Spring 2015

The Sorcerer King

Jennifer San Filippo
San Jose State University

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31979/etd.sr5a-yuu7>
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THE SORCERER KING

A Creative Project

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of English and Comparative Literature

San José State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Fine Arts

by

Jennifer San Filippo

May 2015

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The Designated Thesis Committee Approves the Thesis Titled

THE SORCERER KING

by

Jennifer San Filippo

APPROVED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND COMPARATIVE

LITERATURE

SAN JOSÉ STATE UNIVERSITY

May 2015

David Kahn	Department of Television, Radio, Film, and Theatre
Barnaby Dallas	Department of Television, Radio, Film, and Theatre
Alan Soldofsky	Department of English and Comparative Literature

ABSTRACT

The Sorcerer King is a musical stage adaptation of Charles Perrault's fairytale "Bluebeard." In a kingdom loosely based on eighteenth-century France, young courtier Catherine unwittingly falls for King Damien, the young monarch whose wife mysteriously disappeared years ago. Meanwhile, peasant Anne, Catherine's friend, secretly plots a rebellion against whom she perceives as a cruel and apathetic king. As Catherine and Damien's relationship quickly culminates in marriage, political tensions between the rich and poor rise. Catherine must confront the patriarchal barriers of her station as queen, as well as her own naiveté, to prevent civil war—and learn the truth about her husband.

This project began as a challenge to "Disneyfy" the tale of Bluebeard, an engaging exercise that revealed the sharp differences between the violence of original fairytales and the conflicting expectations of children's entertainment. Since then, the piece has taken on a surprising life of its own as certain themes and characters matured, creating a surprising mix of lighthearted comedy with heavy, dark dilemmas. Relevant to today's political climate, *The Sorcerer King* explores themes of status, responsibility, and the nature of authority. Tonally, the musical offers simple, enjoyable pieces alongside dramatic, sometimes morbid songs.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I owe a great deal of gratitude to Dr. David Kahn, without whose patient guidance and keen eye this script would not have gone farther than an ugly first draft.

Special thanks to Barnaby Dallas, for his consistent support in all my scriptwriting endeavors, and to Alan Soldofsky, with his honest enthusiasm for this unusual project.

And of course, to John, Rebecca, and Rachael.

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PREFACE

This musical is very loosely based on Charles Perrault's "Bluebeard," a fairy tale about a woman who marries the titular nobleman and learns that he is a serial killer: After he leaves for a trip, she disobeys his wishes and enters his forbidden chamber, discovering the bodies of his previous wives hanging on the walls. When he returns, a bloodstain on the key betrays her, and her brothers rescue her just as Bluebeard is about to kill her. Perrault concludes the story with this moral:

Curiosity, in spite of its many charms,
Can bring with it serious regrets;
You can see a thousand examples of it every day.
Women succumb, but it's a fleeting pleasure;
As soon as you satisfy it, it ceases to be.
And it always proves very, very costly. (Perrault 148)

I found it both curious and a bit frustrating that not only is the primary vice of this tale female curiosity (rather than murder), but also that much of the critical literature acknowledges this as a valid interpretation; Maria Tatar notes,

[F]olklorists have shown surprising interpretive confidence in reading Perrault's "Bluebeard" as a story about a woman's marital disobedience or sexual infidelity rather than about her husband's murderous violence... Illustrators, commentators, and retailers alike seem to have fallen in line with Perrault's stated view in his moral to the story that "Bluebeard" is about the evils of female curiosity.
(Tatar 141)

Therefore, it was important that my heroine's curiosity be her strongest virtue.

Catherine actively enjoys academic pursuits, and when questions concerning

Damien's motives are posed to her, she seeks answers through study and critical

reasoning. Her logistical approach to problems is what quickly makes her a capable leader.

Similar feminist themes are easy to encourage from the basic framework of “Bluebeard.” Catherine’s primary struggle with the leading men is largely based on sexist constructs that she must overcome. Both her father, Claude, and her brother, Tristan, constantly exert their will upon her, insisting that she submit to socially prescribed gender constructs. As a lady of court, she is expected to marry for status; all academic pursuits are nothing but distractions. Despite her status, she has very little say in larger life decisions. Even when she becomes queen, Catherine must fight for a chance to make politically controversial decisions while her husband is away.

Both thematically and musically, I took inspiration from *Wicked*, the Broadway musical accounting the untold story of *The Wizard of Oz*’s Wicked Witch of the West, also known as Elphaba, and her friendship with Glinda the Good. Much of Elphaba’s struggle involves the Wizard himself, who is more concerned with keeping the oppressed Animals (talking anthropomorphic animals) silent than serving Oz as a noble ruler. Both Catherine’s and Anne’s struggles are similar in that they must defy the standing government in order to achieve their goals, but the stakes are more personal as both girls harbor opposite sentiments for the king.

Despite the heavy political and moral themes of *Wicked*, Valerie Lynn Schrader notes the importance of humor in Stephen Schwartz and Winnie Holzman’s stage adaptation of the Gregory Maguire novel. Schrader discusses *Wicked*’s

employment of two stereotypes common in women's comedy: the "dumb blonde" and "reformer." She writes: "This stereotype [of the 'dumb blonde'] frames women as being unintelligent, dependent, self-doubting, and mere sexual objects in the eyes of men," while "the stereotypical role of the 'reformer' suggests that women must always be 'good' and seek to make men 'good' as well" (Schrader 51). What makes *Wicked* a work of feminist humor is the eventual breaking of these stereotypes: "[*Wicked*] subtly challenges stereotypes while superficially describing them, but it also overtly confronts sources of discrimination through the fictional Animal Rights Movement" (Schrader 62). Our "reformer" character, Elphaba, does not retain the proverbial "moral compass" for the sake of men's praise but rather does what is right despite the public shaming she receives; she also breaks the stereotype by reforming herself. G(a)linda, the "dumb blonde," is eventually humbled at the lost affections of Fiyero and becomes a true leader upon realizing that popularity is not a viable source of happiness.

Rather unwittingly, I have included similar stereotypes with my two leading female characters. Catherine's situation calls for the "dumb blonde" persona; she would do better to flirt and seek marriage in court, and her passionate but clumsy persona suggests an endearing naiveté (oddly enough, I also imagine her as a blonde). She subverts the stereotype with her inquisitive nature and intellectual pursuits in science as well as her eventual embrace of her royal title and subsequent responsibilities. Anne, perhaps the "reformer" of this tale, wants justice for

wrongdoings committed against her family and constantly refocuses other character's attention to the larger political goals at hand. Her divergence from the stereotype is her willingness to defy moral ethics to achieve these goals.

It is always difficult to separate a piece's influences from one's first. *The Glass Menagerie* by Tennessee Williams is the first script that really opened my eyes to the unique finesse and craft required in scriptwriting. I was especially struck by Laura's struggle against her crippling shyness with Jim and the frustrating sadness invoked when the reader realizes their relationship is over before it begins. Despite Damien's villainy, I strove to create that same aching desire for the romance to play out as it should. I want the audience to silently beg Damien to change, to wish away the small clues of his true nature, rather than insist that Catherine should leave him.

I have always been impressed with Williams' dialogue as well. He does an excellent job writing concise, expressive dialogue that remains easily accessible for actors and audiences and yet avoids useless small talk and clichés. In *A Streetcar Named Desire*, for example,

Stella: [*crossing to bureau*] Stanley doesn't give me a regular allowance, he likes to pay bills himself, but—this morning he gave me ten dollars to smooth things over. You take five of it, Blanche, and I'll keep the rest.

Blanche: Oh, no. No, Stella.

Stella: [*insisting*] I know how it helps your morale just haven a little pocket-money on you.

Blanche: No, thank you—I'll take to the streets!

Stella: Talk sense! How did you happen to get so low on funds?

Blanche: Money just goes—it goes places. [*She rubs her forehead.*]

Sometime today I've got to get hold of a Bromo!

Stella: I'll fix you one now.

Blanche: Not yet—I've got to keep thinking! (Williams 2213)

With just a little bit of seemingly simple conversation and minimal stage direction, Williams presents character exposition primarily through subtext and diction. Even his punctuation is well chosen, giving the reader a guide to where vocal inflection should occur with em dashes and exclamation points, while still allowing the actor some creative freedom. I took inspiration from his work for my own dialog.

More recent influences include Disney's *Frozen*, an animated musical loosely inspired by Hans Christian Anderson's "The Snow Queen." I was specifically inspired by the music of *Frozen*. In an interview, Robert Lopez and Kristen Anderson-Lopez, the husband-wife songwriting team of *Frozen*, spoke about the importance of cohesive storytelling through their work. "We wanted to write the kind of movie where, if you took the songs out, the movie wouldn't make sense," said Robert Lopez. "The songs would each bear some story weight" (DP/30 8:43). Such dynamics can easily be spotted in songs like "Let It Go" and "For the First Time in Forever (Reprise)," which are scenes of conflict and transformation, rather than just character exposition. Stephen Sondheim, renowned composer-lyricist of *Company*, *Sweeney Todd*, and *Into the Woods*, speaks more to this effect but also recognizes a need for balance: "If the lyric is too packed, then the audience's ear can't take everything in. It's like an over-egged cake; it just is too rich. On the other hand, if

the lyric is too sparse, it's dull. So it's always a juggling act" (PBS NewsHour 1:27).

This specificity, Joanne Gordon suggests, is why Sondheim has made such a name for himself:

Although the songs and dances in a Rodgers and Hammerstein musical relate to character and text, they have an active life outside the theater. Many of their tunes are standards in the world of popular music. Sondheim's music and lyrics rarely possess this independent life. They are so intimately linked to text and so intricately woven into the fabric of the entire work that they cannot easily stand alone. Other than "Send In the Clowns," Sondheim has not written a 'hit' tune. (Gurewitsch 5)

Like Sondheim and the Lopezes, I also strove to use my music and lyrics as a tool of world-building that not only creates context within the musical, but also requires it to achieve its greatest impact. "It's Merry When You Marry" is a lighthearted, energetic song in which Catherine complains to Anne about the problems of high society. The reader may certainly see some implied tension, as Anne is a lower class citizen, but nothing is truly addressed until the reprise in the second act, when Anne rails against Catherine for being passive in her new station as queen. The reprise takes the original melody and twists it darkly, allowing new dimension in the recurring theme of status and responsibility.

It is important to look at other adaptors of Perrault's "Bluebeard" as well. In her essay, Shuli Barzilai takes a look at Angela Carter's "The Bloody Chamber" and Anne Thackeray Ritchie's *Bluebeard's Keys*. She writes,

Bluebeard's Keys may seem by now so far removed from its major fairy-tale intertext, from Perrault's "Bluebeard," that it can no longer properly be called a revision or even an adaptation. However, what is

remarkable about this retelling is how many identifiable story elements it is able to include and integrate into its divergent narrative. It is as if the author had set herself the task of seeing how far she could stretch the diegetic structure of “Bluebeard,” and how far she could undermine its institutional modalities, while still remaining within it. (Barzilai 117)

It seems, then, that to divert so boldly from the original “Bluebeard” is not uncommon, yet the themes constantly entice writers to revisit the story with a modern perspective. Carter, Ritchie, and even more recent writers such as Margaret Atwood (“Bluebeard’s Egg”) have adapted this tale in striking ways, shifting the feminist lens from different angles to analyze the tale’s patriarchal themes. According to Marina Warner, we especially have Carter to thank for a rising interest in fairy tales. With a slew of post-war feminists renouncing the fairy tale genre and its heroines, Carter “refused to join in rejecting or denouncing fairy tales, but instead embraced the whole stigmatised genre, its stock characters and well-known plots, and with wonderful verve and invention, perverse grace and wicked fun, soaked them in a new fiery liquor that brought them leaping back to life” (Warner).

For further study of “Bluebeard” adaptations, we might turn to renowned fairy tale scholar Jack Zipes, who notes that the effacing of the original author’s name is a fundamental part of the “memetic process that enable[s] a particular fairy tale to become popular and classical in Western culture” (*Irresistible* 44). The tale of Bluebeard in particular, Zipes notes, has undergone a surprising number of retellings, each one further burying Perrault’s name in favor of the adaptor’s. But while fairy tale adaptations are a rising trend, one must be wary of the ever-present Disney name

looming overhead. Zipes discusses the effect of Disney's commercialization of fairy tales. He writes that bringing the fairy tale to the screen was a chance to pull the fairy tale from the private experience of literature and return it to its originally communal experience:

Instead of using technology to enhance the communal aspects of narrative and bring about major changes in viewing stories to stir and animate viewers, [Disney] employed animators and technology to stop thinking about change, to return to his films, and to long nostalgically for neatly ordered patriarchal realms. ("Disney Spell" 352)

Zipes further discusses that Disney's tight control over the end product and unwillingness to share credit left little chance for communally inspired creativity; not only were the talented animators slighted, but the need for audience imagination—once necessary for both oral and literary tales—is never encouraged. A stage adaptation, however, is arguably the most honest return to the oral tradition that the modern era maintains: a group of performers work together to tell the story to a live audience, and while much depends on the production, viewers must imagine what they see in its intended context, beyond the physical stage presented.

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THE SORCERER KING

By

Jennifer San Filippo

September 2014

Cast of Characters

<u>Catherine:</u>	17, young astronomy enthusiast
<u>Damien:</u>	23, the king
<u>Tristan:</u>	19, Catherine's brother and guardsman
<u>Anne:</u>	18, peasant rebel
<u>William:</u>	47, university professor
<u>Claude:</u>	Catherine and Tristan's father
<u>Jean:</u>	Damien's attendant
<u>Josephine:</u>	16, Damien's late wife
<u>Rebels:</u>	Ensemble of peasants
<u>Advisors:</u>	Three advisors to the king
<u>Courtiers:</u>	Ensemble of elite

ACT IScene 1

A basement, dark and dank and hardly used. Eerie, mournful music drifts over the stage and swells. Enter REBELS, mostly women, dressed in black, in mourning.

