

SCENE ONE

Lights up on Jim Hawkins, private detective.

JIM

In his journals, Long John Silver wrote that man seeks to rule, and to fight. And so came the idea of nation. From cave to tribe to country, nation gave a privileged few a way to rule, and gave the rest an idea to fight for, and an enemy to fight against. Those are important. Without them, people might start fighting for less noble reasons. Or worse, they might try fighting the rulers. John Silver was a cynic to the end, but it's hard to say he was wrong. The human race has never done well with peace. Less than two decades after the War to End All Wars, Germany dragged the world into a sequel. Echoes of gunfire were still ringing in Berlin when the winning alliance collapsed and Axis vs. Allies suddenly became East vs. West. And it wasn't that long ago that one of the kindest women I've ever known killed two heads of state... a red queen and a wonderful wizard... just to start a war between Oz and Wonderland. Peace won out... but for how long is anyone's guess. Nations are getting bigger, and so are the weapons, and it seems to take everything we have to keep war at bay. Maybe because the drums of war are loud enough to keep the ruled from noticing who's beating them.

Lights come up on the Emerald Room, a nightclub owned by Dorothy Gale. The bar is bestrewn with used bottles. Jim strolls through, looking for someone.

JIM (CONT'D)

Hello? Anyone here? I was told... Anyone?

Dorothy pops up from behind the bar, clutching a wine bottle.

DOROTHY

I wasn't sleeping!

JIM

Dorothy.

DOROTHY

Jimmy Hawkins? Haven't seen you in an age.

JIM

I know. Things have been... it's complicated. Been a busy time.

DOROTHY

Sure. Busy. We all get busy, Jim, no harm there.

JIM

Right.

DOROTHY

I mean I'd just assumed you were avoiding me out of guilt for helping that psychopath Jack Heart kill the Wizard, but no, you're just busy.

JIM

I didn't-- I made a mistake. Is that why I'm here? To rub that in?

DOROTHY

I don't know why you're here.

JIM

Someone left a message to come to the Emerald Room. Figured it was you.

DOROTHY

Not me.

JIM

No?

DOROTHY

Think I'd remember.

JIM

(picks up an empty bottle)

...You sure?

DOROTHY

Oh, please. Those aren't even mine. Most of them. Some of them.

(sniffs)

And you're one to talk. Long meeting with Mr. Jack Daniels?

JIM

And his brothers. Toasting another job that ended in a broken marriage.

DOROTHY

You know you don't *have* to keep working cheating spouse cases. You could try something less depressing and more exciting.

JIM

They pay the bills, and by the end everyone tends to still be alive. I'll take that over exciting. Another big night at the Emerald Room?

DOROTHY

Probably. I've only been here...

(checks a clock)

Two hours or so. Just came back 'cause I needed a break.

JIM

A break from what?

DOROTHY

Nobody told you? There's a big peace summit going down at this government building in Burbank. Oz and Wonderland and some muckity-mucks from Washington all talking about peace and harmony and co-existence. It's exhausting.

JIM

A peace summit? Things are that tense?

DOROTHY

Ever since the Red Queen got herself kiboshed, Wonderland's been getting hostile, building up armies for some crazy reason.

JIM

I'm sure Glinda militarizing Oz had nothing to do with it.

DOROTHY

If that's what Oz was doing, and if Glinda gave the order, they can't exactly back off with whole decks of card soldiers running drills on the border, now can they? So now Washington's brought everyone here to talk about playing nice.

JIM

And they asked you to be there?

DOROTHY

I am a goddamn Princess of Oz. Also Glinda made me go.

JIM

They're dragging you back into the royal entourage? After all this time?

DOROTHY

I never officially left.

JIM

You've been in LA for years.

DOROTHY

I had to leave Oz when Auntie Em got sick. And then... then I had this place. My own club. Roots in the community. New friends. Friends who understood... all I'd seen. But with the Wizard gone, Glinda says I should "return to the fold." So she wants me on the summit team. Mostly to keep an eye on young Ozma.

