who could do him any good, anyway? Well, go, prepare yourself.

*knocking is heard offstage*

What’s that noise? (*to Leo*) May the Saints give you comfort!

*Exit Leo*

In a minute! I hope that is some pardon or reprieve for poor Leo.

*Enter Regent Vincent still disguised as a monk*

Welcome father.

**Vincent/monk**: May the saints preserve you, my son. Who has just been here?

**Warden**: No one since the curfew bell rang.

**Vincent/monk**: Not Johnson?

**Warden**: No.

**Vincent/monk**: Someone will be here shortly.

**Warden**: Is there any news to give solace to Leo?

**Vincent/monk**: There’s always hope….

**Warden**: Deputy Dawg is a cruel master.

**Vincent/monk**: No, not really. He walks the same straight line that he expects everyone else to walk. He suppresses the same impulses in himself that he persecutes others for. If he committed the same crimes that he punishes others for he would be a tyrant. But because he’s virtuous, he’s fair.

*Knocking heard off stage*

They’re here.

*Warden exits*

The Warden is a nice man. It’s rare for a man in his position to have sympathy for anyone.

*Knocking is heard offstage*

What is that noise? He is so impatient he will knock that door right off its hinges.

*Warden re-enters*

**Warden**: He’s stuck there until the officer at the gate wakes up to let him in. The officer’s up now.

**Vincent/monk**: Haven’t you received any order yet countermanding Leo’s execution tomorrow?

**Warden**: None sir.

**Vincent/monk:** Even though it’s almost dawn, you’ll have news before morning.

**Warden**: Perhaps you know something I don’t. But I don’t think any reprieve is coming. There’s no precedent for it. Besides, Deputy Dawg pronounced just the opposite, from the judge’s bench.

*A messenger enters*

This is the Regent’s private courier

***Vincent/monk****:* Ah, here it comes. Leo’s pardon.

**Messenger**: (*presenting a paper*) My lord, the Regent has sent you this note and charged me to tell you not to swerve from the smallest item in it, not the time, details, or anything else. Good morning, since I gather it’s almost morning.

**Warden**: I will obey him.

*Messenger exits*

**Vincent/monk**: (to himself) This is his pardon, a quid pro quo for the same crime committed by Deputy Dawg. Crimes spread fast when those in power commit them as well. Now, sir, what’s the news?

**Warden**: It’s strange. Deputy Dawg has never done this before, but for some odd reason, he seems to be pressuring me to perform my duties.

**Vincent/monk**: Please, let’s hear the letter.

**Warden**: (*reads*) “Whatever you may hear to the contrary, have Leo executed by four o’clock, and Barnaby in the afternoon. Send me Leo’s head at five o’clock so that I may be sure you carried out these orders. Be sure you do it, much depends on it. Don’t fail to do your duty, or you will be held accountable.” What do you say to this, father?

**Vincent/monk**: Who is this Barnaby who’s to be executed in the afternoon?

**Warden**: He was born off the shoulder of Orion, but he was raised here. He has been a prisoner for nine years.

**Vincent/monk**: How did it happen that the absent regent has given him neither liberty nor death? I’ve heard he usually does one or the other.

**Warden**: Barnaby’s friends keep getting him reprieves. And there was no clear evidence that he was actually guilty, until now, when Deputy Dawg came to power.

**Vincent/monk**: Is it clear now?

**Warden**: It’s very clear. And he doesn’t deny it himself.

**Vincent/monk**: Has he shown remorse while in prison? How has it affected him?

**Warden**: He is a man who has no more fear of death than a drunk fears sleep. He’s careless, reckless, and fearless. He has no concept of death but yet he desperately clings to life.

**Vincent/monk**: He needs spiritual guidance.

**Warden**: He won’t listen. He’s always had the freedom to go anywhere inside the prison. If you gave him a chance to escape, he wouldn’t run. He’s drunk every day. We even woke him up one time and performed a mock execution on him and it never affected him at all.

**Vincent/monk**: More of him later. Warden, I see honesty and loyalty written all over your face. If I’m wrong, my skill at reading people deceives me, but I’m pretty sure I’m right, so I’ll take a chance on you. Leo, whom you have a warrant to execute, deserves to die no more than Deputy Dawg, who sentenced him. I can clearly demonstrate this, but I need four days to do so, so I’m going to ask you to do me an immediate and dangerous favor.

**Warden**: What is it?

**Vincent/monk**: Delay the execution.

**Warden**: But how can I? The time is set and I have a direct order to deliver his head to Deputy Dawg. I put my own head at risk if I deviate from this protocol even in the smallest way.

**Vincent/monk**: By my holy vows, I guarantee your safety if you follow my instructions. Execute Barnaby this morning, and take his head to Deputy Dawg.

