

MORaine

An Ode to 80's Fantasy

INT. CHILDREN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Toys are scattered across the floor and there's an antique-looking bookshelf tucked to one corner. A single bed is present, a fantasy-themed nursery mobile dangling overhead. We're pretty sure this is a normal room, belonging to normal children.

ADULT CLAIRE, is dressed elegantly in gothic pajamas. She leans over her CHILDREN's shared bed, obscuring their faces.

ADULT CLAIRE  
It's bed time, my little ones.

The children whine, still blocked by Claire's figure.

CHILD #1 (O.S.)	CHILD #2 (O.S.)
No, not bed! We're not tired!	We want to stay up late, with
Tell us another story -	you! Yes - Another story.
Please? We'll go to bed right	Tell us another one. We'll be
after	so good! Straight to bed.

Claire smiles warmly, laughing to herself.

ADULT CLAIRE  
Oh, alright. Just one more.

The children settle.

ADULT CLAIRE (CONT'D)  
What would you like to hear?

CHILD #1 (O.S.)	CHILD #2 (O.S.)
The one with the giants - No,	The fairy godmother - No, the
the scarecrow - Oh! I got it,	sleeping lady - What about
the knight and prince - No,	the magic horse and dragon?
the giants.	No, wait, the cursed king.

Each child insists their own tale must be told. Claire smiles, and settles the children down once more.

She stands up, walking over to a large bookcase. Her finger trails over each of the books present, before settling on a particularly gorgeous book bound in deep, red leather. Claire removes it from it's shelf, turning and showing it to her children.

ADULT CLAIRE  
I know just the one.

FADE TO:

## EXT. SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD - LATE AFTERNOON

We look at the sprawling town below us. All the houses are identical, painted in various shades of beige. Each have beautifully cut, lush green lawns, and neat front yards. The homes blend together in a single amalgamation of copy-paste perfection. The families hanging around outside look normal and happy.

ADULT CLAIRE (V.O.)

Once upon a time, there was a horrible little town -

A WOMAN hands out cupcakes to neighborhood kids. A horrible town, indeed.

ADULT CLAIRE (V.O.)

- And within this town, there was an especially horrible house.

## EXT. THE FLORIN HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

Plain and modern. It blends in perfectly with the rest of the neighborhood. A window is illuminated by a light inside, and gives a view inside where a TEENAGE CLAIRE sits and does her homework.

ADULT CLAIRE (V.O.)

This, my children, is where the princess lived...

## INT. SUBURBAN HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

The room is chic, tidy, and devoid of any personality at all.

CLAIRE has headphones on. She is listening to something loud and rebellious playing on her nearby WALKMAN. She bobs her head along, and it's clear she isn't paying that much attention to her homework.

She's eighteen and as punk as her mother will let her be. She has long, curly hair, and a sweet face. She wears a white button-up, tucked haphazardly into high-waisted, blue jeans.

The year, "1985," is overlaid on Claire's face.

Claire's MOM snaps her fingers in front of the girl's face.

MOM

Claire - Claire, did you finish your applications?

CLAIRE  
Mom - what - ?

MOM  
(Impatient)  
Your applications. Did you finish  
them?

CLAIRE  
Yeah, yeah I did.

MOM  
All of them?

Claire pauses.

CLAIRE  
I don't want to go to Harvard.

MOM  
No, not this again. Claire, honey,  
you're getting a law degree. We're  
not having this conversation.

CLAIRE  
I know you want me to work at  
the firm - I just think - Well,  
it'd be nice, to - you know -

Claire pauses. Her mother raises an eyebrow.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)  
...Take a year off, first.

MOM  
I'm not paying for you to become  
some socialist -

CLAIRE  
Mom -

MOM  
"Free Love" -

CLAIRE  
Mom.

MOM  
Drug-obsessed, hippie!

CLAIRE  
Mom!

Claire's mom slams a hand on the table. She flinches.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)  
...It's not like that.

MOM  
Really? Cause it feels like that's what this is. You wanting to be... "different," not listening to me. I have your best interest at heart. You know that, right?

Claire falters for a bit longer than her mom is comfortable.

MOM (CONT'D)  
If this is about missing prom so you can go hang out with those - those *sluts* - No. No I am not having this. You're better than the other girls, Claire. You're smarter.

She gently touches Claire's cheek. This is the softest she's been in a long time.

MOM (CONT'D)  
You're the smartest girl I know.

In the kitchen, the landline rings. Mom goes to answer it, leaving Claire staring at her homework, vacantly.

MOM (CONT'D)  
(On the phone)  
Oh, hello Vivian! No, she's here.

CUT TO:

INT. CHILDREN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

CHILD #1 (O.S.)  
This is too sad!

CHILD #2 (O.S.)  
Way too sad.

CHILD #1 (O.S.)  
I don't like sad stories.

