

# Death on the Throne

by  
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**Setting:** 19th century, 1839, September 24, Eldoria, The kingdom of Virelia, King's Castle

**Characters:**

ASTRID: 24, ginger curly hair, brown eyes, The king's daughter, from Eldoria  
The Kingdom of Virelia, well educated, powerfull, crafty, clever

JONATHAN: 68, white short hair, green eyes, The king of Virelia, wise, selfish, authoritarian, serious

SHELDON: 26, ginger long curly hair, brown eyes, Jonathan's son, Astrid's brother, from Eldoria The Kingdom of Virelia, clever, secretive, emphatic, patient, attractive

NICHOLAS: 34, brown short hair, blue eyes, Detective, from Eldoria, clumsy, clever, ambitious, well-educated

PRIMROSE: 67, Ginger long hair, brown eyes, Jonathan's Wife, Queen, from Eldoria The Kingdom of Virelia, dainty, disciplined, quick-witted, wise

ADELA: 24, ginger wavy hair, green eyes, Astrid's twin, from Eldoria The Kingdom of Virelia, talkative, pretty, attentive, easygoing, jealous

JOSEPH: 29, blonde straight hair, blue eyes, Adela's boyfriend, Astrid's crush, from Eldoria, Gentle, Honest, womanizer

LUKE: 28, brown wavy hair, green eyes, Jonathan's son, Astrid's stepbrother, from Eldoria The Kingdom of Virelia, bossy, sympathetic, reliable

ALBERTA: 62, blonde long hair, green eyes, Jonathan's ex wife, from Eldoria The Kingdom of Virelia, Mistress of The Harem, bossy, ambitious, clever

## **SCENE 1**

*(A grand royal hall. A large dining table stands at the center. ASTRID'S bedroom is visible at the side of the stage. ASTRID wakes up in her bed, confused and sick. Distant voices begin to echo.)*

ASTRID: *(whispering to herself)* These... these voices? Who... who are they? *(She gets up, heading towards the door.)*

*(The voices grow louder. The conversation between Sheldon, Adela, and Jonathan becomes clearer as Astrid walks through the hallway and enters the dining hall. She looks at the people in the room, her vision slightly blurred.)*

JONATHAN: *(in a stern tone)* The people must know the future of the throne. Tomorrow's announcement is crucial. The kingdom needs an heir.

ADELA: *(anxiously, with a hint of sarcasm)* Father, but you... You are so strong... Who needs an heir? *(glances at SHELDON)*

SHELDON *(quietly, but deeply)*: We must plan for the future, Adela. We have to accept that our father is not immortal.

ASTRID: *(whispering, to herself)* They... my father... Adela... Sheldon... But... why is everything so blurry? *(She clutches her head.)* I know them, but... why can't I remember clearly?

*(ASTRID approaches her father, speaking loudly.)*

ASTRID: Father! What's happening here? Tell me!

*(She looks into JONATHAN'S eyes, but he doesn't respond. ASTRID tries to touch her father's arm, but her hand passes through. Her eyes widen, and her breathing quickens. She slowly steps back.)*

ASTRID: *(in shock, realization dawning)*: They... they can't see me... I can touch some furniture and grab them but... I can't touch human! They can't hear me.

*(Takes a deep breath.)* I'm dead... But... I've lived this day before. Something... something is unfinished.

*(The conversation continues. ASTRID notices the seriousness in ADELA and SHELDON'S exchange.)*

ADELA: *(whispering to Sheldon)* Father is weakening. Who do you think will take the throne? Who will stand before the people?

SHELDON: *(narrowing his eyes)* We'll find out soon enough. What's best for everyone... *(He doesn't finish, a cold expression on his face.)*

ASTRID: *(softly, determined)* This... this conversation... I remember it. But why? *(She scans the room, seeing her father turn to ADELA.)*

JONATHAN: Astrid is resting in her room today. She said she wasn't feeling well. Do not disturb her.

ASTRID: *(whispering, realization striking)* This... this was my last day. This moment... this day... I'm reliving it. Again... I'm reliving the day before I died!

## **SCENE 2**

*(The scene opens in ASTRID'S room. The room is tiny with white walls, a metal bed, a wooden table, and candles everywhere. ASTRID enters, looking around, confused and anxious.)*

ASTRID: *(whispering to herself)* Why... why does everything feel so familiar? These walls... this table... It's my room. *(Pauses, hands shaking)* Is this possible? Was I... killed for the throne? *(She starts to panic, breathing heavily.)*

ASTRID: *(determined, voice trembling)* If I'm going to die today, then some truths... must appear .

*(Suddenly, there is a knock at the door. ASTRID turns sharply. The door opens, and Luke enters. ASTRID stares, surprised. She remembers he is her brother but finds his presence strange.)*

LUKE: *(calmly)* Astrid, you've been in this room for almost two days. You need to stop worrying about Adela and Joseph. It's not worth it.

*(ASTRID freezes when she hears JOSEPH'S name. Her eyes go distant as if remembering something.)*

ASTRID: *(softly, to herself)* Joseph...

