

DAISES IN THE RUINS

A FULL LENGTH PLAY

by

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HONORS THESIS

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ABSTRACT

My thesis was writing and producing my own production of my original play, Daisies in the Ruins. My piece is about Gwyneth, the princess of Zarynia, who just turned 18 at the start of the show. Her whole world gets flipped upside down, when she meets the princes of some neighboring kingdom that are vying for her hand in marriage. Gwyneth couldn't care less about the romance of the matches, that is until she meets someone that can derail all her plans, a knight. Not just any knight, but a female knight. Daisies in the Ruins follows Gwyneth as she tries to help her people by finding a husband whose army can help defeat the rebels once and for all. However, she was not prepared for the one thing that could derail her plans: love. On top of that, her father, Zadkiel, grows more paranoid and crazed as this story progresses. Tensions arise as Gwyneth gives over to the impulses of her heart, and Zadkiel catches them in the act. Faced with the execution of the love of her life Gwyneth must choose between the safety of the world she has always known or risk it all for a chance at something better.

This story tackles themes and ideas such as classism, sexism, and homophobia. In today's society, these concepts hold so much weight and are things that we still struggle with today. All of these things I have personally dealt with myself, which is why I needed to include them in my play. I wrote this play because of the situations in my life that have shaped me into the person I am today.

I. DAISIES IN THE RUINS SCRIPT

ACT 1

SCENE 1

LIGHTS UP ON: BANQUET HALL

Gwyneth and Elodie enter in from off stage. Gwyneth is in a simply elegant gown, very similar in style to Elodie's gown.

GWYNETH

Oh, geez. Is it too late to leave?

ELODIE

It's your birthday.

GWYNETH

So?

ELODIE

Well, I'm pretty sure people will notice if the birthday girl didn't show up to her own party.

GWYNETH

Who cares? Isn't it "my party, so I can do what I want"?

ELODIE

You are going to ditch everyone here?

GWYNETH

Well, no.

ELODIE

That's what I thought.

GWYNETH

...

ELODIE

Hey, let's just get this over with, and then we can do whatever you want.

GWYNETH

Whatever I want?

ELODIE

Ugh, as long as it's not, like, searching for the rare little milly flower.

GWYNETH

It's the *melittis melissophyllum* flower.

ELODIE

I don't really care what it's called. It's the reason I spent three hours picking twigs and leaves out of my best sundress.

GWYNETH

In my defense, I told you to wear something plain.

ELODIE

Gwynny, I go out in flair, or I don't go out at all.

GWYNETH

(exasperatedly.)

Okay.

Gwyneth and Elodie move over to where several people are gathered. They stand behind Amory and Maeve.

CALIX

-and there I was, with hundr- nay thousands of men laid slaughtered at my feet. My remaining men were weary and disheartened-

MAEVE

(quietly to Amory.)

Which tends to happen when they are the ones actually fighting, and seeing their brothers massacred.

CALIX

-I looked at each one of them and said, "Men, this is what we have been working towards-

MAEVE

What *they*'ve been working towards-

CALIX

-this is why we kiss our wives and children goodbye-

MAEVE

Why *they* kiss their families-

CALIX

-these fights are how legends are born, so don't give up now. Now is the time to fight harder than you ever have before. When you fight, you don't fight for yourselves, you fight for all of Sckessa!"

Applause sounds around him.

MAEVE

(furious whisper.)

This is insane. What are they cheering for? A freaking speech?! I've seen a drunk make a better speech about his need for more alcohol, and this impresses people?

Gwyneth leans closer to Maeve and Amory, hanging on to every word.

AMORY

Maeve-

MAEVE

No, because these pompous, arrogant, royal pains in the-/

AMORY

/Maeve, you need to watch it/

MAEVE

(getting louder)

/No, Amory, I don't need to watch it- they are completely fine with sending their people off to die, because who cares if they die. It's not like they even matter. Cowards!

Calix overhears Maeve and turns to her.

CALIX

I'm sorry, what were you saying, Lady...

MAEVE

Dame Maeve.

CALIX

Dame, you mean to tell me that *you're* a knight?

AMORY

Actually-

MAEVE

I am. I earned my title in the Kingdom of Chistwore. Under an *honorable* Prince. One who fights alongside his people. Which is more than I can say for others in this realm.

CALIX

Oh, an *honorable* Prince? Seems to me that it would be the least honorable thing to do. What would happen to his kingdom, his *people*, if he were to die?

Gwyneth tenses and absentmindedly fiddles with a leather bracelet around her wrist.

AMORY

Well, I tend to use fighting as a last resort, so I don't have to fight as often.

CALIX

Huh, and *I'm* the coward.

Maeve instinctively reaches for her sword. Gwyneth steps between the two.

GWYNETH

What an excellent strategy, Prince Amory. I, for one, think that diplomacy is more important to a kingdom than brute strength.

CALIX

Well, that is because women hate violence. They have no real appreciation for it.

MAEVE

Come over here and I'll show you just how much I appreciate it.

GWYNETH

Or perhaps we understand the importance of staying out of pointless fights that cost us *thousands* of men, especially if a treaty was easier and more beneficial.

CALIX

...Must be nice to live in a kingdom where you are not plagued with severe threats, and have the luxury of communicating with your enemies. I need to come visit this idyllic land. Where, pray tell, do you reside?