Song: "THE REBELLION (IN THE MINES)"

REBEL 1

(sings)

MY HUSBAND WORKED EVERYDAY
IN THE MINES
TOILED THROUGH SOIL HE SPENT HIS DAYS
IN THE MINES

REBEL 2

MY SON WAS FOURTEEN WHEN HE WENT TO WORK
IN THE MINES
A BROKEN LEG, A SPRAINED WRIST
FROM THE MINES

REBEL 3

OUR MEN SEARCHED AND DUG AND GROUND THEIR WAY
THROUGH CAVES OF ROCK AND DARK DECAY

REBELS 1,2,&3

AND THEY FOUND NOTHING.

REBEL 1

WITH THEIR FINAL BREATH
WITH CAVES THAT PULLED THEM
TO THEIR DEATH
NOT A SINGLE STONE TO BUY THEIR LIVES
THEY FOUND NOTHING

REBELS 2&3

THEY FOUND NOTHING

ENSEMBLE

NOTHING...

The ensemble of Rebels bow their heads in mourning. The music shifts as ANNE enters. When she sings, the Rebels slowly turn their attention towards her and give her center stage.

ANNE

(sings)

THEY SAY THAT WHEN A LOVED ONE IS LOST
A GLOWING STAR IS ADDED TO THE SKY

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ANNE (cont'd)
BUT I SUBMIT TO YOU
THAT IF THAT MYTH WERE TRUE
THERE'D BE NO SUCH THING AS NIGHT
(growing anger)
TOO LONG WE HAVE WAITED
FOR RELIEF FROM OUR NEW KING
THE YOUNG SON OF A TYRANT

ENSEMBLE
OH WHAT SORROW HE DID BRING

ANNE
HE TAKES OUR CROPS TO FEED HIMSELF
AND ALLOWS HIS MEN TO STEAL OUT WEALTH
BUT LET US NOT FORGET THE WORST GRIEVANCE OF ALL

ENSEMBLE
OUR MEN TOIL BENEATH THE EARTH
DIG THROUGH SOIL WHERE NOTHING'S WORTH
THE LIVES THAT WE'VE LOST
IT WON'T STOP UNTIL HE'S GONE, I FORETELL

ENSEMBLE
NOT UNTIL WE REBEL!

WILLIAM enters and breaks through the crowd.

WILLIAM
What are you talking about? Anne, what is this?

ANNE
We've gathered here tonight to take a stand against
King Damien. We've asked him for years to stop this
ridiculous mining project in the northern mountains,
and even after the latest tragedy, he still refuses.

WILLIAM
Tragedy?

REBEL 4
A large network of caves collapsed. Twenty-two men were
killed.

ANNE
And our king did *nothing*. He could've prevented this.
He could've listened to us when we first said we
shouldn't dig in the mines.
(sings)
THERE'S NOTHING THERE TO FIND

(CONTINUED)

REBEL 5
NO SILVER

REBEL 6
NO GOLD

REBEL 7
NO REASON TO GROW OLD

ENSEMBLE
IN THE MINES
(echoing)
NO HOPE IN THE MINES
NO LIGHT IN THE MINES
NO LIFE IN THE MINES

The music softens as William speaks.

WILLIAM
I am sorry. Truly, I am. Your loss is unfathomable. But
violence is not the answer.
(sings)
WHAT YOU SPEAK IS TREASON, YOU MUST CEASE
AS MUCH AS WE WISH OTHERWISE
THE KING THAT'S OUR IS KING BY RIGHT
WHAT YOU SEEK CAN BE BOUGHT WITH PEACE

The music is suddenly harsh again as Anne sings.

ANNE
INSPIRING WORDS FROM A MAN LIKE YOU
WHO'S WITNESSED MORE THAN CAN BE PROVED
AS MUCH AS YOU PREACH PEACE, I'M NOT DECEIVED
(to the rebels)
A FORMER SCHOLAR TO THE KING
HAS WITNESSED THINGS YOU WON'T BELIEVE
(to William)
TELL THEM EXACTLY WHAT YOU TOLD ME
TELL THEM OF A KING WE MISPERCEIVE
OH HOW WE GRIEVE!

REBEL 4
(speaks)
Is it true? You once served the king?

WILLIAM
I--I did--

REBEL 3
What was he like?

(CONTINUED)

REBEL 5

Why did you leave?

REBEL 6

Do you think he killed the queen?

The rest of the crowd tenses in surprise at the mention of the queen.

REBELS

(murmuring)

The queen! May she rest in peace. What happened to her? We don't know that she died. Do you really believe he killed her?

WILLIAM

No, no! Stop, please, these are just rumors. I served as the royal librarian for a short time, but I don't know what happened to Queen Josephine.

ANNE

Tell them what you do know, William. Tell them what you saw.

William looks around at the crowd, sorry that he ever drew attention to himself. He sighs, resigned.

WILLIAM

All right.

As William speaks, Anne and the Rebels back away, and the stage forms into a flashback: A library. Shelves of books and a desk roll in to set the scene.

WILLIAM

I had been teaching at the university when one of the king's advisers appointed me to manage the library. It was fairly small, but poorly organized. Her Majesty came often to read.

William takes a seat at the desk and begins pouring over papers and stacks of books, immersed in the memory.

Enter JOSEPHINE, 16, dressed very ornately, perhaps uncomfortably so. She seems a bit shy but offers a wide smile to William as she appears.

When he sees her, he stands and bows.

(CONTINUED)

WILLIAM

Good afternoon, Your Majesty.

JOSEPHINE

Hello, William. How is the library coming?

WILLIAM

I'm afraid not so well. I've tried compiling a list of all the texts so I can organize them by author, but not every text has an author, and then of course there's subject matter to consider, the date it was written, how much is historical fact as opposed to folktales and legends, and there's the--

JOSEPHINE

William, I'm getting a headache.

WILLIAM

Forgive me, Your Majesty. I completely understand.

Josephine takes a random book from the pile and opens it, begins flipping through it idly.

JOSEPHINE

I find it odd that King Julian had so many books in his chambers.

WILLIAM

I'm told he was an avid scholar for much of his life. It seems when the previous librarian passed away, he took all the responsibilities upon himself.

JOSEPHINE

(absently)

Odd...

WILLIAM

Your Majesty?

JOSEPHINE

Hm? Oh, forgive me. I mean this book.

WILLIAM

Ah, that one is a history of our kingdom, one of the older ones. Most of the books here are histories and legends.

JOSEPHINE

May I...?

WILLIAM

Of course.

(CONTINUED)

Josephine picks up the book, takes a seat nearby, and begins to read. A few of the rebels come on stage, interrupting the memory, and stare at Josephine wonderingly.

REBEL 4

She was quite beautiful.

WILLIAM

Yes.

REBEL 5

(almost pleading)

What happened to her?

WILLIAM

I wish I knew. I only know what happened next.

Enter DAMIEN, looking regal and well suited to his power. The rebels back away, frightened and repelled by the sight of him. He doesn't see them; the scene returns to the memory as dialogue continues.

DAMIEN

Josephine.

Josephine smiles, but William hastens to his feet and bows lowly.

WILLIAM

Your Majesty.

Damien's attention doesn't leave Josephine until he places a kiss on her cheek.

DAMIEN

(looking at William)

Who is this?

JOSEPHINE

Damien--my lord, this is William, our new librarian.

DAMIEN

A librarian! What an excellent idea. Father's chambers were a mess with books. He was quite obsessed.

WILLIAM

(uncertain)

Yes--I mean, perhaps, Your Majesty. He seemed very interested in a wide array of histories of the kingdom.

(CONTINUED)

JOSEPHINE

This book here is about the founding of the kingdom.
Have you heard this story?

Damien takes the book from his wife and begins to read. As Josephine speaks, his expression changes from polite curiosity to intense, almost angry focus.

JOSEPHINE

It says that a great hero, a leader of his people, caught a star one night with his bare hands. He became the first king.

WILLIAM

Many of the books are quite similar, though some seem to mix the legends with the history as if they're the same. There's not much continuity, either, I'm afraid, though that's not unexpected with--

DAMIEN

Is it true?

(beat)

Forgive me, I meant--the history and the legends. Can you distinguish between them?

WILLIAM

Not fully, I suppose, but some things are quite obvious. The legend of the first king, of course, catching a falling star with his hand and such, but there are stories like that sprinkled throughout the histories, some rather dark. Some discretion is needing in reading those, of course.

DAMIEN

(absently, still reading)

Of course.

(beat)

I'd like to take this one, if it doesn't hinder your work.

WILLIAM

Certainly, Your Majesty.

Damien closes the book and holds it casually, as if his interest is simply mild curiosity.

Damien turns to his wife, and the two begin speaking without sound. A few rebels intrude upon the memory, observing.

As William speaks, the couple exit together, Damien's arm around Josephine.

(CONTINUED)

WILLIAM

I confess I didn't find anything truly peculiar at the time, though I suppose I should've realized that he had learned our history in his lessons as a boy. But there was a slow change in dynamic between them that was impossible to ignore.

William takes his seat and returns to studying, and the scene returns to memory, though the rebels don't go far. Josephine enters, stomping in frustration.

William sees her and hurries to his feet.

WILLIAM

Forgive me, Your Majesty, I didn't see--

JOSEPHINE

How many books, William?

WILLIAM

I...beg your pardon?

JOSEPHINE

How many books has *His Majesty* taken from this library?

WILLIAM

(fumbling)

Oh, well, Your Majesty, I'm afraid my records aren't the most, uh...

(off of her glare, relenting)

Fourteen, Your Majesty.

JOSEPHINE

And how does he expect to read fourteen books in three weeks unless he neglects his responsibilities, his people, his wife... He's become obsessed, like his father.

WILLIAM

I'm sure he'll slow down when--

JOSEPHINE

You don't understand. The stories in those books... They...they aren't good. They terrify me.

Josephine exits, close to tears.

WILLIAM

That was the last time I saw her.

(CONTINUED)

REBEL 2

Did she run away?

REBEL 4

Or was she murdered?

REBEL 5

Perhaps suicide?

WILLIAM

I don't know. There was no note, or a--body. She just vanished.

Damien, dressed in black, enters with a stack of books and places them on the desk. Damien's eyes are vacant and unfocused, completely unaware of his spectators.

WILLIAM

I tried to convince him that she might not be dead, that she had just left, but I suppose there was little difference to him.

Damien looks up at William, as though William is speaking to him, and shakes his head dejectedly. He exits.

WILLIAM

He was not the same after that. His mind always seemed somewhere else. Shortly after, I was dismissed from my position.

The memory is over. The shelves and desk and chairs are removed from the stage. The rest of the rebels enter, including Anne, who takes center stage.

ANNE

This is the ruler we have. A king so neglectful that his own wife left him. Or worse.

WILLIAM

Anne, we don't know what happened--

ANNE

We know enough! We know he doesn't care, that nothing will be done to change the way we live now.

WILLIAM

What if he would listen to you? Give you an audience to discuss your grievances?

(CONTINUED)

REBEL 1
We've tried.

REBEL 2
Many times.

REBEL 3
We can't even get past the main gate.

WILLIAM
Perhaps if I arranged a meeting myself. I still have ties in the palace. The king's advisers might be able to sway him.

ANNE
It seems highly unlikely, William.

WILLIAM
But let me try, at least. Please. We can seek justice for your loved ones without violence.

The Rebels exchange glances uncertainly, then all turn to read Anne's expression.

ANNE
All right, William. We won't do anything until you request an audience.

WILLIAM
Thank you. I know we can right these wrongs.

William exits.

REBEL 1
(to Anne)
Do you really think it'll work?

A ghostly version of THE REBELLION theme drifts under Anne's words. When she sings, the song begins slowly and quickly builds.

ANNE
No, but let William do what he likes. He'll be less inclined to stop us when he realizes what kind of king he's really protecting.

(sings)

HE'LL SOON SEE THAT I AM RIGHT
DAMIEN DOESN'T CARE ABOUT OUR PLIGHT
A KING WHO DOES NOT LEAD DESERVES NO THRONE

REBEL 6
WE ARE STARVING

(CONTINUED)

REBEL 7

WE ARE POOR

ANNE

SO WHAT'S LEFT TO US BUT WAR?

FROM DAMIEN'S GREED WE MUST PROTECT OUR OWN

ENSEMBLE

PEACE WON'T LAST UNTIL HE'S OVERTHROWN

WE WILL OVERTHROW THE KING!

Scene 2

Moreau Estate. Catherine's room is stage left, where CATHERINE sleeps, sprawled gracelessly across her bed, still dressed. Charts and diagrams litter the area. A telescope points out the window.

CLAUDE (O.S.)

Catherine. Catherine! You'd better be awake.

Catherine bolts awake, groggy and blinking the sleep out of her eyes. She sees the mess of charts and scrambles to collect them in a heaping mess. With nowhere else to hide them, she shoves them under the bed.

Too late, she realizes her telescope is still up and in full view. She lunges for it and tries dismantling it, but there's no time--

CLAUDE (O.S.)

Catherine, I swear, if you make today difficult--

Enter CLAUDE, dressed too finely for this early in the morning. Out of options, Catherine holds up the partly dismantled telescope behind her.

CLAUDE

Ah, you're up.

CATHERINE

Good morning, Father.

CLAUDE

Did you just get up?

CATHERINE

No. I'm dressed, see?

(CONTINUED)

CLAUDE

Weren't you wearing those clothes yesterday?

CATHERINE

(beat)

No.

Catherine's grip slips on the telescope. It topples and crashes to the floor.

Claude closes his eyes and sighs, fighting the too-familiar frustration.

CLAUDE

You were up all night again.

Catherine scrambles to pick up the telescope and get it out of sight.

CATHERINE

No, I wasn't! Papa!

As he speaks, Claude scours the bedroom until he finds her hidden charts and diagrams.

