

The chronicles of *Wild Hollow*

THE GRAY TRILOGY

EPISODE ONE **A Smuggler's Honour**

A **Shouting Is Funny** production.

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SCENE 1 - THE LILYPAD LOUNGE. EVENING.

SFX: City traffic fades into a crowd of chatting voices.

MUSIC: 'Lilypad Smooth'

NARRATOR The Lilypad Lounge throbbed like a beating heart. Music rattled through the building, pouring out onto the bustling streets of Fortuna City. Fandango Boursin was perched at the bar, talking to a couple of frogs.

FANDANGO I ain't a snake, but I can tell something's got you rattled.

MARTHA Take your questions elsewhere before you get us both mixed up in a cocktail of bad news. You know I should-

SFX: A ribbit, and approaching high-heeled footsteps.

MARLOWE Well, this is just wonderful to see a brand new face here at our humble establishment. Madame Marlowe is my name. I see you've already met Martha. Martha, will you go and count stock in the office please?

SFX: Martha's footsteps walking away from the bar.

NARRATOR As Martha sullenly dragged her heels towards the office, she felt Madame Marlowe's eyes burning into the back of her skull.

SFX: The office door creaking open.

MARLOWE (Fading away) Apologies about Martha, she's new... Clearly struggling with all the pressure, poor dear.

SFX: The door snaps shut.

MARTHA Good for nuthin...

NARRATOR She mumbled as entered the dimly lit room.

SFX: The click of a light switch, and the whirl of a bulb above Martha's head.

NARRATOR Brown barrels were stacked at the far end. A chemical smell wafted about her. She squinted through the haze.

SFX: Martha Gasps.

MUSIC: 'Prologue'

NARRATOR Camouflaged in the shadows, a slender figure leant against the barrels. The slow, rhythmic windmill of a twirling dagger betwixt furry, red fingers...

SFX: A dagger twirling through the air.

MARTHA The smuggler... I've heard about you.

NARRATOR Martha's words hung in the air. A shiver ran down the frog's slimy spine.

MARTHA This is the Sludge, right? So I gotta sign for this stuff?

ARTEMIS I don't take signatures. I take my money and I take my leave.

NARRATOR Martha scrabbled to the desk and pulled out a hefty sack of gold coins.

SFX: The opening and closing of a desk drawer. The clink of coins.

NARRATOR She held it out in front of her, quivering under the dull filament bulb.

MARTHA It's all here, Marlowe made me check it three times over. Said the smuggler wouldn't be too happy getting underpaid.

NARRATOR Martha caught a glimpse of red fur as the smuggler's paw darted out into the light, snatching the coins.

ARTEMIS Right. If that's all. I've another drop to make.

MARTHA Wait. Please. Marlowe keeps us in the dark but I can tell she's in deep with something nasty. Can you tell me what this Sludge stuff is really for? It's gotta be more than just a ploy to boost business.

SFX: Slow footsteps as Artemis emerges.

NARRATOR The smuggler stepped out from the shadows. A slender fox in a forest green jerkin. Tucked into her leather belt was an ornate silver dagger. Her emerald eyes stared at Martha.

ARTEMIS There are bigger players in this game than your froggy pals. I've found asking questions is a sure way to get yourself killed.

NARRATOR A look of anguish flickered across Martha's face. She looked at the barrels, crestfallen.

SFX: Artemis sighs.

ARTEMIS You're new here, aye?

MARTHA Yes.

ARTEMIS You seem nice. Too nice for this place. Listen, you want my advice? Trust no one. This world is filled with cutthroats and cowards. Get out while you still can.

SFX: Footsteps as Artemis begins to take her leave.

NARRATOR She turned, and headed for the back door.

MARTHA Thank you, friend.

SFX: The footsteps pause.

ARTEMIS I'm not your friend. Round here, a dagger is the best friend you can have.

MARTHA Then... What can I call you?

ARTEMIS Artemis. Artemis Gray.

NARRATOR A grin danced upon the smugglers' lips for a brief moment, and she dashed into the night.

TITLE SEQUENCE

MUSIC: 'The Chronicles of Wild Hollow (Main Theme)'

NARRATOR In a far off place... An endless forest grows. A land where adventure lurks around every corner. A land where legends are made. A land, called Wild Hollow.

SCENE 2 - OUT AT SEA. A MERCHANT SHIP. NIGHT TIME.

SFX: Waves crashing, a ship creaking, and snippets of conversation as we pass by members of the merchant crew.

NARRATOR Wild Hollow was a mere dot on the horizon. A merchant ship carved its way through the waves of the Crispian Sea. Its destination: Fortuna Harbour.

CREW 1 Blimey, it's cold tonight.

CREW 2 Well, put your pants back on then, for goodness sake.

NARRATOR The usual cargo of Hollow Rum was stacked in barrels below deck. Nothing out of the ordinary, you would have thought. But on this particular evening...

CREW 3 Oy, did you hear? Captain's caught a stowaway.

CREW 4 What??

CREW 3 He caught her behind the barrels, rum all over her whiskers.

SFX: Heavy footsteps across deck.

CAPTAIN Now, now, gentlemen. Gossip is not welcome in my crew.

CREW 3 Sorry, cap'n. Right you are.

NARRATOR The tall, scraggly hound nodded curtly, a marvellous moustache bristling along his stiff, upper lip.

SFX: We go with the footsteps, down below deck. The waves fade as we head inside.

MUSIC: 'Not Too Happy'

NARRATOR The Captain descended the steps below deck. The wind faded to a distant howl, the waves muffled through the oakwood hull. Deeper and deeper the sea-dog ventured, before finally arriving in the brig. A shadow lurked in the corner of the darkest cell.

CAPTAIN You're a long way from home again... Miss Gray.

ARTEMIS Well, you know me, Captain. I never can resist a trip aboard your beautiful vessel.

NARRATOR The captain lit a lantern on the table behind him.

SFX: A match being struck.

NARRATOR The golden red light spilled across the floorboards and into the cell, revealing Artemis Gray.

