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### **Freesia**

Abby Burlison

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# FREESIA

By Abby Burlison

*"A ONE ACT  
PLAY THAT  
WILL WHISK  
YOU AWAY ON  
A PIRATE  
ADVENTURE!"*



## Characters

- MARLOWE: 21-25. Female. The high-energy first mate of the *Siren Song*. Always has a joke in her back pocket.
- SOLEIL: 21-25. Male. Cool-headed cartographer of the *Golden Jewel*. Well-educated and detail-oriented.
- THEODRAH: 21-25. Female. Lookout of the *Golden Jewel*. Silent but deadly. Hint of a Scottish accent.
- RYCROW: 21-25. Male. Wandering musician. Skilled with the fiddle. Can make a friend wherever he goes.
- KRIKORIAN: 75-80. Male. Seasoned captain of the *Siren Song*. Gruff but friendly. The *Siren Song* is his lifeblood.
- LATCHELL: 25-30. Male. Second mate of the *Siren Song*. Highly intelligent and strategic.
- MAXRIE: 21-25. Female. Close friend of Soleil and advisor to the King. Serious but likes to have fun.
- SAILORS: 21-40. Any. Various crew members of the *Siren Song* and *Golden Jewel*.
- MERCHANTS: 30-40. Any. Various merchants of the market. Double as GUARDS of the hotel in Scene 4 and the King's SOLDIERS in Scene 6.

## Pronunciation Notes

Theodrah: THEE-uh-druh  
Bortana: bore-TAHN-uh  
Malden: MALL-din  
Stamhead: STAM-head  
Rifta: RIFT-uh  
Wilrich: WILL-rick

Scene 1

SETTING:                    *We find ourselves at the port of Bortana on the island of Malden. Merchants sell their wares and ships dock for repair. The townsfolk avoid intimidating crews who crowd the taverns after a long sea journey. The pirate sloop, the Siren Song, has just docked after a month at sea. The crew is eager to relax, grab a drink, and check into the nearest inn (in any order they see fit). In darkness we hear:*

BOATSWAIN

Bring in the sails! Heave to port! All hands on deck, you landlubbers!

*(Lights up. Stage right, we see the bow of the Siren Song. Stage left is the port market. Both are full of activity.)*

MARLOWE

That's right, men! Heave to port, or you'll walk the plank!

*(MARLOWE, first mate, laughs as overlooks the market with anticipation.)*

KRIKORIAN

Marlowe! Get down from there. For the last time, go tend to this "business" you've been harping on for the past month.

MARLOWE

I'm going, I'm going! I'll be back in time for dinner, captain!

*(They share a laugh as MARLOWE descends from the prow and down the exit plank onto solid ground. As she does this, SOLEIL has entered from stage left and stopped behind MARLOWE.)*

MARLOWE

Now, where is he...

SOLEIL

Looking for me, are you?

MARLOWE

What—! Oh, it's you.

SOLEIL

I'm disappointed. I thought you'd be happier to see me.

*(MARLOWE laughs and punches SOLEIL's arm as the initial tension breaks.)*

MARLOWE

I am happy to see you! I just didn't expect a surprise attack so soon.

SOLEIL

Perhaps your reflexes are dulled from being away for so long.

MARLOWE

*(Rolling her eyes)* It's nice to see you too, pretty boy. Come on! I'm ready to stretch my legs.

SOLEIL

Lead the way, then.

MARLOWE

Where should we stop first? Food stalls, weaponry, trinkets?

SOLEIL

I need to restock my supply of paper and ink for my maps.

MARLOWE

Say no more.

*(The pair cross stage left to the market. It is buzzing with activity: stalls lined up with merchants ready to sell their wares. MARLOWE spots a stationery stall and runs up to it.)*

SOLEIL

Perfect. Hello! Two rolls of your finest parchment, please. And one jar of ink.

MERCHANT #1

Yes, sir. That will be 5 silver pieces.

SOLEIL

*(Handing them the coins)* Here you are. Thank you.

MARLOWE

Your maps sure can be expensive.

SOLEIL

Maybe so, but it's an expense I tolerate for my passion.

MARLOWE

How poetic of you.

SOLEIL

This is my normal way of speaking.

MARLOWE

*(Chuckling)* Yeah, I know.

SOLEIL

Well-

MERCHANT #2

Flowers! Come get your flowers! A lovely variety of freesia suited for any occasion!

*(A MERCHANT crosses stage right, pushing a small cart full of freesia flowers. They only stop to nod at the two pirates before exiting. At the same time, a short woman has begun to approach behind the cart and stands behind SOLEIL.)*

MARLOWE

Need any freesia for your maps?

SOLEIL

No. Flower pressing isn't a part of the cartography process.

MARLOWE

Well, it would make them a lot prettier- I'm sorry, but... there's someone behind you.

SOLEIL

Oh, that's Theodrah.

MARLOWE

Nice to meet you!

*(Silence.)*

SOLEIL

She's the lookout on our ship.

MARLOWE

Any friend of Soleil's is a friend of mine.

*(MARLOWE extends her hand for THEODRAH to shake. She does not. More silence.)*

MARLOWE (cont.)

A woman of few words, huh?

THEODRAH

Aye.

MARLOWE

Good to know. How long have you been on the *Golden Jewel*?

THEODRAH

Two years.

MARLOWE

Impressive! It's good to see that Soleil has more friends than just me.

SOLEIL

I would like it known that I have numerous social connections-  
(*THEODRAH exits.*)

MARLOWE

Well, where's our next stop? Theodrah, why don't- Oh. She's gone.

SOLEIL

She tends to keep to herself when off duty. And... on duty.

MARLOWE

Speaking of, when do you ship out again?

SOLEIL

Not for a while. Why do you ask?

MARLOWE

Why don't you come and see Captain Krikorian? I've been meaning to introduce you two.

SOLEIL

I would be honored.

MARLOWE

Then let's go!

*(The two make their way back to the Siren Song, where KRIKORIAN is laughing with LATCHELL, his second mate, and the crew.)*

KRIKORIAN

Latchell, I need you to supervise the men below deck. They're organizing some new cargo.

LATCHELL

Yes, sir. But may I ask why Marlowe isn't supervising them? That's usually her job.

KRIKORIAN

*(Laughing)* She's out handling some important business!

MARLOWE

Sorry, Latchell! I'll help you clean the cannons next week!

LATCHELL

It's no problem.

KRIKORIAN

Marlowe! I thought I told you to go find that boy you've been raving about. Really, I'm surprised you two haven't made anything official yet.

*(SOLEIL blushes briefly while LATCHELL scoffs under his breath.)*

MARLOWE

Captain! He's right here.

KRIKORIAN

Oh! My apologies. It's a pleasure to meet you...?

SOLEIL

Soleil, sir. It's an honor.

KRIKORIAN

What's your business here?

SOLEIL

My ship is stopping for some supplies and some rest. We've been out at sea for around four months now.

MARLOWE

Four months?

SOLEIL

We encountered a particularly ferocious sea monster and took on a lot of water. Our journey was difficult with having to dry the crew's clothes numerous times.

KRIKORIAN

You had to sail the Rifta Pass, didn't you? There's a simple fix. Hang the clothes on the lines and rigging. The wind will take care of the rest.

