

## ***The Plague of Coronius***

### ***Scene 1:***

*King Coronius addresses his daughter, Asteria, about the spread of the sickness in the town. A guard enters and reports of the newest death tolls in the city. When alone, Coronius admits that he fears he will become sick and feels he is too important to allow himself to become sick. He plans to leave the city in secret and escape to a place where the disease is not present.*

*Asteria and Coronius Enter.*

Asteria: Father there must be something more we can do to stop the spread of this disease. We need to close off all transportation into and out of the city. Your people need you to take control before things get out of hand.

Coronius: We cannot cut off travel. If we do we will have to limit supplies coming into the city, including my weekly shipments of fine jewels and fabrics.

Asteria: How can you be worried of your belongings when your people are dying? Aren't you worried this disease will spread?

Coronius: Can't you see the disease has only affected those of in the city who are poor or elderly? There is nothing to fear daughter and no reason to cut off our merchants from entering and exiting the city.

*Guard Enters.*

Guard: Sir, daily update on goings with the townsfolk. Death rates have increased greatly in all sectors of the city. I fear even many of my own men have fallen ill with this plague. What can be done to stop this madness?

Asteria: See! You say only the old and poor have been affected by this sickness, but now you must face the truth that you and all of us are at risk! You have to end all transportation in and out of the city! We need to quarantine the city to stop the spread and keep surrounding towns from becoming infected!

Coronius: ENOUGH! You will not question my authority! I will not limit the people from leaving the city! Now both of you may leave –

Daughter: How can you be so selfish? How can you care so little –

Coronius: I SAID LEAVE!

*Asteria and Guard exit.*

Coronius: There are so many sick and more each day. I cannot risk my own health, I must be able to rule this city and fear I would not survive this disease. This city cannot operate without my ruling, therefore I must be kept safe from this illness. Therefore, I shall escape from the city through the tunnels under the

city and travel far enough away so this sickness cannot harm me. Quick, before my staff notice my absence!

*Coronius exits.*

## **Scene 2:**

*Coronius escapes the castle through hidden underground passages. While in the tunnels, Coronius begins to feel sick. As his illness progresses, Coronius, while having delirious hallucinations, meets a creature who helps lead him through the tunnels.*

*Coronius Enters.*

Coronius: I know of door in the wall of the grand library. It shall lead me down to the secret tunnels where I shall make my escape. Now where is the lever for the door? Ah, here it is!

*\*Door creaks open\**

Hmm there is no light, *\*cough\**, oh but there is a lantern here on the wall *\*cough\**. Must be a lot of dust too. Oh well, time to head down and find a way out of this city before the illness catches up to anymore of my staff, or worse, me!

The walls are smooth but smell of mildew

Wow it is cold down here... and yet, I feel warm as well. Too warm. My head is damp and –

Where am I? Do I turn left? Maybe right here, no that can't be right. UGH!

*\*whispers\**

WHO'S THERE?! *\*Cough\**

*\*singing and unintelligible whispers\**

Hello? Is someone there? Damn another dead end...

Unknown Voice: When up is down and right is left shall no one find the way. But, as for you just shout hooray! For I am here to lead the way! Covin had not seen a friend in quite some time. How be you, mister, new friend of mine?

Coronius: Who are you? What is a covin?

Voice: Covin is not a what, but a who. Covin is me, I am Covin. How do you be good sir?

Coronius: Why can I not see you? Where am I? Do you know how to get out of here? I fear I have gotten myself turned around...

Covin: The covin be a shy creature, so he hides from all to see. Covin afraid my new friend would be scared of Covin's outer looks so I shall stay in shadow.

Coronius: Well, Covin, do you know how to get out of the castle?

Covin: Ah yes! Covin knows all! Tunnels be not a problem for Covin to navigate. I shall help my new friend to escape his fate. Come! Come! Follow my voice friend!

Covin exits.

Coronius (aside): Whether I should trust this creature, I do not know. However, I must escape these tunnels for I fear if I do not I shall die down here. My body aches and my heart races with each step I take. I swear I keep hearing whispers and moans as we continue down this path. The sounds are haunting, as if in pain. Maybe others are with me... maybe the sounds are coming from my own soul. How far have we gone? I have lost all track of time... Time? What time is it? Where am I?