**Warden**: Deputy Dawg has seen both of them and will recognize the face.

**Vincent/monk**: Death is a great disguiser, and you can disguise him even more. Shave his head and trim his beard, and say it was the prisoner’s request to be shaved before his death. That’s common enough. If anything bad happens to you because of this, I will defend you with my life.

**Warden**: Forgive me, father. It’s against my oath.

**Vincent/monk**: Did you swear allegiance to your office or to Deputy Dawg?

**Warden**: To him, and to his representatives.

**Vincent/monk**: Will you think you’ve done nothing wrong if the Regent vouches for the justice of your action?

**Warden**: But what is the likelihood of that?

**Vincent/monk**: Not a possibility, but a certainty. Yet since I see you are still afraid, that neither my robes, my integrity as a monk, nor my arguments can easily persuade you, I’ll go farther than I meant to, to dispel all your fears. (*Displays a letter*)Look here, sir, here’s the Regent’s handwriting and seal. You recognize them both, I’m sure.

**Warden**: I know them both.

**Vincent/monk**: This letter describes the Regent’s return. You can read it over at your leisure, and you’ll learn that he’ll be here in two days. Deputy Dawg doesn’t know this, since today he’ll be getting some letters with strange news, maybe about the Regent’s death, or maybe about him entering a monastery, but nothing about what’s written here. Look, the morning star is out. Don’t be confused by all this. Everything will make sense after it’s been done. Call your executioner, and off with Barnaby’s head. I’ll hear his confession, and prepare him for his eternal salvation. You’re in shock now, but this absolutely explains everything you need to know. Let’s go, it’s almost dawn.

*They exit*

**Scene 12. Another room in the prison**

*Enter Chuckles*

**Chuckles**:I’ve got as many friends here as I did back at the whorehouse. You’d think it was Missy Overstreet’s old house, so many of her old customers are here.

*Enter Kevorkian*

**Kevorkian**: You there, bring Barnaby here.

**Chuckles**: Barnaby! You’ve got to get up now! Time to be hanged!

**Kevorkian**: Barnaby!

**Barnaby**: (*offstage*) Damnation! Who’s making all that noise? Who are you?

**Chuckles**: Your friends, sir, the hangmen. Please be so kind, sir, as to arise and be put to death.

**Barnaby**: (*offstage*) Go away you crazy bastards! I’m sleepy!

**Kevorkian**: Tell him he has to wake up, and quickly too.

**Chuckles**: Please, Mister Barnaby, at least stay awake till you’re executed, and then sleep afterward.

**Kevorkian**: Go in there and fetch him out!

**Chuckles**: He’s coming, sir, he’s coming. I hear the straw rustling on his cell floor.

**Kevorkian**: Is the ax on the chopping block?

**Chuckles**: Aye sir! Everything is in readiness!

*Enter Barnaby*

**Barnaby**: What’s up Jack? What’s the news?

**Kevorkian**: Well, to tell the truth, sir, I’d like you to get on with your prayers as the warrant has arrived.

**Barnaby**:You slimy bastard! I’ve been drinking all night and I’m not ready to die!

**Chuckles**: Better and better yet, sir, for he who drinks all night and is hanged early in the morning may sleep better all the next day.

**Kevorkian**: Look, we aren’t joking around. Here comes your holy father to hear your confession now.

*Enter Regent Vincent still disguised as a monk*

**Vincent/monk**: Sir, out of a sense of charity and goodwill, and hearing how hastily you have to depart, I came to offer you spiritual guidance and to pray with you.

**Barnaby**: Not me, father. I’ve been drinking hard all night, and either I get more time to prepare, or they’ll have to beat my brains out with a hammer. I won’t agree to die today, that’s for certain.

**Vincent/monk**: Oh, sir, but you must, and it’s my job to make sure you look forward to the trip.

**Barnaby**: I swear I will not die today, no matter what you say!

**Vincent/monk**: But listen….

**Barnaby**: No sir, I won’t! If you got anything to say to me, come to my cell. I’m not leaving it today.

*Barnaby exits*

**Vincent/monk**:Unfit to live or die! After him, men. Bring him to the block.

*Kevorkian and Chuckles exit*

*Warden re-enters*

**Warden**: How is the prisoner?

**Vincent/monk**: He is unprepared for death. To send him off in his current state of mind would lead to damnation.

**Warden**: Here in the prison, father, a notorious pirate by the name of Jack Sparrow has just died this morning after a terrible fever. He was Leo’s age, with the same color beard and hair. What if we forget about this damned reprobate, and send the deputy Jack Sparrow’s head?

**Vincent/monk**: Oh, what a stroke of good luck! Do it at once. It’s getting near the time set for the execution. See that it’s done, and send the head, as ordered. Meanwhile, I’ll persuade this uncouth barbarian to die willingly.

**Warden**: We’ll do it, immediately, father. But Barnaby must die this afternoon. And what do we do with Leo? If word gets out, he is alive I’ll be in big trouble.