SOLEIL

Hm. I'll have to suggest that to my captain. Thank you, sir.

KRIKORIAN

Of course. And what ship would yours be?

SOLEIL

The *Golden Jewel*, sir.

KRIKORIAN

Aye, the King's pride and joy. I didn't know you royal seamen had time to rub shoulders with *sailors* like us. I'm sure His Majesty-

*(He pauses to spit.)*

-keeps you busy.



SOLEIL

That would be correct.

KRIKORIAN

Don't let me keep you two, then. Behave yourself, Marlowe.

MARLOWE

Aye, aye, sir. No promises.

*(KRIKORIAN, LATCHELL, and SAILORS exit.)*

SOLEIL

He seems very wise.

MARLOWE

Kirkorian was elected captain 30 years ago, and he loved it so much he never left. I've been with the *Siren Song* ever since I was a young girl.

SOLEIL

I respect his long years of service to you and his crew.

MARLOWE

Tell him that next time you see him!

SOLEIL

I will. Would you care to inspect the weapons at the market now, Miss Marlowe?

MARLOWE

I thought you'd never ask. And that's just Marlowe to you!

*(Blackout.)*

Scene 2

SETTING:                    *Aboard the Siren Song. Crew members complete their respective tasks. On one side we see KRIKORIAN's office, decorated with trophies from past excursions and a desk filled with scattered papers. It's simple but lived in. MARLOWE and SOLEIL enter, energized from their visit to the market.*

MARLOWE

12 gold pieces for a dagger! You'd think we were made of gold to pay that much.

SOLEIL

The engraving was quite impressive. But the metalwork was shoddy, at best.

MARLOWE

Exactly. Now, I promised Krikorian I'd be here for dinner. He's probably in his office.

*(MARLOWE crosses into KRIKORIAN's office, but he is not there.)*

SOLEIL

Should we wait for him elsewhere?

MARLOWE

No, he shouldn't be long. But hey, look at this! It's a souvenir that we... "liberated" from the Southern Isles.

*(On the shelf behind KIRKORIAN's desk, MARLOWE grabs an emerald. SOLEIL narrows his eyes at MARLOWE.)*

SOLEIL

Liberated, huh?

MARLOWE

Of course! That's the only way we know.

SOLEIL

Well, it's beautiful.

MARLOWE

I know. Latchell took it from the mayor when we... paid him a visit.

SOLEIL

When you attacked his home, I presume?

MARLOWE

When you put it that way...

*(Silent beat.)*

SOLEIL

Your captain's desk... He seems busy.

MARLOWE

Oh, Krikorian. He's always been like that. He says he knows where everything is. I call it "organized chaos."

SOLEIL

I've always been taught that a organized workspace leads to a better-

MARLOWE

*(Laughing)* It's fine, Sol.

*(As MARLOWE moves around the desk, a letter falls to the ground. SOLEIL picks it up and hands it to her.)*

MARLOWE

Thanks. Wait... is that the King's crest?

SOLEIL

Yes, it is.

MARLOWE

Why would Krikorian have a letter with the King's crest on it?

SOLEIL

A message about certain... pirating activities, perhaps?

MARLOWE

He's never gotten anything like that before. I don't think we've ever had contact with the King through the post. Only through cannons being fired at us from royal ships.

SOLEIL

It must be an important matter, then.

MARLOWE

The only time we would ever talk to the King would be looking down the barrel of a gun.

*(MARLOWE hesitantly opens the letter and stares at it for a few moments. She seems troubled.)*

SOLEIL

Is something the matter?

MARLOWE

Well, it's very dark in here. I've always told Krikorian to get another light, but he insists he can see. You know, I worry about his eyesight going since he's been getting older. But he won't listen. He says "I've got eyes like a hawk," which I really doubt-

*(SOLEIL realizes she can't read. He gently takes the note from MARLOWE and begins to read it aloud. She is surprised, then thankful. She doesn't speak.)*

SOLEIL

"To whom it may concern, I am writing to offer an opportunity that will benefit both of us as concerned parties. I am proposing a meeting at the Black Cat Tavern in Bortana for this 18th of June at 3 hours past midday. I expect your attendance. Signed, His Majesty the King."

MARLOWE

A meeting? With the King?

SOLEIL

That's what it seems like. But I doubt His Majesty will actually be in attendance. He will most likely send a representative in his stead.

MARLOWE

*(Pacing)* This must be some sort of joke by one of the night watchmen. They have a lot of time on their hands in the crow's nest.

SOLEIL

The seal seemed authentic. I've seen it in various correspondence with the Jewel. The crimson color of the wax is made from a dye only harvested from His Majesty's spice fields. It's incredibly rare.

MARLOWE

It can't be! Krikorian has never mentioned any meetings or communication with the King. He wouldn't betray us like that!

SOLEIL

Is there anyone else who would know about this letter?

MARLOWE

Maybe Latchell. He's my second mate, so he knows almost everything I do. But I doubt he'll have anything new to add.

SOLEIL

Then what do you propose?

MARLOWE

Just give me a second. I'm trying to think.

SOLEIL

Of course.

*(Beat.)*

MARLOWE

*(Sighing)* We'll take the letter to Latchell.

*(The two cross to the second level of the hull. LATCHELL stands in a storage area supervising a few SAILORS who are organizing supplies.)*

LATCHELL

Move those barrels to the corner! Keep them in groups of 3, please! I don't want to rearrange this later. Again.

MARLOWE

Or else I'll have to clean up after Latchell too!

*(The SAILORS laugh at MARLOWE's joke and give her a salute.)*

Latchell, I need to speak to you about a letter I found on Krikorian's desk.

LATCHELL

*(Laughing)* Which one? His desk is never organized, that's for sure.

MARLOWE

Well, this letter had the King's crest on the seal.

LATCHELL

Would you excuse me for one moment? Thank you.

*(To SAILORS:)*

Everyone above deck!

*(The SAILORS exit.)*

LATCHELL (cont.)

Now, the letter.

MARLOWE

Yeah, did you know about it?

LATCHELL

Oh, yes. But it was nothing significant. Just "His Majesty" threatening to bring down the ship for illegal activities.

MARLOWE

What? They're going to kill Krikorian at this meeting, Latchell!  
I think that's pretty significant!

LATCHELL

I'm joking! Our dear captain was simply hysterical when he first read it. It turns out that it was a joke some of the cooks had concocted on their break. I had it settled. And I shortened their break time.

MARLOWE

But the seal... It's authentic.

*(MARLOWE shows LATCHELL the letter.)*

LATCHELL

Do you see the ribbon below the King's motto? It's crooked. You really have to inspect the details; it's very easy to miss.

MARLOWE

*(Hesitantly)* Right.

LATCHELL

I'll see you above deck, Marlowe.

*(LATCHELL exits.)*

MARLOWE

See? It was a joke, just like I said. The crew's known for this kind of thing.

SOLEIL

Perhaps they are, but I'm not convinced. That seal was authentic, Marlowe. I've seen it enough times to know.

MARLOWE

Krikorian wouldn't just mutiny this ship.

SOLEIL

If His Majesty is corresponding with your captain, it could be an exciting opportunity. What if he's inviting your crew to be a legitimate part of his fleet? Then, perhaps, we could work together and not wait months on end to see each other-

MARLOWE

Legitimate? Hardly. The King doesn't want to deal with us "blithering scoundrels." I don't want to work for him and his gold-encrusted galleons that sail around just for show. There's no adventure in that.