CAPTAIN I must say, your visitations are becoming so regular, I may as well induct you as part of the crew.

ARTEMIS As flattering as that is, I'd rather steal from you than work for you. How did you get on in Fortuna last month, by the way?

CAPTAIN My contractor wasn't particularly pleased when I arrived with only a third of his shipment.

ARTEMIS Aww, that's a shame. He certainly seemed cheerful enough when I sold him the rest three hours later.

SFX: The Captain chuckling.

NARRATOR The captain sneered through the bars.

CAPTAIN Yes, I imagine he was. How unfortunate that you weren't able to pull the same stunt this evening.

ARTEMIS Not tonight. I've taken a sabbatical. Personal reasons.

CAPTAIN I'll believe that when Scumwarter becomes a hotel resort.

ARTEMIS Honestly. Just passing through. Got a bit thirsty, had a wee drink, hope you don't mind. But, tonight, I'm just a passenger.

CAPTAIN Correction. Tonight, Miss Gray, you're a prisoner.

NARRATOR The Captain turned again to the table, picking up an ornate, carved object. Ivory white, curved to a point and detailed with scripture and symbols.

CAPTAIN So which poor sod did you swipe this from, then?

NARRATOR He tossed the object into the air, then caught it again.

ARTEMIS Be careful!

NARRATOR The Captain paused, eyeing Artemis with sudden curiosity.

CAPTAIN Interesting... I wasn't aware you cared for anything other than your own skin.

ARTEMIS I just mean, the poor sod I swiped that from might not be too happy if it got damaged.

NARRATOR The two glared at each other, before the Captain took a closer look at what he held.

CAPTAIN These runes... They're Old World. I'd almost say this was...

CREW 1 (Distant) SHIP APPROACHING STARBOARD!

NARRATOR The Captain spun towards the noise, his eyes fearful.

CAPTAIN No. You didn't.

ARTEMIS Like I said. Not too happy.

SFX: A cannonball smashes through the hull. An explosion of splintering wood.

NARRATOR At that moment, a cannonball exploded through the hull behind Artemis, smashing through the cell door and launching the captain across the brig. Artemis clambered through the wreckage and crouched at the Captain's side.

ARTEMIS I'm sorry. I didn't mean for this.

CAPTAIN You've... doomed... all of us...

NARRATOR The dog went limp, his paw falling to one side, the object still in his grasp.

ARTEMIS I'll be taking this back.

NARRATOR Artemis prized the precious cargo from the dog's dead grip, before turning towards the growing commotion. Cries of panic and clashing of sword on sword. Artemis bounded out of the brig and up the stairs, out onto the deck.

SFX: Waves smash against the hull of the ship, as swords clash in battle. Various screams from the fighting pirates.

SONG: 'Last Chance to Parlay'

NARRATOR A heavily tattooed otter with a rag for an eye patch bellowed orders to his invading crew.

(OSRIC)

SHE'S HERE
SHE'S GOTTA BE HERE
CHECK BELOW DECK AND LET'S
COMMANDEER THIS SHIP

SORRY FOR BARGING IN
BUT YOU BE HARBOURING A

STOWAWAY
THERE'S AN EASY WAY FOR
US TO ALL PROCEED
I'D RECOMMEND NOT PUTTING UP A FIGHT
SURRENDER NOW AND GIVE US WHAT WE NEED

NARRATOR The pirates swarmed the deck, seizing the merchants and throwing them to the ground at the foot of the mast. Artemis was frozen in the doorway of the stairs, horrified by the sight. They had found her.

OSRIC Ah, decided to show your fur then, Miss Gray.

(OSRIC)

RIGHT THEN
LISTEN TO ME
EVERY SOUL ON
BOARD THIS SHIP WILL DIE

UNLESS YOU COME WITH US
AND I'D APPRECIATE IT

IF YOU COULD
RESIST THE USUAL
PANTOMIME YOU PLAY
WE'RE NOT IN THE MOOD FOR A RUN AROUND
YOU STOLE FROM US, AND NOW YOU HAVE TO PAY

(PIRATES)

THIEF

AND A CROOK
GIVE US BACK
WHAT YOU TOOK FROM US

RUN
AND YOU'RE DONE
THERE'S NO PLACE
THAT YOU CAN ESCAPE

THIS
ARTEMIS
IS YOUR LAST
CHANCE TO PARLAY

OSRIC Have it your way.

NARRATOR Artemis had pounced into the air, scurrying up the rigging. She swung herself onto the mast, and began to edge her way along the narrow wooden beam, her adversaries in hot pursuit. A fearsome bearded dragon stalked her from below.

(CAINE)
CREW
YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO
HOW ABOUT WE SHOW THIS GIRL
EXACTLY HOW WE FEEL
PRISONERS LINE UP ON THE DECK
AND KNEEL

I THINK AN EXECUTION MIGHT BE DUE
HOW HEAVY CAN YOUR CONSCIENCE GET, FOX
BEFORE YOU REALISE YOU'RE THROUGH

OSRIC Caine, might I remind you that I give the orders around here.

CAINE Relax, Osric. I'm just doing what needs to be done. Now then...

NARRATOR Caine placed the tip of his blade at the nearest merchant's throat.

SFX: The unsheathing of Caine's dagger.

CAINE How about we start with you.

ARTEMIS (From above) WAIT.

SFX: Artemis swings from a rope and lands with a thud on the deck.

ARTEMIS We might as well have a chat, seeing as you've gone to all the trouble. Leave them alone.

NARRATOR The otter eyed Artemis suspiciously.

ARTEMIS No games, Osric. I'm coming with you.

NARRATOR Osric called out to the rest of the crew.

OSRIC Grab her! We spare the rest!

NARRATOR Artemis was suddenly seized from behind. A burly beaver stuffed a rag into her mouth, wrapped her tightly in ropes and hoisted her onto his shoulder. The bearded dragon held back.

CAINE One last thing!

OSRIC Caine! We're done here!

NARRATOR Caine looked down through the cracked deck at the barrels of Hollow Rum. He leered at the cowering merchants, before snatching up a lantern and tossing it down onto the kegs.

