

DUNGEON PLAYby CHARLOTTE AHLIN

*A dungeon.*

*A skeleton is chained to the wall.*

*Ulric sits. Ed is doing yoga.*

ULRIC

D'you know what I was thinking?

ED

Go on.

ULRIC

I was thinking I've got to work harder on self-love.

ED

Right.

ULRIC

It's like, yes, right, I'm in a dungeon--

ED

Me too.

ULRIC

Right, we're in a dungeon, yeah--but the dungeon's not in us, right?

ED

Wouldn't fit.

ULRIC

Well no, but I mean--is the dungeon the real problem?

ED

(cautiously)  
...no?

ULRIC

Or is it our *perspective* on ourselves in the dungeon?

ED

That one!

ULRIC

Right. I mean, if we were kings--

(CONTINUED)

ED

We're not kings.

ULRIC

No, but if we were--

ED

Of different kingdoms or the same kingdom?

ULRIC

Doesn't matter--

ED

Or of neighboring principalities within the same larger nation-state?

ULRIC

That one. If we were kings, we might feel trapped by our--y'know, all our kingly duties, and turn our anger inward. Same as dungeon.

ED

Right.

ULRIC

You see?

ED

Would be cleaner, if we were kings.

ULRIC

Yes, well--

ED

Would have nicer food.

ULRIC

Yes, but we'd start feeling hemmed in by all the burdens of wealth and power, right, and it would start to feel like a sort of a dungeon of the mind. You see?

ED

Right.

*Ed finishes his yoga. There is the sound of clanking and muffled screaming from without.*

ULRIC

So we'll love ourselves, then?

ED

Alright.

(CONTINUED)

*A woman is hurled into the dungeon. The door clangs shut behind her.*

*She scrambles to her feet, screaming.*

ELSPETH

Fucking bastards! Let me out! LET ME OUT!

ULRIC

Hello.

ELSPETH

FUCK YOU!

ULRIC

I'm Ulric, and this is Ed.

ED

Hello.

ELSPETH

Hi.

ULRIC

Do you have a name?

ELSPETH

Yes, but it's Elspeth. How do we get out of here?

*Ulric and Ed look at each other and laugh.*

ULRIC

First time in dungeon?

ELSPETH

Yes.

ULRIC

There is no "out."

ED

Well there is, but not as it applies to us going there.

ELSPETH

No. No, there--there must be something we can do.

ULRIC

We could play a game?

ED

Like "Guess What I'm Thinking"?

ULRIC

Yes! Ed, guess what I'm thinking.

ED

Ah... plague?

ULRIC

No! Plague rat.

ED

I lose.

ELSPETH

I need to get out.

*Elspeth begins searching for an exit.*

ULRIC

It's all about finding the fun within the dungeon.

ED

*Finding* the fun.

ELSPETH

No. I just need to get out.

ED

What did you do to get in?

ELSPETH

Nothing.

ULRIC

They wouldn't put you in here for nothing.

ED

No. For example, we're both terrible criminals.

ULRIC

Terrible.

ELSPETH

What did you do?

ULRIC

Ah...

ED

Hmm...

ED

Do you remember, Ulric?

(CONTINUED)

ULRIC

Well... it was a long time ago... but it must have been terrible, because we're here in this terrible dungeon.

ED

Yes! That was it.

ULRIC

Which means you're a terrible criminal, too.

ELSPETH

No. I stand accused of witchcraft.

ULRIC

You're a witch?

ELSPETH

No.

ED

That's what a witch would say.

ELSPETH

I'm not a witch.

ULRIC

They wouldn't put you in dungeon for not being a witch.

ED

I don't think I feel comfortable sharing our dungeon with a witch.

ELSPETH

I'm not a witch.

ED

Being trapped with a witch isn't self-love.

ULRIC

It's alright, Ed--we just need her to prove she's not a witch.

ED

Oh, alright then.

*They look at Elspeth expectantly.*

ELSPETH

I can't prove what I'm not!

ED

You could drown.

(CONTINUED)

ULRIC

That's right! Witches can't drown.

ELSPETH

There's no water.

ED

Ah.

ULRIC

You could recite scripture from the holy book without bursting into flames.

ELSPETH

I can't read.

ED

Witch! Witch!

ULRIC

There's only one thing for it, then... you've got to turn one of us into a goat.

ELSPETH

I can't.

ULRIC

You've got to.

ELSPETH

I can't!

ED

Witch!

ULRIC

I'm afraid it's the only way to maintain a comfortable environment for the majority. If you don't, we'll have to subdue you using our terrible criminal capabilities.

ELSPETH

You're gonna make me turn you into a goat?

ULRIC

Or Ed.

ED

Hang on--

ULRIC

It's the only reasonable option.

(CONTINUED)

ELSPETH

Alright. I'll try.

*Elsbeth tries.*

ELSPETH

There.

ED

(uncertainly)

I don't feel like a goat. 'Least, no more than usual.

ELSPETH

You see?

ULRIC

Aye. But this could be one of her demonic tricks.

ELSPETH

It isn't! I'm not a witch, I promise.

ULRIC

Probably best to subdue you, just to be safe.

ED

We could ask Cedric?

ULRIC

We can't ask Cedric, Ed.

ED

Oh, that's right.

ELSPETH

Cedric?

ULRIC

Our fellow dungeon companion. He's... late.

*He gestures to the skeleton.*

ED

Wasn't particularly punctual before, neither.

*Elsbeth gingerly inspects the skeleton.*

ED

You would've liked Cedric. Was always talking about trying to get out of the dungeon.

ULRIC

Well, that was before we'd decided to love ourselves.

(CONTINUED)

ED

Right, of course.

ELSPETH

What's this?

*She pulls a key out of the skull.*

ED

Witch! Witch!

ELSPETH

No, it was just in there. It's... a key.

ULRIC

Give it here.

ELSPETH

No! We should try it on the door!

*Ulric snatches the key from her.*

ULRIC

Cedric must've choked trying to swallow it.

ED

(emotional)

That's so Cedric.

ULRIC

Must've got it off a guard during torture hour.

ELSPETH

Torture hour?

ED

He did go quiet at the end there.

ELSPETH

Give it back!

ULRIC

I can't disrespect Cedric's memory by giving his death key to a witch.

ELSPETH

I'm not a witch!

ULRIC

We'd best throw it in the dung bucket, or we'll be in trouble. Can't have keys in dungeon.

(CONTINUED)



ELSPETH

Please, you mustn't--

ED

It killed Cedric!

ELSPETH

NO!

*Elspeth snaps her fingers, and suddenly she has the key. Ulric and Ed draw back in horror. She ignores them, and tries the key on the door. There is a triumphant clicking sound.*

ED

(whispered)

Witch.

ELSPETH

It works! Come on--the key works. It works!

*She turns back to Ulric and Ed.*

ELSPETH

The door is open, we can go out. Quickly!

*Ulric and Ed stay where they are.*

ELSPETH

Come on!

*They don't move. Elspeth runs, taking the key. The door clangs shut behind her.*

ULRIC

Might've been guards out there.

ED

More witches, maybe.

ULRIC

Would've found something else to make us unhappy.

ED

Right--too right.

*A beat.*

ULRIC

I feel more loved already.

*Blackout.*