**Vincent/monk**: Let’s do this: put both Barnaby and Leo in secret holding cells. Before two days have passed your safety will be assured.

**Warden**: I am relying on you.

**Vincent/monk**: You must hurry now. Secure the head and send it to Deputy Dawg.

*Warden exits*

Now I’ll write letters to Deputy Dawg. The Warden can deliver them. They’ll say I’m close to home and it’s paramount that I make a huge public entrance. I’ll ask him to meet me at the Oracle of Delphi three miles outside of town. And from there, step by step, I’ll deal with Deputy Dawg.

*The Warden re-enters*

**Warden**:Here’s the head. I’ll carry it myself.

**Vincent/monk**: Ok, but come back soon. I want to talk with you about some things that only you can hear.

**Warden**: I’ll be back as fast as I can.

*Warden exits*

**Bella**: (offstage) Hello! Peace be with you!

**Vincent/monk**: That’s Bella’s voice. She’s here to see if her brother’s pardon has come through yet. But I’ll hide the news from her for now for her own good, and turn her despair into joy when she least expects it.

*Bella enters*

**Bella**: May I come in?

**Vincent/monk**: Good morning to you, my fair lady.

**Bella**: Good morning to you, father. Has Deputy Dawg sent my brother’s pardon yet?

**Vincent/monk**: He has been released from this world, dear Bella. His head is off and is on its way to Deputy Dawg now as we speak.

**Bella**: No! It’s not true!

**Vincent/monk**: It is. Be wise my child and try to maintain your composure.

**Bella**: Oh! I’ll go and tear out his eyes!

**Vincent/monk**: You can’t get in to see him.

**Bella**: Unhappy Leo! Sad, sad Bella! Cruel, cruel, world! And Damned, damned Deputy Dawg!

**Vincent/monk**: This neither hurts him nor helps you. Control yourself and listen exactly to what I have to say. Every word is the truth and you can rely on it. The Regent’s coming home tomorrow. No, dry your eyes. His confessor, who is my brother, gave me this information. He’s already sent word to Echo and Deputy Dawg, who are preparing to meet him at City Hall and surrender their authority to him there. If you can follow what I am saying you’ll have your revenge on this villain.

**Bella**: I’ll do whatever you say.

**Vincent/monk**: Then give this letter to Friar Tucker. It’s the one he sent me about the regent’s return. It’ll be a sign that I want to meet him at Anna Belle’s house tonight. I’ll tell him all about her case and yours, and he’ll bring you before the Regent, and you can accuse Deputy Dawg up close and in person. I am bound by a sacred vow, so I won’t be there. Go with this letter. Stop crying now and try to put on a happy face. Never trust me again if I steer you wrong. Who’s there?

*Luke enters*

**Luke**: Good evening, father. Where is the Warden?

**Vincent/monk**: Not inside, sir.

**Luke**: Oh Bella, I’m sick at heart to see your eyes so red, but please try to calm down. They say the Regent will be here tomorrow. I swear, Bella, I loved your brother. If the Regent, had been at home, instead of fooling around the galaxy, Leo would be alive today.

*Bella exits*

**Vincent/monk**: Sir, the regent is nothing like you say he is.

**Luke**: Father, you don’t know the regent as well as I do. He’s more of a womanizer than you think. Remember that porn star he paid off last year?

**Vincent/monk**: That, sir, was a big lie and never happened. Well, you’ll pay for this one day. Goodbye.

**Luke**: Hold up! I’ll go along with you and I can tell you more tales of the Regent!

**Vincent/monk**: You’ve already told me too many. True or not, I don’t want to hear anymore.

**Luke**: I appeared before him once for getting a girl pregnant.

**Vincent/monk**: You did?

**Luke**: I did. But I denied it under oath. They would have made me marry the rotten whore otherwise.

**Vincent/monk**: Sir, you have a filthy tongue. Goodbye.

**Luke**: I’ll walk with you to the end of the lane. If dirty talk offends you, we will avoid it. No, on second thought, I’m sticking to you like glue.

*They exit*

**Scene 13. A room in Deputy Dawg’s House**

*Deputy Dawg and Echo enter*

**Echo**: Every letter he has written has contradicted the one that has preceded it.

**Deputy Dawg**: Yes, he is quite vague and inconsistent and his actions don’t make sense. And why do we have to meet him at the city hall instead of at Delphi to surrender our authority?

**Echo**: I don’t have a clue.

**Deputy Dawg**: And why, an hour before his arrival, should we announce that if anyone wants compensation for unjust treatment, they should come ready to present their petitions publicly?

**Echo**: He gives reasons for that. To be able to deal promptly with the complaints, and to save us from future lawsuits.

**Deputy Dawg**: Well, announce it early in the morning. I’ll come to pick you up at your house. Alert all the usual high-ranking party members.