Adult Claire laughs.

ADULT CLAIRE  
It gets better, trust me.

The children murmur. They aren't convinced. Claire turns back to the story, pointing at one of the pages.

ADULT CLAIRE (CONT'D)  
Hm, where was I? Oh, yes.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

ADULT CLAIRE (V.O.)  
So, the princess lived with a cruel  
and wicked mother. But then -

MOM (ON THE PHONE)  
Oh, hello Vivian! No, she's here.

Mom snaps her fingers at Teen Claire. She jumps to her feet, running to take the phone.

TEEN CLAIRE (ON THE PHONE)  
Hi, ma'am - No, no I'm not. Right  
now? Well I guess - No I  
understand. I'll be right there.

She puts down the phone.

TEEN CLAIRE (CONT'D)  
The Parson's need me to babysit.

Mom looks unamused, but waves her off. Claire runs to grab her babysitting supplies from her bedroom.

INT. CLAIRE'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Rebellious teenage paradise. It's the antithesis to the rest of her mother's house. Punk memorabilia litters the dirty floor. Posters for girl groups hang tacked to the walls, and clothes are strewn about. Polaroid photos are collaged above the bed.

Claire grabs her messenger bag from her bed, taking a minute to make sure she looks presentable in the mirror. She grabs a scrunchie from her cluttered desk, tying her hair up.

EXT. PARSON HOUSE - EVENING

Claire runs across the street and down the road, coming to a skid at the PARSON'S HOUSE. It's similar, if not identical to Claire's own.

There is a welcome mat on the front porch telling her to treat people with kindness. Claire frowns at it.

MRS. PARSON opens the door, relieved. She's dressed up, hair tied into a bun and natural looking makeup on her face. She's in her late thirties and runs the local book club.

MRS. PARSON  
Oh, Claire, you're a life saver.

She waves, inviting Claire inside.

INT. PARSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Home-y, but tidy. Children's art is hung up on the walls, along with several family portraits.

MRS. PARSON  
I hate calling you in last-minute but Katherine Stevenson's car broke down and her husband's out of town for a work meeting. PTA needed someone to cover - you know how it is. Anyways, Richard and I volunteered to chaperone prom tonight.

Mrs. Parson sits on the couch. Claire stands.

MRS. PARSON (CONT'D)  
How have you been? School going good? I was surprised you were free tonight; what with prom and all.

Claire shuffles, awkwardly. She tightens her grip on the strap of her bag.

CLAIRE  
My mom - uh - well, I decided it'd be better to stay home instead. I'm applying to Harvard - I've got to work on my application essay...

MRS. PARSON  
That's nice. You'll get right in.

Claire looks like she wants to say something else.

MR. PARSON enters, interrupting her train of thought. He's wearing a poorly tailored suit.

MR. PARSON  
Claire! Oh, you're a life-saver.

He gives her a firm pat on the shoulder.

MRS. PARSON

Are you ready to go? We're going to be late.

Mr. Parson clasps his hands, gesturing to the door.

MR. PARSON

Lead the way, dear.

Mrs. Parson smiles, exiting gracefully. Her husband follows, but stops and turns back to Claire.

MR. PARSON (CONT'D)

Have fun with Matthew, kiddo.

Claire nods.

MATTHEW is an unruly ten-year-old and part-time brat. He communicates through biting and punching, and is obsessed with war history. There's snot crusted over his clothes. He's an only child, and it's obvious.

As soon as the front door shuts, Matthew appears.

MATTHEW

Die!

He's holding a rubber-band gun, and shoots at Claire, who briefly drops to the ground to duck, before jumping back up to her feet. She turns to Matthew.

CLAIRE

I see how it is.

Claire spends a few seconds rooting through her bag, only to reveal a matching rubber-band gun. She fires multiple bands at Matthew, who screeches.

INT. PARSON HOUSE / LIVING ROOM / KITCHEN / HALLWAY - DUSK

Matthew chases Claire, both shooting at each other.

Claire jumps over a couch, barreling down through the kitchen.

Matthew swings over the kitchen counter, running through the hallway as he chases her.

He backs her into a corner, weapon drawn. Claire's empty-handed, out of rubber bands. Shit.



Matthew laughs, raising his gun to shoot her. He reaches into his pocket, only to find he's out of bands as well.

He doesn't hesitate to throw the entire gun at Claire, who manages to dodge in time. He screams in frustration, while Claire scrambles past him, jumping to her feet.

CLAIRE

Mattie, knock it off - it's almost  
your bedtime.

Matthew rages at the nickname, diving for Claire's ankles.

MATTHEW

I hate you! I'm not going to bed.

Claire stumbles, but manages to shake the kid off. He seethes and starts chasing her again.

She runs down the hall, escaping Matthew by jumping over the kitchen counter and hiding in a broom closet.