JIM

Isn't she a teenager?

DOROTHY

Because bad things never happen to unchaperoned teen girls.

JIM

Trying to decide what's the weirder image... you as a diplomat, or a chaperone.

DOROTHY

Keep up the smart lip, Jimmy. Maybe it can take a turn saving your hide instead of me having to do it. Surprised you're not stuck at that summit too.

JIM

Sounds like the last place I want to be. Maybe I did a bad enough job with the Red Queen case they're willing to stop dragging me into these things.

DOROTHY

You did catch the killer, Jim. Not as soon as I'd have liked, but... you caught the killer and stopped a war. That ain't nothing.

JIM

Feels like it some days.

DOROTHY

Yeah, well... still doesn't explain who called you here.

Argent Hawkins enters. She wears a conspicuous piece of gold jewelry.

ARGENT

That would be me.

DOROTHY

Who the-- how do people keep--

JIM

Argent!

ARGENT

Hello, James.

Jim and Argent hug.

ARGENT (CONT'D)

You look terrible and smell like a distillery. Late night?

JIM

And an early morning. I assume that's thanks to you.

DOROTHY

(produces an axe from under the bar and thumps it down)

Hi! Someone want to tell me who she is and why she's in my club after hours?

ARGENT

Don't you mean *before* hours?

JIM

Dorothy Gale... meet Argent Hawkins.

DOROTHY

...Hawkins. You mean...

JIM

Yes.

DOROTHY

Hot damn! I'm the first to meet one of the Hawkins family! Wendy and Alice each owe me a sawbuck!

ARGENT

If we could possibly return to the matter at hand?

DOROTHY

You do that, I'm gonna find some of the good stuff.

ARGENT

We're on duty, we can't--

JIM

Scotch. Single malt if you have it.

DOROTHY

I said "The good stuff," didn't I?

JIM

So let me guess. You're both in town for this Oz and Wonderland summit.

ARGENT

We're part of the Washington delegation that's helping Oz and Wonderland learn to be better neighbours.

DOROTHY

Like it's *our* fault half of Wonderland is demented.

ARGENT

And we begin to see why outside help was necessary.

DOROTHY

Was that a crack? Is she making a crack?

JIM

(taking a scotch from Dorothy)

You're running our end?

ARGENT

If only. "Men's work," or so I'm told. John is running our delegation.

JIM

...John.

DOROTHY

John who?

JIM

John, our baby brother. Who can't find his ass with both hands and a map.

ARGENT

He wouldn't have been my first choice for a partner, but then the Hawkins I'd have chosen made an angry speech about how our "ill-gotten wealth" made us no better than "mean spirited pirates," left the family and moved to the opposite corner of the country.

JIM

Seemed the thing to do at the time.

ARGENT

Not all of your points were wrong.

JIM

And we did make a good team growing up.

ARGENT

Yes. But now John will have to do.

JIM

Is he really--

ARGENT

For one, he almost certainly isn't having scotch for breakfast.

JIM

His loss.

ARGENT

I'm there to guide him. Same as always. He gets prestige, I get to do important work, and father gets the family name in prominent positions, which keeps him happy and means you get to live your private detective life, such as it is, in peace.

JIM

Looking after every body . Same old Goldie.

DOROTHY

Goldie?

JIM

Just a nickname.

ARGENT

His way of saying I was more than just “silver.” But there’s been a complication.

JIM

A complication that means meeting in a closed nightclub first thing in the morning?

ARGENT

We’ve lost a queen.

JIM

What?

ARGENT

Queen Ozma is missing.

DOROTHY

What?

ARGENT

We’ve searched the entire compound, there’s no sign of her.

DOROTHY

She was fine when I tucked her in last night! Safe and cozy!

ARGENT

Her security detail reported her missing earlier this morning. Regent Glinda was informed at once, but so far there’s no sign of where she could be. Obviously, this needs solving if the talks are to succeed.