*(She walks to a wooden drawer, opens it, and pulls out a letter. She reads it quickly, her hands shaking.)*

ASTRID: *(whispering)* A love letter... to Joseph.

*(Suddenly, a memory unlocks. She looks at LUKE, but something is off. LUKE is clear, but the rest of the memory is dark and blurry.)*

ASTRID: *(frustrated)* I... I can see you, Luke. But... I can't see or hear myself in the past. I must solve this mystery myself.

*(She looks determined. She takes a deep breath and walks toward the door.)*

ASTRID: *(whispering)* I need to watch Adela.

*(The scene closes when Astrid leaves the room.)*

### **SCENE 3**

*(The scene opens in ADELA'S room. The room has pink walls, a wooden dresser, and a large window beside a pink iron bed. Animal fur rugs cover the floor, and little light streams through the window. Adela lies on her bed, smiling, staring out the window.)*

ASTRID: *(whispering to herself)* This... feels familiar.

*(ASTRID cautiously examines the room. She opens a wooden drawer, seeing a stack of papers and rose petals.)*

ASTRID: What are these...?

*(She pulls out several sketches of ADELA, signed by JOSEPH.)*

ASTRID: *(voice shaking)* Joseph... How could she? My love and my sister!

*(She holds the papers. Then, she finds a letter hidden beneath the rose petals. As she opens it, Adela stands up and exits the room. Astrid quickly pockets the letter and follows Adela.)*

#### **SCENE 4**

*(Scene opens in Shadowy Forest. Tall trees loom over narrow, muddy paths. Foggy weather)*

ASTRID: *(thinking)* Why such secrecy? This is more than just a forbidden love.

*(She follows ADELA through the winding paths, finally spotting JOSEPH waiting ahead. ADELA runs into his arms.)*

ADELA: *(softly)* I missed you so much, Joseph. We can't keep meeting like this. It has to end.

JOSEPH: *(firmly)* We've dealt with Astrid. Do we really need to worry about the rest of them?

ASTRID: *(to herself)* Dealt with me? What did they do?

ADELA: I talked to Astrid. After tonight's dinner, everything will be fine. Trust me. She'll do her part.

ASTRID: *(to herself)* What will she do tonight... at dinner? She said, "After tonight's feast, everything will be fine." What did she mean? How? Did she really... give up on me... for her own love? Her own sister... just like that? Or... is there something else... hidden? Something I can't see yet?

JOSEPH: *(skeptical)* And what about Luke? He's a problem. He won't let go so easily. Let's say Astrid did her part. What will happen to Luke? Even if Astrid doesn't realize it, he will keep filling her head with doubts about us. You know

they... used to be closer than anyone else for a while. Even if Astrid doesn't fully trust Luke, she will definitely trust him more than us.

ADELA: Yes, Luke will say a lot of things to Astrid, but he will accept it eventually. Also, don't underestimate the trust issues between them. Luke knew about Alberta's plans for the throne from the beginning and didn't say a single word to Astrid. No matter what, Astrid cares about me. She will listen to us.

ASTRID: *(whispering, confused)* Luke... betrayed me? Alberta... What is happening?

*(Adela looks back toward the castle, noticing a red flag hanging from Astrid's balcony.)*

ADELA:*(panicked)* I have to go. Astrid signaled. They'll notice I'm gone.

*(She kisses JOSEPH and runs back.ASTRID, filled with turmoil, follows her.)*

ASTRID: *(thinking)* Why would I help her? What did I forget?

*(The scene fades to black as ASTRID hurries back to the castle.)*

## **SCENE 5**

*(Adela nervously walking into the castle, her figure fading from Astrid's sight Astrid watches as Adela disappears into the castle's corridors. She hurries towards the faint glow of the candles lighting the dark passageway. At the end of the corridor, she sees her parents, Jonathan and Primrose, deep in conversation.)*

JONATHAN: *(authoritative tone)* Primrose, you need not worry. I know exactly who I will choose as the heir. This decision has already been made. You know it as well as I do.

PRIMROSE: *(concerned)* Yes, but I am worried about Astrid. You know what people are saying about her... And Luke and Alberta—they will cause us

trouble. I'm not sure the people will accept this decision. She has never been in the spotlight enough.

JONATHAN: We're not looking for a clown. Although Astrid is important to us, the power she holds is dangerous. The people have other plans for her. We need to solve this problem completely.

*(ASTRID listens in shock, unable to fully grasp what she is hearing. Were they discussing her as the heir to the throne, or were they planning to rid themselves of her because of the threat she posed? She listens carefully, her mind racing with confusion.)*

PRIMROSE: Look, solving this could lead to irreversible problems in our family. Astrid might need to... disappear.

*(Before PRIMROSE can finish her sentence, Jonathan interrupts her sharply.)*

JONATHAN: We can't talk about this here! A decision has been made, and we must live with the consequences. Tomorrow, everything will be decided.

*(JONATHAN and PRIMROSE slowly leave the area, their conversation lingering in the air.)*

ASTRID: (whispering to herself, terrified) What are my parents planning for me? The real question is: who will be the heir? Why is it such a problem for me? These thoughts are consuming me. I need to hear more from the others.