**Echo**: Will do! Goodbye!

**Deputy Dawg**: Good night.

*Echo exits*

**Deputy Dawg:** This thing I’ve done has totally discombobulated me. A young girl robbed of her virginity by a respected public figure who was supposed to enforce the law against sex! She could easily denounce me, but her shame will keep her from it! She wants to but my credibility is so strong that any scandal would blowback on her, not me. I would’ve let Leo live except he might have come after me someday.

*Deputy Dawg exits*

**Scene 14. A Field outside the town**

*Enter Regent Vincent in his own clothes and Friar Tucker*

**Vincent**: Deliver these letters for me at the appropriate time.

**Friar Tucker**: I’ll take care of it.

*Exit Friar Tucker*

*Enter Flavius*

**Vincent**: Thanks, Flavious, you got here fast. Let’s get going. More of our friends will be here soon.

*They exit*

**Scene 15. A street just inside the city gates**

*Bella and Anna Bell Lee enter*

**Bella**: I hate being devious. I’d rather tell the truth. But accusing Deputy Dawg is your job, the priest says, and he instructs me to lie, to hide our real purpose.

**Anna Belle**: We should do as he says.

**Bella**: And, he tells me not to think it strange if he contradicts me. It’ll be a bitter pill to swallow.

**Anna Belle**: I wish Friar Tucker…

**Bella**: Oh wait! He’s here now.

*Enter Friar Tucker*

**Friar Tucker**: Come on, I’ve found you a good place to stand, where the Regent will be sure to see you. The alarm bells are tolling, the party leadership has gathered, and the Regent’s about to enter. So, let’s go!

*They exit*

**Scene 16. City Hall**

*Anna Belle Lee, wearing a veil, Bella, and Friar Tucker are standing in their places. Regent Vincent, aides, Deputy Dawg, Echo, Luke, Warden, officers, and citizens enter from various directions.*

**Regent Vincent**: (*to Deputy Dawg)* My loyal deputy! Welcome! *(To Echo)* My faithful old friend, I am gladto see you.

**Echo and Deputy Dawg**: Welcome home, your honor!

**Regent Vincent**: My heartfelt thanks to you both. I’ve heard such good things about your administration of justice in my absence that I just had to thank you publicly.

**Deputy Dawg**: Your words make my heart swell with pride.

**Regent Vincent**: You are most worthy, your service deserves to be carved onto a marble monument, where time can’t erase it. Give me your hand, and let the people see how proud I am of you. Come, Echo, you must walk with me on my other side.

*Friar Tucker and Bella approach*

**Friar Tucker**: Now is the time to speak up and kneel before him.

**Bella**: I seek justice, Regent! Look down here at a poor girl who has been wronged in the most despicable way. I beg you to hear my true story and give me justice, justice, justice! That is all I ask!

**Regent Vincent**: Describe how you’ve been wronged, girl, in what way? By whom? Be brief. Deputy Dawg here will give you justice. Tell him your complaint.

**Bella**: Oh, worthy Regent, you’re urging me to ask the very devil himself for help. Listen to me yourself. You will either believe me and be compelled to do the right thing or you can punish me if you don’t. I beg you to listen to what I have to say!

**Deputy Dawg**: Sir, I’m afraid she’s not in her right mind. She’s appeared before me before, begging for her brother’s life, who was executed by the justice system.

**Bella**: By the justice system!

**Deputy Dawg**: She will speak in a strange and bitter way.

**Bella**: Yes, I’ll speak strangely, but truthfully. I’ll say that Deputy Dawg is a liar, isn’t that strange? He’s a murderer, isn’t that strange? He’s an adulterous thief, a hypocrite, and a man who rapes virgins, isn’t that strange?

**Regent Vincent**: That’s strange ten times over!

**Bella**: And it’s just as true as Deputy Dawg is standing right there. Yes, it’s true ten times over, for the truth is the truth, no matter how you slice it.

**Regent Vincent**: Take her away! Poor girl, she’s insane.

**Bella**: Oh, Regent, I beg you, don’t dismiss me by thinking I’m mad! Just because something is unlikely doesn’t make it impossible. It’s possible that the lowest scum on the face of the earth may look as innocent, and dignified, as Deputy Dawg. And for all his official finery, badges, and titles, he can still be the devil in disguise.

**Regent Vincent**: I must say if she’s mad, and I believe she is, her madness has a method to it. I’ve rarely heard such coherent logic from someone insane.

**Bella**: Please, your honor, don’t dismiss my arguments because they don’t seem to conform to outward appearances. Use your wisdom to uncover the hidden truth, which is covered over by lies to only look like the truth.

**Regent Vincent**: Very well. I have heard so-called sane persons make less sense than you. What is it you want to say?

**Bella**: I am the sister of Leo, the one who was sentenced to die for fornicating with his girlfriend, sentenced by Deputy Dawg. I was about to enter a convent when my brother contacted me. He sent me a message through his friend Luke.