CLAUDE

You sat at the window, and stared at the stars all night, and drew *pictures*, and wasted your time--

Claude finds the charts and rifles through them roughly. Catherine reaches to save them.

CATHERINE

Papa, don't--

CLAUDE

Fooling with ridiculous--

CATHERINE

Papa!

CLAUDE

Enough! This is the most ridiculous thing I've ever heard of. You sneak away from your lessons during the day to go sit in a university full of *men* and pour over these ridiculous sketches--for *what?*

CATHERINE

But, Mother used to--

CLAUDE

Your mother, for all her interest in this nonsense, never *once* failed in her responsibilities as a lady of the court.

(CONTINUED)

(beat)

Get dressed. You'll eat breakfast with your family like a lady, and then you have a dance lesson. And clean up *this* before you come down. If I see these again, they go in the fireplace.

Claude exits.

Catherine looks around. She starts cleaning up, smoothing out the papers that Claude crinkled, but soon slows down, her anger fading to despondence. She looks out the window, thinking.

Song: "ONE DAY AWAY"

CATHERINE

(sings)

OH LOOK, THE SUN
IN ALL ITS BRIGHTLY SPLENDOR
TAKING UP THE ENTIRE SKY
TO REMIND US ALL OF OUR LIVES
DOWN HERE

LET'S PRETEND
WE'RE OH-SO BIG AND IMPORTANT
THAT WE'RE NOT JUST LITTLE SPECKS
IN A GREAT UNIVERSE

STARE AT THE GROUND
LIKE IT'S ALL THAT'S THERE
FORGET ALL YOUR JOYS
ANY REASON YOU'RE HERE
WHAT'S RIGHT IN FRONT OF YOU IS ALL
YOU'LL EVER KNOW

BUT TELL ME WHEN
THE WORLD IS STILL
THE LIGHTS OF NIGHT
ARE THE GREATEST THRILL
A SECRET HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT
SO NOW IT'S ONLY UP TO TIME
TO DRAG THAT STAR ACROSS THE SKY
SO I CAN SEE MILLIONS MORE TONIGHT

OH YES THE NIGHT IS JUST ONE DAY AWAY

MAYBE AT LAST I'LL FINALLY SEE
WHERE YOU ARE AND WHERE I'LL BE
BUT I KNOW PATIENCE IS KEY
SO UNTIL THEN
I'LL WAIT FOR NIGHT
IT'S JUST ONE DAY AWAY
OH YES THE NIGHT
IS JUST ONE DAY AWAY!

(CONTINUED)

At the end of the song, TRISTAN enters. They halt and stare at each other in surprise.

CATHERINE
Tristan.

TRISTAN
Good morning.

CATHERINE
What are you doing home?

TRISTAN
(strained)
Is that anyway to welcome your brother?

Catherine straightens and curtsies deeply, mockingly.

CATHERINE
Ah, apologies, Sir Knight. How do you fair this fine morning?

TRISTAN
(defeated)
Catherine, please.

CATHERINE
Surely His Majesty hasn't released the great warrior from his service?

TRISTAN
No. I'm here to escort you and Father to the ball.

CATHERINE
Of course.
(dropping act, honestly confused)
What ball?

TRISTAN
You can't be serious.

CATHERINE
There's a ball?

TRISTAN
You really don't know?

CATHERINE
(frustrated)
Yes, I really don't know! What ball?

(CONTINUED)

TRISTAN

The Harvest Moon Ball? It's tomorrow.

CATHERINE

Oh. That's not a *ball*.

As Tristan speaks, Catherine starts gathering her things, getting ready to leave.

TRISTAN

It is this year. Some special arrangement with the lower class, I suppose. Apparently there's been some unrest concerning the mining project up north, so this is a way to make peace for...Where are you going?

CATHERINE

Nowhere.

TRISTAN

Breakfast is almost ready, and Father wants us to practice dancing--

CATHERINE

Bye!

Catherine rushes out before he can stop her.

TRISTAN

You haven't changed a bit.

Scene 3

A university classroom. William sits at his desk speaking with a STUDENT. A few other STUDENTS, all male, mill about; class has just ended. Anne storms in. The students give her odd, surprised looks.

ANNE

Will--Professor Durand.

WILLIAM

Hello, Anne. I'll be with you in a moment.

Anne stands right in front of his desk, blocking William from the other student.

WILLIAM

I'm afraid you'll have to excuse me, Aubrey. We'll discuss your coursework later.

The student gives Anne a look of contempt and exits.

(CONTINUED)

WILLIAM

How may I help you, Anne?

ANNE

Is this some kind of joke?

WILLIAM

Anne--

ANNE

A ball? *That's* your plan? The Harvest Moon Festival is now a *ball*?

WILLIAM

It was the best I could do.

ANNE

A festival is no place to talk politics! Why couldn't the king

WILLIAM

I only managed to speak with his advisers.

ANNE

Oh, lovely.

WILLIAM

This is an invitation for all citizens to attend.

ANNE

No one will take us seriously. They hope we get drunk and forget the whole thing. Or else the king himself will.

WILLIAM

Anne--

ANNE

This is not what you promised. This is not a proper offer of peace.

WILLIAM

(firm)

Stop looking for reasons to take violent action. You agreed to remain peaceful for tonight and give negotiations a chance.

ANNE

You truly think one night is going to fix everything?

WILLIAM

I think it's a step in the right direction.

(CONTINUED)

CATHERINE (O.S.)
Professor!

WILLIAM
(to Anne, more quietly)
And it's all you have now.

Enter Catherine, struggling to carry all her charts.

CATHERINE
Professor Durand!

WILLIAM
Good afternoon, Catherine.

Catherine pushes past a few other students, nearly dropping her charts.

CATHERINE
Excuse me, sorry. On your right, there. Oh, can you grab that? Thanks. Nice jacket. Professor, did you see it? Oh, hi Anne.

ANNE
Hi, Cat.

WILLIAM
See what?

Catherine dumps her charts on the desk unceremoniously.

CATHERINE
There was a small meteor shower. Well, I think, I'm not sure. Could've been smudges on my telescope lens. And I thought Mars was a bit brighter, did you?

TRISTAN
I didn't look, but it's that time of year, so I wouldn't be surprised. And what time was the meteor shower?

CATHERINE
Around two o'clock?

WILLIAM
Goodness. Catherine, you should get sleep.

CATHERINE
Would you mind if I took a look at your charts? Just to compare from last year?

(CONTINUED)

WILLIAM

Of course not, help yourself. I'm sure Anne will help you tidy up when you're done.

Anne gives him a hard, knowing look.

WILLIAM

I'm afraid I must be off. I'll see you ladies tomorrow at the ball.

CATHERINE

Bye, Professor.

He exits. Catherine starts looking at charts while Anne begins sweeping.

CATHERINE

(to Anne)

You're going to the ball?

ANNE

Yes, I suppose.

CATHERINE

Oh, then maybe I won't be so difficult about going.

Song: "IT'S MERRY WHEN YOU MARRY"

ANNE

A ball sounds like fun. Dancing, fancy dresses, and I bet the food is amazing.

CATHERINE

Yeah, but you've never worn a corset.

ANNE

Fair point.

CATHERINE

(sings)

YOU'VE NEVER HAD TO FIT INTO PINCHY SHOES

ANNE

True.

CATHERINE

YOU'VE NEVER BEEN SO TIED INSIDE YOUR POOFY FAT DRESS
THAT YOU CAN BARELY MOVE
YOU'VE NEVER HAD TO FLIRT
YOU'VE NEVER HAD TO GIGGLE AND SMILE AND WAVE
YOU'VE NEVER HAD TO SAY TONIGHT
IS THE HIGHLIGHT OF YOUR LIFE
AND PRATTLE TILL HE SAYS "GOOD DAY"

(CONTINUED)

ANNE

Okay, but wait--

CATHERINE

BUT SOMETIMES
I WONDER IF IT'S WORTH IT
IF I'LL MEET A MAN WHO'LL HOLD MY ATTENTION
AND DESERVES IT
AND THE CROWD WILL CHEER AND WAVE
ON OUR SUNNY WEDDING DAY
AND IT'S ALL DOWN HILL FROM THERE

ANNE

I think you're being a bit overly dramatic.

CATHERINE

Oh, really?

(sings)

YOU'VE NEVER HAD TO DANCE
AND TRUST ME, IT'S DIFFICULT ENOUGH TO WALTZ
WHEN THE MAN YOUR FATHER CHOSE
KEEPS STEPPING ON YOUR TOES
AND HE HOLDS YOU WITH SWEATY PALMS

(solemn)

YOU'VE NEVER BEEN THOUGHT A FOOL
YOU'VE NEVER BEEN TOLD THAT YOU SHOULDN'T SPEAK
TO HAVE EVERYTHING YOU SAY
BE DISREGARDED IN EVERY WAY
BECAUSE YOU'RE SMALL AND PRETTY AND WEAK
BUT SOMETIMES, I WONDER IF IT'S WORTH IT
JUST HOLD MY HEAD UP HIGH AND WAIT AND ENDURE IT
I'LL PRETEND THAT I DON'T KNOW
WHERE IT IS I WANT TO GO
FOR ONCE, MY BROTHER WON'T ARGUE
FOR ONCE, MY FATHER WILL SMILE
AND EVERYONE WILL BE EXACTLY
WHERE THEY SHOULD

ANNE

Catherine, that's not true--

CATHERINE

And that's exactly why I won't!

(sings)

OH SURE, IT'S MERRY WHEN YOU MARRY BUT
UNTIL THEN I'LL BE WARY
OF EVERY MAN THAT COMES MY WAY

ANNE

You still can't miss the ball.

(CONTINUED)

CATHERINE

I can try.

*Catherine sits quietly, considering.*Scene 4*At the Harvest Moon Ball. COURTIERS are dressed splendidly, talking and flirting with each other. Music is playing, but no one is dancing yet. Enter Catherine, Tristan, and Claude.*

CLAUDE

Stop fidgeting, Catherine.

CATHERINE

Let me undo my hair. This bun is awful.

CLAUDE

Your bun looks fine.

CATHERINE

I mean it's uncomfortable.

CLAUDE

And stand up straight.

CATHERINE

(still fidgeting)

Believe me, Father, I really don't have a choice.

TRISTAN

Catherine, please.

Catherine gives him a look, which he ignores. She looks at the crowd.

CATHERINE

Why is no one dancing?

TRISTAN

I guess the king hasn't made an appearance yet. We should probably socialize.

CATHERINE

Great, I'm going to go that way and socialize.

TRISTAN

What?

CATHERINE

Yes, let's split up. Cover more ground, you know.

(CONTINUED)

TRISTAN

Catherine...

CATHERINE

Come on, you don't want me tagging along when the girls over there is eyeing you, do you?

Catherine gestures to a group of GIRLS who are indeed looking at Tristan and giggling. While he's distracted, Catherine casually slips out of the ballroom unnoticed.

Enter Anne and William, along with two other Rebels. Anne and the Rebels are obviously out of place; their best clothes are nothing like those of the Courtiers, who stair disdainfully in their direction.

ANNE

This was a terrible idea.

WILLIAM

Give it a chance, Anne. Why don't you introduce yourself?

ANNE

I'm not speaking with anyone other than the king.

WILLIAM

You can at least attempt conversation with some of his advisers. You're likely to get a more cooperative audience with them.

ANNE

Because they know how to say a lot of nothing. I won't get any guarantees from an adviser.

WILLIAM

Don't be impossible, please.

Anne folds her arms and holds her ground, glaring at William. The other two rebels share a glance, shrug, and fold their arms like Anne. William sighs in exasperation.

WILLIAM

Fine. We'll wait.

In his chambers, stage left, Damien is dressing himself in uncomfortable and elaborate clothing. He seems to be looking in a mirror, and though he appears impressive, he is largely apathetic to what he sees.

(CONTINUED)

Enter JEAN.

JEAN

Your Majesty, most of the guests have arrived.

DAMIEN

And yet the more I try to muster the sense of importance, the less inclined I am to go downstairs.

JEAN

Sire, I hate to seem out of place--

DAMIEN

Of course you do--

JEAN

But this ball could stop the various attacks your soldiers have been enduring.

DAMIEN

"Attacks" seems like a strong word. They should be able to handle peasants.

JEAN

And yet everyone will benefit if you can convince the... lower class that you mean them well.

DAMIEN

It should be irrelevant.

JEAN

Sire?

DAMIEN

(still quiet, but fierce)

I should not be questioned. I should not be challenged. My authority should not be a topic of discussion. I am the king. I have other matters to attend to.

JEAN

(uncertain, a bit fearful)

Of course, Your Majesty. I will fetch your cape.

Jean exits. Damien stares at himself in the mirror, then looks away, frustrated.

Song: "THE TRIAL OF THE KING"

DAMIEN

(sings)

HE DOESN'T KNOW
WHO ELSE CAN KNOW
THE BURDEN I POSSESS

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DAMIEN (cont'd)

A KINGDOM I MUST COMMAND
RESENTMENT I MUST STAND
HOW CAN I PLEASE SOME BUT NOT THE REST
I LEAVE THEM ALONE, THEY STARVE
I RULE WITH POWER, THEY CHARGE
WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO WHEN
THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS RIGHT
I MUST FOREVER ENDURE
THE TRIAL OF THE KING

WHAT'S THERE TO DO
WHAT CAN BE ACHIEVED
WITH JUST TALKING AND PLANNING

TO MAKE A KINGDOM GREAT
THERE'S MUCH I MUST TAKE
TO SEE THIS VISION REALIZED

I SEEK ONLY TO LEAD THEM ALL
YET HERE THEY ARE TONIGHT, THE GALL
TO SUGGEST THAT MY RULE
IS LESS THAN DIVINE
I ALONE MUST ENDURE
THE TRIAL OF THE KING

TRAGEDIES THAT I COULD NOT HAVE FORESEEN
AND JOSEPHINE...