SOLEIL

They carry precious cargo for the Empire-

MARLOWE

Do you hear what I'm saying, Sol? Krikorian would not join the King's ranks for all of the gold in the world.

SOLEIL

I understand. But do you want to let this go?

MARLOWE

What, in case it's real?

SOLEIL

Yes.

*(Beat. MARLOWE begins to pace.)*

SOLEIL

Marlowe?

MARLOWE

Look. I don't believe that Krikorian is plotting to do anything with the King. But I'll see for myself. As soon as I know Krikorian is innocent, I'm out.

SOLEIL

Are you sure?

MARLOWE

Yes. Let's leave before I change my mind.

SOLEIL

Alright, then. Maybe we should get some dinner first? It's getting late.

MARLOWE

Fine. I need some fresh air, anyway.

*(MARLOWE and SOLEIL exit.)*

*(Blackout.)*

Scene 3

SETTING:                    *The next day. The town square outside the Black Cat Tavern. Merchants hustle by to their stalls and attend to other business.*

MARLOWE

I still don't like this.

SOLEIL

It will be fine, Marlowe. Theodrah is the best woman for the job. They won't even know she's there. She has a talent for sneaking up on people.

MARLOWE

Yeah, I'm aware.

SOLEIL

So, no need to fret! She'll report back soon.

MARLOWE

Fine.

SOLEIL

It's alright to be worried. But if this turns out to be something good, you will laugh about it later.

MARLOWE

*(Sarcastically)* Have you ever laughed about anything?

SOLEIL

As a matter of fact, yes. Our boatswain is quite known for his jokes.

*(This lifts MARLOWE's spirits a little.)*

MARLOWE

Maybe I should meet him, then. We could even exchange some puns.

SOLEIL

Meet him? Well, yes, maybe. But he is awfully overbearing sometimes. Always bothering me about my maps. You wouldn't like him.

MARLOWE

He sounds like me.

SOLEIL

No, you two are quite different.

MARLOWE

How so?



SOLEIL

Well, he's a boatswain. And you're a first mate.

MARLOWE

Pretty similar roles, if you think about it.

SOLEIL

*(Searching)* He... has scurvy! Quite detestable, really.

MARLOWE

Right...

*(As MARLOWE studies his face, suspicious, THEODRAH has somehow appeared behind her. Be creative.)*

THEODRAH

Ready to report, Soleil.

MARLOWE

Son of a sea biscuit-! You've gotta stop doing that.

THEODRAH

Doing what?

MARLOWE

Never mind.

SOLEIL

Go ahead, Theodrah.

THEODRAH

Your captain and two advisors were there. Real aristocratic types.

MARLOWE

What did they say?

THEODRAH

I only heard part of their conversation. They mentioned a contract with your captain.

MARLOWE

Contract? What kind?

THEODRAH

Something about a "transfer of crew" between them. I couldn't make out much else.

SOLEIL

See, Marlowe? Your crew could be joining His Majesty's ranks! It would be a lot better pay, better working conditions-

MARLOWE

I don't care about any of that. This doesn't feel right to me.

SOLEIL

Did the advisors seem to threaten the captain at all?

THEODRAH

They tried. Hard to be threatening when you're covered in velvet and ruffles.

MARLOWE

Did they say anything about another meeting?

THEODRAH

If they did, I didn't hear it.

MARLOWE

We need more information. I will not let the King threaten us like this.

SOLEIL

Any ideas?

MARLOWE

I need to find Latchell again. If he knew about the letter, then maybe he knows something else.

SOLEIL

Where can we find him?

MARLOWE

We should try the *Siren Song* first.

*(As the three start to leave, LATCHELL enters, holding an envelope. He spots the group and calls out, waving.)*

LATCHELL

Marlowe... and company!

MARLOWE

Latchell! We were just looking for you.

LATCHELL

Well, you have me. Who are your friends? I recognize your suitor that you brought on the ship, but I never got his name.

MARLOWE

He's not my suitor.

SOLEIL

*(Awkward chuckle)* Soleil of the *Golden Jewel*, at your service. And this is my crewmate, Theodrah.

*(LATCHELL extends his hand for her to shake. She remains still.)*

LATCHELL

Well, it was a nice surprise running into you here.

MARLOWE

Actually, I had something I wanted to ask.

LATCHELL

Of course.

MARLOWE

Krikorian's letter from the King? We saw him go into the tavern like he was actually going to that meeting. Same time and everything.

LATCHELL

He told us he was just meeting some old friends.

MARLOWE

Us?

LATCHELL

He mentioned it when you were off exploring the market with...?

SOLEIL

Soleil.

LATCHELL

Right.

MARLOWE

And it had nothing to do with the King?

LATCHELL

Don't tell me you're falling for the cooks' pranks.

MARLOWE

No, of course not. I just know that Krikorian is getting older. Yesterday, I saw him almost put cannon oil in his rum.

LATCHELL

Our captain can surely take care of himself, Marlowe.

MARLOWE

I know, I just...

*(LATCHELL tucks the envelope in his pocket.)*

MARLOWE (cont.)

What's that?

LATCHELL

I'm sending a letter home to my mother. She worries, you know.

MARLOWE

She lives in Stamhead, right?

LATCHELL

Correct.

MARLOWE

Well, I'll let you get to the delivery office.

LATCHELL

Thank you. It was a pleasure meeting you two.

SOLEIL

The same to you.

*(LATCHELL bows and exits rather hurriedly.)*

THEODRAH

He could pass for one of those ruffled aristocrats.

*(The three share a small laugh. Beat.)*

MARLOWE

Maybe I'm overthinking all of this. Krikorian is just playing a joke on me.

SOLEIL

Perhaps. But what Theodrah heard... I find it hard to believe that this is all an elaborate prank.

MARLOWE

Krikorian never told me anything about this letter. Or the meeting. Why would he tell Latchell and not me, his first mate?

SOLEIL

I have a friend who is a close advisor to His Majesty. Perhaps she could give us some more clarity on the situation.

MARLOWE

She wouldn't mind a "blithering scoundrel" like myself?

SOLEIL

*(Laughing)* Of course not. Any friend of mine is a friend of hers.

MARLOWE

See, there's a laugh.

SOLEIL

I told you I'm perfectly capable.

MARLOWE

Fine. Let's pay her a visit.

SOLEIL

Right! She's currently in Stamhead on business.

MARLOWE

Let's get to packing.

*(The group exits as the lights fade down.)*

Scene 4

SETTING: The island of Wilrich. Our fearless band of sailors, MARLOWE, SOLEIL, and THEODRAH, find themselves in the capitol, Stamhead. Historic brick buildings tower above the wealthy townsfolk below. Split stage: one side is outside the King's hotel, the other inside of MAXRIE's office suite. SOLEIL pulls out an intricate sketch of the King's Hotel from his satchel.

SOLEIL

Welcome to Stamhead, Marlowe.

MARLOWE

It's... fancy.

SOLEIL

It's one of the oldest cities built on this island, dating back almost 200 years. Quite impressive.

MARLOWE

Yeah.

THEODRAH

All velvet and ruffles.