**Luke**: That’s me. I was sent by Leo to persuade her to ask Deputy Dawg for a pardon.

**Bella**: Yes, that’s the man.

**Regent Vincent**: No one asked you to speak.

**Luke**: No, your honor, but no one asked me to be quiet either.

**Regent Vincent**: I’m asking you now. Remember it. And when you have your own business before me, you would be well advised to behave yourself.

**Luke**: Yes, your honor. Duly noted.

**Bella**: This gentleman has told you some of my story…

**Luke**: Right…

**Regent Vincent**: It may be right but don’t interrupt again, or I will have you jailed for contempt!

Proceed.

**Bella**: I went to this vile, evil deputy…

**Regent Vincent**: You’re sounding crazy again.

**Bella**: Excuse me, but the choice of words is material.

**Regent Vincent**: Very well. Continue.

**Bella**: To make a long story short, he wouldn’t release my brother unless I surrendered my body to him. And after wrestling with my conscience for a while my duty as a sister overcame my honor, and I gave in to him. But having got what he wanted, early the next morning he sent an order for my poor brother’s head.

**Regent Vincent**: Yes, that is believable!

**Bella**: It is not only believable, it is true!

**Regent Vincent**: Saints preserve us, girl! You can’t know what you are talking about! You are bearing false witness against this man. His integrity is beyond reproach. It makes no sense that he would so vigorously prosecute a crime that he himself commits. If he had committed such a crime, he would’ve judged your brother against himself, and not executed him. Someone has put you up to this. Confess the truth, and tell us who urged you to come here with this accusation.

**Bella**: That’s it? That’s all the help I get? I must be patient. Time will reveal the evil lurking here behind the false pretenses! Since you don’t believe me, I have to go.

**Regent Vincent**: Not so fast! Officer, take her to prison! I will not permit such scandalous rumors to run rampant about my closest deputy. This is obviously part of a larger conspiracy designed to take down the government. Who knew about your plan, and that you were coming here?

**Bella**: Someone I wish was here now. Friar Lawrence.

**Regent Vincent**: A Holy Ghost, most likely. Who knows about this Friar Lawrence?

**Luke**: Your honor, I know him. He’s the sort of priest who’s always meddling in people’s business. I don’t like the man. If he hadn’t been a monk, I would have dealt him a blow for the way he spoke about you while you were gone.

**Regent Vincent**: Words against me? Some holy priest he is! And to send this deplorable woman here against my deputy! Someone, go and find this priest and bring him here to me!

**Luke**: Just yesterday, your honor, I saw her and this priest at the prison. He’s brazen and he’s rude and he’s beneath contempt.

**Friar Tucker**: May the Saints preserve your honor! I’ve stood by, and I’ve heard the truth twisted to make a trap for fools! First, this woman has wrongfully accused Deputy Dawg. He is as far from any sexual misbehavior as she is from a virgin birth.

**Regent Vincent**: I never doubted that for a moment. Do you know this Friar Lawrence?

**Friar Tucker**: I know him to be a holy man of great character, not someone who meddles in earthly pleasures, as this gentleman suggests. And, trust me, he’s a man that has never slandered your honor.

**Luke**: I object! He did slander your honor, and viciously too. You can believe it!

**Friar Tucker**: Well, in time he may come to clear himself, but at this instant, he’s sick with the virus. When he learned of the conspiracy against Deputy Dawg, he personally asked me to come here and speak for him. And when he’s called, he’ll give his oath and provide proof that will clear everything up. This loyal party member, this noble deputy who’s been so publicly and personally accused, will be vindicated, and this woman will be discredited.

**Regent Vincent**: Go on good father, let’s hear it.

*Bella is taken off under guard.*

*Anna Belle Lee comes forward wearing a veil.*

**Anna Belle:** Pardon me, your honor. I will not show my face until my husband bids me to.

**Regent Vincent**: What, are you married?

**Anna Belle**: No, your honor.

**Regent Vincent**: Are you single?

**Anna Belle**: No, your honor.

**Regent Vincent**: A widow then?

**Anna Belle**: Neither, your honor.

**Regent Vincent**: So, you are neither single, widow, nor wife?

**Luke**: Your honor, she may be a prostitute. Most of them are neither virgins, widows, nor wives.

**Regent Vincent**: Keep that fellow quiet!

**Luke**: OK, Your honor!

**Anna Belle:** I do admit I’ve never been married, your honor, and I also admit I’m not a virgin. I’ve slept with my husband, but my husband doesn’t know he’s slept with me.

**Luke**: He must have been drunk then, your honor. That’s the only explanation.

**Regent Vincent**: Silence!

**Luke**: Yes, your honor.

**Regent Vincent**: This is hardly a witness for Deputy Dawg.

**Anna Belle**: I’m coming to it now, your honor. The woman who’s accusing him of fornication is actually accusing my husband. And she alleges it was at the very same time, as he was in my arms, making love to me.