INT. HALLWAY CLOSET

It's dark, dusty and filled with old junk.

Matthew passes by, not sparing a second glance at the closet. Claire breathes a sigh of relief, then climbs out.

Carefully, Claire begins picking up the mess Matthew left in his wake. She stumbles upon a series of loose dominos.

CLAIRE

...This could work.

INT. PARSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Claire has managed to assemble a Rube Goldberg machine with random household objects. She carefully positions her stance, looking at a small 'X' on the floor she marked with chalk.

She begins whistling.

MATTHEW

Found you, you stupid Nanny.

CLAIRE

Matthew! Bed time.

Claire watches as Matthew slowly begins stepping on her 'X.' She doesn't listen to whatever demands he starts making.

Matthew steps on the 'X.'

Claire grins, using her foot to tip over a single domino. A series of wildly complex, but very subtle mechanics are triggered as more dominos fall, leading to a heavy blanket falling over Matthew's head. Claire wastes no time, scooping him up and running to his bedroom.

INT. MATTHEW'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Matthew's room is messy, apart from an open chest of drawers that holds neatly folded clothes. There's war propaganda posters stuck on his walls, and increasingly concerning amounts of toy-weaponry. Not a single clean surface. There is a dart board with Claire's face on it. None of the darts have landed.

Claire wrestles Matthew into bed, using the sheets to tuck him in so tightly he can't wiggle out.

MATTHEW

This is unconstitutional! You can't keep me prisoner like this. I want bedtime cookies, I want my mommy, I want a bedtime story!

Matthew continues to rattle off demands, while Claire slowly forms an idea.

CLAIRE

I... have a story.

Matthew resents that idea.

MATTHEW

Yeah, right. It's probably stupid girly stuff, right? Like fairy princesses and the power of friendship or whatever. Blargh.

CLAIRE

Hm. I guess you won't get a story, then.

MATTHEW

No - I mean, you can tell your girly story. But if it's bad you have to let me stay up as late as I want.

CLAIRE

Fine.

She pauses.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Once there was a princess and a Goblin Queen. The princess was upset, because she had a terrible life and all she wanted was to study magic with the queen. The princess was misunderstood, and people thought she was sweet, and fragile, and needed to go to royal princess school and find a beautiful prince to marry. What they didn't know, was that the princess was actually a *witch*.

MATTHEW

...That's it?

Claire shushes him.

CLAIRE

The princess, who was secretly a witch, had fallen *madly* in love with the Goblin Queen. And the queen promised that if she ever needed anything, all she had to do was snap her fingers.

Claire holds her fingers in front of Matthew, poised into snapping position. A beat.

Matthew bursts out laughing.

MATTHEW

That's the stupidest thing I've ever heard.

Claire looks flushed, raising a hand to pull at her hair.

CLAIRE

It's not stupid, it's true.

MATTHEW

Yeah? What part? Magic isn't real, and you're crazy if you think a princess could ever marry a queen. 'Sides, it's not like you'd ever get to be a princess.

CLAIRE

Magic *is* real. I can prove it.

MATTHEW

What? By snapping your fingers?

Claire glares, but composes herself, smiling. She raises a hand to Matthew's face.

A beat.

She snaps, and everything seems to come to a slow.

Another beat.

Nothing. It didn't work.

Claire stares at her fingers, confused, while Matthew loses it laughing at her.

CLAIRE

Why didn't...?

Suddenly, the lights go out. Wind sweeps around Claire and Matthew, and the whole room spins.

MORAINE (O.C.)

Hello, princess.

CLAIRE

Oh no.

Matthew screams, and manages to wrangle an arm free to point at whatever's behind Claire. She looks pale, and turns around. MORAINE stands confidently behind her.

MORAINE

Miss me?

Moraine is nineteen, and dressed in gorgeous, high-femme, glam-rock, gothic, clothes. Her hair is wild and untamed, but shaped into a mullet. She is swimming in glitter and black fabric, maroon highlights accenting her figure. She commands your attention, and demands disrespect.

Her ego is as big as the heels on her boots.

Claire is flustered, scrambling to her feet.

MORAINE (CONT'D)

Get the kid.

GOBLINS launch themselves out from every nook and cranny. They're horribly ugly creatures that are disturbingly cute, with bright yellow eyes and short stances. They spring toward Matthew, tying him up as he screams.

CLAIRE

No! Wait, no, you can't do this.

The goblins don't listen, cackling and dragging a now tied-up Matthew to Moraine's side.

MORAINÉ

Oh, princess, I can do whatever I please.

She runs a gloved hand along Claire's cheek, tucking a loose curl behind her ear.

MORAINÉ (CONT'D)

Besides, you're the one that asked for this. Weren't you?

Claire tries to protest, but can't find the right words.

MORAINÉ (CONT'D)

That's what I thought.