*(This gets a laugh from MARLOWE.)*

SOLEIL

And here we are at the Grand Hotel! This is where my friend is currently staying.

*(SOLEIL shows the drawing to MARLOWE.)*

MARLOWE

Did you draw that?

SOLEIL

Yes.

MARLOWE

It's beautiful.

SOLEIL

Thank you.

*(MARLOWE looks up at the hotel.)*

MARLOWE

It looks so... expensive.

SOLEIL

This is where His Majesty hosts ambassadors from other countries. Only the best for his guests.

MARLOWE

And you think they'd let me in?

SOLEIL

Of course. We're here on business, and Maxrie won't turn us away.

MARLOWE

If you say so.

*(The three attempt to cross the stage into MAXRIE's suite before being stopped by two GUARDS, who stare at MARLOWE suspiciously.)*

SOLEIL

It's all right, men. We're here to see Maxrie. Official Golden Jewel business.

*(The GUARDS nod and move out of the way. MARLOWE, SOLEIL, and THEODRAH enter into MAXRIE's office. Very clean but some evidence of disarray. It's been a busy day. MAXRIE, seated at her desk, doesn't look up when the group enters.)*

MAXRIE

Leave your paperwork in the corresponding bin, thank you.

SOLEIL

I'm afraid I don't have any paperwork.

*(MAXRIE now looks up, her deadpan expression transforming once she sees SOLEIL. She stands and crosses, initiating a tight hug. MARLOWE can't help but make a face of disgust.)*

MAXRIE

Soleil! What brings you here?

SOLEIL

Well, I have some business I thought you could help us with.

MAXRIE

Of course, anything for a friend!

MARLOWE

*(Under her breath)* Only a friend?

SOLEIL

Maxrie, this is Marlowe, a good friend of mine. This is Theodrah, one of my crewmates.

MAXRIE

A good friend, huh? A pleasure to meet you both.

*(MARLOWE extends her hand to shake MAXRIE's, but she dodges and keeps walking. SOLEIL chuckles awkwardly.)*

MARLOWE/THEODRAH

*(Deadpan)* You too.

MAXRIE

What can I help you with, Soleil?

SOLEIL

Oh! It's a matter of His Majesty's.

*(SOLEIL shows the letter to MAXRIE.)*

MAXRIE

I'm afraid I'm not allowed to discuss His Majesty's dealings like this.

SOLEIL

So he does deal with pirate ships?

MAXRIE

I didn't say that, but-

MARLOWE

Can you tell us anything, Maxrie? Please.

SOLEIL

I would consider it a great favor.

MAXRIE

A favor, huh? What kind?

SOLEIL

*(Obviously flustered)* Well, I'm not sure-

MAXRIE

I'll let you think about it. But I'm afraid I still can't say anything on His Majesty's behalf.

MARLOWE

Is there anything you can tell us?

MAXRIE

I'm sure your captain has his reasons for the letter. Pirates always have their reasons for betrayal.



MARLOWE

Krikorian wouldn't do that.

MAXRIE

Don't be so quick to assume anything.

*(One of the GUARDS enters, nodding to MAXRIE.)*

GUARD #1

Your presence is requested outside, ma'am.

MAXRIE

I'll be right there. Behave yourselves.

*(MAXRIE winks at SOLEIL before exiting.)*

MARLOWE

Quick, look in her desk!

SOLEIL

What? I'm not going to invade her privacy.

MARLOWE

That's literally what we came here to do!

*(MARLOWE rummages through MAXRIE's desk, pulling out files. SOLEIL reluctantly joins her and pulls out a paper from the pile labeled "Contract." He pauses for a moment as he reads.)*

MARLOWE

Did you find it?

*(SOLEIL is silent. MARLOWE takes the paper from SOLEIL. At the same time, MAXRIE enters.)*

MAXRIE

You pirates always stick your nose where it doesn't belong.

MARLOWE

Listen, lady-

MAXRIE

I wouldn't expect a lowlife like you to be literate, anyways.

SOLEIL

Maxrie-

MAXRIE

Whatever you think you saw, I highly suggest you forget it.

MARLOWE

I've had enough of you.

*(MARLOWE begins to approach MAXRIE, her fists clenched.)*

MAXRIE

Guards!

*(Before MARLOWE can throw a punch, three GUARDS enter and seize MARLOWE, SOLEIL, and THEODRAH. They are dragged back outside the hotel and thrown to the ground. GUARDS exit. SOLEIL rushes over to help MARLOWE up.)*

SOLEIL

Marlowe, are you alright?

MARLOWE

I can do it myself.

SOLEIL

I apologize for Maxrie. I had no idea that she would treat you that way.

MARLOWE

I tried to tell you that they wouldn't let someone like me in there. If you call someone like her a friend, then maybe I don't know you as well as I thought I did.

SOLEIL

Marlowe, I-

MARLOWE

Don't.

SOLEIL

I'm sorry about all of this, Marlowe. I thought she could help us.

MARLOWE

You work for the King, of course you would think that. Meanwhile, me and my crew are being sold to the people who are always trying to kill us.

SOLEIL

I only wanted to-

MARLOWE

I don't want to hear it, Soleil!

THEODRAH

I hear something.

MARLOWE

Hear what?!

*(Over the last couple of moments, the faint sound of a fiddle can be heard approaching. The three*

*go silent to listen as the sound grows louder and livelier. RYCROW, a traveling musician, enters. He calls out to a small group of children offstage.)*

RYCROW

Alright, little ones. Off you go!

*(He motions for them to run along before he turns to our sailors.)*

RYCROW

What's all this talk about killing? You're going to scare the children.

MARLOWE

What? Oh, sorry.

RYCROW

Quite alright.

MARLOWE

Who are you?

RYCROW

I'm Rycrow, traveling musician. And nanny, it seems.

*(RYCROW plays a short tune, a continuation of the one heard a moment ago. MARLOWE and SOLEIL listen while THEODRAH taps her foot to the beat. They're all a bit relaxed now.)*

RYCROW (cont.)

Enjoy my music, did you?

MARLOWE

Yeah, it was pretty lively.

THEODRAH

It was nice.

RYCROW

Why, thank you. Now, I don't mean to intrude, but I overheard a little scuffle between you all and those guards.

*(RYCROW gives the group an expectant look.)*

MARLOWE

We had a... disagreement with someone important.

RYCROW

I don't blame you. I try to stay far away from those important people. They don't enjoy my music, and they think that a

gathering of children could start a rebellion. Too much trouble.  
And too many ruffles.

*(THEODRAH smiles. This is a rare occasion.)*

THEODRAH

I couldn't agree more.

RYCROW

Well, you all look a little worse for wear. If I were you, I'd  
take a moment to stop and smell the flowers. It would do you a  
lot of good.

MARLOWE

Where?

*(RYCROW gestures to a freesia display against a  
shop building. They're in full bloom. MARLOWE  
picks one and smells it.)*

RYCROW

Blissful, isn't it?

MARLOWE

Yeah.

*(SOLEIL and THEODRAH take turns smelling the  
freesia as well.)*

SOLEIL

They smell like... strawberries.

THEODRAH

He's right.

RYCROW

Freesia. They're quite popular here for their sweet scent. And  
they make a lovely gift.

