

**THE** \_\_\_\_\_ **FOR T.K. AND J.W.**  
**SPIRIT OF RENEWAL**  
**BY**  
**JAMES Y. LEE**

**CHARACTERS:**

- **SKYE KWAK** – 28, female (she/they), Korean-American. The screenwriter. Intentional [and aimless]. Butch.
- **STEPHEN HENDERSON** – 64, male (he/him), white. The author. Relevant [and desperate].
- **ANDREA HWANG**– 29, female (she/her), Korean-American. Skye’s girlfriend. An activist and Variety journalist. Concerned [and furious]. Femme.
- **KEVIN HENDERSON** – 29, male-presenting (they/he), white. Stephen’s child. A mechanical engineering graduate student. Reticent [and observant].
- **LARRY BOSCH** – 37, male (he/him), white. Senior vice president of production at Paramount Pictures. At work [always].

**SETTING:**

- **LOCATIONS:**
  - Los Angeles, California.
    - Skye and Andrea’s apartment, and Stephen Henderson’s study. All other locations and states of being are expressed via an “in-between” space.
- **TIME:** May 2021 to March 2022.

**NOTES:**

- **On CASTING:**
  - Under no circumstances are Skye and Andrea to be portrayed by non-Asian performers. **No exceptions, whatsoever.**
- **On DIALOGUE:**
  - A slash (/) marks an interruption, where the next line or action interrupts where the slash is in the previous line.
  - **When dialogue is spoken in Korean** – the actual Korean and English translations will be written into the script for actors’ references.
    - Under no circumstances are these English translations to be projected or shown to the audience in any form. If they cannot understand Korean, those lines are not for them.
- **On CHARACTERS:**
  - **KEVIN** is referred to as such with they/he pronouns for the first several scenes of this play. However, any references to and discussion of this character with awareness of the events of **Scene Eleven** and onward should use the name and pronouns this character expressly identifies with from that point onwards.

법고창신 (法古創新 / beop-go-chang-shin): *The spirit of creating something new based on the tenets of what came before. A four-character Korean idiom.*

*"They say stories like this only happen in the movies. I cannot believe it's happening to me. This — this is the American Dream!"*

— **Ke Huy Quan**, while accepting his Academy Award for Best Supporting Actor for *Everything Everywhere All at Once* (2022).

## **PROLOGUE**

*The sounds of a restless audience **roar** to life. LARRY BOSCH stands at a podium, suit-and-tie, facing an enormous crowd, yelling into a microphone.*

### **LARRY**

And finally, as one last thank-you to everyone who's come all this way, we have... *one. more. thing.* to announce.

*Cheers.*

### **LARRY**

In the 1980s, high-fantasy literature was given a groundbreaking new entry in the form of three amazing books.

And from 2005 to 2007 – the film adaptations of these books changed high-fantasy cinema *forever.*

These films told the story of perseverance. They told the story of how to break past the restrictions the world throws at you and grow into the person you were destined to be. And they told the story of an intrepid warrior named Loric...

*As he says these next few lines, he holds up a copy of the first Kingdoms and Amulets book. The cheers escalate.*

### **LARRY**

... who grows to bear the power of a particular, magical Amulet...

*Louder cheers. Larry grins.*

### **LARRY**

... joins an entourage of adventurers...

... and uses his new power to save the Kingdoms of the Ancient Earth from the clutches of the Dark Lord, Malice.

That's right, folks – I'm talking about Stephen Henderson's *Kingdoms and Amulets*!

*Loud applause. Larry holds up a finger:*

### **LARRY**

Now! Now! If you'll let me, I have something to read for you all.

*He opens the book to a very obviously marked page, which triggers a shift. Lights illuminate an in-between space.*

**LARRY**

Here's a quote. "Even at the end of this journey..."

*Right as he says that, the in-between morphs into the world of Kingdoms and Amulets. Entering the in-between is STEPHEN HENDERSON — dressed here in a brown fantasy robe, carrying a staff, wielding a tome... and wearing an Amulet.*

**STEPHEN**

... There are still many realms left to explore. Other kingdoms within the Ancient Earth. The Dark Lord's hold over this one may have loosened... but evil does not die forever. May our victory serve as an example for those in other lands. And may their fights be as valiant as ours.

*Larry keeps the book open as he says:*

**LARRY**

Don't you guys think it's time we explore those other lands?

*Raucous, explosive applause. As it settles down and Larry laughs:*

**LARRY**

Two years ago, before the pandemic slowed everything down, Stephen Henderson reached out to us, telling us that he wanted to create something new within the Ancient Earth universe. The world fell into crisis, and we couldn't move forward... but now, we *can*.