She throws her arms up, making the goblins and Matthew vanish.

CLAIRE

My Queen, I didn't mean it -

Moraine raises a finger to Claire's lips, effectively cutting her off.

MORAINÉ

You only have two snaps left. Are you sure you want to waste them on some human boy?

Claire is silent for a beat. She looks away, thinking.

CLAIRE

He's a good kid.

Moraine laughs.

MORAINÉ

Is that so? Really? You want him back simply because... you care? No other reason... monetary or otherwise?

Claire is once again silent, though she glares at Moraine.

MORAINÉ (CONT'D)

Of course, our flawless Claire would never think of herself.

(MORE)

MORAINE (CONT'D)

She simply cares so deeply for the  
brat that torments her weekly.

Moraine turns, facing away from Claire and raising her hand  
with a dramatic twirl. She looks over her shoulder and grins.

MORAINE (CONT'D)

You can have him back... as soon as  
you, my dear Claire, figure out  
what it is you want him back for.

Moraine looks away and snaps her finger. In a burst of dark  
smoke and glitter she vanishes. Claire raises her arms to  
shield her eyes. She blinks, letting her vision adjust.

CLAIRE

What is that supposed to mean? I  
want him back because it's my job  
to babysit him. I want him back  
because he's a child that's been  
kidnapped.

Claire pales.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Oh my God, he's been kidnapped.

Claire paces, frantically moving her hands as she thinks.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Should I call the police? No, no,  
that's stupid. What would they do?  
They can't even get to - I have to -

She pauses her rambling, looking at her hands. A beat passes.  
Claire raises a hand to her face, about to snap her fingers.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

I wish to go to Fortuna.

Claire snaps her fingers, watching as she is quickly  
enveloped by a swirl of glittering magic and smoke. It covers  
her whole body, leaving nothing behind as she is whisked  
away.

EXT. FORTUNA - FIELDS - MORNING

Fortuna is a colorful, magical land. There are giant  
mountains in the distance and huge trees. The clouds are pink  
and there are two suns hanging overhead. An assortment of  
trees cover the land, though their leaves are purple.

The grass is comprised of overgrown clovers, with hundreds of exotic flowers curling up into the sun. In the distance, we can see a large, sprawling castle and an iron gate.

Claire is lying in the grass, surrounded by lush green and blooming flowers. She slowly opens her eyes, as if waking up from a dream.

CLAIRE  
Hello again, old friend.

Claire gets to her feet, taking a minute to look around. She spots her messenger bag a few feet away, hidden in the flowers. She picks it up.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)  
Can't lose you.

Looking around again, Claire sees the large gate nearby. She starts walking toward it.

EXT. KINGDOM GATE - MORNING

The gate is old silver, rusting in many places and covered in vines. It's attached to two tall cobblestone pillars. Each one forms a tower, with dark red flags and accents. Both towers have a door built into the middle. On the gate there is a wooden sign that says "Please Knock."

CLAIRE  
"Please Knock?" Hm... Alright then.

Claire knocks.

Both tower doors swing open as THE DOOR GUARDS reveal themselves. They are very small, cranky old creatures. They're both a puke-beige, covered in old webs and with fungi growing off them. Each wears a small, rusting knights outfit. The LEFT GUARD has a very remarkable mustache, while the RIGHT GUARD has a very remarkable beard. They're old as dirt.

LEFT GUARD	RIGHT GUARD
What's all that racket?	Who's making noise? I hate noise!

Claire steps back, looking up at the guards.

CLAIRE  
Hello, I was -

LEFT GUARD  
 You! You made the noise.  
 What's with all the noise?  
 Don't you know not to make  
 noise. It's not polite. Who  
 raised you? Letting you go  
 around and make noise like  
 that. Shame!

RIGHT GUARD  
 She made the noise. She's a  
 noise-maker, that one.  
 Nothing good ever came from  
 noise makers. Why are you  
 making noise at this hour?  
 Not a good hour to make  
 noise. Come back for the  
 noise making hour.

CLAIRE  
 Oh, I'm sorry. The sign said to  
 knock.

RIGHT GUARD  
 And you listened?

LEFT GUARD  
 Nothing good ever comes from  
 listening to signs.

RIGHT GUARD  
 Are you always listening to signs?

LEFT GUARD  
 Oh, I hope not. Are you, then?

Claire looks confused.

CLAIRE  
 Am I... what?

The Door Guards are baffled, 'ha-rumph'ing to each other.

RIGHT GUARD  
 Are you a Sign-Listener?

LEFT GUARD  
 Yes, yes. A Sign-Listener.

CLAIRE  
 I... suppose so. But I was taught  
 you should always listen to signs.

The Door Guards guffaw at Claire. They can't believe what  
 she's saying.

LEFT GUARD  
 And I suppose you're the kind to  
 keep off the grass, too?