DOROTHY

I thought maybe it needed solving because *a kid is missing*.

JIM

Why tell me all of this? And why here?

ARGENT

Dorothy has a right to know. And the fact is, we need your help.

JIM

Mine. You've got access to every law enforcement agency and the marines, but you need my help?

ARGENT

This situation doesn't call for a sledgehammer. It needs a scalpel. Someone who can go where the 82nd Airborne can't.

DOROTHY

You need a scalpel to ask the White Queen what she did with Ozma?

ARGENT

We don't know it's the White Queen, or Wonderland.

DOROTHY

Really. We don't know that the kingdom of lunatics with a *history of snatching girls* might have *snatched a girl*. We really don't know that?

ARGENT

You've spent too much time with Alice Liddell.

(glares at Jim)

Happens a lot in this town.

JIM

Why would Wonderland come to a peace summit just to ruin it by abducting Ozma? It doesn't make sense.

DOROTHY

Nothing they do makes sense!

ARGENT

Oh, it does. You just need to look at it from the right direction.

DOROTHY

Then how about this. How else would Wonderland get access to Ozma?

JIM

Maybe. But I still don't see the why. Even Jack had a why.

Argent gives Jim a look.

DOROTHY

Yeah, but--

ARGENT

As helpful as it will be to accuse one of the principal summit participants of kidnapping, there's another possibility. How familiar are you with the Visitor Underground?

JIM

Some. Immigrants, refugees, and other ex-patriots from the other places.

DOROTHY

Ex-card soliders from Wonderland, pirates from Neverland, some of the Jinjur Rebellion crowd from Oz who never settled into Ozma's rule.

JIM

That sort of folk. I run into them from time to time.

DOROTHY

Half of them drink here.

JIM

You think some refugee is behind this?

ARGENT

We think this city is filling up with people from other worlds with grudges against the people they ran away from. They've been... active, as of late. Causing all sorts of trouble. An Ozian delegation went missing, one of our safehouses was torched...

DOROTHY

And more and more visitors started going missing.

JIM

Since when?

ARGENT

Since a while ago.

DOROTHY

Since the Red Queen murders.

JIM

You knew about this?

DOROTHY

We haven't all been able to bury our heads in the sand chasing cheating husbands, Jimmy. Visitors drink here. I hear things.

ARGENT

Now Glinda and the White Queen are officially making nice and maybe some of that aggression gets pointed our way. And if they did, you're the one to find out.

JIM

Why me?

ARGENT

Why do you think John and I were tasked to this summit?

JIM

Because this is a stepping stone to running the Berlin office, so you made sure John got the job?

ARGENT

No call to be nasty, James.

JIM

Sorry. Fighting a headache.

Jim goes to drink his scotch, but Argent takes it.

ARGENT

Can't imagine why. We got the job because the name Hawkins carries weight with these people. Because of *you*. Because of all you've done since that storm swept you off your ship in the war. The visitors won't talk to the FBI, or the Secret Service, or me. But they might talk to Jim Hawkins the Third.

DOROTHY

Not if he says it like that they won't.

JIM

Dorothy--

DOROTHY

“The Third.” Will his lordship be staying for tea?

JIM

You’re a princess.

DOROTHY

Yeah, but... not a fancy one.

JIM

I got out of this business ages ago. The government already dragged me back once over the Red Queen murder and that was a mess I’m not looking to relive.

ARGENT

Your country needs you, Jim.

JIM

I went to war for my country. I almost died for my country fighting Hirohito. And as a reward, my country sent me to fix every problem over the rainbow, through the looking glass, and after the second star on the left. My country got its share of me. I’m through.

ARGENT

Your family needs you.

JIM

I doubt Father would agree. But maybe you’d know better. You’ve actually talked to him since I left D.C.

ARGENT

I need you.

JIM

...Goldie... you don’t know what you’re asking. How hard I’ve worked to get away from all of this. I can’t just--

DOROTHY

What do you know about Ozma, Jimmy?