*Coronius exits.*

### **Scene 3:**

*Coronius awakes in a bed and learns that he fainted while escaping the tunnels. A strange woman named Haelyn has been healing him, and not only him. There are many sick around him and more become sick each day. The town's people believe he is to blame for the illness spreading through the town and plan to have him sacrificed as a way to stop the death.*

*Coronius Enters, laying in a bed. Coronius wakes.*

Coronius: Oh my head. It pounds in my ears as I try to sit up. My mouth feels dryer than that of any desert known to man. I must have water. I shall try to sit up again.

*Coronius falls back into bed.*

Nope, I shall just lie here then.

Curious, what is this place I have found myself in? The bed feels softer than any I have sat upon, and the pillow my head sinks into feels like it has been stuffed with clouds.

*Haelyn Enters.*

Haelyn: Ah, so you have finally awoken. And, to answer your question, you are in the infirmary in Hexellen. You have been very ill, in fact the first of many to enter my ward.

Coronius: Hexellen? I have never heard of such a place... how far did those tunnels take me? To a land I have never been? Where is that Covin creature and how did I get out of the tunnels?! Where am I?! I need to get home! HELP ME!

Haelyn: Shhh..... It's alright. It seems the fever has taken hold again. Lanie!

Coronius: Covin! Where is Covin? He brought me here, he can get me home!

Kaitlyn Cool

*Lanie Enters.*

Lanie: Yes ma'am?

Haelyn: Hurry I need water and a rag! And something to soothe this gentleman here.

Lanie: Yes of course! One minute ma'am! Here you are!

Haelyn: Shhh, sir. There is no one named Covin here. I know of no such man, you must have dreamt this. Now sleep again as the fever comes.

*Haelyn gives sedative to Coronius.*

Haelyn: Thank you Lanie that will be all. Please check on our other patients. I am afraid dear Mrs. Olden has little time left with us.

*Lanie Exits.*

*Enter two guards and the town leader, Bexton.*

Haelyn: Good afternoon, Bexton. What is the purpose of your visit today?

Bexton: I have been informed that a man of foreign blood has been taken in by your institution and that he was brought in with the same symptoms that are now plaguing our town. Is this true?

Haelyn: It is true that we are treating a man here. Whether he is the cause of this illness is still to be seen. We know not what has brought this sickness to our people.

Bexton: Oh, but we do. Guards, take this man. We shall make him pay for his selfishness and bringing his plague to our town! He is cursed and has brought his curse upon us! We must sacrifice him to keep more of our people from becoming ill!

*Guards reach for Coronius.*

Haelyn: No! Do not make contact with the patient! We do not know how this illness is transmitted and we must stop the spread before the entire town is sick. Two have died already and I fear at least another shall pass before the night is through. He is under heavy sedatives now for the fever, he shall not be going anywhere.

Bexton: Fine he shall remain here in your care. However he shall be imprisoned to this bed and cuffed to keep him from escaping! When he wakes he shall answer for his crimes against my people. Guards! Keep post at the door. Make sure the prisoner doesn't escape.

(Aside) I have a simpler way of getting rid of this disease anyways.

*Bexton exits.*

#### **Scene 4:**

*A week has passed and Coronius wakes again from his slumber and sees the sickness he has brought to Hexellen. Many people have died and the infirmary doesn't have enough supplies*

*for the new patients that are brought in daily. Coronius, filled with self-hatred and guilt, helps the sick as much as he can. In the middle of the night a fire breaks out at the infirmary. All inside are trapped as the guards and Bexton have barred the exits.*

*Enter Coronius and Haelyn.*

Coronius: At last I feel I am free of this illness! I no longer feel weak and full of fever. My body no longer aches as I move. Yet, I have not gotten the sound of agony out of my ears. Could it be my memory haunting me?

Haelyn: That would be the sound of those sick around you sir. We have many that have befallen the same illness that once plagued you. We cannot find a cure and many have died. Only those healthy enough to fight off the fever have recovered. \*cough\* It seems even I have become infected.

Coronius: Oh dear! Please, lay down! What can be done to help you?

*Haelyn lays down on the bed.*

Haelyn: I am afraid nothing can be done. We ran out of supplies yesterday. All that can be done is to try and keep everyone as comfortable as possible and hope they can pull through on their own.