RIGHT GUARD  
 Oh, yes! She's definitely the kind.



CLAIRE

Well, if the sign calls for it.

The Guards can't believe what they're hearing.

LEFT GUARD

Unbelievable! The worst kind of Sign Listener - How do you get anything done? Walking around and listening to signs all the time?

RIGHT GUARD

Such a Sign-Listener! Yes, the worst - She must spend all her days reading signs. That's no way to live.

CLAIRE

I'm sorry, why do you have the sign if you don't want people to knock?

LEFT GUARD

We don't expect people to listen to the sign.

RIGHT GUARD

Nothing good comes from listening.

CLAIRE

But why have the sign at all?

The Guards are absolutely flabbergasted.

LEFT GUARD

Why - Why have the sign? Why have the sign?

RIGHT GUARD

She wants to know why we have the sign. Why have the sign? She wants to know.

CLAIRE

Yes. Why do you have the sign?

LEFT GUARD

Well we need the sign.

RIGHT GUARD

Yes, we need the sign.

Claire groans, extremely frustrated with the two guards. She's not getting anywhere at this rate.

CLAIRE

Can I come in?

RIGHT GUARD

Come in?!

LEFT GUARD

Come in?

CLAIRE

Yes. I want to come in.

LEFT GUARD

Did you knock?

RIGHT GUARD  
Yes, did you knock? We have a sign,  
you know.

CLAIRE  
I knocked. Remember?

The Guards look at each other. They do not remember.

LEFT GUARD  
We heard someone knock.

RIGHT GUARD  
Yes, someone. But how do we know  
it's you?

CLAIRE  
I'm the only one here!

The Guards laugh.

LEFT GUARD  
That's not true!

RIGHT GUARD  
We're here too. We could have  
knocked!

CLAIRE  
Well, did you?

The Guards are both silent. Claire stares at them. They  
exchange glances.

LEFT GUARD  
Did we what?

CLAIRE  
Did you knock?

RIGHT GUARD  
No!

LEFT GUARD  
We hate knocking!

Claire sighs, rubbing her temples.

CLAIRE  
So, can I come in?

LEFT GUARD  
Did you knock?

Claire screams. She is done with the guards, barreling  
forward and kicking the stupid rusty gate. It swings open  
immediately, the lock on it breaking under the force of her  
kick. The Guards stare, baffled.

<p>LEFT GUARD (CONT'D)          You didn't need to do that.          No need for violence - We          just needed you to knock. She          probably didn't even read the          sign.</p>	<p>RIGHT GAURD          All you had to do was knock.          Yes, no violence - Just          knocking - Not a Sign-Reader,          this one.</p>
---	---

Claire stomps through the gate, glad to be rid of the Two Guards.

INT. THE GARDEN BEYOND THE GATE - MORNING

Stepping past the gate, Claire enters a beautiful, fantastical garden. The flowers are gigantic, making Claire look like an ant. All the flora is as tall, if taller, than her. The petals could be used as umbrellas. It sparkles and shimmers in the sun. Glittering mist swirls around Claire's feet as she walks forward. Mushrooms and sparkling rocks are littered all over.

CLAIRE  
 Woah... I've never seen it like  
 this.

She bends down, looking at a small mushroom. A FROG sits on top of the mushroom cap.

THE FROG  
 Staring is very rude, you know.

CLAIRE  
 Oh, I'm sorry.

She quickly looks away at the frog, standing back up and moving onward.

Nearby, there's a cluster of smaller, very pretty flowers.

Claire leans over the smaller flowers, gently grabbing them in her hand. She goes to pluck them, but immediately lets go when she hears a high-pitched scream.

FLOWER FROG is a small, yellow frog with flowers sprouting from her back. She speaks with an older, vaguely New York sounding accent.

FLOWER FROG  
 Why'd you do that?

The flowers are attached to another frog, sprouting from her head. She climbs out of the dirt, hopping at Claire.

CLAIRE

Oh my God! Are you alright?

FLOWER FROG

No, I'm not alright. How would you feel if someone went around yanking your head? Pretty bad.

Claire blushes, flustered.

CLAIRE

I didn't know.

FLOWER FROG

You people never know. Not-knowing is the worst crime you could commit. People are killed for not-knowing.

CLAIRE

I - It can't be the worst crime. Out of all of them, really? Worse than murder.

FLOWER FROG

Of course not murder. Are you really that dense? You not-knowers, I swear.

Claire takes a step backwards. The Flower Frog moves closer.

FLOWER FROG (CONT'D)

I bet you don't know there's a witch's hole behind you, either.

CLAIRE

A what -

Claire takes another step backward, screaming as she suddenly loses footing and falls. She disappears into the ground and away from view. The Flower Frog sighs.

FLOWER FROG

Those not-knowers. They never know about the witch's hole.