*SKYE KWAK enters the in-between space — wearing a darker, more obscuring robe, holding a glowing sword in her hand. There's an Amulet of her own around her neck.*

*Stephen and Skye face off, circling each other as Larry continues in the real world:*

**LARRY**

We at Paramount Pictures are formally announcing the development of a new entry in the *Kingdoms and Amulets* series — a continuation of the trilogy that will expand the series forward in a new direction never before seen.

The film is currently in its initial stages, but we know the journey will be just as full of wonders and magic. Until then, in the words of these novels — "may fortune and its tidings bless you all!"

*The applause grows even louder.*

*Larry snaps the book shut, and the in-between space immediately blacks out. He exits and lights fade on his podium.*

## **ACT ONE,**

### **SCENE ONE**

*Skye reaches the door of Stephen's house. She rings on the doorbell and waits. She closes her eyes. Breathes. In. Out. In. Out.*

*Stephen opens the door. Skye immediately extends her hand to shake.*

**SKYE**

Stephen Henderson?

*Stephen shakes her hand:*

**STEPHEN**

... Uh. Yes! I take it you're Skye [*pron. "quack"*] Kwak?

**SKYE**

Skye [*pron. "kw-ah-k"*] Kwak. It's actually — never mind, I just — wow, it's a real honor to meet you. Genuinely. I've—

**STEPHEN**

Come on in. We'll be working in my study.

*The two of them enter his study. Behind a large desk are wooden shelves filled with books and accolades. Stephen sits at the desk, where his laptop, a clean copy of the same book as Skye, and a folder sit. He coughs slightly.*

**SKYE**

Are you okay?

**STEPHEN**

Yeah. My throat's been dry lately. Hold on.

*Stephen takes some medications at his desk with a glass of water. Skye sits on a chair opposite Stephen's desk and pulls out her things — first, three copies of the Kingdoms and Amulets books, plastered all over with notes.*

**SKYE**

No worries. Um — I just want to say, first — I've been such a fan of *Kingdoms and Amulets* for so many years. The movies changed the way I saw fantasy as a genre, and then I jumped straight into the books, and I... I knew I wanted to become a writer ever since. This world means a great deal to me. And then it just so happened that Larry — Larry Bosch, you've met him—

**STEPHEN**

I have, yes.

**SKYE**

— yes, he hired me to help write this spin-off, and then he told me you'd be my consultant, so I just did a deep dive into the books, as well as the, uh...

*Skye takes out a notebook, also with notes and post-its scattered all over.*

**SKYE**

... the movies as well!

**STEPHEN**

Ah. I appreciate the due diligence.

**SKYE**

Anyways, I'm rambling — I'm so excited to work on this spin-off with you. It's such an honor.

*She gets a glance at the shelves, and stands up to look—*

**SKYE**

Oh, my God. Do you mind if I...?

**STEPHEN (chuckling)**

Please, take a look.

*Skye immediately walks over to the shelves and looks at the books in them, awestruck.*

**SKYE**

I've never seen so many first editions in one place. My God.

*At the sight, Stephen grins, amused:*

**STEPHEN**

Your passion's quite something.

*Skye snaps out of it, and returns to her seat.*

**SKYE**

Thank you! Sorry! Got carried away there! Um, well, I've also only had the chance to write a psychological thriller so far, and I've adapted two science-fiction novels in the meantime—

**STEPHEN**

Yes, very nice. Larry briefed me on your work when you were signed on. Seems very much like you're a good fit for fantasy material like this, especially if you're this attached to the trilogy.

**SKYE**

Thank you. I've never really worked on a spin-off, and this is kind of my first big studio gig, so...! I'm grateful that you'd trust me with this world.

**STEPHEN**

Yes. In terms of the work we have to do... to my understanding, you have about three months to write the script for this, yes? I assume we'll be doing something similar with the original trilogy, where I'd be vetting and giving approval to any of your choices.

**SKYE**

Yes, that's... close to my idea for it, too. My deadline for the first draft's in January 7th. And, obviously, we need to give it a few more passes and writes over the next few months.

**STEPHEN**

Right.

**SKYE**

I do want to ask. The movies before this one... they're pretty faithful to your books. I know you're credited as a creative consultant on them, but did you end up writing the scripts for those?

**STEPHEN**

No. I lived up to that title, really. The writers followed the lead of the books. I vetted all of their deviations. That's all.

**SKYE**

So now that we're working on a spin-off, rather than an adaptation... what are your expectations?

**STEPHEN**

... Well, I've had something in mind for a while. In terms of a direction to bring this story.

**SKYE**

Happy to hear it.