**Deputy Dawg**: Does she accuse anyone else?

**Anna** **Belle**: Not that I know of.

**Regent Vincent**: No? Deputy Dawg is your husband, you say?

**Anna Belle**: Exactly! And he believes he never slept with me but thinks he had sex with Bella.

**Deputy Dawg:** What trickery is this? Let me see your face.

**Anna Belle**: My husband bids me to, so I will unmask.

*Anna removes her veil*

This is the face, that you once swore would launch a thousand ships. This is the hand that held yours when you swore your vows. This is the body that kept your rendezvous with Bella and satisfied your lust in your garden-house and that you thought was her.

**Regent Vincent:** Do you know this woman?

**Luke**: Sexually, yes.

**Regent Vincent**: Quiet!

**Luke**: Right, your honor!

**Deputy Dawg**: I must confess I do know this woman. Five years ago, there was some talk of marriage between her and me. I broke it off, partly because her dowry fell short of the agreed amount, but mainly because it came to my attention that she was a loose woman. So, I broke it off. For the last five years, I haven’t spoken with her, seen her, or heard from her, I swear.

**Anna Belle**: Good sir, I swear to you, as sure as the sun rises in the east, I am engaged to this man. And last Tuesday night in a garden house, he treated me as his wife. Now that I’ve told the truth allow me to arise from my knees, or else I’ll be stuck here permanently like a frozen statue.

**Deputy Dawg**: I was amused up until now, but my patience has run out. Your honor, let me apply the full force of the law. I believe these poor, demented women are part of a larger conspiracy. Someone else has put them up to it. Give me the chance to unravel this plot.

**Regent Vincent**: Yes, by all means, punish them as much as you like. You, you foolish priest, and you, you wicked woman, are in collusion with that other one we just took away. Even if you swore by every saint in all the galaxies, your oaths would mean nothing compared to Deputy Dawg’s reputation. Mr. Echo, work with the good deputy here and do all you can to help him unravel this conspiracy and discover where it came from. There’s another priest who put them up to this. Send for him.

**Friar Tucker**: I wish he were here, your honor! He did encourage the women to make this accusation. The Warden knows where he lives and can go get him.

**Regent Vincent:** Go do it, immediately.

*Warden exits*

**Regent Vincent**:(*to Deputy Dawg)* And you, my good friend, you have a lot at stake here. Deal with the crimes against you as you think best, with any form of punishment you like. I’ll leave you for a while, but don’t move until you have fully decided the fate of these defamers.

**Echo**: Yes, your honor, we will be most diligent.

*Vincent exits*

Luke, didn’t you say you knew this Friar Lawrence to be a dishonest person?

**Luke**: One hoodie does not make a monk. This monk’s robe is the only thing holy about him. And he’s said some very ugly things about the Regent.

**Echo**: We’ll ask you to stay here until he comes and repeat those charges. We also think this monk’s a suspicious character.

**Luke**: As much as anyone on Globulus!

**Echo**: Call Bella in here again. I want to speak with her.

*Exit lackey*

Please, your honor, allow me to question her. You’ll see how I handle her.

**Luke**: No better than him according to her.

**Echo**: What did you say?

**Luke**: Saints! I think, if you talked to her privately, she’d be more likely to confess. She might be ashamed to do it in public.

**Echo**: I’ll be quiet about it. Discretion is always the better part of valor.

*Officers re-enter with Bella. The Warden re-enters with Regent Vincent in the costume of a monk.*

**Echo**: (*to Bella*)Listen, young lady, this woman contradicts everything you’ve said.

**Luke**: Sir, here comes the rascal I was talking about, with the Warden.

**Echo**: All in good time. Don’t speak to him until we call on you.

**Luke**: Mum’s the word!

**Echo**: Now, sir, did you encourage these women to slander Deputy Dawg? They have testified that you did.

**Vincent/monk**: It’s a lie!

**Echo**: What! Do you know where you are?

**Vincent/monk**: With all due respect, where is Regent Vincent? He is the one who should be hearing my testimony.

**Echo**: We represent the Regent and are his agents. We will hear you speak. Just make sure you speak truthfully.

**Vincent/monk**: I will be bold. I am afraid the fox is in the hen house. You might as well kiss justice goodbye. Is the Regent gone? Then your case is gone. The Regent’s unjust, rejecting your accusation and turning your case over to the very villain you came here to accuse.

**Luke**: This is the rascal I was telling you about!

**Echo**: Why you disrespectful and unholy monk! It’s not enough that you’ve conspired with these women to accuse this worthy man, but with your foul mouth, you call him a villain right in front of him? And then attack the Regent, and call him unjust? Take him away! We’ll waterboard you until you drown or until we hear your confession. “Unjust,” you say? The regent is “unjust?”