Enter Catherine, pulling a small telescope out of the folds of her skirt. She spots a window and, without even noticing Damien, points her telescope up and looks out, completely focused.

Damien turns and sees her.

DAMIEN

Excuse me.

Catherine straightens in surprise.

CATHERINE

Oh! Sorry, I didn't see you.

DAMIEN

What are you doing?

CATHERINE

Looking through a telescope.

She returns to stargazing. Damien stares at her, somewhat helpless.

(CONTINUED)

DAMIEN

Do you...need to do that here?

CATHERINE

(not looking up)

Considering this is the first window I've found, I don't have much choice.

DAMIEN

(struggling)

I...Do you know where you are?

CATHERINE

Um, the king's palace. A bit smaller than I expected, but the view is perfect.

DAMIEN

You...

(giving up)

You like the view, huh?

CATHERINE

Mmhmm. You've got a nice view of Mars from here.

Damien comes to the window, suddenly curious. He looks over her shoulder.

DAMIEN

Are you talking about the star by Ursa Major?

CATHERINE

Just under it, yes.

DAMIEN

(flirtatious)

You certain that's not Venus?

CATHERINE

No, it's not Venus.

DAMIEN

Why not?

CATHERINE

Well because...What makes you think it's Venus?

DAMIEN

Because it's so bright.

Enter Jean carrying a cape.

(CONTINUED)

JEAN

Pardon the wait, I--

(seeing Catherine)

Oh, forgive my intrusion, sire--

DAMIEN

(speaking over him)

It's quite all right, Jean. I'll take the cape.

He does.

DAMIEN

I'll be down in a moment.

Jean bows and exits again.

CATHERINE

Who was that?

DAMIEN

The king's ever-helpful attendant. I have to go downstairs.

(pause)

Are you coming?

CATHERINE

Hm?

DAMIEN

Downstairs.

CATHERINE

Sure.

Catherine continues to look out her telescope.

CATHERINE

I wish I had my telescope from home.

DAMIEN

(beat)

I also have a telescope.

CATHERINE

Did you happen to bring it with you?

Jean enters again, holding a crown.

JEAN

Pardon me, sire--

(CONTINUED)

DAMIEN

Thank you, Jean.

Jean places it on his head and exits. Damien ties on the cape, approaches Catherine, and offers his arm.

DAMIEN

If you would be so kind.

CATHERINE

To what?

DAMIEN

To let me escort you downstairs.

Catherine sighs and lowers her telescope.

CATHERINE

All right.

Catherine takes his arm and looks up.

CATHERINE

Why are you wearing...?
(she realizes)

Oh my--

Trumpets BLARE a fanfare. Catherine jumps in surprise, but Damien smiles.

Damien leads Catherine back into the main hall, where courtiers are milling about. Upon his entrance, every one bows. Tristan, Claude, and Anne stare blankly at Catherine before bowing as well.

CATHERINE

I am in so much trouble.

DAMIEN

Not if I say you're not.

CATHERINE

But I--

DAMIEN

Care to dance?

Music begins, and Damien leads Catherine into a dance. The rest of the courtiers pair up and join them. Catherine starts out looking very uncomfortable, both in her dance and expression.

(CONTINUED)

But slowly, she begins to enjoy herself. As she and Damien dance, the people around them slow, as though time itself as stopped.

Stage right, Anne, William, and the rebels watch, disbelieving.

WILLIAM

Well, this is...unexpected.

ANNE

Catherine told me she hated dancing.

WILLIAM

Then she shouldn't be long.

ANNE

I'm not waiting.

WILLIAM

Well, what do you expect me to do?

ANNE

Cut in.

WILLIAM

I can't do that!

Anne glares at him until he sighs.

WILLIAM

You tire me, Anne.

William wades his way through the crowd awkwardly until he reaches Catherine and Damien.

WILLIAM

Pardon me. May I cut in?

Catherine and Damien stop in their twirling. Catherine looks dazed, like waking from a dream, but Damien looks dangerously affronted, as though he can't believe William's gall.

Catherine recovers first.

CATHERINE

Oh, sure!

(to Damien)

Excuse me.

(CONTINUED)

DAMIEN

Of course.

Damien watches as William leads Catherine away, his expression dangerous. He reigns it in and exits the dance floor.

Meanwhile, Anne watches, gathering the courage to speak with the king. She takes a breath and approaches him.

ANNE

Excuse me, Your Majesty. Your Majesty?

Damien looks at her, again surprised. He gives her the once-over and is duly unimpressed.

ANNE

My name is Anne. I'd like to speak with you for a moment about the mining project that the crown has been funding...?

Anne pauses, but Damien says nothing. She continues, her unease growing.

ANNE

Well, I'd like to...discuss with you the...parameters of this project. You know of the accident that happened recently?

WILLIAM

(long pause)

Accident?

ANNE

(anger growing)

You...don't know? You don't even know? More than twenty men died in those caves and you didn't know?

Nearby courtiers pause at the outburst. William and Catherine pause as well.

CATHERINE

What's going on?

WILLIAM

Oh no.

William rushes over to intercept. Catherine follows more slowly, confused.

(CONTINUED)

ANNE

You *dare* have your men work for you and *die* for you while you pay them scraps--

WILLIAM

Your Majesty, I apologize. I should've spoken with you privately--

DAMIEN

(slowly, dangerously)
You dare...

CATHERINE

Anne? What's going on?

ANNE

Nothing, Catherine, don't worry about it.

Anne stares at the king, challenging. Damien composes himself in front of Catherine.

DAMIEN

A simple misunderstanding, Lady Catherine. I didn't know this was a friend of yours.

CATHERINE

Of course. Is something wrong--?

WILLIAM

I think it's best that we leave now. If you'll pardon us, Your Majesty. Anne?

Anne pauses for a moment, coming to a conclusion.

ANNE

Yes.

Anne curtsies deeply, sarcastically.

ANNE

Have a lovely evening. Your Majesty.

She turns and leaves. William bows and hurries after her.

CATHERINE

Anne, wait--

DAMIEN

Would you care to dance? Just once more?

He offers his hand. Catherine glances back at Anne, but she's gone. Catherine takes his hand, and they begin to dance again.

Scene 5

The following morning. Catherine is in the classroom again with William's notes in front of her, while Anne sweeps up angrily. Catherine tries to concentrate, but grows increasingly frustrated with Anne.

ANNE

And the king didn't talk to a single person there. What's the point of hosting a *festival* if you're not going to speak to people of all social classes?

CATHERINE

Perhaps you would've held his attention longer if you hadn't yelled at him. What were you talking about?

ANNE

It's--you don't need to worry about it.

CATHERINE

If it's something you wanted to bring to the king, then it must be important.

ANNE

It's just...commoner worries. You wouldn't understand.

Catherine grows silent, considering.

CATHERINE

You know, I think if you went to the king again, he would listen.

ANNE

Catherine--

CATHERINE

You could arrange a meeting, or an audience with the king. Bring some friends--

ANNE

He doesn't care, Cat! The king doesn't care about us.

CATHERINE

That's not true!

ANNE

He didn't respond to what I was saying.

CATHERINE

Maybe because you were shouting at him in a room full of people.

(CONTINUED)

ANNE

I truly believe he would've had me hanged if you hadn't been there.

CATHERINE

What?

ANNE

You didn't see it, Catherine. He had this--dangerous look in his eyes. I thought he might strike me right there.

CATHERINE

I don't understand why you're so angry, but you have no reason to take it out on Damien.

Anne pauses in her work, noticing something different in her friend.

ANNE

I noticed you dance with *Damien* quite a bit.

CATHERINE

Only a few songs.

ANNE

Five, I think.

CATHERINE

No, it wasn't five. And how would you know? You left early.

A pause.

ANNE

What did you two talk about?

CATHERINE

Nothing much. I mean, talking is kind of odd while dancing, isn't it? Are you supposed to talk while you dance?

ANNE

(suspicious)

And what did you *think* of the king?

CATHERINE

Oh, he was...quite nice. And intelligent. And a good dancer, though I'm not a great dancer so I'm not a great judge of that kind of thing, but--

(CONTINUED)

ANNE

You must be joking.

CATHERINE

What?

ANNE

You *fancy* him!

CATHERINE

No, I--

ANNE

You fancy the *king*!

CATHERINE

Anne, I--

ANNE

Incredible. Everything that's been going on, and you *fall* for him.

CATHERINE

I didn't say I've *fallen* for him. And what are you talking about, what's been going on?

Anne stares at Catherine for a moment, debating for the first time whether or not she should tell Catherine.

ANNE

Nothing.

CATHERINE

(beat)

You're not telling me something.

ANNE

And you're not telling *me* something, so let's drop it, all right.

(long pause)

I'll be seeing you.

Before Catherine can say anything, Anne exits. Catherine considers this, then, in a huff, grabs her stuff and leaves.

Enter a MESSENGER.

MESSENGER

Pardon me, milady.

(CONTINUED)

CATHERINE

Hm, me?

MESSENGER

Are you Lady Catherine Moreau?

CATHERINE

Yes.

MESSENGER

I come at the behest of His Majesty the King. He requests your presence at his palace this evening.

CATHERINE

He does?

MESSENGER

Yes, milady.

CATHERINE

Oh.

MESSENGER

Milady would be most advised to accept.

CATHERINE

Yes...all right, I do accept.

The Messenger takes her bags.

MESSENGER

Very good, milady. If you'll follow me, I have a carriage ready--

CATHERINE

Wait, now?

MESSENGER

Yes, milady.

CATHERINE

Right now?

MESSENGER

Yes, milady.

CATHERINE

But I'm not ready or dressed properly or--

MESSENGER

I have been told to assure milady that His Majesty doesn't care.

(CONTINUED)

CATHERINE

Oh...all right, then.

Catherine and the Messenger exit.

Scene 6

The king's chamber. Damien sits at his telescope with charts in hand. Enter Catherine.

CATHERINE

Hello Dam--Your Majesty.

DAMIEN

Catherine, you're here! I...

(fumbling)

I thought you'd want your telescope back. You left it here last night.

He hands it to her.

CATHERINE

Thank you.

DAMIEN

You're welcome.

CATHERINE

(pause)

You invited me all the way here just to return my telescope?

DAMIEN

No, that was an excuse.

CATHERINE

And excuse for what?

DAMIEN

...Dinner?

CATHERINE

Oh.

DAMIEN

Please, don't feel obliged to stay.

(pause)

I mean, I'd certainly *like* you to stay, but I don't want...I don't want it to seem...

CATHERINE

All right.

(beat)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CATHERINE (cont'd)
I'll stay for dinner.

DAMIEN
Wonderful. Great. I thought we'd eat up here. I wanted to show you my telescope.

He points to it. Catherine can't help but be interested.

CATHERINE
It's incredible. May I?

DAMIEN
Of course.

Catherine sits and takes a look. She smiles.

CATHERINE
I thought so.

DAMIEN
What?

CATHERINE
That planet we saw last night was Mars, not Venus. You can tell by it's position this early.

DAMIEN
Let me see.

He takes her place. They are quite close now.

DAMIEN
(smiling)
I'm still not sure. It might be Venus.

Catherine slowly creates distance between them, not sure if she wants to be that close. She looks around for some other subject and spots the CHAMBER door.

CATHERINE
What's in there?

DAMIEN
Ah, well, that's my private chamber.

CATHERINE
The king's private chamber needs a private chamber?

DAMIEN

(laughs it off, uncomfortable)
Ah, well. No one is allowed in there but myself. Family secrets, you could say.

CATHERINE

You have a lot of secrets?

DAMIEN

No, not really.

Song: "SECRETS IN THE STARS"

CATHERINE

(sings)
I'M NOT SURE HOW THIS REALLY GOES
I'M NOT SURE WHAT TO SAY
MY HEART WON'T CALM DOWN
MY HEAD'S IN THE CLOUDS
AND I CAN'T DECIDE IF I SHOULD RUN
OR STAY

DAMIEN

IT'S DIFFICULT TO SEE
EXACTLY WHAT YOU THINK OF ME
IS IT TOO EARLY TO HOPE FOR SOMETHING
IS IT TOO SOON TO SAY I SEE SOMETHING
STARTING HERE

CATHERINE

I THINK I WANT TO SLOW DOWN
BUT I DON'T WANT TO STOP
THIS FEELS LIKE A CHANCE I'VE NEVER HAD
BUT HOW CAN I BE SURE

DAMIEN

THE STARS GLOW BRIGHTER TONIGHT
OR IS IT JUST WHAT I'M WAITING FOR

BOTH

I CAN ONLY HOPE
THAT YOUR HEART
IS PART
OF THOSE SECRETS IN THE STARS

Scene 7

The music shifts to something more ominous as the next scene opens: Anne and the rebels are in the university basement for a secret meeting. Anne stands at the front.

Song: "THE REBELLION (Reprise)"

(CONTINUED)

REBEL 1

I knew this would happen!

REBEL 2

The king made fools of us.

REBEL 3

He must've set that whole thing up just to be spiteful.

REBEL 4

He doesn't care!

REBEL 5

What do we do?

Anne steps forward.

ANNE

(sings)

AS EXPECTED FROM OUR KING

WE'VE BEEN IGNORED AND DECEIVED

HOW CAN WE NOT ACT NOW THAT WE'VE BEEN SCORNE

ENSEMBLE

WE ARE STARVING, WE ARE POOR

SO WHAT'S LEFT TO US BUT WAR

ANNE

PEACE WON'T LAST UNTIL HE'S OVERTHROWN!

William breaks through the crowd and approaches Anne.

WILLIAM

Stop this, Anne!

ANNE

I did what you asked, and the king proved to be exactly who I said he was. And now it's time for action. It's time for justice!

*The Rebels cheer.**William grabs Anne by the arm and pushes her out of hearing from the others.*

WILLIAM

You are leading these people to their deaths!

ANNE

Better to die for something than live for nothing.