## **Scene 6**

*(ASTRID spends some time wandering the castle, eventually making her way to the dining hall. The room is vast, with tall green curtains draping down, a long wooden table at the center, walls adorned with countless paintings, and a table covered in candles. She spots SHELDON sitting alone, drinking quietly. His face bears an expression of desperation, his eyes darkened by fatigue, as though something is terribly wrong. LUKE enters the room.)*

LUKE: (mocking) Well, well, look who's drinking alone, Sheldon. With no girls around, huh? This isn't exactly a common sight. What's the occasion?

SHELDON: (*irritated*) Luke, just leave me alone. I don't want to deal with you right now. There's no place for your stupid jokes or you in this castle.

LUKE: (*smirking*) Come on, relax a little. Did you forget? King Jonathan is my father, too. Our father. Ah, but I suppose you're too selfish, thinking everything should belong to you, right? What a shame. The heir will be decided soon, and I wouldn't want you to disappear during the coronation. You should probably get ready.

(*Sheldon clenches his drink tightly, then throws it, the glass shattering on the floor.*)

SHELDON: (*yelling furiously*) You think you have a right to the throne with that attitude? Forget about me—do you honestly believe you could even replace Astrid and Adela?! Can you even hear me?!

LUKE: (*laughing and rolling his eyes*) So, after Astrid, then Adela, huh? Sheldon, Sheldon, Sheldon... has anyone ever told you how funny you are? What's driving you to throw them under the bus? Forget Adela, let's focus on Astrid—the so-called 'heir' in the eyes of the people. Smart, capable, well-educated, and authoritative. She has everything a true heir needs. Maybe she's already the heir, we just don't know it yet. But who do you think you are to stand in her way? Is it because you're my father's 'first and only male child'? Is that it? (Luke steps closer to Sheldon, whispering)

LUKE: (*whispering*) Your selfishness is why you barely let Astrid step out into the public eye. You're too insecure. So stop talking, and start getting your outfit ready for the coronation.

(*Luke smiles as he slowly walks out of the room.*)

ASTRID: (*thinking to herself*) Could Sheldon's arrogance have caused this? The people loved me, and did he want to keep me in the shadows because of

that? Could it be true? Also, why is Luke so certain of his ascension to the throne? Sheldon, Adela, and I are still here, yet he's so sure of his place. How does he know something I don't?

*(As ASTRID thinks, SHELDON suddenly stands up and leaves the room in haste. She remains behind, her thoughts swirling in confusion.)*

## **Scene 7**

*(ASTRID ponders these events for a while, then decides to leave her room and prepare for the dinner her father mentioned. As she walks into her room, she notices a strange indentation on the floor. She approaches it and realizes that something had been hidden there. Upon closer inspection, she sees a pen lodged in the gap. Wondering how the pen got there, she feels a sharp pang of discomfort in her chest and closes her eyes. When she opens them again, she envisions herself writing in a journal.)*

ASTRID: *(whispering to herself)* W-where is that journal? Who took it, and how did they know where to find it?

*(Suddenly, the sound of a servant calling her name interrupts her thoughts—it's time for dinner. She quickly dresses and heads towards the door, only to realize the key is missing.)*

## **Scene 8**

*(In the dining hall, everyone is seated around the large table. Astrid is nowhere to be found. Jonathan sits at the head of the table, surveying the room. Sheldon is once again sulking, staring at his glass. Primrose forces a smile, lifting a cup to get everyone's attention.)*

PRIMROSE: *(forcing cheerfulness)* Your father has something to tell you all. It's a great pleasure to have you all at this dinner. But wait—where's Astrid?

JONATHAN: *(calmly)* She's not feeling well. She had a stomach ache, just like this morning. She asked for my permission to rest in the infirmary.

PRIMROSE: *(sympathetic)* Oh, poor Astrid! She's always running around, exhausting herself. Well, never mind. Where was I? Ah, yes, your father has something very important to tell you all...

ALBERTA: *(interrupting with a sly smile)* Yes, your Majesty. I'm sure your son Luke must be the most important thing to mention, right? What is it that you want to tell us?

PRIMROSE: *(snapping)* How dare you speak—

JONATHAN: *(sharply, commanding attention)* Enough! If you want to hear what I have to say, stop fighting and listen! Servants, serve the food for Luke and Alberta.

*(Servants begin serving food as PRIMROSE looks at JONATHAN in confusion. SHELDON glares at LUKE)*

LUKE: *(mocking)* Father, we're all eager to hear your words.

JONATHAN: *(with a solemn tone)* As you know, I am getting old. I've tried to be a good king throughout my reign, but I know I can't continue much longer. It's time to choose an heir. I've already made my decision, but I'd like to hear what each of you thinks.

SHELDON: *(fuming)* This is ridiculous. If you've already chosen, why bother asking for our opinions? Is this just to humiliate us?

PRIMROSE: *(sharply)* Sheldon!

JONATHAN: *(firmly)* Sheldon, stop acting like a child! You've got everything a future heir could want—what's your problem? Since the moment you learned you wouldn't be the heir, you've been furious. It's not even about who's the best anymore, is it?