**Vincent/monk**: Calm down. The Regent doesn’t dare touch a hair on my head even if I had hair. I have diplomatic immunity. My business on Globulus has me as an on-looker here in Lost Angels. I’ve seen nothing but corruption since I’ve been here flowing like sewage out of the whorehouses of this miserable little town. You’ve got laws for all the crimes, but the crimes are so well-tolerated that the people just laugh at them!

**Echo**: Slandering the state! Take him away!

**Deputy Dawg**: What evidence do you have against him, Luke? Is this the man you told us about?

**Luke**: He’s the one! Come here, monk! Do you know me?

**Vincent/monk**: I remember you, sir, by the sound of your voice. I met you at the prison, back when the Regent was away.

**Luke**: Oh, you did? And do you remember what you said about the Regent?

**Vincent/monk**: Definitely, sir.

**Luke**: Do you, sir? Do you remember saying that the Regent was a pimp, a fool, and a coward?

**Vincent/monk**: I beg your pardon sir, but you obviously have me confused with your own bad self, for it was you who made all those remarks.

**Luke**: Damn you, father! Did I not punch you in the nose for making those statements?

**Vincent/monk**: I swear I love the Regent as I love myself.

**Luke**: Look, how the villain would mollify us now, after his treasonous defamation!

**Echo**: You can’t talk to this kind of man. Take him away! Where is the Warden? Take him away! Put him in chains. And take these strumpets away, too, along with their co-conspirator.

**Vincent/monk**: (*to the Warden*) Hold on a minute!

**Deputy Dawg**: Resisting arrest? Luke! Help the Warden!

**Luke**: Come on, sir. Come on! So, you lying charlatan, you want to keep your hood on, do you? Show your lousy face, damn you! Show your scum-sucking face, and be hanged in an hour! Won’t it come off?

*He pulls off the monk’s hood, revealing Regent Vincent*

**Regent Vincent:** You’re the first scoundrel to ever turn a monk into a Regent! First, Warden, let me free these three gentle people. (*To Luke*)Don’t try to sneak away, sir. The friar and you will have a chat later on. Hold him.

**Luke**: This may be worse than hanging.

**Regent Vincent**: (*To Echo*) I forgive the things you said to me. Sit down. I’ll take Deputy Dawg’s seat. (*To Deputy Dawg*) Do you have any words that you think may exonerate you? Don’t hold the truth back any longer.

**Deputy Dawg**: Your honor, Now, that I realize you have seen my crimes. Let my confession count as my trial. I beg only for the mercy of an immediate sentence and a quick death.

**Regent Vincent**: Come here, Anna. *(To Deputy Dawg)* Were you ever engaged to this woman?

**Deputy Dawg**: I was, your honor.

**Regent Vincent**: Take her and marry her at once. You perform the ceremony, Friar Tucker, and when it’s done, bring him back here. Go with him, Warden.

*Deputy Dawg, Anna Bell Lee, Friar Tucker, and the Warden exit.*

Come here, Bella. Your friar is now your Regent, but my heart hasn’t changed. I devoted myself to your affairs then, and I’m still devoted to you now.

**Bella**: Oh, forgive me, sir! I unknowingly used you and created problems for your honor. I am so sorry!

**Regent Vincent**: you’re forgiven, Bella. And now, dear girl, be as generous to me. I know your brother’s death hurts you deeply. And you may be wondering why I disguised myself, working behind the scenes to save his life, and didn’t just use my authority rather than let him die. Sweet girl, it was the speed of his execution, which I thought would take longer, that ruined my plan. But peace be with him! He is in a better place. At least he doesn’t have to fear death anymore. Try to take comfort in that.

**Bella**: I do, your honor.

*Deputy Dawg, Anna Belle Lee, Friar Tucker, and the Warden re-enter*.

**Regent Vincent**: For Anna’s sake, you must forgive this newlywed, Deputy Dawg. He is a lecherous predator who stained your honor. After he condemned your brother to die, he stole your virginity and he broke his promise to give your brother a pardon. The scales of justice cry out for mercy, “a death for a death!” “Deputy Dawg for Leo!” It is written, “the measure of justice used shall be the measure used against you.” So, Deputy Dawg, your crime is clear for all to see, and you will not be given preferential treatment. I hereby sentence you to be executed at once! Take him away!

**Anna**: Oh, my kind good sir, please don’t make a mockery of my marriage!

**Regent Vincent**: It’s your husband who’s made a mockery of it! I thought you should be married, to protect your honor. If word got out you had sexual relations with this man it would damage your reputation. His possessions now belong to the state, but we are extending to you widow’s benefits and give them to you. Find yourself a better man for a husband.

**Anna**: But, but, your honor! I don’t want a better man or any other man! I want Deputy Dawg!

**Regent Vincent**: Well, you shouldn’t want him. My decision is final.

**Anna**: Please, your honor! I beseech you!

*Anna kneels*

**Regent Vincent:** You’re just wasting your time. Take him to the chopping block!

(To Luke)

Now, sir, about you!