(CONTINUED)

WILLIAM

You foolish girl. You know nothing. You have no idea the destruction you're creating.

ANNE

Something needs to be *done*. No one will ever stop him, more people will die--what's one more life?

WILLIAM

You have no plan, no way of enacting what you want, and no idea what you'll do if you succeed. You could very well bring the entire kingdom to ruin.

ANNE

I'm tired of trying to justify myself to you. You're either with us or against us.

A long pause. William backs from her and speaks loudly, catching the Rebels' attention.

WILLIAM

I refuse to be a part of your quest for vengeance. You know longer have my support.

The Rebels watch quietly as he exits.

REBEL 4

(to Anne)

What do we do now?

REBEL 6

He's closer to the king than anyone else here.

ANNE

He wouldn't have helped us, anyway. We'll figure something out. For now, let's call it a night, everyone. We'll meet here tomorrow and discuss

The Rebels begin to exit.

REBEL 1

Aren't you heading home, too?

ANNE

I will in a moment. Good night.

REBEL 1

Good night.

Rebel 1 follows the others out.

Anne stands alone, looking downtrodden for the first time. She looks up, as though looking at the sky

(CONTINUED)

Song: "REQUIEM FOR PEACE"

ANNE

(sings)

IT'S BEEN FOUR YEARS
SINCE I SAW YOU LAST
AND STILL THE WORLD HASN'T CHANGED

YOUR STARS ARE UP THERE
OR SO THEY SAY
BUT NIGHT HAS NEVER BEEN MORE STRANGE

IF PEACE WERE POSSIBLE
WOULD I NOT KNOW IT
IF HAPPINESS COULD BE
WOULDN'T I HAVE FOUND IT

HOW ELSE CAN I FIND PEACE
UNLESS WITH BLOOD ON MY HANDS
OR IS PEACE A SILLY FANTASY
IS IT ALONE I MUST STAND

SO BE IT
SO BE IT
So be it.

Enter Tristan.

TRISTAN

Hello?

Anne jumps in surprise and hastily wipes her eyes.

TRISTAN

I'm sorry, I didn't mean to startle you. I'm looking
for my sister, Catherine.

ANNE

Catherine? She's not here.

TRISTAN

Do you know where she would be?

ANNE

With the king, I would imagine.

TRISTAN

The...king. The *king*? Why?

ANNE

He likely asked her to dine with him tonight.

(CONTINUED)

TRISTAN

He...wow...this is...this is incredible. Of all men to take an interest in Catherine--Father will be beside himself.

ANNE

You must be Tristan.

TRISTAN

Yes! Pardon my manners. I'm Tristan Moreau of the Royal Guard.

He takes her hand and bows, like they were in court.

ANNE

The Royal Guard? You serve in the king's army?

TRISTAN

When needed, yes, but mostly I guard the palace.

ANNE

Do you...know the king?

TRISTAN

Personally, no. But I know he is well liked among the guard.

ANNE

(defeated)

Of course he is. The guard can do whatever they like under his reign.

TRISTAN

Pardon my asking, but why are you down here?

ANNE

I work here. I clean the classrooms and such.

TRISTAN

But so late? Do you need an escort home? I could--

ANNE

Stop *talking* like that!

TRISTAN

Like--what?

ANNE

Like we're at a ball, in the palace instead of a basement. Like I'm not a filthy peasant--complete *dirt* compared to you! Like you could do whatever you wanted with me right now without consequence.

(CONTINUED)

Tristan is silent for a moment, comprehending.

TRISTAN

There are many in my station who...take advantage of the authority given them.

ANNE

(laughs humorlessly)

You have no idea. The entire world is against me.

TRISTAN

If I may--What happened?

Anne looks to him, considering.

TRISTAN

You don't need to tell me, I know I'm being forward.

ANNE

(a pause)

It was four years ago.

Flashback: Enter ANNA'S MOTHER, ANNA'S FATHER, and ANNA'S SISTER. Anna joins them. Tristan watches as she reenacts the memory for him.

ANNE

We lived on a farm just west of the main city. We lived very modestly and worked hard and minded our own business. My brother was working extra in the city, trying to save up for university. One night, when I was ten, we had a knock at the door.

A KNOCK. Enter a GUARD.

GUARD

The kingdom taxes have increased.

ANNE'S FATHER

We've paid our taxes. We have no more.

ANNE

They argued. The Guard grew angry.

The Guard draws his sword and backs out. The door slams shut.

ANNE

He locked us in and set the house on fire.

The family panics and huddles.

(CONTINUED)

ANNE

My father was able to bash a hole in the wall just big enough for me to squeeze through.

ANNE'S FATHER

(to Anne)

I want you to crawl through here and run to the city. Don't stop and don't look back. And remember; I love you.

The family exits.

ANNE

I ran all night and didn't look back once. It was William who found me. The next day, there was nothing but smoldering ash. William tried to appeal to the king, but he ended up losing his position at the palace. The king didn't want to be bothered by it.

TRISTAN

I am sorry.

ANNE

My story is one of hundreds like it. The problem is more deeply rooted than a bunch of arrogant men. The king himself refuses to lead.

TRISTAN

I don't think--

ANNE

Most recently, a cave in the mines collapsed and killed twenty-two men, and our king didn't even *know* of it.

TRISTAN

That may not be his fault--

ANNE

And let's not forget Queen Josephine. I don't believe she left, or ran away, or whatever the official story is. I believe the king knows *exactly* what happened.

TRISTAN

(beat)

What you speak is treason.

ANNE

(scoffs)

Treason. Men can kill my entire family without hesitating, and yet to speak of the king poorly in an empty basement deserves a hanging.

(CONTINUED)

TRISTAN

(pause)

I have no right to judge you. I suppose, if I had someone to blame for my mother's death, I would feel the same as you.

A silence settles between them; something has changed, but neither is sure what.

ANNE

Well, I better be heading home.

TRISTAN

(uncertain)

Yes, me too. Did you still want an escort?

ANNE

No, thank you. Good night.

Anne makes to leave.

TRISTAN

Your name! I don't know your name.

ANNE

(beat)

I'm Anne.

TRISTAN

It was lovely to meet you, Anne.

Anne nods, unsmiling, not sure she likes where this is going. She exits.

Scene 8

Catherine's bedroom the following morning. She wakes up slowly, comfortably, the happiness of the night before still lingering. She starts to hum as she dresses.

Tristan approaches her door, braces himself, and knocks. Catherine looks up in surprise.

CATHERINE

Come in.

Tristan enters the room.

TRISTAN

Morning.

(CONTINUED)

CATHERINE

Don't tell me there's *another* ball tonight.

TRISTAN

I just said "good morning."

CATHERINE

You did, I remember.

An uncomfortable silence settles between them as Catherine gets ready for the day.

TRISTAN

I wanted to ask you about something.

CATHERINE

Did you?

TRISTAN

Yes, I did.

CATHERINE

It's probably none of your business.

TRISTAN

I know you danced with the king at the ball the other night.

CATHERINE

I did.

TRISTAN

Well, I was wondering...I'd like to know if you...have feelings for him.

CATHERINE

That is *none* of your business!

TRISTAN

(beat)

This hostility you harbor against me seems a lot more trouble than it's worth.

CATHERINE

It's really no trouble at all.

TRISTAN

Why are you always so *angry* with me? I've done nothing to deserve this!

CATHERINE

No, of course you haven't!

(CONTINUED)

Song: "YOU KNOW BEST"

CATHERINE

(sings)

ALL MY LIFE I'VE BEEN TOLD HOW GREAT YOU ARE
THE PERFECT, EXEMPLARY OLDER BROTHER
AND NO MATTER WHAT I DO
IT'S NO GOOD COMPARED TO YOU
THE PERFECT SON FOR A HIGH-STRUNG FATHER

TRISTAN

Even if that's true, it's not my fault--

CATHERINE

AND THEN MOTHER GOT SICK
AND COULDN'T GET WELL
STARS NEVER BURNED AS BRIGHT

*The song has softened, and so has Catherine.
Tristan steps forward to console her.*

TRISTAN

Catherine...

CATHERINE

AND THEN YOU LEFT
(harsh again)
BEFORE SHE WAS EVEN IN THE GROUND
YOU LEFT US HERE ALONE
AND PROVED WHAT I'VE KNOWN ALL ALONG

JOIN THE GUARD, FATHER SAID
BECAUSE IT'S BETTER TO WIND UP DEAD
WITH HONOR FOR YOUR SERVICE
BUT YOU ONLY PROVED TO ME
THAT YOU'RE A COWARD TO THE END

TRISTAN

Enough!

(sings)

YOU THINK YOU KNOW ME
YOU THINK IT WAS THAT EASY
TO LEAVE AFTER WHAT HAD HAPPENED
YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY ONE
WHO LIVES UNDER FATHER'S THUMB
YOU'RE JUST AS SELFISH AS YOU WERE BACK THEN

NEVER MIND, YOU ALWAYS SAID
FORGET RESPONSIBILITIES, 'CAUSE THEN
YOU CAN KEEP YOUR HEAD UP IN THE STARS

(CONTINUED)

BOTH

BUT OF COURSE DON'T LET ME STOP YOU
FROM WHATEVER YOU'D LIKE TO DO
YOU CAN AVOID ME ALL YOU LIKE

CATHERINE

WHAT DO I KNOW?

TRISTAN

WHO CARES WHAT I THINK?

BOTH

FOR SURELY YOU KNOW BEST

TRISTAN

Why were you late coming home last night?

CATHERINE

You wouldn't believe me if I told you.

TRISTAN

Meeting a lover?

CATHERINE

Wouldn't you like that?

(sings)

A CHANCE TO BE DONE WITH ME
HAND ME OFF TO SOME UNSUSPECTING SOUL
A MAN WHO'LL TEACH ME MY PLACE
IN A WAY YOU NEVER COULD ON YOUR OWN

TRISTAN

YOU'RE STUBBORN, YOU'RE SELFISH
YOU DON'T EVER HEED GOOD COUNSEL

CATHERINE

THE LIST COULD GO ON AND ON
BUT WHAT DO I KNOW?

TRISTAN

WHO CARES WHAT I THINK?

BOTH

FOR SURELY YOU KNOW BEST

TRISTAN

You need to consider things before you get too deep.

CATHERINE

Yes, I'm much too reckless to make decisions for
myself, aren't I?

(CONTINUED)

TRISTAN

Have you considered Josephine? No one knows what happened to her.

CATHERINE

UGLY RUMORS YOU WOULD HEED
BEFORE YOU'D EVER LISTEN TO ME
AND STILL YOU PRETEND YOU REALLY CARE
BUT WHAT DO I KNOW?

TRISTAN

WHO CARES WHAT I THINK?

BOTH

FOR SURELY YOU KNOW BEST

Catherine storms out. Tristan hangs his head in frustration.

Scene 9

In the king's chamber, Catherine and Damien sit side-by-side. Damien looks through his telescope. Catherine holds a few charts in her lap, but she doesn't pay much attention to them.

DAMIEN

Ah, how interesting.

CATHERINE

Hmm.

DAMIEN

Mars seems to have started its retrograde motion. I didn't think that would happen this early in the year. Do you want to see? Catherine?

CATHERINE

Hmm?

DAMIEN

Are you all right?

CATHERINE

(beat)

Yes! Yes, I'm all right. I'm great. Dinner was lovely, really.

DAMIEN

It was the fish, wasn't it?

(CONTINUED)

CATHERINE

No, no--well, it might have been a bit overcooked, but that's not--

DAMIEN

I'll banish the chef immediately.

CATHERINE

What? No don't--

DAMIEN

But, in the mean time, how about we get you some tea? Jean? Jean?

CATHERINE

You told him to go press all your laundry. Twice.

DAMIEN

I did, didn't I? Well, no matter. Perhaps I can--

CATHERINE

Damien.

DAMIEN

Yes?

CATHERINE

I'd like to ask you about something.

DAMIEN

Yes?

CATHERINE

What...I mean...can you tell me about...Josephine?

A stunned paused. Damien looks up from his telescope.

CATHERINE

I've heard the rumors, sure, but there are so many that's it's impossible to choose one to... I'm sorry. I shouldn't have brought it up.

DAMIEN

I...have difficulty talking about it.

Catherine nods, dropping it in understanding. Damien regains his composure.

DAMIEN

But I'm glad you mentioned her.

(CONTINUED)

CATHERINE

You are?

DAMIEN

Yes. It means that we've both been having similar thoughts.

CATHERINE

What do you mean?

DAMIEN

I must admit I've been meaning to ask for some time, but I thought it best to be patient about this sort of thing.

CATHERINE

Patient about what?

DAMIEN

Catherine, I have never known anyone like you, much less a *woman* like you. You are intelligent, clever, witty, and beautiful. I know we haven't known each other for very long, but I have a hard time envisioning the rest of my life without you by my side as you are.

CATHERINE

I don't understand...

Damien gets on one knee.

DAMIEN

Lady Catherine Moreau, will you do the honor of becoming my wife?

A long pause. Catherine visibly starts to panic.

CATHERINE

But...you...you're king...

DAMIEN

Yes. Is that a problem?

CATHERINE

I mean--I'm sorry, I sound ungrateful. I just find it hard to believe that you...mean what you say.

DAMIEN

I really do.

(pause)

Of course, if you'd like to refuse me offer--

(CONTINUED)

CATHERINE

No. No, I'm not refusing you.

DAMIEN

You're not?

CATHERINE

No, I--

DAMIEN

Then you accept?

CATHERINE

I... Yes, I accept your proposal. I will marry you.

*Damien embraces her.*Scene 10*Catherine stands dazed as the scene changes before her more quickly than she realizes. A group of courtiers crowds into the great hall, chattering excitedly. Tristan, Anne, William, and Claude enter with them.**Song: "CONGRATULATIONS"*

CATHERINE

I'm getting married.

TRISTAN

YOU'RE GETTING MARRIED

CATHERINE

I'm getting married.