SHELDON: (*snapping, angrily*) So you think this isn't about me? Who else could be a good king? I've spent my whole life trying to prove myself to you, but have you ever seen me? No, you've never even noticed!

LUKE: (*mocking, with a grin*) Come on, big guy, calm down. If there's a decision, it must be respected, right? I'm sure Dad's made the best.

ADELA: Sheldon, can you calm down a bit? Luke is right. The decision has already been made. I'm sure my father has done what's best for us.

SHELDON: Don't tell me you're defending Luke! You and Astrid love this guy just because he treats you well. But you know what? Ah, I mean, you already know, but let me tell you anyway—this so-called ideal “heir,” Alberta, has known from the beginning that he was sending us to death in a carriage just so he could put his “real son” on the throne! Go ahead, deny it! That day, Alberta knew exactly what happened—what he accepted, what he couldn't deny, but what we all knew he did. He sent us to be killed with a carriage. Tell me that you didn't know! Go ahead, say it!

PRIMROSE: You! You despicable woman! Not only did you stain our family with your filthy blood, but did you also use your rotten son in your schemes? I swear...

JONATHAN: (*shouting loudly*) Enough! That's enough! You've crossed the line!

LUKE: (*to Sheldon*) How do you know this? Did Astrid tell you? Who did you hear this from?

SHELDON: (*grimacing*) None of your business. I heard it from whoever I heard it from. It doesn't matter anymore.

ADELA: Sheldon! Was now the right time for this? Just before the heir is about to be announced, and you're clearing obstacles out of your way.

SHELDON: Are you seriously forgiving this? I can't believe you and Astrid.

ADELA: We're not forgiving anything. Luke has been trying to talk to us and apologize since we found out, but we're not talking to him. And don't forget, it was a momentary mistake, and then he saved us!

SHELDON: *(extremely angrily)* You believe this nonsense about him saving us? Can you really say that he didn't organize it? Think about it. He knew the plan, accepted it, but suddenly became a saint. How old are you, Adela? Ten? You believe that? Or are you defending Luke because he's hiding his dirty little secret? Are you protecting him because he's hiding your relationship with Joseph, the brother you've loved for years but buried your love for the sake of the family?

*(A silence falls over the table. Everyone is left speechless. Adela fumes with rage. Jonathan and Primrose look at Adela with shock and anger.)*

JONATHAN: Adela, what am I hearing? How could you do this to our family? How could you meet with that man?

ADELA: In this family, everyone has the right to do whatever they want, except for me! But when I do something, it's a problem. Damn all of you!

*(Adela screams and quickly exits the dining room. The king shouts after her to stop, but then the king, overcome with anger, collapses and has a crisis. He shouts at the servant to bring his injection, but the servant says the injection is missing. The king is hurriedly taken to his room, and the others at the table begin to talk.)*

PRIMROSE: Look at yourselves! You! Take Alberta's son and get out. The damage you've done to my family is more than enough. Leave my dining room immediately!

ASTRID: *(to herself)* It's hard to digest all that's happening. First Luke's betrayal, then my father's missing injection... My room's key and my diary... All of these must be part of the assassination that will happen tonight. Perhaps that's why I remember my death. Being silently killed with an injection in my sleep... It looks

like it's going to be a long night, but to find the last pieces, I need to learn where my living self is. I don't believe it's in the infirmary, contrary to what's being said. It seems... like my living self knows about the possibility of this assassination. It's not coming to meals, it's not wandering around. Time is running out, I need to solve this.

ALBERTA: *(in response to Primrose angrily)* How dare you...

LUKE: *(pulling his mother by the arm)* Mother, let's go.

*(And just then, the sound of an object falling on the floor echoes. Astrid looks down and sees her room's key!)*

ASTRID: *(to herself)* This! This is my room's key! The killer is here right now! In this room, and they accidentally dropped my room's key!

*(Astrid quickly scans the room and looks at everyone's faces, but no one takes the fallen key seriously. Everyone acts as if no one dropped the key. Finally, Luke notices the key and picks it up, then says to everyone at the table: )*

LUKE: You got what you wanted. We're leaving with my mother. I also know what this key means. Such low schemes and thoughts could only belong to a family like yours.

*(LUKE tosses the key into his pocket and storms out of the room. ASTRID begins to follow him.)*

## **Scene 9**

*(After following LUKE for a long time down the narrow, dusty corridors, ASTRID sees him enter a room with a wooden door, hidden in the corner, almost forgotten. She enters the room after him. Inside, she finds a long table covered in parchment papers. The table is full of old parchment. At the far end of the table, there is a girl holding a candlestick, facing away. The girl is pacing around, looking at the parchment in her hand. When she sees the door open and LUKE enter, she turns her face to the door, and ASTRID immediately*

*recognizes that the girl is herself. There's a shadow on her face. She can't see herself clearly. As a sharp pain hits her head, she tries to focus on the conversation.)*

LUKE: *(angrily but controlled)* What do you think you're doing? Are you aware that you're drawing more attention to yourself?