INT. THE WITCH'S HOLE

Claire yells as she tumbles down the long dirt tunnel. Roots hit her flailed limbs, loose rocks ripping at her clothes as she gets repeatedly snagged on her way down.

## INT. THE WITCH'S KITCHEN

Finally, Claire rolls out of the witch's hole, landing on the tiled floor of a massive kitchen. The kitchen is grimy and dirty, covered in cobwebs. It's gothic, the wooden cabinets carved with intricate spooky designs. Various jars of herbs and spices line the shelves, dried flowers hanging from the dirt roof. The kitchen is built into a dirt cavern. An island is in the middle of it, covered in baking supplies. Everything is giant in comparison to Claire.

A KITCHEN WITCH hums idly, rooting through her cabinet and unaware Claire has entered.

The Kitchen Witch is an old giant, wearing dark black, brown, and green fabrics that form a long dress and apron. Her hat is lopsided, and covered in patches. Her hair is a deep, bullet grey, hanging loose in tangles. Her fingernails are long, yellow, and sharp.

The Kitchen Witch grabs a cookbook from her cabinet, following the lines in it with a long nail. She turns, going back to her unfinished cooking project, and finally noticing Claire.

KITCHEN WITCH

My delivery is here. What lovely timing.

The Kitchen Witch goes over to Claire, bending over and pinching her, picking her up with two long and boney fingers. She takes Claire over to the kitchen island, setting her down with the other, massive ingredients.

KITCHEN WITCH (CONT'D)

Better let the oven get hot.

Pulling out a wand and tapping the old, gas-oven behind her, the Kitchen Witch laughs gleefully as her kitchen lights up both by the ovens flames and hundreds of suddenly ignited candles.

KITCHEN WITCH (CONT'D)

Tell me, what kind of girl are you?

CLAIRE

What - Are you going to eat me?

KITCHEN WITCH

Not if you're bad. Sour Girls are the worst tasting.

CLAIRE

Then... I'm a Sour Girl.

KITCHEN WITCH

That's too bad. I suppose I'll add you to the taxidermy collection, then.

The Kitchen Witch taps her wand against the counter, making a nearby shelf illuminate. The shelf is stuffed with taxidermy jars. A book is propped between some of the jars, clearly titled 'Beginners Guide to Preserving the Sour in Sour Girls.'

KITCHEN WITCH (CONT'D)

In you go!

She goes to pinch Claire again, but stops short.

CLAIRE

No! I - I lied, I'm not sour.

The Kitchen Witch retracts her hand. She bends over, staring right at Claire. Her eye is as big as Claire is tall.

KITCHEN WITCH

Lying? That only proves you're sour.

CLAIRE

I only lied so you wouldn't eat me!

KITCHEN WITCH

What girl doesn't want to be eaten?

Claire throws her hands up, exasperated.

CLAIRE

Most! Most girls.

KITCHEN WITCH

I've never had any complaints before.

CLAIRE

Have you ever asked?

The Kitchen Witch pauses. The two are silent for a beat.

KITCHEN WITCH

No... I suppose I haven't.

CLAIRE

Okay. Why don't you try asking?

The Kitchen Witch nods, smiling to reveal a set of horrible rotting, black teeth. She rests her arms and head on the counter so she's level with Claire.

KITCHEN WITCH

Would you like to be eaten? I can make a fantastic pie out of you.

CLAIRE

No, I wouldn't like to be eaten. Thank you for asking.

The Kitchen Witch frowns.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

See how easy that was?

KITCHEN WITCH

I suppose. But if you don't want to be eaten, how am I going to eat you?

CLAIRE

You'll just have to wait until I'm ready to be eaten.

KITCHEN WITCH

Well, when will you be ready?

Claire sucks a breath through her teeth, rocking on her heels.

CLAIRE

I'm not sure. I don't think I'm ready to commit to being eaten right now. Can I think about it?

The Kitchen Witch stands up and takes a step back. She holds her chin in her fingers, thinking. A beat passes. She turns back to Claire.

KITCHEN WITCH

I guess that's fair. But you'll let me know when you're ready?

CLAIRE

Of course, of course.

The Kitchen Witch smiles, clapping her hands gleefully.

KITCHEN WITCH

Good! Good, good, good.

Claire grins as the Kitchen Witch turns and begins humming. She opens a cookbook and shuffles around the kitchen messing with different bobs and bits. While she's distracted Claire spins around looking for an escape route.

A very large mixer lies behind Claire. There's a crack in the base of it, forming a small exit passage. Claire takes a last look at the witch, flashing a cheeky grin and running toward it.

KITCHEN WITCH (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Do I have permission to eat you, my eggs?

She exits through the crack.

INT. THE MIXER'S PASSAGE

The exit from the Kitchen Witch's kitchen is carved from sparkling dirt and rocks. It's a narrow fit, and as Claire travels through it slowly shrinks in size. Soon, she finds herself crawling through the passage.