JIM

Daughter of a former king of Oz, took the throne a while after the Wizard stepped down?

DOROTHY

After spending her *entire life* in captivity. Slave to some cruel witch since she was a baby, not even knowing who or what she was until Glinda undid a spell and put her on the throne when she was still a kid. Brave, but a kid. We can't... we can't let her be a captive again.

JIM

There has to be a better--

DOROTHY

Maybe, but you owe us one.

JIM

That isn't fair.

DOROTHY

Jimmy... losing the Wizard was hard enough. On Oz and on me. We can't lose Ozma too.

JIM

Fine. I'll look into it.

DOROTHY

I'd better check on Glinda. Argent, you let yourself in, can you lock up?

ARGENT

Of course.

Dorothy exits.

JIM

I'd better--

ARGENT

She doesn't know. She thinks Jack killed the Red Queen and the Wizard of Oz.

JIM

Everybody does. Better that way.

ARGENT

I'd have thought you'd have told her, or the other one.

JIM

Oz's death was hard enough for Dorothy when someone she hated did it. If she knew it was Wendy Darling? Her friend?

ARGENT

I see your point.

JIM

So the Secret Service and I let Jack Heart take the blame. Nobody would question it, he's not around to deny it, and it would keep Wonderland and Oz from turning on Neverland. It's just kids and mermaids over there, they can't handle angry Jabberwockies.

ARGENT

And your friends have no idea?

JIM

They've noticed she hasn't been around, but I don't think they know she's in some facility in Anaheim.

ARGENT

One would hope that they don't even know there *is* a facility in Anaheim. I must say, James... having finally seen this ramshackle existence you chose... I remain baffled. Is this really such an improvement over government work?

JIM

The last job I did for my government got one of my best friends locked up in secret. And now I can barely look Dorothy in eye because she can't know the truth. Why on Earth would I want to work for them again?

ARGENT

Not everything is the Red Queen.

JIM

It's all politics, people getting hurt so that the government isn't embarrassed. I'm tired of being part of it.

ARGENT

You think you've escaped that sort of darkness? You haven't. I know what cases you work out here. They're not exactly noble.

JIM

How--

ARGENT

Father might not care what your life has become, but I do. And it's become... less. Is the private sector really worth it?

JIM

Doesn't really matter. I couldn't exactly stay with the Office of Strategic Services. They're long gone.

ARGENT

But the Central Intelligence Agency has taken its place. You could have followed the others there.

JIM

What, and give up the California climate?

ARGENT

I worry it's not the weather you're afraid to give up. You're going to see her now, aren't you.

JIM

No one knows the Underground like she does.

ARGENT

Be careful, James. And keep her away from the summit.

Argent leaves.

SCENE TWO

Spotlight on Jim.

JIM

When tanks are heading to your village, when the country's run out of food, when the Emerald City isn't what you'd hoped, or a crocodile just ate your boss, you need somewhere to go. And if a country has put out a sign inviting the tired, weak, and huddled masses yearning to breathe free, you can hardly be blamed for turning up to accept the invitation. Problem is, just because a nation makes an offer, doesn't mean everyone who lives there likes that it's been made. So when you find yourself in a brave new world full of people who don't want you there... drift west. Los Angeles is a city of reinvention. Los Angeles doesn't care where you came from or who you were. The past is just something they put in movies. So if you were just a meek schoolgirl prone to chasing after white rabbits... in LA you can be something else. Something dangerous. LA's full of predators. You want to catch one? Talk to someone who hunts predators.

Jim exits. Lights up on an alley. Alice Liddell strolls along. A man walks up behind her and grabs her.

MAN

Hey, honey... looking for a good time?

Alice gives a sinister smile.

ALICE

Matter of fact I am.

Alice drives her elbow into his stomach, flips him over her shoulder, and twists his arm. He gives a scream.

ALICE (CONT'D)

Most fun I've had all week.

Jim enters.

JIM

Kind of your own fault, pal. Should've asked what the lady fancied before making the offer.