*(He pulls the key from his pocket and places it on the table.)*

LUKE: Look! Someone has already started to act!

*(ASTRID strains to hear what she herself said to LUKE. Finally, she can hear it a little.)*

ASTRID: What are you doing here? More importantly, how do you know my location? How do I know this isn't just one of your cheap tricks? You've given me no reason to trust you, Luke.

LUKE: Have you lost your mind? Why would I lie to you? What I did before... it was a mistake, okay? I fixed it, but you keep using it against me. Astrid, get a grip. My father's injection is missing upstairs. Then the key fell. You can't fall victim to the assassination right in front of us! Do you hear me? You have to listen to me.

ASTRID: Luke... I stopped believing in you a long time ago. I wish I could believe all this. But I don't. You have so many reasons to kill me, don't you? *(beginning to walk slowly towards LUKE)* You want to be the heir, you tried to kill me before, you want to enter the family, and so on... Another well-rehearsed play. Unfortunately... but no one will believe you anymore. *(Suddenly accelerates her steps, locking LUKE inside.)*

LUKE: *(angrily hitting the door)* Astrid! You're making a mistake. I swear everything I said is true. I'm not doing you wrong. You'll regret this. I'm telling you, you'll be killed! You have to believe me. Astrid, open the door!

## **Scene 10**

*(After climbing the stairs, the real, living ASTRID quickens her steps toward her room, and as she passes by, she encounters SHELDON. As she walks past him, SHELDON starts speaking. Meanwhile, the ghost of ASTRID begins following them, but due to the presence of the real ASTRID, a sharp pain strikes her head, and she starts seeing her as a dark blur.)*

SHELDON: Ah! My dear sister Astrid. I was just about to come check on you. I heard there's something wrong with your stomach. How are you?

*(ASTRID says something, but the ghost of Astrid can't hear it clearly. She forces herself to focus and catches some of the dialogue, though she misses parts of it.)*

SHELDON: My dear sister, these servants have become so incompetent lately. I dropped my key at dinner, and I think they've taken it, confused it with mine. Do you happen to have seen a key around here? Or maybe any key that was given to you?

*(Although the living ASTRID'S face is perceived as a blur, SHELDON's words clearly surprise her. She seems startled by what he said. The living Astrid thought everything SHELDON said was part of LUKE'S scheme. She assumed LUKE was guilty and thought SHELDON was being framed. But the ghost of ASTRID had started to seriously suspect SHELDON.)*

## **Scene 11**

*(The ghost of ASTRID, horrified by what SHELDON said, feels the need to confirm the situation. She follows sheldon to understand where this could lead.*

*SHELDON, while descending the narrow, dusty stairs of the castle, keeps glancing behind him. As ASTRID follows, she notices that SHELDON is heading toward LUKE'S room. Her suspicions begin to grow. Why was he going there? Did he know Luke was there, or was there another reason for him to be there? The only way to know was to continue watching. When SHELDON reaches the door, he slides the bolt at the top and tries to peer inside. As he opens the bolt, he sees LUKE inside and is shocked. His expression immediately changes. He was*

*surprised to see Luke there, but there was more than just shock on his face—there was panic. He quickly regains his composure and speaks.)*

SHELDON: Luke. What are you doing here? Or did your failed assassination attempt on my father bring you here to come up with new plans?

LUKE: *(mocking and laughing angrily)* You know best about the assassination attempt, don't you? Tell me, Sheldon, how does it feel to kill your own brother? Let's say you get what you want, do you really think it'll be worth it? You think our king won't investigate? Pathetic. You think your mind works, but here we are—both of us. And I can see every disgusting thought running through that dirty mind of yours. *(He leans close to the door, only his eyes visible, speaking in a whisper)* Checkmate, Sheldon. You're checkmate.

SHELDON: *(smirking and raising his eyebrows in a condescending manner)* Am I checkmate? Oh, poor Luke! Look at you. You're locked in a room no one even knows about in the castle. Let's see. Do you have a savior coming to rescue you? *(He spins around, mockingly looking around)* No, doesn't seem like it. No dear sisters are here to rescue you. And I'm afraid, sadly, one of them, dear sister Astrid, won't be there to save you for the rest of your life.

*(The ghost of Astrid is in shock. Luke was right. She now knows the reason for her death and her killer. She doesn't know what to do, and a mix of anger and sadness rises in her. She was about to watch the man she thought of as her brother kill her, and there was nothing she could do. This thought torments her, but then she remembers something. After today, whether tomorrow or later that night, she would have time to expose everything. She might not be able to change the course of things, but she was sure Sheldon wouldn't get away with what he did. She listens to their dialogue as she continues observing.)*

LUKE: You coward! All this time, you've been killing your innocent brother who only loved you, who protected you from our father's wrath—all for a throne! And you don't even know if our father will actually make him king!

SHELDON: Do you think I care whether my father makes Astrid queen or not? Astrid is a danger in herself. Her intelligence, skill, education, and cunning will bring nothing but trouble even if she doesn't ascend to the throne. She loves sticking her nose into everything, just like you. But look at the end. She'll be dead soon. And the bells will toll for you, "stepbrother."