Coronius (aside): What have I done? These people are all going to die because of me... How could I be so selfish and determined to escape my kingdom's fate to risk all of these people's lives? I may not be able to change what I have done, but I can try to help them in any way to ease the burden on my heart. I shall never be able to forgive myself for bringing this misery upon these citizens....

(To Haelyn) Rest now woman. You have done all you can in your state to help these people. Let me take over to repay you for all you have done for me. It is all I can do for bringing this plague upon you and your people.

Haelyn: There are towels and blankets in the cupboards against the wall. Try to keep their fevers from getting too high. There is access to water one room over. That is all we can do for now.

Coronius: Good now you must rest and I will stay to tend to your patients. Lanie, will you grab some towels? I shall go fetch more water...

*Night falls.*

Coronius: Well Lanie, I think we may be able to rest. I have replaced the damp rags on each patient and most are asleep. I only pray they all last until morning... so many deaths I have seen today... Lanie? Is everything alright?

*Lanie enters.*

Lanie: FIRE! HELP, fire!! Coronius, we must get water! Hurry!

Haelyn: Lanie I smell smoke, where is the fire coming from?!

Lanie: From the supply room! It looks like someone came in from the back door and set the room on fire! The entire exit is blocked as a beam has fallen from the ceiling!

Haelyn: Quick, move as many as you can to the front entrance of the building! Coronius try to keep the fire from spreading any quicker!

Coronius: There's no time! Look, the fire has reached the room! Hurry start moving patients!

Lanie: It's no use! The door has been jammed shut. Someone has purposely locked us in here! What can we do?!

Haelyn: Move beds to the far end of the room we must hold off the fire as long as we can! Grab blankets and try to smother the flames!

Lanie: I can't see, the smoke is too thick! \*Cough, cough\*

Coronius: Cover your mouths with rags to keep from inhaling smoke! Here are some blankets!

Lanie: I can't breathe! The smoke is filling my lungs... I... can't....

Haelyn: Coronius, put her with the others! We can't stop the flames much longer! Hurry!

*Haelyn disappears into the smoke.*

Coronius (aside): Oh the flames have almost engulfed the whole room. My lungs fill with smoke and my breathing is labored. I cannot go on any longer. My body succumbs to the darkness as I feel the flames lick my skin. Yet it is not so bad as my fever felt before... Why am I hearing singing?

*Coronius exits. Enter Covin.*

*\*Whispered singing\**

Covin: To bad dear friend you had to be, so selfish and to blame are thee.

Covin helped thee to escape your fate, now you bring all death, be foe or mate.

Goodbye new friend as you now shall slumber, as the flames around continue to plunder.

*Covin exits.*

### **Scene 5:**

*Coronius wakes in his bed chamber. Asteria tells him he collapsed in the tunnels where they found him, delirious with fever. He has been unconscious for three days mumbling about creatures and fire. Coronius makes the decision to close off the gates to the city to help stop the spread of the sickness.*

*Enter Coronius and Asteria.*

Coronius: Am I dead and in heaven? For it must be heaven and not hell as I no longer feel the flames of death grip my body. My head spins and ears ring if I try to lift myself to look around. Where am I now?

Asteria: Father? Have you finally come back to us?

Coronius: Well yes I suppose I have, although I am unsure how I escaped the fire in Hexellen...

Asteria: Hexellen? What are you talking about? You were found three days ago lying on the ground in the tunnels leading from the city. A guard found the library door open and followed the corridor down to you. You were talking of all kinds of madness; a creature named Covin? And this place called Hexellen... We knew you must have contracted the virus that the townspeople have been faced with and brought you back to your bed chamber where the doctor has been trying to get your fever to break. It looks as though it finally has.

Coronius: A dream? It was all a dream? Oh, but it felt so real. Thank the gods it was not. Asteria, my daughter, I was wrong. I need to make an immediate announcement. Please help me to write. We shall be closing the gates to the town. I know now that nothing is more important than keeping people safe. Going forward, until this plague in our town is no longer, we will be shutting down transportation into and out of the kingdom that is not necessary for the wellbeing of our citizens!

Guard! Hurry I need this notice made known to all. This decree must go into effect immediately! We must quarantine the kingdom to keep other towns around from becoming infected. Come daughter let us go to those who are most in need of treatment.

*Coronius and Asteria Exit.*