SFX: The lantern smashes into the cache of rum. The merchants cry out as an explosive fire ignites.

OSRIC Caine! They were innocent. Everyone, back to The Crown.

NARRATOR The hull was alive with flames. The last few pirates clambered back aboard their invading ship with the fox, as smoke began to seep from below deck.

SFX: The flames grow into an inferno.

NARRATOR Artemis stared in horror as the merchant vessel was engulfed in the inferno. The screams ebbed away one by one. Until finally, silence fell.

SFX: The burning ship fades into silence.

SCENE 3 - THE CROWN. NIGHT TIME.

SFX: Waves, the creaking of the ship and wind blowing across the deck.

NARRATOR The bowels of The Crown creaked, salty night air whistling through the cracks in the ship. There was a frenzied hustle and bustle as the crew marched across the deck, Artemis bound in ropes and held aloft. Osric addressed the crew.

MUSIC: 'Bring Her Down Below'

OSRIC Bring her down below!

CAINE We've got the Whale Song already, Osric, why can't we just throw her overboard?

OSRIC We must honour the code, Caine, we can't just toss people overboard willy-nilly.

NARRATOR Caine grunted, his reptilian scales bristling. He barged past the crew and headed down the stairs. Osric watched him go and turned to the others.

OSRIC Take her to the cabin.

SFX: General pirate dialogue, footsteps leading down below deck and into the cabin.

PIRATE (Amidst the commotion) Anyone seen my pickled eggs?

NARRATOR The pirates piled into the cabin, dropping Artemis down and forming a crowd around her.

SFX: A thud and a grunt as Artemis hits the deck.

NARRATOR She sat up on her knees and surveyed the space. Back again, she thought. It had been two weeks since she had snuck aboard the ship in search of the Whale Song. While the crew had been making merry in the taverns of Sinner's Cove, she had scaled the empty vessel, broken into the Captain's chamber and slipped away into the night with the ancient artefact. But there was something different about the place now, something more sombre. The shutters were closed, and large curtains were hung around the room, like ominous spectres.

ARTEMIS How did you find me?

OSRIC When we found the Whale Song was gone, we asked around and heard there'd been a fox spotted skulking around the harbour. Didn't take us long to put two and two together, Ms Gray. You have quite the reputation.

ARTEMIS Well, two weeks could be considered a fairly long time-

CAINE -Shut it, vermin!

OSRIC Right. As first mate, I will do the honours. I call this trial into session.

ARTEMIS Where's the Captain?

SFX: Murmuring from the crew.

NARRATOR A murmur ran through the crew. They looked edgy. Artemis' nose switched.

ARTEMIS Take me to the Pirate King. Isn't that part of your code?

OSRIC Artemis Gray. You are charged with treason against the pirate code, for the theft of the Whale Song and subsequent attempt of resale for personal gain.

ARTEMIS I wasn't trying to sell it.

SFX: Creaking floorboards as Artemis takes a step forward, before Caine yanks her back to the ground.

NARRATOR Caine boisterously tugged on her ropes, pulling Artemis back down to the floor.

CAINE Course you were, dirty smuggler! There's no honour in your trade.

ARTEMIS Says you! You pirates wouldn't know honour if it bit you on the nose!

SFX: A burst of outrage from the crew.

NARRATOR The crew erupted. Osric tried to maintain order.

OSRIC Calm down, you lot!

ARTEMIS Why are you so precious about an old whale tooth anyway?

NARRATOR A small penguin piped up from the crowd.

SALAMI It's not just a tooth, it's a beacon to another land, the song inside it can-

CAINE -Shut up Salami, the less she knows the better.

NARRATOR Artemis grinned slowly.

ARTEMIS So it is real.

NARRATOR Caine grunted. Salami looked at her quizzically.

SALAMI Why would you take it if you didn't know it was real?

ARTEMIS I had a hunch, but now I'm sure. You lot have made one hell of a fuss about getting it back.

CAINE I've had enough of this, throw her overboard!

ARTEMIS Not until I've seen the Captain!

OSRIC All of you, quiet.

SFX: A hacking cough from behind the crew.

NARRATOR A spluttering cough cut through the silence from behind the heavy velvet curtain, followed by a sickly wheezing sound. Osric tried to restart the proceedings.

OSRIC As I was saying, you have been charged with-

SFX: The hacking cough interrupts Osric.

OSRIC Charged with treason against-

SFX: The cough continues.

NARRATOR A faint voice whispered from behind the curtain.

LESLEY Let me see her.

MUSIC: 'The Pirate King'

NARRATOR The pirates looked at each other nervously. Osric walked to the curtain and drew it back.

SFX: Footsteps, then the curtain scraping across a metal rail. More coughing.

NARRATOR Behind it was a melancholy sight. A grand four poster bed, carved with intricate gold filigree, stood in the corner of the room. An elaborate candelabra hung above it, casting a warm glow over the silk sheets. And lying in the middle of the bed was the

Pirate King. A great pale Walrus; he was dressed in white bed clothes and wrapped in woven blankets.

SFX: The scuttling of the crab nurses.

NARRATOR Around him were several small crabs, each laden with towels, water basins and smelling salts. Benny the Parrot perched by his shoulder, looking solemn in the candle light. Artemis stared in shock. The King spoke.

LESLEY The Whale Song...

OSRIC We retrieved it, Captain!

NARRATOR Osric approached the King's bedside and presented the treasure. The pale King tried to reach for it but could not muster the energy. Osric quickly leant forward and placed the Song gently into his hand.

OSRIC It's back in its rightful place now, your Highness.

NARRATOR Artemis turned to Salami.

ARTEMIS What's wrong with him?

SALAMI Been like this for three days. Each morning he's worse than the night before.

BENNY Sickness, sickness!

SALAMI Exactly. As Benny so eloquently said. He has a sickness. Only Paeon's Kiss can save him now.

ARTEMIS What's that?

SALAMI Well, they say it's this magic flower hidden in the Heath Cliffs that can heal any ailment, but it's not easy to get to because-

CAINE -Salami! Keep your beak shut. The smuggler don't need to know.