*(RYCROW picks a freesia flower and hands it to  
THEODRAH. She doesn't know what to do with it.  
So, she places it on the bow of RYCROW's fiddle.  
He laughs.)*

RYCROW (cont.)

See?

SOLEIL

It was very nice meeting you, Rycrow. We should be on our way  
now.

RYCROW

And where would that be?

MARLOWE

Bortana.

RYCROW

On Malden? That was going to be my next stop.

SOLEIL

Best of luck to you, then.

RYCROW

Goodbye then, travelers! It was a pleasure to meet you all.

*(RYCROW exits as he plays his fiddle.)*

MARLOWE (cont.)

Latchell said his mother was in Stamhead. Maybe we could visit her and get away from all these nobles.

SOLEIL

I think we've overstayed our welcome. We should go.

*(MARLOWE exits hurriedly ahead of SOLEIL and THEODRAH as the lights fade down.)*

Scene 5

SETTING: A small sloop on the Rifta Pass, a small body of water separating the islands of Malden and Wilrich. It is a well-traversed but monster-infested area for sailing. MARLOWE stands at the helm, while SOLEIL sits, drafting a map of Wilrich. THEODRAH stands not too far behind on the bow. There is a tension that hangs in the air.

SOLEIL

Have you ever steered a ship before, Marlowe?

MARLOWE

I'm first mate, Sol. Of course I have.

SOLEIL

Well, be cautious. These waters are known for frequent monster attacks. And I was trying to make a joke.

MARLOWE

*(Softening)* Leave that to me next time, pretty boy.

SOLEIL

It was worth an attempt.

*(THEODRAH stifles a laugh. MARLOWE and SOLEIL turn their heads to her, eyes wide. Beat.)*

THEODRAH

What?

SOLEIL

Did you just... laugh?

THEODRAH

Maybe. I mean, she just called you "pretty boy."

SOLEIL

I don't understand how that is funny.

MARLOWE

You're always so prim and proper compared to some of us ragtag pirates.

*(MARLOWE and SOLEIL are quiet for a moment, blush evident on their cheeks. THEODRAH breaks the silence.)*

THEODRAH

What are you going to say to your captain when we get back?

MARLOWE

I'm still thinking. I don't want to upset him, but I have to know.

SOLEIL

He trusts you more than anyone, Marlowe. I'm sure that asking him comes from a place of love.

MARLOWE

I know.

*(RYCROW suddenly appears from below deck, a piece of bread in his hand.)*

RYCROW

What comes from a place of love?

*(The group jumps in surprise, turning to look at the stowaway. MARLOWE and THEODRAH draw their weapons. For MARLOWE, a small knife. For THEODRAH, a curved dagger. RYCROW holds up his hands in defense.)*

RYCROW

I mean no harm, friends!

MARLOWE

How did you get on the ship?!

RYCROW

A musician never reveals his secrets. You all were heading to Bortana, so I figured I would join!

*(There is silence for a moment. They all look at MARLOWE.)*

MARLOWE

What are you looking at me for?

SOLEIL

Well, should he stay?

MARLOWE

I was going to ask you two the same thing.

SOLEIL

I suppose I don't mind. More hands on deck could be useful. He seems harmless.

THEODRAH

I have one condition.

RYCROW

Of course.

THEODRAH

Play more of that music.

RYCROW

*(Laughing)* Done! Now what was this about a "Krikorian?"

MARLOWE

Krikorian is my captain. He's... selling his crew to the King.

RYCROW

I'm sorry. I assume you're going to confront him about this?

MARLOWE

Confront is a strong word. But I know him; he wouldn't just betray us like that.

RYCROW

Some guts you've got! Well, I hope that your venture proves fruitful. It sounds like you're in quite a tough spot.

SOLEIL

Marlowe, you do realize that Maxrie warned us about telling anyone?

MARLOWE

I don't care what Maxrie said. She thinks she can do whatever she wants with the King on her side.

RYCROW

I would have to agree with you on that one. I've had my fair share of run-ins with nobles-

*(Suddenly, the crew is thrown to one side. A large crash and a fierce roar can be heard offstage.)*

MARLOWE

What was that?!

THEODRAH

Portside hit! By...

MARLOWE

By what?!

SOLEIL

A sea monster! It looks like a serpent, given the damage!

MARLOWE

Man your stations!



*(Everyone pauses. There is some sort of joke to be made here: a lookout, cartographer, and musician walk into a bar. In this case, a ship. They do not have "stations.")*

MARLOWE (cont.)

Theodrah, man the rigging! Let the sails out! We need to gain some speed. Soleil, load the cannons! Rycrow...

*(RYCROW holds up his fiddle with a smile.)*

Play more of that music!

SOLEIL/THEODRAH/RYCROW

Yes, captain!

*(SOLEIL cleans two cannons before loading them with cannonballs. THEODRAH sets the sails to full. RYCROW begins to play an uptempo tune.)*

MARLOWE

On my mark! 1, 2, 3! Fire!

*(SOLEIL fires a cannonball. We hear a loud roar; it has made contact with the serpent.)*

MARLOWE (cont.)

Yes! Keep it going!

THEODRAH

It's coming starboard!

MARLOWE

Fire!

*(The cannonball misses.)*

SOLEIL

I've got two more ready!

THEODRAH

Starboard! It's coming up!

MARLOWE

Fire!

*(Both cannons are fired. Both are a hit. The serpent roars, and the ship is thrown to one side again. The serpent rears on the side of the ship above SOLEIL. RYCROW runs over and plays a screeching, dissonant chord. The serpent roars and backs off.)*

SOLEIL

Thank you for-

RYCROW

Perhaps later? After the monster has been dealt with.

SOLEIL

Right!

MARLOWE

It's hurt! One more hit and we'll have it! Fire!

*(This time, THEODRAH has come down from the rigging and fires the cannon. It is a direct hit. The serpent retreats.)*

MARLOWE (cont.)

What a shot! Good one, Theodrah.

*(THEODRAH smiles. She is pleased with herself.)*

THEODRAH

Thanks, captain.

MARLOWE

Captain, huh?

SOLEIL

Marlowe? We should assess the damage.

*(They all turn to MARLOWE once again to receive orders.)*

MARLOWE

Right. Soleil, go below deck. Theodrah, you and Rycrow start cleaning up the deck.

SOLEIL/THEODRAH/RYCROW

Aye aye!

*(SOLEIL exits below deck. THEODRAH and RYCROW move cannons back into place and pick up debris. MARLOWE crosses to the helm, looking at one of SOLEIL's maps. After a beat, SOLEIL enters from below deck.)*

SOLEIL

The hold took a beating. We're taking on water.

MARLOWE

I'm getting us back to Bortana as quickly as possible. Let's get to work... crew.

*(They all smile. Lights fade down as the crew resumes their tasks.)*

Scene 6

SETTING:                    We find ourselves back on Bortana on the island of Malden. It is late afternoon; most merchants have left their stalls and the townspeople have returned home from work. Our fearless crew has docked and now boards the *Siren Song*. No other SAILORS are in sight.

MARLOWE (cont.)

Hello! Anyone here? Krikorian?

*(KRIKORIAN enters from the captain's quarters, a solemn look on his face.)*

KRIKORIAN

Ahoy there, Marlowe.

MARLOWE

Captain! There you are. Where is everyone? It's like a ghost ship around here.