ANNE

YOU'RE GETTING MARRIED.

CATHERINE

I'm getting...I'm getting...

COURTIERS

CONGRATULATIONS
CONGRATULATIONS
SUCH AN OPPORTUNITY
FOR THIS WORTHY FAMILY
CANNOT BE LESS THAN
WHAT WE WOULD EXPECT
CONGRATULATIONS
FOR OUR GREAT NATION
WHAT A TIME FOR YOU
IT'S TRULY TRUE

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

COURTIERS (cont'd)

THAT A QUEEN AS FAIR AS YOU
WILL NEVER LEAVE OUR KING'S SIDE
CONGRATULATIONS!

CLAUDE

Thank you! Thank you! I couldn't be happier or more proud, or more humble, than I am today, that His Majesty the King would recognize the modest greatness of my young daughter. Thank you.

The crowd cheers and begins to mingle amongst themselves. Catherine tries to leave.

CLAUDE

Catherine, dear, a word?

Catherine resignedly returns to him.

CATHERINE

Yes, father.

CLAUDE

I just wanted to tell you, privately, how proud I am of you.

CATHERINE

(beat, confused)

Proud?

CLAUDE

For years, I've worried that you wouldn't quite find someone who... well I guess it was just a matter of finding the right man, wasn't it? And who would've thought that it would've been the king!

CATHERINE

I think...we were all surprised.

CLAUDE

Well, as much as I've always been concerned about your...well, courtly manner, I think you will make a wonderful queen and a beautiful wife.

CATHERINE

Thank you, Father. I hope I don't disappoint you.

CLAUDE

My Catherine, I don't believe there's anything you could do at this point that would disappoint me. I am, truly, so proud of you.

(CONTINUED)

A long moment, then Claude exits. Catherine still looks uneasy.

Enter Anne, looking nervous.

ANNE

Catherine.

CATHERINE

Anne.

ANNE

Listen, I...I just want to wish you the best. Really. I hope you're happy.

CATHERINE

Thank you.

ANNE

(beat)

Are you happy?

CATHERINE

Of course. I must be. Right?

Before Anne can ask, William approaches with three ADVISERS.

WILLIAM

Catherine, I'd like you to meet the king's royal advisers. They will help you immensely when you begin living in the palace.

The Advisers bow.

ADVISER 1

A pleasure to meet you, Lady Catherine.

Catherine curtsies hastily.

CATHERINE

A pleasure.

Catherine joins their circle uncomfortably. They start an inaudible conversation, of which Catherine is not a part, while William pulls Anne aside.

WILLIAM

Anne, a moment. I'd like to apologize for the other night. It was...improper of me.

(CONTINUED)

ANNE

Oh.

WILLIAM

But I stand by what I said.

ANNE

I can't do anything now. I can't do that to my friend.
I'll never see justice, now.

WILLIAM

But perhaps you'll find peace.

*He puts a comforting hand on her shoulder and
exits.*

*By now, the Advisers have moved on from Catherine,
and the other party-goers have drifted back,
leaving Anne and Catherine downstage.*

Song: "I DON'T/I DO"

CATHERINE

(sings)

IS THIS WRONG?

ANNE

IS THIS RIGHT?

CATHERINE

AM I FEELING

BOTH

PAST THE FRIGHT?

ANNE

HOW CAN I BE CERTAIN

CATHERINE

OF ANYTHING AT THIS

BOTH

POINT

ANNE

IS THIS IT?

CATHERINE

IS IT TIME?

ANNE

IS THE FUTURE NO LONGER

(CONTINUED)

BOTH
MINE?

CATHERINE
THE WEIGHT OF A
KINGDOM
PULLS AT MY CHEST
IS THIS FEELING
REALLY FOR THE BEST?

ANNE
THE PEACE THAT I
WANTED
IS TOO CRUEL TO ME NOW
I NO LONGER FEEL
TETHERED
TO THE GROUND

BOTH
ONE THING IS CLEAR
CLEARER THAN BEFORE
I'M NOT SURE OF ANYTHING
ANYMORE

*The music picks up speed as the party-goers gather
around again and transform the scene into a
wedding, placing a white veil on Catherine's head.*

COURTIER 1
DON'T YOU LOOK LOVELY!

CATHERINE
DO I?

COURTIER 2
ISN'T IT WONDERFUL!

CATHERINE
IS IT?

COURTIERS
OUR CHEERS AND JOY WE BESTOW
WE TOAST TO YOU THE BEST BORDEAUX
ISN'T IT WONDERFUL?

CATHERINE
I DON'T KNOW

COURTIERS
ISN'T IT GRAND?

CATHERINE
I DON'T KNOW
I *DON'T*

REBEL 1
WHAT'LL WE DO?

(CONTINUED)

ANNE

I DON'T KNOW

REBEL 2

WE SHOULD STOP HIM NOW

ANNE

BUT WAIT--

REBELS

HOW WILL WE WIN THIS

ANNE

STOP!

Everyone gathers for a wedding ceremony, Catherine and Damien facing each other, a PRIEST between them.

PRIEST

Do you take this woman to be your wife?

DAMIEN

I do.

CATHERINE

BUT WAIT

PRIEST

And do you--

CATHERINE

I CAN'T

PRIEST

Take this man--

CATHERINE

I DON'T KNOW

I DON'T

PRIEST

To be your husband.

CATHERINE

I...do.

PRIEST

You may kiss!

ENSEMBLE

ISN'T IT WONDERFUL

ISN'T IT GRAND

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ENSEMBLE (cont'd)
CONGRATULATIONS
FOR THIS HAPPY END-ING!

They kiss.

ACT IIScene 1

The palace main hall. Frenetic music follows a MESSENGER onstage.

MESSENGER

Over the past month, the kingdom has seen unrest throughout peasant towns. Caves in the northern mines have collapsed and resulted in more deaths, and peasants from all corners of the kingdom are rioting against the crown.

DAMIEN (O.S.)

I won't hear any more of it!

The Messenger hurries offstage as Damien enters, trailed by his three Advisers.

ADVISER 1

Your Majesty, there are riots all along the western and southern towns.

ADVISER 2

A large group of peasants stormed one of the prisons and freed all the debtors.

DAMIEN

Send troops where needed. Break up any riots you find. Keep the peasants off the streets.

ADVISER 3

Sir, that might not be the best course of action--

Damien stops and whirls on him. The three advisers cower.

DAMIEN

(dangerous)

I am king. Whatever I decide is what will be.

(pause)

See to it.

The advisers scurry away. Enter Catherine.

CATHERINE

Damien.

DAMIEN

This is absurd. I shouldn't need to deal with this.

(CONTINUED)

CATHERINE

I heard about the riots.

DAMIEN

My authority should never be challenged.

CATHERINE

It'll be all right.

DAMIEN

The people no longer fear me. They no longer respect me.

CATHERINE

But--why, though? Something must have happened.

DAMIEN

Should it matter? I rule them by divine right. They have no right to question me!

(beat)

Catherine, I'm afraid I need to leave.

CATHERINE

You--leave?

DAMIEN

Yes, I need to lead our troops around the southern and western towns.

CATHERINE

Troops? For war?

DAMIEN

No, not war, exactly. I'm just making sure that peace is maintained in those parts.

CATHERINE

What--what are you going to do to those people?

DAMIEN

I'm going to teach them that a king should not be trifled with. They are truly a mass of fools if they think I'll stand for this.

CATHERINE

Don't you think there's a more peaceful way to...

Damien looks to her, and she senses danger.

CATHERINE

Um, I mean, is there a way...you could stay?

Damien relaxes, the picture of understanding, and embraces her.

(CONTINUED)

DAMIEN

You have no reason to worry about me. I'll be with the strongest guards in the kingdom.

(pause)

In the meantime...

*Damien draws away and pulls out a ring of keys.
She takes it.*

DAMIEN

I'll give these to you for safe-keeping.

CATHERINE

These...

DAMIEN

Open every room in the palace. I know you've been trying hard to learn about your position, and I think the best way is to give you full reign, let you make a few mistakes. My advisers will remain here with you, so they will help with any political matters.

(misinterpreting her silence)

I'll only be gone for a few weeks or so.

Catherine stares at the keys, realizing the weight of this assignment.

CATHERINE

Are you sure?

DAMIEN

Quite. I leave later today.

CATHERINE

Do you think you could have my brother transferred back here? Just until you get back.

DAMIEN

I think I could do that.

He kisses her forehead.

DAMIEN

I know you'll be wonderful, my queen.

He exits.

Enter Anne.

ANNE

Cat--uh, Your Majesty.

(CONTINUED)

CATHERINE

You don't need to call me that.

ANNE

(beat)

I have some new dresses for you...Is everything all right?

CATHERINE

Oh. Well, no. I mean yes. I mean, it's nothing you need to worry about.

ANNE

I don't mind worrying about things.

(beat)

Have you heard from your brother?

CATHERINE

No. He's still stationed in the west. I haven't received any letters. But I also haven't heard reports on him, so that's a good thing, right? No news is good news.

ANNE

Sure.

An awkward silence settles between them.

CATHERINE

I just don't understand. Why are the people so unhappy? Why do they hate Damien so much?

ANNE

(cautious)

Have you ever been to the outer towns?

CATHERINE

No. Why? Have you?

ANNE

I grew up there. It's...very different than here.

CATHERINE

I mean, I know it's farmland and such, but I don't see how they would grow to be angry with the king.

ANNE

Maybe it's the taxes.

CATHERINE

The taxes?

(CONTINUED)

ANNE

Or working in those mines for no reason.

CATHERINE

What do you--?

ANNE

(gathering anger)

Maybe they're tired of working hard and then having their money taken from them.

CATHERINE

What do you mean--?

ANNE

Maybe they're tired of being voiceless, being treated like cattle!

CATHERINE

All right, enough! I don't know what's gotten into you. I thought I was doing you a favor--

ANNE

You'll be doing me a *favor* when you start helping people

CATHERINE

(beat)

I--I'm trying.

ANNE

Trying to do what? Fix your hair? Organize balls? You have the chance to do something!

CATHERINE

I don't know what to do!

ANNE

Well, I do, because I've seen it with my own eyes.

Song: "IT'S MERRY WHEN YOU MARRY (YOU'VE NEVER HAD TO) [REPRISE]"

ANNE

You don't know anything! You have no idea!

(sings)

YOU'VE NEVER HAD TO WORK

CATHERINE

I--what?

(CONTINUED)

ANNE

YOU'VE NEVER HAD TO WORRY FOR YOUR NEXT MEAL
YOU'VE NEVER HAD TO SAY TODAY
IS THE DAY YOU MIGHT GET PAID
AND ROAM THE MARKETPLACE FOR A DECENT DEAL

CATHERINE

Anne, what is this?

ANNE

YOU'VE NEVER HAD TO STARVE
YOU'VE NEVER HAD TO PUSH, AND TOIL, AND PLOW
YOU'VE NEVER HAD TO SIT AND EAT
IN THE MIDDLE OF THE STREET
AND BLINDLY WONDER HOW--

CATHERINE

Enough!

ANNE

(long pause)

You are not even remotely aware of the power you have,
of the *position* you're in to make a difference for
these people.

CATHERINE

I don't! I don't have power! I don't do anything.
I'm...useless.

ANNE

That's your choice.

Anne exits.

Scene 2

*A rebel meeting. The rebels mill about and huddle
in groups, talking animatedly amongst themselves.*

*Upon Anne's entrance, the crowd grows silent and
stares at her warily.*

ANNE

Hello everyone, sorry I'm late. I had to wait until the
queen fell asleep.

(noticing)

What's wrong?

REBEL 4

It's been a while since you've joined us for a meeting.

(CONTINUED)

ANNE

I know. I come when I can.

REBEL 3

How's life at the castle?

REBEL 4

Quite cozy, I bet.

REBEL 5

Murdered any kings, recently?

ANNE

(beat)

Is there something you'd like to discuss with me?

REBEL 6

I understand you're the queen's lead maidservant now.

ANNE

I am, as I told you.

REBEL 4

You didn't tell us anything.

REBEL 3

You've had this position for weeks and you haven't done anything!

REBEL 4

We have the perfect chance to strike!

ANNE

And as I've mentioned before, I'm the *queen's* maidservant. I hardly ever see Damien throughout the day.

REBEL 5

Damien.

REBEL 6

Sounds like you two are good friends, doesn't it?

REBEL 1

Enough. Anne, we need to talk.

(to the Rebels)

Privately.

Unwillingly, the rebels disperse.

ANNE

Well, thanks for jumping in so soon.

(CONTINUED)

REBEL 1
Anne--

ANNE
I was worried they would get the wrong impression.

REBEL 1
They're frustrated.

ANNE
We're all frustrated.

REBEL 1
The whole kingdom's frustrated! This means that others are rising up! We have numbers that we never thought we'd have!

ANNE
But now the king is on to us. He set out for the western towns yesterday.

REBEL 1
(thinking)
Did he? Well, we'll have to make the most of it.

ANNE
How?

Rebel 1 looks at her, suspicious.

REBEL 1
How? That's not something our ferocious leader asks.

ANNE
Ferocious leader?

REBEL 1
Our leader gets it done without questions. Our leader doesn't stop until it's done.

ANNE
Perhaps that's been my problem all along.

REBEL 1
Are you trying to back out?

ANNE
Suppose we succeed? Suppose we kill the king. What then? Do we elect one of our number to be king?

REBEL 1
Killing the king is a means to get attention to our cause. It's justice.

(CONTINUED)

ANNE

It's revenge.

REBEL 1

What's the difference?

Anne says nothing. She has no answer.

REBEL 1

For now, there's not much we can do anyway, not until he returns. We might consider taking out the queen while he's away--

Anne grabs Rebel 1.

ANNE

Listen to me. You can target the king all you want, I don't care, but you cannot--you *will* not--target the queen.

Rebel 1 eases out of her grip.