NARRATOR Artemis sat up briskly.

ARTEMIS I've heard of this flower! Back home they used to call it the Living Weed. It's notoriously hard to find. Has a near undetectable scent.

NARRATOR Osric turned from the bedside, looking the fox in the eye.

OSRIC And that's the problem. Even if we get to the Heath Cliffs in time, we still need to sniff it out.

SFX: The crew sighs in melancholy unison.

NARRATOR There was an audible sigh from the pirates. As everybody knew, the years of salty sea air had all but eroded the crew's sense of smell. A look of despair played across the faces of the shipmates. A peg-legged seagull chimed in.

PABLO Oooh! We're done for. I can't smell nothing!

SALAMI He's right. I can't smell the difference between a kipper and my own bumhole.

OSRIC Charming, Salami.

SALAMI True though...

NARRATOR Caine snarled.

CAINE Are we gonna have this trial or what? This no-good bin sniffer stole our sacred Whale Song. There must be consequences.

SFX: Shouts of agreement from the crew.

ARTEMIS Now wait a minute. I could help you! You said you need someone to help you find the flower. I can do that.

SALAMI They do say foxes got great smelling skills.

NARRATOR Caine drew a knife from his belt.

SFX: The unsheathing of a dagger.

CAINE Enough of this twaddle. She's lying to save her fur.

NARRATOR Artemis looked Caine in the eye and inhaled deeply.

SFX: Artemis taking a slow sniff.

ARTEMIS Three pickled eggs, six pieces of fish jerky and about half a gallon of sheep's piss.

NARRATOR Caine and the crew fell silent.

ARTEMIS Correct me if I'm wrong, but that's everything that's passed your lips since sunrise. Am I right? Or am I just a no-good bin sniffer?

SFX: Shocked and impressed murmurs from the crew.

PIRATE My pickled eggs!

NARRATOR Artemis slowly picked herself up from the floor and stood to face the crew.

MUSIC: 'Are You Sure You Can Do This?'

ARTEMIS Now, I'll help you find your flower. But I want something in return. I want to use the Whale Song. Just once, then I'll give it back.

NARRATOR Caine spluttered and the crew broke into anxious murmurs. Osric looked at the Pirate King. The walrus beckoned the otter over and whispered into his ear.

SFX: The Pirate King whispers into Osric's ear.

NARRATOR After a moment, Osric turned to Artemis.

OSRIC Are you sure you can do this?

ARTEMIS I am.

OSRIC Then it's a deal.

CAINE You can't give her the Whale Song, only the King can use-

OSRIC -The king has decided. The fox will find the flower, and then, under my supervision, will be granted use of the Whale Song. Set course for the Heath Cliffs. For the King, we sail!

CREW For the King, we sail!

NARRATOR The crew cheered and made for their stations, cutting the ropes that bound Artemis as they went. Osric slowly drew the velvet curtain and then, together, they headed up to the deck.

SFX: Footsteps leaving the cabin.

SCENE 4 - THE CROWN. NIGHT TIME.

SFX: Waves crash against the hull, the ship creaks and the sails billow in the wind.

NARRATOR The bow of The Crown pierced the oncoming waves, cutting through the foggy night. Every member of the crew was busy fulfilling their duties, scurrying around the great galleon as it made its way to the Heath Cliffs.

SFX: General crew noises.

NARRATOR Artemis stood at the quarter deck with Osric, who was gently resting his hands on the Ship's wheel.

OSRIC Something feels off about it. Only last week he was guzzling rum and enchanting us all with dramatic readings from Richard III... I don't know, maybe I'm being paranoid.

ARTEMIS The sea will do that to you.

OSRIC It's not the sea, it's what goes on inland that worries me. Wild Hollow's cracking up. I heard all sorts in Sinner's Cove. People disappearing, important people. Scumwarter has lost its leaders, now it's tearing itself apart. It's only a matter of time before the chaos spreads. I tell you, out here at sea is the safest place to be.

NARRATOR Artemis nodded thoughtfully. She surveyed the crew, each one of them working in perfect tandem, pulling lines and heaving barrels. They smelled worse than a Dust Town trash can, she thought, but they seemed like a family. On the main deck, a couple of seals were helping each other clean their muskets, and down by the cannons, Salami the penguin was humming a tune as Geoffrey the burly beaver portioned gunpowder into fresh kegs.

ARTEMIS So, d'you have any idea what we're in for at the Heath Cliffs?

OSRIC Legend says, there's a labyrinth within the cliff face. A cave system so full of danger that no one has come out alive. The story goes that there are ancient guardian's protecting the flower. They say it's the last of its kind in all Wild Hollow.

ARTEMIS Sounds like a challenge.

LITTLE MOLLUSC A scary challenge.

NARRATOR A little voice croaked up. For a moment, Artemis was unsure where it had come from, and then she noticed a small shell-like creature attached to the ship's wheel, smiling up at her.

OSRIC That's Little Mollusc. They keep look-out on this ship. Not the most agile of look-outs mind...

LITTLE MOLLUSC Hey! I'm no barnacle you know. I just happen to like this spot.

ARTEMIS Pleased to meet you. (To Osric) So, what's the plan?

OSRIC Get to the Heath Cliffs. You sniff around, dodge the booby traps, and find the flower. Grind it up with a splash of seawater and there we have it. A cure for any ailment.

ARTEMIS That easy, eh?

OSRIC Well, we better hope so. For everyone's sake. If we lose the Captain, the mood could turn. Not everyone is too happy about you using the Whale Song... What do you want it for anyhow?

ARTEMIS I'm... looking for someone.

OSRIC Must be someone important for you to go to all this trouble.

NARRATOR Artemis smiled and leaned against the mast.

ARTEMIS You know, you are very chatty for someone who had me tied up as a prisoner not half an hour ago.

OSRIC I was just following my orders. First-mate has to follow the code. I just want what's best for the King and his ship.

SFX: A fresh gust of wind caught in the sails.