As she crawls, Claire's shirt and pants are dirtied.

CLAIRE

Is that a light? I think - an exit?

INT. THE TROLL'S SOCK CAVE

Claire pushes through some hanging vines and emerges through the end of the tunnel. The end opens up into a larger cavern absolutely stuffed to the brim with socks.

TRADE TROLL sits on a massive mound of socks, wearing a very tight, black jacket. He's a very ugly, grey lump of a monster with large horns. His teeth stick out in every which way, and he is chewing on a pair of pants.

Behind him there is a crudely made wooden wagon with a sign reading "TRADE." The R in "trade" is backwards.

CLAIRE

Hello?

TRADE TROLL

Do you have anything to trade?

CLAIRE

Trade? What - no, I don't have anything.



TRADE TROLL  
Pity, but you'll do fine.

The Trade Troll gets up, sending socks flying. He towers over Claire, and picks her up in his hands. Claire screams.

CLAIRE  
Are you going to eat me?!

TRADE TROLL  
Ew, no. I'm going to trade you.  
Peoples trade very well on the  
market these days.

CLAIRE  
What market? What are you talking  
about?

The Trade Troll carries Claire up his hill and plops her on the trade wagon. Various other trinkets and clothes surround her inside the wagon.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)  
Hello?

He hums, putting a sack over her head and beginning to wheel her and the cart down the sock hill and through another tunnel.

INT. THE TRADE MARKET

Claire peels back her sack and sees she's being rolled through a large cavern filled with other trolls. Each troll has a different trade stand, all filled with various trinkets and knickknacks. Crystals glow overhead, casting a warm light over the market.

TRADE TROLL  
You'll trade quite nice. Yes.

CLAIRE  
You're not listening, I'm not for  
sale!

TRADE TROLL  
Not sale. Trade.

CLAIRE  
Ugh.

As the Trade Troll gets distracted by a nearby vendor's shiny object, Claire sees an opportunity to escape. She jumps from the wagon and runs into the market.

As she flees, the Trade Troll notices she's gone and rages in the distance. He spots her and begins running after her.

TRADE TROLL

You can't get away! I see you!

Claire panics. As she passes a trade booth, she spots a dark brown jacket.

CLAIRE

...He can't be that dumb.

Claire pulls the jacket on, attempting to blend in with the rest of the market. The Trade Troll runs right past her.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

I guess he is that dumb.

She walks in the opposite direction of the troll, looking around at the market. Nearby, a wood sign points to a set of stairs carved into the wall of the cavern. It says "EXIT."

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

No way.

Claire runs up the stairs.

EXT. SWAMP OF CERTAIN DEATH - AFTERNOON

The Swamp of Certain Death is green, stinky, and made up of poisonous bogs. The trees within it are creepy, the animals are weird, and overall it's a bad place to be. Pits of acid and sludge are scattered throughout.

CLAIRE

Oh my God, it stinks.

Claire watches as a bird flies through the swamp. It catches a whiff of stink fumes rising out of a nearby sludge puddle and immediately falls down, dead.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Okay, so let's stay away from there.

Pinching her nose, Claire creeps around the bog, jumping over various pits.

She reaches a larger one and uses a log to hop across. Safe on the solid ground, Claire takes a moment to catch her breath.

PEBBLE (O.S.)  
 Help! Help me! Please help!

Claire looks up toward the noise, trying to find it's origin. She focuses in on a path in the distance.

CLAIRE  
 I'm coming! Hold on, I'm coming.

She begins running toward the voice.

EXT. LARGEST SLUDGE PUDDLE

Claire follows the voice to a larger part of the Swamp of Certain Death, ending up at the largest puddle of sludge yet. It's bubbling and puke green, steaming in the sun. A vine hangs over it, where PEBBLE hangs.

PEBBLE is a small dog-like creature with a large snail shell on their back. They are kind, but quick to judge, and prone to ending up in the wrong place at the wrong time. As a Snorgen, they're supposed to be good luck, but Pebble seems to be the unluckiest Snorgen ever.

PEBBLE  
 You there, can you help?

CLAIRE  
 How did you manage to get stuck there?

PEBBLE  
 Are you going to stand around asking questions or are you going to help? I'm slipping!

CLAIRE  
 Right, sorry.

Claire looks around the bank of the puddle for something to lasso Pebble with.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)  
 There's nothing here.

Panicked, Claire begins upturning rocks. She stumbles across a root to a nearby tree.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)  
 Crap, I don't have a knife.

Pebble slips further down the branch and screams. Claire turns back to the root, stepping on it and ripping hard.

With a snap, it tears off and sends her falling backwards. She quickly regains composure, standing up and attempting to lasso Pebble.

Claire throws the root, it misses by a foot.