REBEL 1

So it's true. That's how you got such a high position in the palace. You're a friend of the queen's.

ANNE

It doesn't matter.

REBEL 1

It matters plenty. You're objectivity's been compromised, Anne.

ANNE

If you were to end Damien, then Catherine would be a great replacement.

REBEL 1

Would she?

ANNE

She cares. She listens. We'd be better off with her as our leader.

REBEL 1

And then be right back where we started a few decades later. You have said yourself that the problem isn't just *this* monarch; it's monarchy in itself.

ANNE

And if we wipe out the entire monarchy, what then? What do we put in its place?

(CONTINUED)

REBEL 1
You're looking for excuses.

ANNE
I'm pointing out facts.

REBEL 1
You still in or not?

ANNE
(beat)
Y--yes. Yes, I am.

REBEL 1
Good, we need you. We have a plan.

Scene 3

A meeting. The three advisers sit at a table on stage. Soon after, Catherine enters without being noticed.

ADVISERS 1
While the king leads the troops to the west, we need to send reinforcements to the north and east.

ADVISER 3
There aren't any reports of violence there.

ADVISER 2
I heard of a minor tussle with a couple of guards happened in a northeastern town. We should--

CATHERINE
Pardon me, gentlemen.

The men turn and hurry to their feet as she approaches.

ADVISERS
Your Majesty.

CATHERINE
(gathering courage)
Would you mind terribly if I joined your meeting?
(beat)
I don't mean to be an intrusion, but I'm learning the ways of royalty, and I thought your meeting might be educational for me.

ADVISER 1
Pardon me, Your Majesty...and I truly mean no disrespect in this, but...I'm not sure the king meant
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ADVISER 1 (cont'd)

for you... That is, I believe your duties are to govern the palace and the inner workings...of it. The upkeep, I mean.

Catherine falters, looking sheepish. The men exchange glances.

CATHERINE

I see.

ADVISER 1

Please pardon us, Your Majesty. We are quite busy.

Catherine turns to leave, and the Advisers take their seats.

ADVISER 1

Now, we still have troops in reserve here. I think if we--

Catherine pauses.

CATHERINE

This is the palace.

ADVISER 1

I--beg your pardon, Your Majesty?

Catherine turns back to them. They uncertainly get to their feet again.

CATHERINE

We are in the palace, correct?

ADVISER 1

Ah, yes, Your Majesty.

CATHERINE

And this meeting is being held within the palace, is it not?

ADVISER 1

It is, Your Majesty.

CATHERINE

Then it's fair to say that this meeting is under my governing, wouldn't you say?

Adviser 1 looks to the other two for help.

(CONTINUED)

ADVISER 1

I--well, I don't mean--that is--

ADVISER 3

I would say that's a fair deduction, Your Majesty.

Advisers 1 and 2 look at him in horror.

CATHERINE

(gaining confidence)

Great! Then it's settled.

Catherine pulls up a chair between Advisers 1 and 2, wedging in uncomfortably close.

CATHERINE

Please, continue. Pretend I'm not even here.

ADVISER 1

(pause)

As you wish, Your Majesty.

(to Adviser 2)

So, as you were saying, there are disturbances in the northeast.

ADVISER 3

One disturbance.

ADVISER 2

Yes, a conflict with the peasants and a few of our guards. Perhaps we should send a small platoon to that area, just to prevent any more violence.

ADVISER 3

But--

CATHERINE

How will the townspeople feel about this? Do you think?

The conversation halts abruptly.

CATHERINE

What?

ADVISER 1

Your Majesty, the fact that we need to consider sending troops suggests that the townspeople are being unruly.

ADVISER 2

We want to prevent further violence.

CATHERINE

I understand, but why is there violence in the first place? What happened that made the townspeople upset?

Adviser 2 flips through the report.

ADVISER 2

It had to do with a fruit stand, Your Majesty.

CATHERINE

(beat)

A fruit stand?

ADVISER 2

Yes, it seemed that one of the guards purchased a piece of fruit from a farmer, and the farmer became angry and assaulted him.

CATHERINE

That's it?

ADVISER 2

In summary, Your Majesty, yes.

CATHERINE

May I see that report?

Adviser 2 slides her the report. Catherine starts reading as the conversation continues.

ADVISER 1

Fine, so we're agreed on sending a platoon to the northeast.

ADVISER 3

Perhaps a platoon--

ADVISER 2

Is not enough, I agree. If we don't send enough troops, we'll display over-confidence, and we might further incite the townsfolk into more violence.

ADVISER 1

An excellent point. Perhaps if we send--

CATHERINE

(absently)

He took it.

The men stop their conversation again. Adviser 1 restrains his frustration.

(CONTINUED)

ADVISER 1

Something troubling you, milady?

CATHERINE

Oh, I don't mean to interrupt, but this report says that the guard took a piece of fruit from the farmer.

ADVISER 1

Yes? And?

CATHERINE

It doesn't say he *purchased* it. The guard was stealing.

ADVISER 1

Your Majesty, the report doesn't indicate that he stole the fruit.

CATHERINE

Of course it doesn't, who wrote the report?

ADVISER 2

The--Captain of the Guard, Your Majesty.

CATHERINE

The riots in the west and south are one thing, but this incident doesn't deserve military action.

ADVISER 1

This could be one of many more incidents to come.

CATHERINE

Then we'll deal with them when the time comes. For now, I say give the farmer compensation for his losses and speak to the Captain of the Guard about disciplining his soldiers.

ADVISER 1

Your Majesty, I must advise against--

CATHERINE

And while we're all here, I'd like to ask you three about the mining project going on in the northern mountains.

ADVISER 1

For the past few years, the crown has been funding the project--

CATHERINE

Why?

(CONTINUED)

ADVISER 1

The king requested it.

CATHERINE

But what are the miners looking for?

ADVISER 2

Precious gems, of course.

CATHERINE

Have they found any?

ADVISER 1

Ye-yes. There are reports here of some findings.

CATHERINE

But not enough to justify the expense.

ADVISER 3

No, Your Majesty.

CATHERINE

Then I would like to stop the project.

ADVISER 1

Stop it?

CATHERINE

It's a waste of money, and more importantly too many people have lost their lives. There's no reason--

ADVISER 1

Your Majesty, I must protest. This is simply not how things are done.

CATHERINE

(assertive)

I am queen. While my husband is away, I will do what I think it best. I think I'm allowed a few mistakes for my first time being queen. Good day, gentlemen.

The men bow and leave. As soon as they're out of sight, Catherine lets out a pent-up breath, showing her nervousness fully. She gives herself a moment.

Song: "A QUEEN I'LL BE"

CATHERINE

(sings)

WHAT DID I DO WRONG

OR WAS THIS DOOMED AT THE START

WAS I IN THE WRONG WHEN I LISTENED TO MY HEART

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CATHERINE (cont'd)

STARS BURNED BRIGHTER
THAT FATEFUL NIGHT
BUT I NEVER CONSIDERED IF IT WAS RIGHT

HAVE I DONE NOTHING GOOD
I HOPED THAT TIME WOULD TELL
IF THESE FEELINGS OF MINE SOUNDED LIKE WEDDING BELLS
IF THE WORLD GREW
WHILE I STAYED SMALL
BUT IS THERE MORE TO THINK OF
IS THERE MORE TO ALL

THIS IS MY CHANCE
TO A PART
AMONG THE BLACK I'LL BE A SHINING STAR
NO MORE WAITING, NO MORE CHANCES
NO MORE GETTING LOST IN DANCES
THIS IS MY TIME TO SEE
WHAT KIND OF QUEEN I'LL BE

I'M NOT A NUISANCE, NOT JUST A WIFE
NOT JUST SITTING WATCHING STRIFE
IT'S TIME TO BE LOUD AND BE FREE
YES IT'S A QUEEN I'LL BE

She exits.

Scene 4

Catherine sits in Damien's study, reading a book.

CATHERINE

(reading)

"Upon the First King's coronation, stars fell from the sky like rain, and from the stars, the lands grew bountifully. It is said that the stars remain, buried throughout the kingdom."

Enter Tristan.

TRISTAN

Um...Your Majesty?

He bows as Catherine looks up.

CATHERINE

Oh, you're not dead. And don't call me that, please.

She comes over and hugs him. Tristan, surprised, returns the embrace.

(CONTINUED)

TRISTAN

Are you all right? The king himself reassigned me to be your personal guard.

Catherine pulls out of the hug.

CATHERINE

I...need your help. I want you to tell me something.

TRISTAN

(unsure)

All right.

CATHERINE

And you must swear to be honest with me.

TRISTAN

I swear.

CATHERINE

I mean it, Tristan, you can't lie to me about this, even if you think it scares me.

TRISTAN

All right! What it is?

CATHERINE

What's it like in the western towns?

TRISTAN

(long pause)

Well, the farmers are rioting, but the violence isn't--

CATHERINE

The truth, Tristan. You swore to me.

TRISTAN

(pause)

You shouldn't need to worry over these things.

CATHERINE

Shouldn't I? I'm the queen!

TRISTAN

Yes, but you have a king.

CATHERINE

And if that king is cruel? And violent? And more likely to demolish a town than reason with his people for a peaceful solution?

(pause)

I need to know.

(CONTINUED)

TRISTAN

The riots are worse than the reports indicated. Much worse. Many people are protesting the higher taxes and the strict military discipline. We contain them, but the sheer numbers... It's like the kingdom is having a war amongst itself.

CATHERINE

That's exactly what it seems. Damien is going just to prove a point.

TRISTAN

Catherine, please don't do anything rash. You won't be able to get away with things like that.

CATHERINE

Au contraire. I get away with way more now.

Catherine returns to her book. Tristan notices the telescope and walks over to it.

TRISTAN

Is this yours?

Catherine looks up.

CATHERINE

Oh. No, it's Damien's.

TRISTAN

I bet you use it all the time.

CATHERINE

(beat)

No, I don't. I haven't used it once since...since the night he proposed.

TRISTAN

Does he treat you well? He doesn't...harm you or anything?

CATHERINE

No, no, he takes good care of me. I just wonder if he is a better husband than king.

Catherine flips through the book.

CATHERINE

What I don't understand is the mines. There's nothing there! Why spend so much money on a useless project?

(CONTINUED)

TRISTAN

You think the king is looking for something?

CATHERINE

I suppose.

TRISTAN

You could ask him when he returns.

CATHERINE

I'm not sure I can.

TRISTAN

Well, I just ask that you be careful. I will be your personal guardsman.

CATHERINE

You don't have to, I just asked that you be sent back.

TRISTAN

Orders from the king himself.

CATHERINE

Well, you know best.

TRISTAN

I'd like to talk to your current guardsmen. I'll be just outside the door.

CATHERINE

All right. And Tristan.

He stops.

CATHERINE

I'm glad you're here.

Tristan smiles and exits. Catherine returns to her book, but she quickly realizes that she can't focus.

She turns to the door of the secret chamber. She stares, considering.

Enter William. He bows.

WILLIAM

Your Majesty.

Catherine stands to greet him.

CATHERINE

Professor! Thank you for coming, please don't bow.

WILLIAM

I'm afraid you'll have to get used to that, Your Majesty.

They sit.

CATHERINE

Please sit. I wanted to discuss something with you. I heard that you were once the royal librarian.

WILLIAM

Uh--yes, I was. For a short time.

Catherine hefts up the book she was reading.

CATHERINE

I was wondering if you could tell me...about Josephine.

WILLIAM

Ah--Josephine.

CATHERINE

Yes. What was she like?

WILLIAM

(hesitant)

Well, she was...kind. Good company. New to throne, as you are, so she felt uncertain about her place here. She visited me in the library often.

CATHERINE

Did she and Damien...love each other?

WILLIAM

Well...

CATHERINE

You can tell me the truth, Professor. Either way.

WILLIAM

The truth is I don't really know. They seemed to get along well enough in my presence, but there's never truly a way to be sure of these things, I suppose.

CATHERINE

(pause)

What do you think happened to her?

(CONTINUED)

WILLIAM

My dear, I've been asked that question more times than I can count. I don't know. I never imagined her to be the type of person that would run away, even when things became difficult between her and her husband, but if she didn't run away, what happened to her?

Catherine nods, considering his words, and a short silence settles between them.

WILLIAM

Is there anything else you wished to discuss?

CATHERINE

Just...how's Mars?

WILLIAM

Retrograding quite nicely, Your Majesty. Good day.

William bows and exits. Catherine sits for a moment in silence.

She turns and looks at the chamber door. Music swells as she comes to a decision.

She begins looking for her keys and soon realizes she can't find them. The music fades.

CATHERINE

Oh no, oh no, oh no--Tristan!

Tristan enters.

TRISTAN

What's wrong?

CATHERINE

I can't find the keys.

TRISTAN

(relieved)

Oh. Well, where did you have them last?

CATHERINE

They were here this morning, right here! I don't know where I could've put it. Maybe Anne moved them? I don't know...

TRISTAN

Anne was here?

(CONTINUED)

CATHERINE

Yes, she's in and out all day. She might've been cleaning and moved them. You know I could never keep up a place on my own--

TRISTAN

All right, I'll go ask around, you keep looking here.

CATHERINE

All right.

Tristan exits.

Scene 5

Tristan enters, finding Anne folding laundry.

TRISTAN

Hello.

Anne jumps, startled.

TRISTAN

Sorry. I keep doing that.

ANNE

It's fine. It's...good to see you.

TRISTAN

And you.

(beat)

I'm looking for Catherine's ring of keys. Have you seen them?

Anne pauses only briefly.

ANNE

I had them this morning, but I left them in the room.

TRISTAN

That's what I thought. Catherine will find them eventually.

A charged pause. Tristan considers leaving, but doubles back. Anne looks up from her folding and eyes him.

ANNE

Is there something on your mind?

TRISTAN

(pause)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

TRISTAN (cont'd)

I saw the outer towns, the farmlands, for the first time. I saw the men who...keep the peace there. There is...a lot that could be better.