NARRATOR A gust of wind caught the sail and the heavy fog that had been shrouding the ship suddenly faded. Little Mollusc called out...

LITTLE MOLLUSC Land-ho!

SFX: The scene fades.

SCENE 5 - THE CROWN. DAY TIME.

SFX: The waves, creaking ship and blustering wind fades back in.

NARRATOR The Crown sat, anchored a league away from the Heath Cliffs. They dwarfed the galleon. Basalt columns clustered

together into a gargantuan wall. They loomed above the crashing waves, dark and eerie.

MUSIC: 'Voluminous Undulation'

CAINE Good luck trying to navigate those waters, Osric. You'll be fish food before you can say shiver me timbers-

OSRIC -I need you to pipe down. This is not the time for jokes. Our King is not well this day.

CAINE Oh, why don't we ask the fox? She seems to have an answer for everything. Where is she, anyway.

SFX: A whistle is heard over the side of the boat. The crew run over with interest.

NARRATOR The crew ran to the port-side of the boat. Artemis and Salami were bobbing on the water in a small skiff, a second one floating by their side.

ARTEMIS Are we done whining? Hurry up. Time's not our friend.

SALAMI Neither's the sea by the looks of it...

NARRATOR Half of the pirates quickly clambered down into the rowing boats and set off toward the cliffs, leaving The Crown with the remainder of the crew. The sea smashed and swelled.

SFX: Oars hitting the surface of the water.

OSRIC Row, mates! Geoffrey, you beaver, get those webbed feet in the water and push us!

GEOFFREY Yes Sarge!

SFX: A splash as Geoffrey dutifully leaps into the water and begins swimming.

NARRATOR The pirates pushed on. As they drew closer to the looming cliffs, Caine bellowed over the voluminous undulation of the waves.

CAINE A cave! I see a way through!

ARTEMIS That's our way in!

NARRATOR The skiffs were thrown toward the cave's mouth by the thunderous wind. It looked impossible, but they slipped through, narrowly avoiding oblivion.

SFX: Waves crash as the crew scream, nearing the cave entrance. As they enter, the crashing waves cease, replaced by distant echoes from within the cave.

MUSIC: 'Sea Magics'

NARRATOR Inside, the cavern was huge. Within this nautical cathedral, the water was calm, and a mystical light ebbed from the walls.

ARTEMIS Well blow me down...

OSRIC We must be wary of sea magics.

CAINE Pah! Tales of fishwives. We're here, press on!

NARRATOR Ahead of them, the cave forked into two paths. Identical in nature, this truly was a question of left or right.

SALAMI This truly is a question of left or right.

CAINE My head's telling me right. But maybe that's because right means correct.

OSRIC But what if this is a mind game. They want us to think it's right because we subconsciously associate the word right with correct. This would imply that we should in reality take the left hand route.

SALAMI We could just leave. That's always an option.

CAINE Silence, you flightless idiot. We're postulating over here.

NARRATOR Whilst the pirates bickered, Artemis closed her eyes and inhaled.

SFX: Artemis sniffing deeply. A swirling mixture of smells.

NARRATOR The dank air, the salt of the sea, Geoffrey the beaver's salmon-tainted breath. Suddenly, she discerned a new smell amongst the aromas of the cavern.

SFX: The swirling fades.

ARTEMIS I've got the scent of the flower!

OSRIC Which way?

NARRATOR Artemis opened her eyes.

ARTEMIS Right. We go right.

GEOFFREY Right?! But we just established that right is bad, and left is right!

CAINE Shut up you fool! We go right.

OSRIC Aye. The fox has a mighty fine nose on her. We go right.

GEOFFREY Aye. YOU go right. I'm going left. Who's with me!

SFX: A few questionably enthusiastic responses.

ARTEMIS Osric, we don't have time for this. Just let those fools do what they want.

OSRIC Fine! Go left. If you get lost, it's your own fault..

NARRATOR Promptly, Geoffrey took command of his skiff. The accompanying crew members were filled with a new sense of purpose and drive. The little boat shot through the docile waters.

SFX: Geoffrey's rowboat veering down the lefthand route.

GEOFFREY We're going to save the captain! Yes!

SFX: The other rowboat heads in the opposite direction.

NARRATOR Artemis, Osric, Caine and Salami veered right. As they rowed forward, they heard Geoffrey scream...

GEOFFREY Oh no! What is that.. What is that, a giant bloody octopus?!

CREW AHHHHHHHHH!

SFX: A monstrous roar, explosive splashing and terrified screams from Geoffrey's boat.

NARRATOR Indeed it was a giant bloody octopus. A gargantuan beast erupted from the left hand cave. Its slick, muscular tentacles plucked the terrified pirates into the air one by one, crushing the life from them.

SFX: A crew mate is tossed through the air, his scream cut off by a sickening crack of skull against rock. A splash.

NARRATOR Gore stained the crystal-clear seawater. Then, just as swiftly as the carnage had begun, the mucilaginous appendages slipped back beneath the water.

SFX: A final fearsome growl from the beast as it submerges itself below the inky depths.

CAINE By the sea gods...

OSRIC Journey on.

ARTEMIS Shall we?

SFX: The rowing boat continues.

NARRATOR They continued into the gloom. The fox's nasal strength quickly brought them to a small cove. A jagged stairwell reached up towards a glimmer of light. They moored the skiff, and began to climb.

SFX: Footsteps begin to climb the stone steps, and fade away.

SCENE 6 - THE CAVE. DAY TIME.

SFX: The footsteps fade back in, accompanied by a soft breeze echoing off the stone walls.

ARTEMIS It's too quiet. Doesn't feel like it's being guarded.

OSRIC Legend says the guardians of this flower are elusive and deadly. We should watch ourselves.

SFX: The wind intensifies, and distant waves can be heard far below.

NARRATOR Reaching the top of the stairs, the cave opened onto a large, rocky ledge. Sunlight hit the pirates, the sea breeze licking their faces. The plateau felt quite serene. Wild grass poked through the stone, swaying gently. To their side, a large boulder protruded from the cliff face.

