

Ballgown Bitches

by  
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CHARACTER NAME	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	AGE	GENDER
Fairy	Nervous and tired	Any	Any
Unicorn	Dutiful and righteous	Any	Any
Mermaid	Intelligent and angry	Any	Any

#### SETTING

The border between 3 magical realms

Costuming note: The characters may be made to look as much or as little like these magical creatures as necessary. A unicorn headband is as true-to-text a design choice as a prosthetic horn.

FAIRY stalks across the stage, each of their steps accompanied by a soft tinkle of bells. Their movements are cautious, but not stealthy.

A sound rises over their steps: hoofbeats. Fairy flinches, but doesn't leave, as UNICORN steps onto the stage. Unicorn moves with the quiet menace of someone with a knife built into their body.

UNICORN

You're a long way from the border.

Unicorn prepares to run Fairy through with their horn.

FAIRY

Please! Please don't! If I could stay away, I would. I've come to meet with the ambassador of your people about a matter of great urgency. We need your help.

UNICORN

You should have told us through a spell, or a crystal ball. It's archaic, but we do still check for smoke signals. You know as well as I do what we do to messengers.

FAIRY

I couldn't. They're watching, all of it, the magic, the crystals, the fires. Please, listen.

UNICORN

Who's watching?

FAIRY

The princesses.

UNICORN

You've broken the treaty for those flouncing fools? The fairies made their deal with the princesses generations ago. Don't come fluttering to us because you're just now realizing it was a bad one.

FAIRY

We didn't know how bad it could get. They started granting wishes.

UNICORN

(Oh shit, holy fuck, please god, no.)

How?

FAIRY

No one knows, but they're not going to stop. I've come to seek aid from the unicorns. Will you tell them to help me?

Fairy offers their hand, Unicorn shakes it.

FAIRY

You must now ask something from me, to make it a fair deal. I will grant you anything in my power.

UNICORN

I ask that my horn may never be dulled.

FAIRY

The deal is made.

UNICORN

The deal is made. Though, if the princesses are as powerful as you say, my people will not be enough. Anyone can see how they've influenced you.

FAIRY

Influenced us?

UNICORN

Where are your claws, your teeth? Your people used to rend flesh from bone, to lurk in the trees and whisper in the shadows. Our elders taught us to heed your every word, lest we lose ourselves in a deal. And now? Look at yourself. You sparkle. You can fit in the palm of my hand. They put bells in your step! Wherever you go, you announce the presence of a fairy.

Fairy stares at their hands, traces their teeth with their tongue.

FAIRY

I... I hadn't even noticed.

Unicorn softens and takes Fairy's hand.

UNICORN

I know who we need.

Unicorn, still holding Fairy's hand, leads them across the stage. As they speak, the rustle of the woods gives way to the sound of waves.

FAIRY

I wish you could have seen me how I was before. I could steal the breath right out of your chest.

UNICORN

I know what you mean. We've been changed too. We have to sharpen our horns now to pierce anything. Without your help, I might have filed it down to nothing. They would have made me into a horse.

FAIRY

What I miss most is the quiet. I never knew until you pointed it out, how much I hated these bells.

They arrive at the shore.

FAIRY

Your secret reinforcements are the people of the sea?

UNICORN

Sea dwellers were instrumental in the territory wars. They have the magic to survey every corner of the realm. They've changed too. Like us. They're not even called the people of the sea anymore.

As the two speak, MERMAID rises from the ocean, unnoticed.

FAIRY

What are they called?

MERMAID

Mermaids.

The travelers jump back.

MERMAID

Is that a convenient enough title for you? Or shall we have to negotiate it down to one syllable?

FAIRY

What have they done? What did they do to you?

MERMAID

I thought fairies were supposed to be careful with their words.

Beat.

FAIRY

I apologize... I was startled.

MERMAID

(God, you're an idiot.)

There's that fairy diplomacy.

Several more beats. Fairy takes a jingling step forward, hand outstretched, as if to soothe, but Unicorn stops them.

UNICORN

We've come-

MERMAID

To send us to war for you. We know. The mermaids wish you all the best, but kindly decline the offer. You've broken the treaty by coming here, and more importantly, we'd rather be driven mad upon the rocks than lift a tail to help you selfish hollow-shells, so I think we can call this one a solid... no. Have a nice ride back!

FAIRY

Wait a moment, I know in the past our peoples have fought, but there is a bigger threat at hand here! The Princesses can grant wishes.

Beat.

MERMAID

So?

UNICORN

You're not worried that the princesses will take your wishes?

MERMAID

Mermaids don't grant wishes. We use our magic to watch and listen, as the treaty dictates. You land dwellers can carry on with your wars, squabbling over your acres and plots and magic. You can't ask us to fight for a world you've taken every opportunity to keep us out of.

FAIRY

So you won't even try to help us?

MERMAID

No. We won't. Why do you assume that if you continue asking me to help, I'll wise up and realize the mermaids owe you something? Honestly, I hope the princesses waste every one of your wishes on moving furniture and getting snacks.

