

**LENCK:**

My father you know... was a wheelwright. Once, we resided on the land of a wealthy family. And one day we were banished, all of us. I watched as my mother died in penury, as my siblings scattered to alleyways and poor houses, and I, the eldest, cared alone for my father. He was felled by a massive seizure of the brain. And no sooner had I left the home of the black-market surgeon to whom I sold his organs and limbs than I vowed that all my loved ones would be avenged. But what power did I have to do so? I am a musician, yes. But I also am a gambler. And so I honed my skills. Years later I returned to the site of my family's ruin, for a musical performance. Once there, I pursued an invitation to the evening card game hosted by the master of the house. Soon enough, I found myself seated across from the man himself. And, at stake, on our final hand, ownership of the very land where I was born.

The trouble with cards, you see, is that even in a game of skill, in which queen, jester, and knave find meaning only in combination, the contest is reduced, at the last, to its simplest element. To luck alone. I turned mine. And he turned his. I had a pretty run of princes, but the were... insufficient, for he showed kings.