SALAMI Maybe the guardians aren't even hostile. I would consider myself a guardian of fun and laughter, and I'm by no means hostile.

OSRIC Salami, fun and laughter aren't quite as difficult to come by as an ancient, mythical, healing flower.

SALAMI Tell that to Caine...

NARRATOR Caine's dour expression twisted into an ugly smirk.

CAINE What do you mean...? I love fun! Remember how happy I was when we had to slaughter those merchants to rescue Miss Gray?

SFX: Caine cackles sickeningly.

OSRIC I suppose... Comedy is subjective.

DODOS REEEEEEEEEIIIIKKKKK.

MUSIC: 'REEIIK'

NARRATOR The crew stopped dead in their tracks. The piercing scream had come from behind the boulder.

OSRIC What in the deep, dark sea was that?!

NARRATOR Caine's knife shot out in the blink of an eye.

SFX: Caine's dagger being drawn.

ARTEMIS Maybe some diplomacy before we jump straight to violence?

CAINE Diplomacy?! No! They sound terrified, we should rush them!

DODOS REEEEEEEEEIIIIKKKKK! REEEEEEEEEIIIIKKKKK!

SALAMI Could we make an offering? I swear I've got a mackerel in my pockets somewhere...

CAINE ENOUGH!

SFX: Caine's footsteps towards the source of the cries.

NARRATOR Caine strode towards the boulder, blade at the ready. The others followed warily. Preparing themselves for what lay beyond, they took a deep breath, then dived out into the clearing.

ALL AHHHHHH-

ARTEMIS What the..?

MUSIC: 'Mid-Philosophising'

NARRATOR Three dodos stood before them, clad in togas. The portly birds were standing around a small purple flower that poked out from a crack in the ground. They seemed to be arguing.

GAIADROS RIIIIIEEEEK! The flower must never leave this spot. I agree with you, Brother Embrontetos! But not for your reasoning of it being a beacon of worship. We must study it as alchemists, to harness its abilities and spread good health to all!

EMBRONTETOS RIEEEEEK! Silence! Health means nothing! I agree with you, Brother Gaiadros, that we must harness its properties. But we must prioritise a means of profit! Imagine the riches we could gain!

KEFALAS RIIIIEEEEEEKK! Have you two forgotten our oath? Ever since dodos came to Wild Hollow, we have known our purpose! Guardians! Resisters of temptation while our species dwindled! We are the final three! If we expose its true power, our sacrifice will have been for nothing!

CAINE Will you shut your beaks for one moment!

NARRATOR The flightless birds froze mid-philosophising and turned to the pirates. They were ugly creatures. Plump, grey, wizened old things.

OSRIC Are you the guardians of Paeon's Kiss?

KEFALAS Who dares disrupt our discourse?!

CAINE Look, we're in a hurry-

GAIADROS -Oh excuse us, were we holding you up?

EMBRONTETOS Oh yes, so sorry we were having a consultation, that you rudely interrupted!

KEFALAS What on earth could you have to say that is more important than that?

CAINE Gods, this is torture already...

ARTEMIS We mean no harm. We need your help.

ALL DODOS Hmmmm.

GAIADROS Help you say...?

EMBRONTETOS And what kind of help would that be, then, fox?

KEFALAS Surely, you don't intend on taking our sacred flower?

EMBRONTETOS Our... precious flower...

GAIADROS Because if that was your intention...

KEFALAS Then of course, we would have to...

EMBRONTETOS CAST YOU INTO THE DEPTHS OF THE CRISPIAN SEA!

SONG: 'Dodo's Lament'

NARRATOR The Dodos eyed them beadily, before Brother Gaiadros spoke mysteriously.

GAIADROS No one touches the Pæan's Kiss.

(KEFALAS)
WE'VE BEEN HERE FOR MANY A YEAR
EVER SINCE WE WERE TOLD

(GAIADROS)
IF WE STAYED PUT

(EMBRONTETOS)

WE'D BE KAPUT

(ALL)

BACK IN THE DAYS OF OLD

BUT WE HEARD RUMOUR OF A TUMOUR
THAT GREW IN A FAR OFF LAND
A ROOT KNOWN AS THE PAEAN'S KISS
OUR PURPOSE WAS AT HAND

WE JOURNEYED FOR MILLENNIA
MANY OF OUR KIN WERE SLAIN
FROM FAMINE AND EXHAUSTION
BUT THEIR LAST WORDS WERE THE SAME

(DEAD DODOS)

REMEMBER ME...
REMEMBER ME...
REMEMBER ME...
REMEMBER ME...

(ALL)

AH HA HA, AH HA HA
AH HA HA, AH HA HA
AH HA HA, AH HA HA
AH HA HA HA!

(KEFALAS)

AFTER WHAT SEEMED LIKE CENTURIES

(GAIADROS)

WE FINALLY HAD A LEAD TO FOLLOW

(EMBRONTETOS)

A WHISPER SPOKE OF A HEALING FLOWER

(ALL)

IN A WORLD CALLED WILD HOLLOW

BY THIS TIME THERE WERE ONLY THREE
DODO'S LEFT ALIVE

WE KNEW OUR TIME WAS RUNNING THIN
EXISTENCE WAS ON THE LINE

SO WE SAILED AND WE STRODE AND WE
SWAM AND WE CRAWLED AND WE CLIMBED
UNTIL THE BLESSED MOMENT DID ARRIVE

WE FOUND THIS PLACE
AND FROM THE GROUND IT GREW
A SINGLE FLOWER, WE KNEW WHAT WE MUST DO

WE MADE A PACT
THE FLOWER WAS OURS
AND DODO BLOOD WOULD EVER FLOW OUR VEINS
NO ONE ELSE COULD EVER USE IT
THE FLOWER'S POWER, THEY WOULD EXHAUST IT
WE COULDN'T RISK EXTINCTION ONCE AGAIN

(DEAD DODOS)

REMEMBER ME
REMEMBER ME
REMEMBER ME
REMEMBER ME

REMEMBER ME
REMEMBER ME
REMEMBER ME
REMEMBER ME

(ALIVE DODOS)

BUT THAT WAS YEARS AGO
ALMOST FOUR HUNDRED YEARS AGO
THE FLOWER'S PROPERTIES DWINDLE
WITH EVERY PASSING DAY

WE USE THE FLOWER, IT GROWS AGAIN
BUT EVERY CYCLE IS WEAKER THAN
THE TIME BEFORE, IT'S SIMPLY A
QUESTION OF
HOW MUCH LONGER DO WE HAVE
UNTIL WE JOIN OUR BRETHREN IN THE END

OSRIC They're completely mad.