Fairy wades into the water with tinkling steps, and with a weak hand, slaps Mermaid.

FAIRY

You have no idea how important the wishes are, how powerful! You're sending the dream realm to its ruin--

Mermaid reaches out and grabs Fairy by the throat, Fairy struggles against their grasp, but is too weak to fully escape it. Every movement they make is accompanied by the pathetic jingle of bells.

MERMAID

How could I know about granted wishes? How?

UNICORN

Enough. You're killing them.

Mermaid relishes the choke for a few moments longer, staring at the suffocating Fairy.

Then Fairy raises a hand into the air, closes it slowly into a fist, and pulls the air out of Mermaid's chest. When Mermaid stops holding Fairy to clutch at their own throat, Fairy lets the air go, and both of them collapse to the ground, heaving. Fairy stares at their hands, they are different now, wilder. There is a little more danger in them than there was before.

UNICORN

Well. This is a fine mess.

(to Fairy)

You should know better than to go for a Mermaid's throat.

Fairy does not look up.

FAIRY

They went for mine first.

UNICORN

Was it not you that struck the first blow?

FAIRY

It came back.

MERMAID

What?

FAIRY

I stole the air. Right out of your chest.

MERMAID

What does that have to do with anything?

FAIRY

How easy it would be to kill a princess now... as easy as breathing.. not breathing.

MERMAID

(to Unicorn)

Is this as creepy for you as it is for me?



## UNICORN

The princesses have been wishing away anything that makes us fearsome or dangerous. Wishing us useless. This power... it returned.

## FAIRY

(strange, mocking, singsong)

They changed your name. You're not a person of the sea anymore, you're not a person anymore. You're just a mermaid.

Unicorn realizes Fairy is casting a spell.

## UNICORN

Enough.

## FAIRY

I felt your hands as they wrapped around my throat. Such sweet, feather-light hands. No roughness at all.

## MERMAID

(entranced, furious)

Do you think I like being this? My scales are all gone, there's whites in my eyes now. My skin is so soft it hurts.

## FAIRY

Don't you hate princesses?

## MERMAID

I do. I hate fairies and I hate unicorns, but those ballgown bitches are the worst of all. At least you can cast spells, princesses get their power by stealing. Oh, I have power because I wear a fancy hat, which I only have because my father wore a fancy hat, which he only had because God said he should!

## FAIRY

Don't you want revenge?

## MERMAID

Of course I do!

FAIRY

Then-

Unicorn steps between them.

UNICORN

Stop it! We will have their help honestly or not at all!

MERMAID

(Snapping out of it.)

I want revenge for a lot of things. That doesn't mean I'm going to risk my life, the lives of my people to get it.

FAIRY

Your people won't go in alone. You'll have the unicorns, the fairies.

UNICORN

Fairy, you mustn't do this.

FAIRY

(to Unicorn)

Why? You can't tell me it's not worth it. Flout me if you want, be content as a common workhorse, but I won't live like this. Jangling with every step I take, never again to be quiet. What do you say, Mermaid?

MERMAID

It's a deal I would take.

FAIRY

Very well.

Fairy steps forward into the waves, bells in their steps, hand extended in a handshake. Mermaid accepts.

FAIRY

Down with the ballgown bitches.

Mermaid writhes. All at once, they too are dangerous and wild.

Fairy stares at Mermaid, who is blinking the softness out of their eyes. Mermaid snaps out of it fully and snatches their hand back.

UNICORN

What have you done?

FAIRY

I granted a wish.

MERMAID

(A little impressed)

That was a dirty trick.

Fairy stops, looks at Unicorn, and realizes what they've done. They snap out of it too, overcome with regret. Part of the wildness leaves them.

FAIRY

Yes. It was. I'm sorry.

UNICORN

You get to ask for something. It's not a fair deal otherwise.

FAIRY

That's true. Ask something of me. Anything in my power, I will grant.

MERMAID

Anything?

FAIRY

Anything in my power, I will grant.

MERMAID

Very well. I want to finish what I've started. When the battle is done, we will return to this beach, and I will cut the air out of your throat.

UNICORN

That doesn't sound fair-

Mermaid and Fairy turn to Unicorn and the weight of their combined stares makes Unicorn fall silent.

FAIRY

The deal is made.

MERMAID

The deal is made.

Mermaid slips back down into the sea.

Unicorn begins to move offstage, but stops to look at Fairy. Fairy meets their gaze and begins to say something, an apology, maybe a defense. Unicorn leaves before Fairy can say anything.

Fairy looks around at the empty stage and sees that there's nothing more to be done. They walk offstage too, the jingle of their bell ringing louder and louder. Fairy's bells are soon joined by more and more bells, layering over each other. The bells are joined by hooves, thundering over the ground, roaring ocean waves, and finally, high, delicate screams.

The sound of the battle rages on offstage. Something rolls onstage before clattering to the ground. A bloodied tiara.