KRIKORIAN

They're all at the tavern. You know how they are.

MARLOWE

Too well.

KRIKORIAN

Where have you been on your time off? Adventuring with that mapmaker fellow?

MARLOWE

*(Playfully)* He's a cartographer, and yes. I also made some other friends along the way!

*(SOLEIL, THEODRAH, and RYCROW approach and stand beside MARLOWE.)*

KRIKORIAN

Nice to meet you all.

MARLOWE

I had something I wanted to ask you about, captain.

KRIKORIAN

And what would that be?

MARLOWE

I found a letter from the King on your desk. About a meeting. And... I know about the contract. Is it true we're going to be sold to the King?

KRIKORIAN

What? That's preposterous! I would never have any dealings with that tyrant.

MARLOWE

But... you had that meeting at the Black Cat Tavern. We went to Stamhead and we saw the contract.

KRIKORIAN

I don't know what you saw, Marlowe, but-

*(Suddenly, MAXRIE and a large group of royal SOLDIERS burst onto the deck. She spots MARLOWE and commands her army towards the group.)*

MAXRIE

Arrest them!

*(The SOLDIERS advance and seize MARLOWE, SOLEIL, THEODRAH, and RYCROW.)*

MARLOWE

Maxrie! What is going on?

MAXRIE

Did you really think I could let you all go? You can't trust a pirate with anything.

SOLEIL

Maxrie, please! We haven't done anything wrong!

MAXRIE

Your little girlfriend plunders and steals from the Crown for a living! It's sad that you would defend a pathetic girl like her instead of turning her in sooner.

SOLEIL

Maxrie-

MAXRIE

There's no use in arguing. You are all under arrest for piracy and plotting against the Crown. You will be sold for 40 pieces of silver each to His Majesty as laborers. Men!

*(The SOLDIERS grab some spare rope and tie MARLOWE, SOLEIL, THEODRAH, and RYCROW to the mast of the ship.)*

MARLOWE

Let us go!

MAXRIE

Not possible.

*(LATCHELL enters from the captain's quarters and runs over to the group.)*

MARLOWE

Latchell!

LATCHELL

What's going on?

MARLOWE

The King's men are here for us. The letter was real, Latchell.

LATCHELL

But I thought-

MARLOWE

Just untie us, please!

*(LATCHELL rushes over, cutting them free. We hear MAXRIE yell "Now!" Her and the SOLDIERS advance, dividing themselves between our fearless crew. MARLOWE and SOLEIL raise their fists, THEODRAH wields her dagger, and RYCROW decides that his fiddle bow will suffice as a weapon for now. KRIKORIAN and MAXRIE find themselves in a standoff with LATCHELL.)*

LATCHELL

I trusted you, captain!

KRIKORIAN

Latchell, stop this madness!

MAXRIE

Can we deal with him already?

LATCHELL

Right. Krikorian, now!

*(MAXRIE and LATCHELL watch as KRIKORIAN hesitates for a moment before crossing to the SOLDIERS and MARLOWE. He raises a dagger as if to stab one of them in the back. At the last moment, KRIKORIAN dodges the SOLDIERS and rushes at MARLOWE, weapon raised.)*

MARLOWE

Captain! Captain?

KRIKORIAN

I'm sorry, Marlowe.

*(KRIKORIAN brings the dagger down. By this time, RYCROW has subdued his attackers with another dissonant chord and ran over to MARLOWE, throwing himself in front of her. KRIKORIAN's dagger stabs him in the side. THEODRAH sees this happen and quickly knocks out her attackers, running over.)*

MARLOWE

Rycrow!

RYCROW

*(Strained)* Do what you need to do, friend.

MARLOWE

Theodrah!

THEODRAH

Put some pressure on the wound. It will stop the bleeding. Go, Marlowe.

MARLOWE

Thank you. Latchell!

*(LATCHELL runs over as MAXRIE slowly follows behind.)*

LATCHELL

What's wrong?

MARLOWE

Krikorian, he... tried to stab me.

LATCHELL

It's a pity it didn't work.

MARLOWE

What?

*(MAXRIE stands at LATCHELL's right side. KRIKORIAN joins them solemnly.)*

MARLOWE (cont.)

Krikorian?

*(He remains silent.)*

LATCHELL

He's not the one you need answers from, I'm afraid.

*(Beat.)*

MARLOWE

The letter to your mother in Stamhead...

LATCHELL

Finally putting the pieces together, I assume?

*(MARLOWE is silent for a moment as her worst fear is confirmed.)*

MARLOWE

Latchell, how could you?

LATCHELL

How could I? After being thrown to the side since I joined this crew, I deserved some respect!

MARLOWE

You always had my respect, Latchell!

LATCHELL

That meant nothing to me! All I ever got on this ship was the honor of staying behind while you ran off with that spineless cartographer! You were never with us, Marlowe!

MARLOWE

Yes, I was!

LATCHELL

Every free moment we had, you spent with someone else. You should be embarrassed to call yourself first mate.

MAXRIE

Really, I don't know what Soleil sees in you.

MARLOWE

You're the one who should be embarrassed, Latchell! Krikorian dedicated his life to this ship and you betrayed us!

LATCHELL

*(Approaching MARLOWE)* That old man would do anything for this run-down, dingy excuse for a pirate ship! It was time for someone to give him some guidance.

MARLOWE

Soleil, help!

*(SOLEIL has managed to escape the remaining SOLDIERS. He grabs some spare rigging line with the help of THEODRAH. They seize KRIKORIAN and MAXRIE, tying them to the mast of the ship. LATCHELL attempts to run, but he meets the same fate after being kicked down by MARLOWE.)*

LATCHELL

You can't always ask him for help, Marlowe. You're better than that.

*(MARLOWE slaps him across the face.)*

MARLOWE

That's enough from you.

*(As she turns)* Krikorian.

KRIKORIAN

Marlowe.

MARLOWE

Why did you let Latchell do this? I thought you cared about this ship. About me.

KRIKORIAN

He forced my hand, Marlowe. He threatened to turn us in immediately if I didn't follow his instructions.

MARLOWE

I've followed you my whole life.

KRIKORIAN

I'm sorry. I never meant to hurt you.

MARLOWE

You tried to *kill* me, captain.

KRIKORIAN

I don't expect you to forgive me.

MARLOWE

I need you to tell me where the contract is.

KRIKORIAN

...The first drawer of my desk, on the left.

MARLOWE

Soleil.

SOLEIL

Of course.

*(SOLEIL exits into the captain's quarters.)*

MARLOWE

It's time to put an end to this, Latchell.

LATCHELL

Don't you dare! I will have you thrown in prison! The worst prison His Majesty has to offer.



*(SOLEIL enters, contract in hand. He gives it to MARLOWE, who rips it in half and tucks it in LATCHELL's pocket.)*

LATCHELL

Stop! You don't know what you're doing!

MAXRIE

You will regret this!

MARLOWE

Tell that to the King. I wonder what he'll think when he sees you've broken his precious contract.

LATCHELL

You will pay for this, Marlowe.

MARLOWE

Save it for a pirate that cares.

SOLEIL

What are we going to do with them?

MARLOWE

We'll let "His Majesty" deal with them.

KRIKORIAN

Is there no mercy for your old captain?