LUKE: *(shouting)* Do you think I won't tell anyone about this? What you've done will come out. You'll end up in the dungeon! I won't let you kill Astrid! *(as he starts banging and pushing the door, yelling)* I'll kill you, do you hear me? After I get out of here, I'll tell everyone your true face! You'll never step foot in Eldoria again, you coward!

SHELDON: Ah, Luke, Luke, Luke... I'm tired of your empty threats. Look at you. You're locked in a room, and you know what I just realized? That key to Astrid's room you took from me is still with you. How sad. What do you think people will think when they find you with the key to her room after she's dead? And with all those papers full of assassination plans she wrote... You think anyone will believe you when you try to blame it all on "innocent" Sheldon, the one who never left his room? *(Shaking his head with a grin, continuing mockingly)* No, brother. They won't believe you. Now, if you'll excuse me, I have a brother to kill. We'll talk later.

LUKE: *(knocking on the door, shouting)* Coward! You're a coward! Astrid! Can you hear me? Astrid, run! Please, run!

*(The ghost of ASTRID unable to do anything. She passes through the door and enters LUKE'S room, witnessing his desperate state. There is nothing more to be done now. As she is about to think the end is near, she remembers something from just five minutes ago. She recalls the panic SHELDON had when he realized LUKE was there. Could there be something he's hiding in this room? As ASTRID thinks, LUKE kicks the table angrily and then lowers his head into his hands, collapsing. Since LUKE is looking at the surface of the table, he doesn't notice, but as the table tips over, a notebook fixed under it becomes visible. ASTRID notices it and thinks it might be a journal, wondering if there's a way to make*

*notice it. ASTRID grabs a few papers that have fallen from the table, crumples them, and throws them toward that side of the table. Being a ghost, she can only move objects so much, but she uses all her strength to make the noise. Hoping to catch LUKE'S attention, she cautiously watches him.)*

LUKE: What was that sound?

*(LUKE stands up, walking towards the source of the sound behind the table. ASTRID feels a surge of joy and continues watching. LUKE pulls out a notebook, which is fixed under the table, and opens it.)*

LUKE: *(muttering to himself)* What is this? What's a notebook doing here?

*(LUKE starts examining it. After reading for a while, he realizes it's a diary, or rather, ASTRID'S diary. Immediately, he flips to the last pages, seeking any clue or proof. He begins reading the final entry.)*

"Dear Diary,        09.24.1839

*For days now, the echoes of succession have been spreading through the kingdom, and I must admit, it's scary. As soon as the throne issue is mentioned, the fake expressions on everyone's faces give way to their true thoughts. No one dares to look each other in the eye but the eyes still reveal everything. An assassination, a betrayal, a disaster... It's as though there's a plan whispered in every corner.*

*Though it's difficult to write this, I'm afraid of an assassination. Even the silence around me these days feels like a threat. I've grown suspicious of the notes left in my room, the footsteps I hear at midnight, and even the furtive glances of the servants. People might think these are just the delusions of a paranoid princess, but I have this terrible feeling inside me. It's too strong to ignore.*

*So last night I said something to Sheldon. With my usual calmness, I asked him to spend the night with me. "If you wish, you can stay in my room tonight," I said. Weird enough, when I said that, it felt like a weight had been lifted off me. Sheldon is the only person I trust. In this palace where everyone digs each*

*other's graves, I feel I can breathe when I talk to him. Just one night... knowing he's by my side is enough to calm me. Thankfully, Sheldon didn't refuse me and accepted.*

*As I write these lines, I still feel stressfull. If a shadow were to pass under the door, my heart might stop beating. I'm scared, but I can't tell anyone. It's even hard to write it in my own diary. But if Sheldon stays with me tonight, perhaps my fears will be proven wrong. Maybe tomorrow, there will be a new beginning... or maybe not.*

*Astrid''*

*(LUKE panics and starts rubbing his face. He speaks to himself.)*

LUKE: This crazy girl went to her death willingly, and I couldn't do anything! Damn it! At least I'll be cleared of the crime, and I'll send that bastard to prison. Now I've got proof. This changes everything. But Astrid... Astrid, forgive me. I... I couldn't protect you. I'm so... so sorry. Damn it! *(kicking the door)* Open! I'm begging you, open!