**Anna Belle**: Dear kind sir! Bella, take my side. Kneel with me, and for the rest of my life, you can count on me.

**Regent Vincent**: It makes no sense to beg her. If she were to kneel and plead for mercy, it will only fall on deaf ears.

**Anna Belle**: Bella, sweet Bella, just kneel beside me and hold my hand. You don’t have to say anything, I’ll do all the talking. Deputy Dawg may yet learn from his mistakes and be the better for it. Oh Bella, won’t you kneel?

**Regent Vincent**: He dies for Leo’s death.

**Bella**: (*kneeling*)Generous sir, please look upon Deputy Dawg as if my brother were still alive. He was actually sincere in his intentions until he encountered me. That’s where things went off the rails. So, don’t let him die. My brother was actually executed for the thing that he did, so that in a way that was justice. But Deputy Dawg didn’t actually fulfill his bad intentions, and that should be considered as mitigating circumstances. Intentions are merely thoughts, and thoughts are not illegal, at least not yet.

**Anna Belle**: Merely thoughts, good sir!

**Regent Vincent**: Your pleas are of no use. Stand up! Another crime has been committed that I want to get to the bottom of. Warden, why was Leo beheaded at such an unusual hour?

**Warden**: Because it was so ordered.

**Regent Vincent**: Did you have a warrant?

**Warden**: No, it was by private message.

**Regent Vincent**: You’re discharged for this. Turn in your keys.

**Warden**: Forgive me, your honor. I thought it might be wrong, but I wasn’t sure. After thinking about it, I changed my mind about the next prisoner who was to be executed by private order. Him, I kept alive.

**Regent Vincent**: Who?

**Warden**: His name is Barnaby.

**Vincent**: I wish you had done the same with Leo. Go and get him. Let me see him.

*Warden exits*

**Echo**: Deputy Dawg, I am sorry that someone so educated and wise, as you appear to be, should fall so far and swiftly from grace.

**Deputy Dawg**: No sorrier than am I. It is an embarrassment to me and a humiliation that I cannot bear. It sticks so deeply in my heart that I crave death more than mercy. I deserve to die and I beg to be put to death.

*The Warden re-enters with Barnaby, Leo with his face covered, and Miss Julie*

**Regent Vincent**:Which one is Barnaby?

**Warden**: This one, your honor.

**Regent Vincent**: (*to Barnaby*) Sir, you’re said to have a stubborn disposition. You’re doomed in this life, but I pardon you for all your crimes here on earth and hope you’ll take advantage of this mercy to prepare for the next world. Friar, counsel him. I leave him in your hands. Who’s that covered-up fellow?

**Warden**: This is another prisoner I saved. He should have died when Leo lost his head. He looks almost exactly like Leo.

*He uncovers Leo*

**Regent Vincent**: *(To Bella)* If he resembles your brother, then for his sake, he’s pardoned. And as for your sake, give me your hand and say you’ll be mine. Deputy Dawg, I think, realizes this means he’s safe. Well, Deputy Dawg, your wicked ways seem to have paid off. Make sure you love your wife as you love yourself. I’m feeling merciful, and yet here’s someone I can’t forgive. *(To Luke)* You, who called me a fool, a coward, and a lecher. What did I ever do to you that you call me these things?

**Luke**: I swear, your honor, I’m only repeating what I’ve heard. You can hang me for it if you want, but if it pleases your honor, I would just as soon be whipped.

**Regent Vincent**: Whipping first, hanging after. Send out a message, Warden, to all citizens of Lost Angels, if there is any woman out there that has been wronged by this man, she should come forward. They shall be married. After the wedding, let him be whipped and hanged.

**Luke**: I beg your honor, don’t marry me to a whore. You just said I made you a Regent. Don’t pay me back by giving me a prostitute for a wife.

**Regent Vincent**: Upon my honor, you will marry her. I forgive your insults and lift your other punishments. Take him to prison, and see that my wishes are carried out.

**Luke**: I beg your pardon, your honor, but marrying a whore is worse than being whipped, and hanged.

**Regent Vincent**: Maybe so, but you get what you deserve for your slanderous mouth.

*Officers exit with Luke*

Leo, the girl you wronged, make sure you marry her. Much joy to you, Anna Belle Lee! Love her, Deputy Dawg! She is a woman of great virtue. Thanks, good friend Echo, for being such a loyal soldier. You will not be forgotten. Thanks to you, Warden, for your ability to keep a secret. You will be rewarded with a promotion. Forgive him, Deputy Dawg, for bringing you Jack Sparrow’s head instead of Leo’s. The crime redeems itself. Dear Bella, I have a proposal to make if you are willing. I would like to offer you all I have in this world for your hand in marriage. Come with me to my mansion by the sea and I’ll show you everything you need to know.

*All exit*