ARTEMIS You don't say. We need to convince them somehow.

SALAMI I've found the mackerel if that helps.

ARTEMIS I think they have more of a hunger for intellectual conversation than pocket fish, Salami-

SFX: A punch from Caine and a shriek from Brother Gaiadros.

GAIADROS -RIEEEEEEKKKKKKKK

NARRATOR Artemis, Osric and Salami spun towards the screech, as Caine delivered a second walloping blow to the nearest Dodo.

SFX: Another strike. Another yelp.

EMBRONTETOS Violence! A threat to the flower!

GAIADROS I've been maimed! I have been very badly maimed!

MUSIC: 'Execute Defensive Stance'

KEFALAS Dodos, execute defensive stance! Kill them!

ALL DODOS RIIIIIIEEEEEEEEKK!

SFX: Running from both parties, battle cries, a cacophony of punches, kicks and squawking.

NARRATOR The Dodos sprang towards Caine, snapping their razor-sharp beaks. Artemis, Osric and Salami leapt into action, battling the birds away from their reptilian comrade. Artemis socked the fattest dodo in the solar plexus, stunning him briefly. She turned to help the others, but was stopped by a familiar smell.

ARTEMIS Wait a minute...

NARRATOR She clambered up the rock-face, following the scent.

SFX: Dirt and debris as Artemis scales the cliff.

NARRATOR She reached the summit before staring in wonderment.

ARTEMIS Oh for the love of...

NARRATOR She called down to the brawl below.

ARTEMIS Stop fighting! Get up here!

SCENE 7 - ATOP THE HEATH CLIFFS. DAY TIME.

NARRATOR The rabble fell silent. Caine, who had been dangling one of the Dodos over the edge of the cliff, tossed the bird onto the dirt.

SFX: A disgruntled noise and a thud as the dodo hits the dirt.

NARRATOR Salami crawled out from behind a rock. Everyone peered up at Artemis.

ARTEMIS I'm serious! Get up here!

SFX: More debris as the group climb up to Artemis.

NARRATOR Curiously, they scrambled up the rocky wall. One by one, they heaved themselves over the top. The sight that lay before them rendered the entire group speechless.

MUSIC: 'Our Purpose Continues'

GAIADROS But...

EMBRONTETOS But there's only meant to be...

KEFALAS One of them...

ARTEMIS Apparently not.

NARRATOR Atop the peak of the Heath Cliffs, spread out like an ocean, was a meadow of Paeon's Kiss. As far as the eye could see, the petals swayed gently in the breeze, each one indistinguishable from the single flower that rested below.

ARTEMIS Just how long were you three guarding that thing?

GAIADROS Three hundred and ninety seven years...

KEFALAS ...and four days.

OSRIC But this is extraordinary! The King is saved!

CAINE Not yet, he's not. Are we actually going to bring him the flower or just stand around savouring the happy moment?

ARTEMIS Caine's right, we need to move.

SFX: Waddling dodos.

NARRATOR The dodos waddled between the meadow and the pirates.

KEFALAS Our purpose continues.

EMBRONTETOS We must protect the Paeon's Kiss.

GAIADROS However, without you, fox pirate, we would surely have perished.

KEFALAS You may take one flower.

SFX: Hastened footsteps and a growl as Caine proceeds to pick a flower from the meadow.

NARRATOR Caine growled as he pushed past the dodos, snatching up the nearest flower and tossing it towards Osric.

CAINE Shall we?

NARRATOR The pair began the descent back down to the shore. Salami hovered at the edge of the meadow as the dodos turned to Artemis.

KEFALAS Thank you, fox pirate. Your help is greatly appreciated.

ARTEMIS I didn't have much of a choice. But you're welcome. Teetering on the edge of extinction can wait a little longer.

NARRATOR The dodos bowed deeply, before waddling their way into the meadow. Unnoticed by anyone, Salami picked a second flower, hastily tucking it beneath her flipper.

SALAMI Pretty...

OSRIC Salami! Let's go!

SALAMI Coming!

SFX: Salami dashes across to Osric, and the scene fades.

SCENE 8 - THE CROWN. DAY TIME.

SFX: Waves crash and oars hit the water. Cries of welcome as the pirates arrive back at The Crown.

NARRATOR The four arrived back at The Crown in their little rowboat. They hastily clambered aboard, rushing onto the deck. Artemis spotted one of the crab nurses and Benny the Parrot emerge from the cabin.

SFX: The scuttling of crab legs and the fluttering of parrot wings.

ARTEMIS How's the Captain?

CRAB Not good! You must hurry!

BENNY DYING. DYING.

OSRIC Bring me a bowl, a jar and some seawater!

NARRATOR Osric crushed the flower into a bowl with the pommel of his dagger. The purple petals melted into a dark, gooey paste.

SFX: Dashing footsteps as Salami brings the seawater to Osric.

NARRATOR Salami rushed over with a cupful of seawater. The otter poured the paste and water into a glass jar, and shook hard. A luminous glow began to swell from within.

MUSIC: 'Sabotage'

SALAMI It's working!

OSRIC We must get it to the Captain.

NARRATOR Osric turned towards the cabin, the jar of Paeon's Kiss now shining brightly. But suddenly, Benny the parrot swooped in, snatching the jar from the otter's paws.

SFX: The glass jar clinks as Benny clutches it in his claws.

NARRATOR The bird flew high above the crew, a wild look in its eye.

SALAMI What are you doing?!

SFX: Benny the Parrot screeches.