*(But it's not enough. The door won't open. LUKE helplessly falls to the ground and sits there. Meanwhile, ASTRID, watching him, quickly passes through the door and heads upstairs.)*

## **Scene 12**

*(ASTRID has gone upstairs, and her head starts throbbing. This is actually a sign that the time of death is near. Even as a ghost, she's almost unable to walk. Swaying from side to side she struggles to maintain her balance while trying to make her way to her room. The occurrence of death is a necessity for the cycle, and death cannot be altered, but she can create time before the evidence is lost. She quickly staggers toward the room, and when she finally arrives, she tries to push a vase in front of the door with her remaining strength. She succeeds. After a loud crash in front of the door, she hears ASTRID'S voice from inside and shortly after, SHELDON opens the door and steps out. This gives her more time.)*

ASTRID (*to herself*): Yes! I did it. This will make Sheldon uneasy for a while. That changes the clock's timing. Now, my goal is to use Sheldon's presence in this room to search his room and find Luke's key. Yes, he can't see me, but since I can't take the key myself, I'll need to sneak someone into the room. But who can I find at this hour to sneak in and then get Luke out without raising suspicion? (*as she starts pacing, thinking*)

(*Just then, ASTRID detects ALBERTA, holding a candle and quietly searching for LUKE.*)

ASTRID: (*to herself*) Thank God! Alberta. And she's looking for Luke. Two birds with one stone! Alright, now I need to sneak her into Sheldon's room without anyone seeing. I still have some strength left since I bought time. I can use this. (*She begins gathering some of the broken vase pieces and throws a small one towards Alberta.*)

ALBERTA: (*with a faint, startled scream*) Oh God! What was that?

(*Later, ASTRID throws a few more pieces towards Sheldon's room.*)

ALBERTA: (*in fear*) I think this kingdom is driving me mad! Suddenly, broken vase pieces are flying at me, almost telling me where to go. (*rubbing her eyes in disbelief and whispering to herself.*) If this is all Luke's doing, I swear I'll kill him!

(*Still fearful, ALBERTA begins to look around as if sensing that another piece is about to come. At that moment, ASTRID continues throwing the remaining pieces. In the end, she manages to guide ALBERTA to SHELDON'S room.*)

ALBERTA: This has to be a joke! What am I even doing in front of this disgusting child's room? This nonsense! I'm leaving. I think I'm going insane.

(*ALBERTA is about to leave, but just as she's about to go, ASTRID opens the door. Seeing the door open by itself, ALBERTA gets scared and, realizing she has no other choice, steps inside.*)

### **Scene 13**

*(The room is very gloomy. Everywhere, there are parchment papers, melted candles, red velvet curtains, and tables covered in notebooks. The old, rustic furniture fills the room, which is almost entirely decorated in red. ALBERTA, looking around, is surprised.)*

ALBERTA: What is this room? It's like a battlefield. Hey! I'm talking to you. Whoever brought me here, can you help me out? Oh God! I'm talking to myself now. How am I even believing in this nonsense? You protect me.

*(ASTRID immediately starts searching the room, and in the end, ALBERTA, overcome by curiosity, joins in without seeing any sign. After searching inside the bed and the drawers of the old reddish-brown dresser, they finally turn to the messy table. Although they can't see each other, this pair works in perfect harmony, as if they've both set their sights on the same places. In the end, while searching through the books on the table, ALBERTA opens one and notices that the inside of the book is hollow, and she takes the key inside.)*

ALBERTA: Aha! Let's see what's here.

*(ALBERTA starts examining the key by turning it around. Taking a candle, she carefully inspects the key on the table and notices the markings "-3, 21 L". Realizing that this key is for a door on the 3rd floor, ALBERTA quickly heads towards the door to leave the room.)*

ASTRID: Oh my God! We found the key! Now Luke can be cleared, and Sheldon will rot in prison forever.

*(Just as ASTRID celebrates this thought and moves towards the door, the sharpness of her headache increases. This indicates that time is running out, and she could die at any moment. So, despite staggering, she rushes out of the room and starts following ALBERTA.)*

## **Scene 14**

*(The next day comes, and the castle is filled with deep noise. Everyone is mourning. PRIMROSE moves here and there, sobbing, while ADELA is crying*

*heavily, clinging to SHELDON. LUKE watches all this from afar, clenching his teeth, praying for the right moment to come. The King has placed black flags outside the castle, and after his speech from the balcony, he is heading back inside. At that moment, DETECTIVE NICHOLAS enters the main room of the castle, accompanied by servants. DETECTIVE NICHOLAS scans the family members, then looks at Luke with a slight smile and gives him a vague greeting. He then turns to the rest of the family, greets them, and begins to speak.)*

DETECTIVE NICHOLAS: First of all, I would like to express my condolences, Your Majesty, Your Queen, and esteemed family members. While seeing all of you together today, I would like to bring the murderer to light.

PRIMROSE:(*in a shocked tone*) B-but how? You've been here for just 3 hours, and you're saying you found my daughter's killer? How is that possible?

JONATHAN: Queen, please, let Mr. Nicholas continue. (*gesturing with his hand toward NICHOLAS, signaling him to proceed*)

DETECTIVE NICHOLAS: Thank you, Your Majesty. Your Majesty King Jonathan, Queen Primrose, and esteemed family members, I know you are all in deep mourning, but I must speak in order to reveal the truth. The killer of Astrid is in this room. However, this murder was not a simple act of rage or a coincidence. We are dealing with a meticulously planned assassination. This murder is the result of a much deeper betrayal than it appears. As I began piecing together the details to solve Astrid's death, every clue led me to the same person: SHELDON.