*Beat. Stephen gathers his thoughts for a second.*



**STEPHEN**

I've put a lot of thought into this. But at the end of this trilogy — when the adventurers have vanquished the Dark Lord, Loric makes a very bold decision, where —

**SKYE**

He passes the Amulet onto Samuel, his apprentice.

**STEPHEN**

Yes. And Samuel is interesting, because... he sort of becomes a son-like figure to Loric. Right? There's a legacy he gets to inherit there, and it chooses Samuel just like it chose Loric. So, the story ends on the question of, "What will he use this power for?"

**SKYE**

Interesting.

**STEPHEN**

And I thought about the way the trilogy ended. The power vacuum left behind by the removal of Malice. The kinds of people who would vie to fill it back up on their own terms. And how Samuel might be the person to bring stability back to a destabilizing world.

**SKYE**

Right.

I think there could be a place for my idea in that, as well.

**STEPHEN**

Oh. How so?

**SKYE**

So... I was told by Paramount that I had creative liberties as the writer. And it's interesting that you have a character that you want to bring into the forefront, because... well, so do I.

**STEPHEN**

Which one?

**SKYE**

... Mr. Henderson, the Ancient Earth is based on our world, right? You've kept all the continents, but just renamed the countries to Kingdoms — and I think that works in our favor, because there's a moment towards the start of the second book...

*Skye takes her copy of the second book and opens it, activating the in-between and reforming it into the world of the books.*

**SKYE**

... where you have a scene with a character that stood out to me.

*Skye and Stephen walk into the in-between. Stephen dons the same brown robe, staff, and Amulet he did a scene prior. The soundscape evolves, too — a bustling nighttime city. Skye stands near him for a second:*

**SKYE**

Somewhere along the way, Loric's separated from his fellow adventurers, roaming the streets of the Tunneled City. He's only starting to grasp the full potential of the Amulet. And huddled in a back alley is someone named...

*Skye then dons the darker-styled robe from the scene prior.*

**SKYE**

... Varden Chang. A mage from the Eastern Lands — which, like, I don't know if the Eastern Lands are inspired by Japan, Korea... but it's there. It's a part of your world.

*She carries her sword near her hip, concealing her Amulet, and approaches Stephen.*

**SKYE**

And she shares something in common with Loric — an Amulet of her own. What happens in that chapter is a lesson — she has things to show Loric about what it means to use an Amulet.

*Skye and Stephen raise their hands towards each other — and a flash of magic occurs between them.*

**SKYE**

They fend off assassins coming after them, brought under the Dark Lord's wills.

*They stand back-to-back, as shadows of other characters slink around them.*

**SKYE**

And Loric grows one step closer to activating his true potential.

... But Varden isn't in the movies. Because she got cut.

*They step away from their stances, and at "cut," Skye snaps the book shut — the in-between fades again. They return to Stephen's study.*

**SKYE**

I saw the movies before I read the books.

**SKYE (cont'd)**

So when I started reading, I found out we could have actually seen her. And we just... didn't.

**STEPHEN**

That's true.

**SKYE**

... Why was she cut?

**STEPHEN**

The Eastern Lands were never of narrative importance at that time. And Varden was never really a character of note. The writers didn't... consider her that way.

**SKYE**

What if she is now? What if we knew about where she comes from?

What if we saw more of the powers *she specifically* is capable of wielding? Because of where she comes from, because of who she is?

What if someone like me can have space in the world you've built?

**STEPHEN**

Well, I wouldn't know where to start. And I think the fact that that's so unfamiliar is why I frankly can't see / your —

**SKYE**

We have the foundations, though. She comes from an actual place within the world you've constructed. And if she hasn't mentored Loric in the movies... what if she becomes a mentor to Samuel instead?

**STEPHEN**

... Sure, but I don't have enough canonical material on the Eastern Lands for us to build a full character from it.

**SKYE**

There's not a single page of this I would write without your blessing, Mr. Henderson. And I'd love to see if we can bring Varden into the story you want to create.

**STEPHEN**

I'm sorry, I guess I was expecting something different. It seemed to me that your role as the writer would be to materially follow the guidance I had for consulting you.

I didn't realize you had all this... input in mind.

**SKYE**

I fully intend to respect that. And I also think, as the writer, that I can contribute something that can expand on the world you've made.

*Beat.*

**STEPHEN**

Here's the deal. At some point soon, we'll do something similar to the previous films and the writers I was working with for those.

I'll provide you a more tangible vision for the story I have in mind for Samuel. So that you can have a clearer idea of the direction I think your script should go in.

**SKYE**

I can do that. What would you like me to prepare?

**STEPHEN**

... Nothing in particular. Unless you'd also... like to explain what you have in mind for Varden and whatnot.

**SKYE**

Then that's what I'll have ready.

**STEPHEN**

... Sure thing.