ANNE

I'm glad you agree.

TRISTAN

I'm sorry if I seemed insensitive before.

ANNE

Tristan, you are perhaps the most caring guard in this palace.

TRISTAN

(smirking)

That's not much of a compliment, I suppose.

ANNE

Well, it is.

Song: "WE ONLY HAVE TIME"

TRISTAN

(sings)

I CAN'T PROMISE MUCH
I CAN'T SAY I KNOW WHAT TO DO
BUT MY HEAD IS SPINNING
AND I HAVE TROUBLE LOOKING
AT ANYTHING BUT YOU
I KNOW WHAT HAPPENS NOW
I KNOW WHAT THIS MOMENT MEANS
BUT TOMORROW IS UNCERTAIN
AND I ONLY CAN HOPE THAT
THIS IS WHAT IT SEEMS TO BE

ANNE

I'VE NEVER QUITE HAD THIS FEELING
I NEVER EXPECTED IT FOR ME
BUT WHEN I MET YOU
YOU WON'T BELIEVE, BUT IT'S TRUE
THIS WAS THE LAST THING I COULD FORESEE
AND IT SCARES ME TO NO END
THAT THIS ISN'T PRETEND
AND WE'RE WHERE WE WANT TO BE

BOTH

THE DAYS HAVE BEEN SHORT
AND TIME RUNS WILD
BUT WE HAVE WHAT'S HERE AND NOW
IT'S HARD TO THINK OF YOU AS MINE
BUT THE WAIT HAS BEEN WORTH IT

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BOTH (cont'd)

AND THOUGH WE CAN'T BE SURE YET
FOR NOW, WE ONLY HAVE TIME

Scene 6

*Back in the king's study, Catherine is further
along in the book she's been reading.*

*A commotion begins just outside her chambers. She
looks up as two GUARDS lead in a restrained Anne.
Catherine shoots to her feet.*

CATHERINE

What are you doing?

GUARD 1

Your Majesty, this maidservant was caught stealing from
the royal treasury.

CATHERINE

Stealing?

*Guard 2 holds up a large pouch of gold and the
ring of keys.*

GUARD 2

She was in position of these when

Catherine takes the items.

GUARD 1

She insists that she was there on your orders.

*Catherine and Anne stare at each other, Catherine
understanding. After some silence, Catherine comes
to a decision.*

CATHERINE

She was.

GUARD 1

Your Majesty?

CATHERINE

I gave her these keys to retrieve some gold from the
treasury.

GUARD 1

But, she attempted to evade us.

(CONTINUED)

CATHERINE

Obviously, I asked her to be discreet. For my own reasons. Release her.

The guards do.

GUARD 1

Apologies, Your Majesty.

CATHERINE

I can only hope that the rest of my guard is as diligent as you, gentlemen. You're dismissed.

The Guards bow and exit. As soon as they're gone. Catherine huffs in indignation.

ANNE

Catherine.

CATHERINE

Are you part of it? The rebellion? Are you

ANNE

(long pause)

Yes.

CATHERINE

How long?

ANNE

Since before we met.

CATHERINE

Is that why we're friends?

ANNE

What? No--

CATHERINE

Is that why you were happy to take this position when I offered it?

ANNE

No.

CATHERINE

Are you going to kill me in my sleep?

ANNE

No!

(CONTINUED)

CATHERINE

Or Damien?

ANNE

(beat)

No. No, I'm not...that's not what I want.

CATHERINE

Then what do you want? To steal? Are you just a petty thief?

ANNE

You call that stealing? Have you even been to the treasury? That bag is a trinket compared to everything you have. Vaults and vaults full of gold! More than you could ever spend in a lifetime.

CATHERINE

(pause)

Because of the taxes.

ANNE

And what do you spend it on? A mining project in the north that's far more dangerous than it is profitable.

CATHERINE

(beat)

You always make me feel like a cruel idiot, Anne. Like I stole the money myself, pick-pocketed every farmer within our borders for everything they had.

ANNE

No, you just married the man who did. You fell in love with him.

CATHERINE

Don't say it like that.

ANNE

How would you like me to say it? That you were tricked? That you didn't really know the man you were marrying? That you weren't at any point just blinded by all the power you were about to receive?

CATHERINE

I'm tired of trying to justify myself to you. I want to *help* I want to make things better. Why not instead of blaming me for everything that's happened, you help me figure out *how*?

ANNE

I'm not the queen.

(CONTINUED)

CATHERINE

And what would you do if you were queen? What changes would you make? Or is everything you're doing just about revenge? Would you rather just hurt me back?

A heavy silence. Anne is so angry she's trembling, but she has nothing to say. She curtsies lowly.

ANNE

If that will be all, Your Majesty.

CATHERINE

Here.

Anne turns. Catherine tosses her the bag of gold.

CATHERINE

Since you worked so hard for it.

Anne catches it, staring at it as though she'd like to throw it back at her. She leaves without a backwards glance.

Alone again, Catherine lets the exhaustion show plainly on her face.

Song: "A QUEEN I'LL BE (REPRISE 1)"

CATHERINE

WHAT DID I DO WRONG
OR WAS THIS DOOMED FROM THE START
WAS I WRONG WHEN I LISTENED TO MY HEART

She pulls out the ring of keys and picks the one that goes to the chamber.

CATHERINE

IS IT TIME TO FACE THIS
OR IS IT TIME TO RUN
THEY SAY BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU WISH FOR
BUT HAS WISHING EVER DONE

She slowly approaches the door, the music around her growing more tense and dangerous the closer she gets.

Slowly, trembling a bit, Catherine puts the key in the lock and opens the door.

The music stops.

(CONTINUED)

The stage morphs into the chamber: a dimly lit room of stone with a single, long table, a body hidden under a curtain with a book beside it. Catherine stares, confused and apprehensive.

Slowly, she approaches the table. She goes to the book first, opens it and thumbs through it, but it means nothing to her, and the mass under the sheet pulls her attention.

Finally, she lifts a corner.

She screams in horror. A haunting rendition of the "A QUEEN I'LL BE" theme fills the air.

Catherine stumbles out of the chamber. The room transforms back into Damien's room, though the music still lingers. Catherine closes the door behind her. She takes a moment to catch her breath, trembling.

Enter Anne.

ANNE

Catherine, a carriage just pulled up to the front...
Damien--what's wrong? Catherine?

Catherine shakes her head, struggling to speak.

CATHERINE

Tristan. Go find Tristan.

ANNE

Cat, what happened?

CATHERINE

Please--go get him. Hurry!

Anne runs off.

Catherine looks around, fighting down panic. Her eyes eventually find the chamber door and linger there.

Slowly, shakily, Catherine enters the chamber again.

A second time, the chamber is somewhat less terrifying. Catherine looks around and uncertainly takes the book, staring at the body as though afraid it may come to life.

(CONTINUED)

Catherine turns her attention to the book, a large, old volume with a faded cover. She opens it and begins to read.

Enter Josephine, an echo of who she was. She is dressed the same as before. She speaks aloud what Catherine is reading.

JOSEPHINE

Before the world had grown and kingdoms stretched to the sky, a village settled in the valley. Among them was a young man. Son of a farmer, he was the kindest heart in the village. When he could spare a moment from his father's farm, he brought food to the children, helped the widow with repairs, and assisted the blacksmith. Everyone in the village loved him very much.

One night, when the stars were happiest, they rained down all across the valley. One aimed straight for the village. The villagers thought they were doomed.

While everyone ran into their homes, the brave young man stood in the center of the village and raised his hand. Just as the star was about to hit the ground, he caught it in his palm.

The people celebrated, for their village had been saved. The children danced around him, the widow sewed for him a royal blue cape, and the blacksmith made for him a scepter on which to place the star. From that day, the young man became their king, and a great kingdom was born.

Now the kingdom waits for the king's return, as the ages whisper the song:

BORN OF GREATEST SACRIFICE
THIS POWER WAITS FOR ONE
A RULER CROWNED BY COMET'S LIGHT
TO SIT UPON THE THRONE

Josephine exits, and the music fades. Catherine looks up, closes the book, and places it where it was, beginning to understand.

DAMIEN

I trusted you.

Catherine cries in fright and whirls around. Damien steps into the light.

(CONTINUED)

CATHERINE
Damien.

DAMIEN
I asked you not to come in here.

CATHERINE
Damien...tell me it's not true.

DAMIEN
I opened my palace to you, gave you everything you
asked of me.

CATHERINE
You...Josephine.

DAMIEN
DO NOT SPEAK HER NAME. She was--I loved her more than
anyone.

CATHERINE
You... This is what you do to people you love?

DAMIEN
You've read the book. You have the book. You know--in
order for my kingdom to see its destiny, in order for
me to truly assume the throne, a sacrifice had to be
made.

CATHERINE
And you...you...

DAMIEN
Do not judge me Catherine. I did what I thought was
best for my people.

CATHERINE
And it's done *nothing*. You've had them in the mines
digging for this star that might not even exist.

DAMIEN
It must exist--

CATHERINE
People are dying!

DAMIEN
As people often do.

CATHERINE
(beat)
You need to stop this.

(CONTINUED)

DAMIEN

Catherine, you don't understand.

CATHERINE

You need to close the mines.

DAMIEN

I have a duty as king--

CATHERINE

You need to lower taxes--

DAMIEN

To make the sacrifices--

CATHERINE

And swear to protect--

DAMIEN

That no one else can make!

Damien rips the keys from Catherine's hand. She lunges for them, but he grabs her wrist.

DAMIEN

I love you.

CATHERINE

No--

DAMIEN

I've loved you since the day I met you.

CATHERINE

That's not love--

DAMIEN

But a king must put his kingdom before himself.

He unsheathes a dagger. Catherine freezes with fear.

CATHERINE

It...you...

DAMIEN

I love you, Catherine.

CATHERINE

Wouldn't...do...

Damien pins her against the wall with nowhere to run.

(CONTINUED)

DAMIEN

Perhaps it didn't work with Josephine because I didn't feel this way with her. I tried. Heaven knows I tried.

CATHERINE

Please...

DAMIEN

And it was the worst moment of my life, doing what I did so many years ago.

CATHERINE

Damien...

DAMIEN

But it's not going to be anything like the pain I'll feel with this.

Tristan runs on stage and grabs Damien's hand.

CATHERINE

(breathless)

Tristan.

A struggle ensues. Tristan pulls Damien away from Catherine and forces him to drop the dagger. Catherine stares at it, then grabs it, holding it like she would something dead.

Tristan and Damien continue to struggle, but Damien is clearly stronger. Catherine holds the dagger uncertainly, not sure what to do.

DAMIEN

You...filthy...traitor!

Damien shoves Tristan away from him and draws his sword.

CATHERINE

Damien, don't--

DAMIEN

You are worse than the peasants.

Damien aims his sword.

Catherine reaffirms her grip.

CATHERINE

NO!

Catherine leaps and stabs Damien in the back with his own dagger.

(CONTINUED)

The world stands still. Damien tries to look over his shoulder, but he can't see her.

DAMIEN

I love you.

He collapses. Catherine backs away, horrified at what she has done. For a moment, Tristan is equally horrified, but when she falls to her knees and begins to weep, he kneels beside her. She turns to him, and they embrace.

Scene 7

The scene transforms into a funeral with Catherine, Tristan, and Damien still on stage. A blanket is placed over Damien's body.

Tristan brings Catherine to her feet as Anne, courtiers, and even rebels gather around them in a loose swarm, giving their condolences before drifting on.

As people speak to Catherine, she hardly reacts.

WILLIAM

I'm so sorry for your loss.

CLAUDE

I can't believe he grew ill so quickly. He was so young.

COURTIER 1

What a horrid tragedy!

COURTIER 2

I can't believe it...

ADVISER 1

The troops have been withdrawn from the farm towns, Your Majesty.

ADVISER 2

The mining project has been shut down.

ADVISER 3

The families of those who lost their lives will be compensated.

REBEL 1

So glad it's over...

One by one, everyone but Catherine, Anne, and Tristan exit the stage.

(CONTINUED)

CATHERINE

If you don't mind, I'd like a moment alone.

ANNE

Are you sure?

CATHERINE

Yes. Please.

Tristan comes forward and places a gentle kiss on her forehead.

TRISTAN

You know best.

She offers them a weak, painful smile.

Tristan nods, understanding, but Anne remains unsure. He takes Anne's hand gently, pulling her attention away from Catherine, and leads her offstage.

Catherine is alone. She lets her pain show plainly for the first time: grief and betrayal and anger push a choking sob from her, but her eyes are dry.

Song: "A QUEEN I'LL BE (REPRISE 2)"

CATHERINE

(sings)

THEY SAY WHEN A LOVED ONE IS LOST
A NEW STAR BURNS BRIGHT
BUT DOES THAT TRUTH STILL STAND
IF HE'S KILLED BY MY OWN HAND
OR IS DARKNESS BETTER AT NIGHT

Enter Josephine, looking just as she did in the beginning, an echo of what she was.

As she sings, Catherine reacts only slightly, as though the words are merely her own thoughts.

JOSEPHINE

IT WAS MY CHANCE
TO BE A PART
OF A CHANGING WORLD ABOUT TO START

CATHERINE

NO MORE WAITING, NO MORE FEAR
NOW MY WAY IS STRAIGHT AND CLEAR

(CONTINUED)

JOSEPHINE

THERE WAS NO CHANCE TO SEE
WHAT KIND OF QUEEN I'D BE

CATHERINE & JOSEPHINE

I'M NOT A MYSTERY, NO LONGER A WIFE
IT'S TIME TO BE STRONG AND BELIEVE

Josephine stops singing. The music drops away.

CATHERINE

(sing)

YES, IT'S A QUEEN I'LL BE

*Josephine exits, a final, farewell glance to
Catherine.*

*Catherine is alone once more. She bows her head,
tired from her own emotions.*

Fade out.

THE END.