*(MARLOWE is silent for a beat. She is torn between two worlds.)*

MARLOWE

I'm sorry, Krikorian.

KRIKORIAN

I understand.

*(As MARLOWE turns away from KRIKORIAN, the BOATSWAIN and SAILORS of the Siren Song have returned from the tavern and entered onto the deck.)*

BOATSWAIN

Captain Krikorian, Marlowe... What's going on?

MARLOWE

Latchell and Krikorian mutinied against this ship with the King.

KRIKORIAN

I did what I had to.

*(The crew is silent for a moment. Then, the BOATSWAIN addresses MARLOWE with a salute.)*

BOATSWAIN

Awaiting orders... captain.

MARLOWE

I'm not going to be your captain. I can't stay here anymore.

BOATSWAIN

Then who will be?

MARLOWE

The *Siren Song* will be safe in your hands. I just have one favor before we leave.

BOATSWAIN

Anything, ma'am.

MARLOWE

(*Gesturing to LATCHELL, KRIKORIAN, and MAXRIE*) Deliver these three to royal waters. We don't want to keep "His Majesty" waiting.

BOATSWAIN

Aye aye. Men! Weigh anchor and hoist the mizzen!

(*The SAILORS pull up the anchor and set the sails to full.*)

MARLOWE

Rycrow, are you alright?

(*RYCROW leans on THEODRAH and SOLEIL for support.*)

RYCROW

I'll be fine. But maybe a doctor would help.

(*They all laugh weakly. MARLOWE, SOLEIL, THEODRAH, and RYCROW exit the Siren Song solemnly.*)

(*Blackout.*)

Scene 7

SETTING: Three days later. We're back at the port market of Bortana, where it all began. Our fearless crew are gathered around the large fountain in the middle of the square. MARLOWE and SOLEIL sit on the edge of the fountain, while THEODRAH and RYCROW stand off to the side. RYCROW is beginning to draw a crowd with his fiddle.

SOLEIL

What are you thinking about?

MARLOWE

Everything. I'm still reeling from it all, I guess.

SOLEIL

I admire how you handled it, Marlowe. I know it wasn't easy. Krikorian couldn't have asked for a better first mate, you know.

MARLOWE

Thanks. But Latchell apparently thought otherwise.

SOLEIL

Latchell was a lunatic who thought he was invincible just from making a deal with the King.

*(MARLOWE laughs.)*

SOLEIL (cont.)

What's funny?

MARLOWE

No "His Majesty," huh?

SOLEIL

I've been... reconsidering things as of late.

MARLOWE

You're thinking of becoming a pirate?

SOLEIL

No, but my time with the Crown is over.

*(Beat.)*

MARLOWE

Look at our resident musician over there.

*(MARLOWE points to RYCROW, who is playing an uptempo song on his fiddle. After a moment,*

*RYCROW lays his fiddle in its case and turns to THEODRAH.)*

RYCROW

Care for a dance?

*(THEODRAH takes RYCROW's hand and they begin to slowly waltz. THEODRAH keeps up in perfect time; RYCROW laughs happily. After a few moments, the two conclude their dance. RYCROW bids his adoring fans adieu and packs up his fiddle. THEODRAH and RYCROW approach the fountain.)*

RYCROW

Greetings, friends! You two seem to be in good spirits.

SOLEIL

We could say the same about you.

RYCROW

Any day I get to play is a good one! Especially when I find a good dance partner!

THEODRAH

I'm not a dancer. My parents made me take dancing lessons as a kid, that's all.

MARLOWE

Dancing lessons? As a kid, I was taught to pickpocket.

THEODRAH

When you visit the King's court every summer, you're forced to learn. I was born into a noble family.

*(Everyone is silent for a beat. THEODRAH expects everyone to berate her. Instead:)*

MARLOWE

*(Grinning)* No velvet and ruffles, huh?

THEODRAH

*(Cracking a small smile)* Yeah, I prefer battling sea monsters instead of braving ballrooms.

MARLOWE

I think we can all agree with that.

SOLEIL

Rycrow. I haven't thanked you for saving my life during that monster attack.

RYCROW

It was an honor, my friend.

MARLOWE

And I can't thank you enough for saving my life. You have a talent for throwing yourself into danger just for us.

RYCROW

*(Laughing)* What can I say? I've grown quite fond of you all.

MARLOWE

Me too.

SOLEIL

We make a pretty good team.

THEODRAH

Agreed.

MARLOWE

What about you two and the *Jewel*?

SOLEIL

I doubt our little adventure will be viewed positively. I'm ready to chart a new course with you all.

THEODRAH

Me too.

MARLOWE

Then it's decided. We'll be our own crew.

*(Beat. MARLOWE brings the group in for a hug. It's a little awkward. They're still navigating this whole "crew" thing.)*

THEODRAH

That's enough hugging for me. I'm going to the tavern. See you all later.

RYCROW

I'll join you!

*(THEODRAH and RYCROW exit. MARLOWE and SOLEIL are left alone. Awkward silence.)*

SOLEIL

Marlowe, I would / like to-

MARLOWE

I want to say-

SOLEIL

My apologies. You first.

MARLOWE

No, you.

SOLEIL

Please, say what's on your mind.

MARLOWE

Sol, stop being so mysterious-

SOLEIL

I would formally like to court you! If that would be alright with you, of course.

MARLOWE

Court? Me?

SOLEIL

If you're opposed to the idea, then I can-

*(MARLOWE interrupts him with a short kiss on the cheek.)*

MARLOWE

Sure, pretty boy. I've never been courted before.

SOLEIL

Then it would be my honor. May I?

*(MARLOWE nods as SOLEIL reaches for her. They share a real kiss. Suddenly, the flower MERCHANT from earlier enters, pushing their cart full of freesia. It brings the fresh scent of strawberries with it.)*

MERCHANT #2

Flowers! Come get your flowers! A lovely variety of freesia suited for any occasion!

SOLEIL

Excuse me! I'd like to purchase some freesia, please. Just one flower.

MERCHANT #2

That'll be one copper piece.

*(SOLEIL gives the MERCHANT one copper piece, and receives one flower. The MERCHANT smiles and exits.)*

MARLOWE

Only one?

SOLEIL

It's for you.

MARLOWE

Me?

SOLEIL

Yes.

*(SOLEIL gently places the flower in MARLOWE's hair.)*

MARLOWE

It's beautiful. Thank you.

SOLEIL

Of course. The freesia represents friendship, you know.

MARLOWE

Sounds like a good name for a ship, too.

*(Short beat.)*

MARLOWE

Should we join our friends?

SOLEIL

Lead the way... my flower.

MARLOWE

New nickname, huh?

SOLEIL

I'm trying it out.

MARLOWE

I like it.

*(Lights fade on MARLOWE and SOLEIL.)*

*(The End.)*

## Author's Notes

### Introduction - What is *Freesia*?

*Freesia* is a short play that I have been developing since 2020. In my Intro to Theatre class freshman year, we were tasked with writing a 10-minute play. I learned a lot of valuable information about becoming a beginner playwright through that process. I have always primarily been a performer; after that Intro assignment, I discovered that playwriting was an activity I really enjoyed and wanted to explore further.