Astrid's diary... The truth can never be fully erased. Astrid was worried for her life. She feared she would fall victim to an assassination, and she wrote in her diary that she would spend the night with SHELDON. She trusted him. But that trust, unfortunately, led to her demise. Sheldon knew very well that Astrid wrote in her diary every night. To cover his tracks, after the murder, he tried to hide the diary. Perhaps he thought he could find some clue in it after Astrid's death. But what Sheldon didn't know was that this diary had already written the truth. And here, fate thwarted his plan. Luke, you were in the wrong place at the wrong time

that night. In the room where Sheldon tried to hide the diary... you were locked in. Everyone knows that the key to that room fell on the floor during dinner, and you noticed it and put it in your pocket. Perhaps staying there was a trap... But look at the irony of fate: it was there that you found Astrid's diary. When you read it, you were the first to realize the truth.

*(NICHOLAS steps forward and looks directly at Sheldon.)*

DETECTIVE NICHOLAS: Sheldon, you offered Astrid to stay with you that night. You gained her trust. But you did it to eliminate her. Just before Astrid's death, you found this diary and hid it because anything that came to light could have betrayed you. But Luke being locked in the room ruined your plan. Now, what do we have? These words, written in Astrid's own handwriting:

*'Sheldon will stay with me tonight. If anything happens, at least I'll feel safe.'*

These words from Astrid confirm her suspicions. And this diary... This diary was your biggest mistake. Here's the proof that Astrid was killed by someone she trusted! We know what happened that night, Sheldon. You took the needle from your father's room and murdered Astrid!

*(Everyone in the room holds their breath. Sheldon's face has drained of color. ADELA screams, PRIMROSE looks at JONATHAN in shock.)*

DETECTIVE NICHOLAS: Luke being locked in the room and finding this diary was a stroke of luck. If anyone else had been in that room that night, maybe this murder would have remained unsolved forever, just as Sheldon wanted. But the truth has come out. Sheldon, you are a murderer! You exploited Astrid's trust and killed your own sister. And now, the kingdom's justice awaits you!

*(SHELDON suddenly stands up, but the guards grab him by the arm. Shock and anger are visible on everyone's faces. LUKE takes a deep breath and watches from the corner. PRIMROSE hugs ADELA, sobbing. JONATHAN closes his eyes, his face filled with sorrow.)*

DETECTIVE NICHOLAS: This murder is now solved. Justice will be served. With your permission, My King. *(He bows before turning to leave, but SHELDON screams after him.)*

SHELDON: *(shouting)* Enough! Enough! Everyone shut up! How stupid are you all! You don't even understand what you're doing! All I did was do a kindness for Astrid! My only crime was telling her I'd spend the night with her. But that's it! Knowing this will be the end for all of you! I did it! Yes! I killed her! I killed Astrid because she... She shouldn't have been heir to the throne! I deserved it! It was mine! Let everyone call, let everyone know! I did what none of you had the courage to do! She wasn't the person the people saw! She didn't deserve the throne.

*(SHELDON continues shouting, trying to push away the guards pulling at his arm. Just then, King JONATHAN approaches and slaps him hard across the face.)*

JONATHAN: *(his heart heavy with anger and deep sorrow)* You, you are not my son! You can't be! A monster like you cannot be my son. How could you do this! How! You scoundrel! Guards, take him to the dungeon! Immediately!

*(The guards walk towards SHELDON to take him to the dungeon, and at that moment, everyone in the family begins to cry. ADELA sobs, repeating that they didn't deserve this. PRIMROSE and ALBERTA, though trying to stay strong, cannot stop the tears from flowing. Meanwhile, LUKE approaches the throne, holding ASTRID'S photo, and places it on the throne. He begins to speak.)*

LUKE:*(with a bitter smile)* Astrid... I'm sorry I couldn't protect you. I tried everything, but I couldn't. *(A tear falls from his eye as he continues, with a slight chuckle.)* Of course, your stubbornness had something to do with it too. My brother, your blood will not be forgotten. The guilty one has been found. You should be here, mocking this ridiculous throne, making a funny joke... but well. We don't always get what we want. I don't know who will sit on the throne... I don't really care. But whoever it is, your name will always live on, my sister. I may not have been a good brother. Maybe I broke all your trust, but from now on, I

will look after Adela like my own eyes, and I will make things right, even without you.

*(While LUKE speaks, ADELA approaches from behind. She, sobbing, steps between LUKE'S arms, holding a candle, and together they pray for ASTRID. At that moment, a drop of wax falls onto ADELA'S hand, and as she looks at it in pain, she notices a scratched message on the floor. She is sure it wasn't there before. The word "smile" is written on the floor. ADELA shows the writing to LUKE, smiling as she speaks.)*

ADELA: *(crying and laughing)* Look at this! She's even thinking of us here. Isn't this a sign, Astrid? *(She smiles and looks upward)* We love you.

LUKE:*(smiling sadly)* Hey, Astrid! For the past couple of days, I haven't been sure about the places of your things. Thanks for your help, but I'm suspicious of the things you took.

*(After these words, LUKE laughs, thinking it's a joke, but in reality, ASTRID had helped him herself. The ghost of ASTRID, almost unwittingly, thanks him and then they both step away from the throne, returning to their families.)*

**THE END**