She tries again, this time it loops over Pebbles head.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)  
Grab on!

PEBBLE  
I'm going to die.

With a yank, Claire pulls Pebble from the branch to her side, just inches from the puddles edge.

PEBBLE (CONT'D)  
I'm alive!

They hug Claire's leg, being too short to hug her properly.

PEBBLE (CONT'D)  
I never doubted you for a second.

She pats Pebble's head.

CLAIRE  
Alright... buddy.

She gently shakes Pebble off. They stick out a hand for her to take.

PEBBLE  
Pebble, ma'am. Pebble Torgen of the Snorgens.

CLAIRE  
Claire. Nice to meet you, and don't call me ma'am.

PEBBLE  
Yes, sir!

Claire sighs. She begins walking away from the puddle, Pebble following close behind.

CLAIRE  
Can I ask what a Snorgen is?

PEBBLE  
Oh, only the best creature in Fortuna.

(MORE)

PEBBLE (CONT'D)  
We grant wishes - okay, that's a  
lie, we don't grant wishes.

Claire chuckles.

PEBBLE (CONT'D)  
But - but we are good luck! Most of  
us, anyways.

CLAIRE  
Is that how you managed to get  
stuck over that death pit?

PEBBLE  
No, that's because I was running  
from a Goblin. Dreadful things. The  
natural enemy of Snorgens.

CLAIRE  
I see. Well, you probably won't  
want to come with me then.

Pebble looks confused, staring up at Claire. She stops  
walking, pulling a branch away to clear the path.

PEBBLE  
Why's that, sir?

Claire smiles, waving Pebble to come closer. She points at  
the horizon, where in the distance MORAINE'S CASTLE is  
visible. It's a foreboding, gothic manor that crawls upwards  
into the sky.

CLAIRE  
I'm on my way there.

PEBBLE  
No!

CLAIRE  
Yes.

To her surprise, Pebble stares at her in admiration.

PEBBLE  
You must be very brave to face the  
Goblin Queen alone.

Claire shrugs.

CLAIRE  
It's just Moraine.

PEBBLE

Hush! Don't say her name. It's bad luck.

Pebble walks out in front of Claire, looking up at the castle.

PEBBLE (CONT'D)

Sir, you have to let me come with you. I need to see you best the enemy of Snorgens with my own two eyes!

CLAIRE

Oh, well I'm not really - I don't plan on - it's really not - please don't - it might be dangerous -

PEBBLE (CONT'D)

Snorgens will sing songs about you! Vanquisher of Goblins and savior to all. You have to let me come with you.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

OKAY! Okay, you can come.

Pebble cheers, clapping their hands together in excitement.

PEBBLE

Follow me! I know the quickest way out of here.

Claire quietly laughs, rubbing the bridge of her nose as she begins to trek after Pebble.

CUT TO:

INT. MORAINES THRONES ROOM

Moraine watches from a magic mirror as Claire and Pebble leave the swamp. Her throne room is larger than life and lavish, draped in dark maroon cloth and furnished with eccentric, statement furniture. The room is dark, lit by dozens of candelabras. Rose vines crawl across the floor and up the walls, thorns sticking into the stone. The flowers bloom dark red.

The Queen narrows her eyes and snaps her fingers, making the transmission of Claire and Pebble disappear.

MORAINES

She's doing too well. Everything's coming too easy to her.

Moraine sits on her throne, kicking a leg up.

MORAINÉ (CONT'D)

Tak? Come here, please.

TAK enters. He is approximately sixteen, a spy, and a Goblin Knight prodigy. His body is covered in a dark black armor, save for his head and face. He has a mane of unruly hair, thick eyebrows, and a crooked nose. A decent sized scar marks his cheek.

TAK

You called, your majesty?

Moraine smiles, inspecting her nails.

MORAINÉ

Tak, dear, how is the boy?

Tak stiffens.

TAK

The human child is... rambunctious.

MORAINÉ

Well, we knew as much.

TAK

Your majesty, if I might have permission to speak freely?

MORAINÉ

You might.

TAK

The other goblins are... a tad worried we may lose the child. Claire has bested us before, she may do so again.

Moraine laughs, getting up from her throne to stand by the window. She stares at Fortuna, focusing on the swamp in the distance.

MORAINÉ

It was never about Matthew, my dear. It was always about her.

TAK

Her?

MORAINÉ

Yes, her. But I fear she's moving too quickly. Which brings me to you, my loyal knight.

Tak beams at the praise. He presses an arm across his chest, saluting his queen.

MORAINÉ (CONT'D)

I want you to distract her. Keep your distance, of course, but make sure she's learning her lesson.

TAK

Yes, my queen.

He exits the throne room, leaving Moraine alone and grinning out the window.

MORAINÉ

See you soon, princess.

**END OF EPISODE ONE**