This play began as the origin story for two pirates who seemed like an unlikely pair. They would eventually find their love for one another after putting their differences aside. Marlowe is a high-energy, humorous pirate who yearns for adventure wherever she goes. Soleil is a more reserved and intellectual cartographer. They, along with the help of others, investigate and discover the mystery behind Marlowe's captain and his secret dealings. This is the culmination of a study in playwriting and characters who are near and dear to my heart.

### Writing Process

#### **Background on *Freesia***

The world of *Freesia* was born when my best friend Cindy and I developed a fantasy world with pirates at the center of it. We created a few characters together, and I fell in love with the dynamic between them. I knew that when it was time to write a short play for Intro to Theatre, the world and characters of *Freesia* would be perfect. The play, back in 2020, originally began as a romance plot between Marlowe and Soleil. However, the length of this play inspired me to center the action around something different, but still include the romance.



After some brainstorming, I chose to have *Freesia* follow Marlowe and the choice she has to make between loyalty to her captain and loyalty to her newfound friends. Once Latchell's secret is revealed, Marlowe struggles to make a decision until she is left with no choice but to do so. *Freesia* explores the complexity of loyalty and how sometimes, those we trust have the greatest power to betray us.

Another choice I had to make was the historical accuracy of *Freesia* in regard to time period and pirate vocabulary. Because of the comedic element of the play, I decided to write the characters and dialogue in a more contemporary way rather than accurate to the time period. I wanted my audience to be immersed in the pirate world in the way of visuals and certain references, but not so confused with a language barrier from the late 17th century, when the Golden Age of Piracy was taking place. Therefore, the characters speak in a more modern manner, but in a world where piracy is at its peak.

## **Historical Background**

The Golden Age of Piracy is the period between the 1650s and 1730s where piracy was plentiful in the North Atlantic and Indian Ocean. This age serves as the loose setting for *Freesia*. When I decided to write a play surrounding pirates, I knew I needed to dive into the history and discern which elements I wanted to incorporate or draw inspiration from. Buccaneers were abundant during this time. A buccaneer was a pirate that mainly operated in the Caribbean; they were free sailors not attached to any specific company. A corsair primarily pirated in the Mediterranean. Marlowe would be considered a buccaneer. Soleil and Theodrah would be privateers because their ship, the *Golden Jewel*, is privately owned by the government.

This time period serves as the inspiration for a lot of retellings of the life of pirates. Many famous pirates like Blackbeard and Captain Kidd were active during this time. The film series *Pirates of the Caribbean* is also based during this time period. Overall, the Golden Age of Piracy serves as a blueprint for many who want to investigate the life of pirates when they were at their peak. I've always found this period in history interesting, and *Freesia* was the perfect opportunity to dig a little deeper.

### **Character Development**

Loving your characters is the first step into good character development. Having Marlowe and Soleil around for a couple of years really helped me explore their behavior and motivations in *Freesia*. My thesis director, Adam Wheat, recommended that I utilize character dossiers included in the book *Dynamic Characters* by Nancy Kress. Much of the dossiers ask for simple information like morning routine, pets, and how they interact with certain groups of people. While clarifying a character's motivations and goals is crucial to their development, diving into the details about a character's life and routine can really bring them to life.

When deciding names for my characters, I wanted to experiment with some that were more unconventional. Marlowe was reminiscent of the Renaissance, which was also taking place during the Golden Age of Piracy. The origin of Krikorian's name is actually a funny one! One day, while I was walking to the music building on my college campus, I looked down at the names of past graduates that are engraved in the pavement. One of them had the last name 'Krikorian.' I immediately wrote a note down on my phone because the name just clicked! I knew it would fit in perfectly with the other names I had chosen. Soleil is French for 'sun.' This is an interesting paradox because I have always considered Marlowe and Soleil to be a sort of

“sun and moon” dynamic, with Marlowe as the sun and Soleil the moon. All of the names have some feeling as though they belong in a fantasy novel.

### **Obstacles Encountered**

Because of my busy schedule during the Fall of 2023, I often found it difficult to set aside a specific time each week/day to sit down and write a page or two of *Freesia*. I was able to make some progress by writing two to three scenes and discussing them with my director. We would take a look at the overall scene, any formatting issues, and then begin detail work. I would often dive into small moments within a scene that were comedic, but didn't further the plot. Since my play is only one act, I had to reassess which sections of dialogue were important so that the plot could fully develop in the short span of an hour.

Conflict was another aspect of the writing process I was constantly assessing. In his book *Playwriting*, Stephen Jeffreys says that “interpersonal conflict works well in theatre” (24). I took this principle and combed through the script to expand upon the conflict between characters so that the extrapersonal conflict between Marlowe and the possibility of a corrupt Krikorian was further developed. I also added onto this during the confrontation/battle in Scene 6 of *Freesia*. I needed to explore Latchell's motivation for betraying the *Siren Song* in more depth. After the draft read before my staged reading, one suggestion was made to bring out more of Latchell's jealousy of Marlowe and Soleil's relationship. This helped me clarify another reason why Latchell would betray the *Siren Song* besides just being undervalued by the crew.

One tip I would give to aspiring playwrights is always ask yourself “why?” Why does this character say this line at this time? Why are they performing this action? Make a chart if that

helps you! This will clarify any confusing motivations behind characters and their interactions with others.

## **Staged Reading**

One of the most valuable experiences I gained while writing *Freesia* was holding a staged reading of my second draft. I began with assembling a cast of my peers to help me. The cast list is as follows:

Director: Grace Woodward

Stage Directions: Brynlee Beams

Marlowe: Jayne Pecena

Soleil: Brooks Harrison

Theodrah: Halle Jones

Rycrow: Ryder Ashlock

Maxrie: Chloe Cofer

Krikorian: Caleb Gumm

Latchell: Logan Babel

Boatswain/Merchants: Kenzie Tatum

I began with a draft read of the script with the cast; this was their first time reading it. After the readthrough, I gave them time for feedback and discussion of *Freesia*. It was a very helpful time where I learned much of what was confusing or unclear. This is the struggle of a playwright: getting all of your ideas floating around in your head onto the paper in a logical manner. I made some edits based on their comments and we returned the next week for 3 nights of rehearsal where the director would give certain blocking to the actors. During that time I would offer an occasional note and write down edits to myself in my script. Another tip for

aspiring playwrights: read your dialogue out loud. You will quickly learn what sounds awkward to the human ear.

The official staged reading occurred on March 29th, 2024 in Verser Theatre. I was incredibly proud of the product that was shown to the audience and the hard work the cast had put in. The audience loved the play and offered a lot of helpful feedback. I plan to expand the length of *Freesia* in the future, and many of their ideas will aid in further developing the world and storyline. Some of the comments helped me in making a few small edits for my final draft. I am overall very pleased with how the reading turned out.

### Conclusion

I have deeply valued this process of writing my first short play. Through my directed study with Adam Wheat and taking Drama Theory and Development with Eric Phillips, I have learned a lot. Writing a play, no matter the length, is no easy feat. It requires discipline and vulnerability to turn your grand ideas into a tangible product. It takes even more so to present your ideas and product to an audience for feedback. It can be intimidating, but seeing how others interpret your work is such a crucial part in developing a piece of theatre. Being able to see my work put on a stage, even if just a reading, was very eye-opening and exciting. I am so blessed to tell *Freesia*'s story; I can't wait to embark on a new adventure with this play and its characters.

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