NARRATOR The parrot screeched menacingly. Its talons opened and the jar began to fall. It plummeted towards the ground.

SFX: The jar spins through the air, faster and faster, until...

NARRATOR The jar hit the deck and shattered, the liquid disappearing between the cracks. The purple glow died.

OSRIC What have you done?

BENNY SABOTAGE. SABOTAGE.

OSRIC Get that parrot!

SFX: The crew give chase, up and down the deck. Shouting, screaming, the flapping of Benny's treacherous wings.

NARRATOR The crew gave chase as the parrot ducked and weaved in and out of the rigging. Benny cleared the final sail, ready to soar out across the open sea, but there was a sudden swoosh and thud.

SFX: Benny the Parrot squawks, as a knife spirals through the air, impaling the bird.

NARRATOR Artemis's blade pinned the parrot to the end of the bow. Benny was impaled, the shining dagger nestled deep in his feathers. The crew gathered around the withering bird.

ARTEMIS Why did you do that, traitor?

BENNY Sabotage...

ARTEMIS Was it you who poisoned the Pirate King?

BENNY Orders... following orders.

SFX: Gasps from the crew.

ARTEMIS Whose orders?

BENNY They're everywhere... everywhere...

ARTEMIS Give us answers!

BENNY The skies... will rule... the land and sea...

SFX: A death rattle from the parrot.

NARRATOR And with that, the parrot's eyes rolled back, its small green body turning limp. The pirates stood, silent with shock. Another crab ran from the cabin and called out.

SFX: Scuttling crab legs.

CRAB The King is dead! Lesley is dead!

NARRATOR Osric slowly sank to his knees. A tear rolled down Salami's cheek. They had failed.

SFX: The scene fades.

SCENE 9 - THE CROWN. SUNSET.

SONG: 'Beyond the 'Morrow'

(OSRIC)

ON
JOURNEY ON
TO A PLACE
WE CAN'T FOLLOW

SFX: Waves, and the creaking of the ship, fade in.

(OSRIC)

ON
SAIL ON
WE'LL MEET AGAIN
BEYOND THE 'MORROW
HMMMM

(ALL)

BEYOND THE 'MORROW
OH!
WE'LL MEET AGAIN
BEYOND THE 'MORROW

WHEN WE REACH
OUR FINAL HOME
WE'LL MEET AGAIN
BEYOND THE 'MORROW
HMMMM

MUSIC: 'The Greatest Wild Hollow's Ever Known'

NARRATOR The Pirate King's body lay peacefully inside a lead coffin. His eyes were closed. He could have been sleeping. But he wasn't. He was dead. Osric slid a pistol beneath the King's crossed arms, before closing the lid of the casket.

SFX: The coffin lid is shut tight.

OSRIC

Lower him down.

SFX: Rope creaks as the coffin is lowered. A gentle splash.

NARRATOR The King was lowered gently into the Crispian Sea, the crew stoically bidding farewell to their leader. The coffin sat atop the waves for the briefest of moments, before being swallowed by the ocean.

OSRIC Ready!

SFX: The click of pistols cocking.

OSRIC For the King, we sail!

CREW For the King, we sail!

SFX: Pistols firing into the sky.

NARRATION They shot their pistols into the sky; a final honour to their Captain. Artemis hung back, taking in the scene. A moment passed, before the crowd dispersed, and Osric made his way towards her.

SFX: Osric's footsteps.

OSRIC It's not every day you get to witness the burial of a Pirate King.

ARTEMIS He clearly meant a great deal.

OSRIC The greatest Wild Hollow's ever known. How anyone's meant to replace him is beyond me.

ARTEMIS How do you replace a King?

OSRIC It requires a gathering of The Council of the Sea Dogs. There must be a unanimous agreement of the successor. Which, as you can imagine, isn't a straight-forward conversation. But that's nothing compared to getting everyone together at the same time.

ARTEMIS Whoever planned the King's murder knew the mess it would make...

OSRIC And we've got nothing but riddles to go on.

NARRATOR Osric walked to the guard rail, gazing out across the waves.

SFX: Osric sighs.

OSRIC This isn't a small ocean, Artemis. What lies past the horizon is anyone's guess. We know Wild Hollow but... beyond that? Hmm. It could be years before the next Pirate King is chosen.

NARRATOR He grimaced.

OSRIC In the meantime... Gather round, you scurvy curs! As First Mate, I have the unfortunate responsibility of taking temporary captaincy of this ship.

SFX: Murmurs of interest and shock.

OSRIC And our first port of call...

NARRATOR Osric pulled the Whale Song out from under his vest, and handed it to Artemis. The crew exploded in outrage.

SFX: Angry cries from the crew, Caine prominent amongst them.

OSRIC If it wasn't for Artemis Gray, Paeon's Kiss would still be a myth. We made a bargain, and she's earned the Song. Anybody disagree?

NARRATOR The crew fell still. Nobody spoke. Caine glowered at the back of the crowd.

OSRIC Right then. Set sail for The Giblets!

SFX: The crew prepare the ship for the oncoming voyage.

OSRIC Ms Gray, it's time to find your truth.

MUSIC: 'The Greatest Wild Hollow's Ever Known (Continued)'

CREDITS

You have been listening to a **Shouting Is Funny** production.

ARTEMIS GRAY	Heather Gourdie
OSRIC / BROTHER GAIADROS	Harvey Badger
SALAMI	Alice E. Mayer
CAINE / BROTHER KEFALAS	Christian Powlesland
NARRATOR / LESLEY THE PIRATE KING / BROTHER EMRONTETOS	Angus Maxwell
MARTHA / LITTLE MOLLUSC	Bethan Barke
CAPTAIN SEA DOG	Paddy Duff
GEOFFREY / PABLO	Loris Scarpa
BENNY THE PARROT / MADAME MARLOWE	Emma Levy
ADDITIONAL B.Vs	Anna Cookson
SPIDER-MAN	Tom Holland (in the MCU movies. He'll never quite top Tobey Maguire for me, though.)

All additional roles were played by members of the company.

All music was created in-house by **Shouting Is Funny**.

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