GWYNETH

...

ELODIE

I'll have you know that this is-

REINA

Gwyneth! Darling, we have been waiting for you. Oh, I see you have met Prince Amory and Prince Calix.

CALIX

Princess Gwyneth?

ELODIE

The one and only.

REINA

(not so quietly to Gwyneth.)

They are both *single*!

CALIX

My apologies, Your Highness. I never would have-

ELODIE

Discredited her on her basis of her sex?

CALIX

Uh...

ELODIE

That's what I thought.

AMORY

If you'll allow me to formally introduce myself. I am Prince Amory of Chistwore.

GWYNETH

(to Maeve.)

And you are?

MAEVE

Dame Maeve, Your Highness.

Zadkiel makes his way through the crowd.

ZADKIEL

What is going on- Oh, Gwyneth. You're here.

Gwyneth doesn't meet her father's eyes instead touches the bracelet on her wrist again.

REINA

Oh, Zadkiel, of course she's here. You are such a jester some times. And she has met our *important* guests.

ZADKIEL

Our important guests...

REINA

Yes, the princes.

ZADKIEL

...

REINA

(not so quietly to Zadkiel.)

The *single* ones.

ZADKIEL

Oh, right.

CALIX

Allow me to introduce myself, again. I am Prince Calix of Sckessa, Your Majesty.

ZADKIEL

Of course, good to see you again, Prince Calix.

AMORY

Your Majesty, I am Prince Amory of Chistwore, and this is my knight, Dame Maeve.

ZADKIEL

Your knight?

AMORY

Yes, Sire.

ZADKIEL

A lady knight?

AMORY

Yes, Sire.

ZADKIEL

Were there not enough men in your Kingdom?

AMORY

On the contrary, but Maeve was better than many of the men who went through the trials. And, she saved my life.

CALIX

A woman saved your life?

AMORY

Yes, she did.

CALIX

Are you not ashamed to admit that?

AMORY

Ashamed to admit that one of my knights stopped an attempt on my life? No, I am not. Should I be?

CALIX

I would be.

AMORY

Why?

CALIX

Because a *woman* saved your life.

AMORY

And?

CALIX

And?! She's a woman.

AMORY

An astute observation, Prince Calix. But I would rather be saved by a woman than dead.

ZADKIEL

I'm not sure I'd agree.

REINA

Oh, Zadkiel, surely you don't mean that.

ZADKIEL

My dear, if a *woman* is able to defeat one of my enemies, and *I* can't, go ahead and let me die.

An uncomfortable pause settles through the room.

AMORY

Well, I, for one, pray that we never have to see that day. Long live the King.

EVERYONE

Long live the King!

ZADKIEL

Thank you-

Zadkiel is cut off by a knight rushing to his side. They whisper urgently to him.

ZADKIEL

If you'll excuse me.

Zadkiel exits.

CALIX

What was that about?

ELODIE

Oh, you don't know? Hmm, and you say diplomacy is useless.

CALIX

I never-

GWYNETH

Rebels. We are dealing with a rebellion.

AMORY

(sympathetically.)

Oh.

CALIX

(curiously.)

Oh.

GWYNETH

Which is why I am looking for a husband, with a considerable army.

REINA

(nervously.)

Aaha, she meant a husband with a considerable heart.

GWYNETH

No, I didn-

ELODIE

Yes, someone that she has a real connection with.

GWYNETH

(quietly to Elodie.)

What are you doing?

ELODIE

You can't just say you want to marry someone for his army.

GWYNETH

Why not?

ELODIE

Because... just because you can't.

GWYNETH

...Huh?

ELODIE

You have to be subtle.

GWYNETH

That's annoying.

Calix moves to Gwyneth's side.

CALIX

Your Highness, I look forward to chance to get to know one another.

ELODIE

I already know all I need to know about you.

CALIX

Mmh. A pity then, seeing as my army is *quite* considerable.

ELODIE

Oh, really-

GWYNETH

I look forward to getting to know you as well, and you, Prince Amory.

AMORY

Thank you, Your Highness.

REINA

I hope you'll forgive me if I excuse myself. I fear I am growing too old to stay out this late.

CALIX

Oh, please Your Majesty, you don't look a day over 25.

Reina exits. Elodie turns to Gwyneth.

ELODIE

I do believe that is our cue.

GWYNETH

Oh, yes. If you'll excuse us as well.

CALIX

Leaving so soon?

GWYNETH

Oh well-

ELODIE

Yes, she is. She needs to get her rest before the ball tomorrow night. Surely you would understand the importance of beauty sleep.

CALIX

...

AMORY

Well, I know I do. This is the face of a man who needs at least 14 hours of sleep a night.

MAEVE

Oh, yeah. I've seen him fall asleep standing straight up. Like a horse.

AMORY

That is a complete lie, I don't do that.

MAEVE

Sure you don't. (Fake Coughing.) Midsummer banquet.

AMORY

(quickly.)

We should probably get going too, Before Maeve spills all of my secrets.

CALIX

Gwyneth, if you are leaving, might I walk you back to your room?

GWYNETH

I guess-

ELODIE

No, that's alright, Your Highness. She knows the way back to her room. She doesn't need help.

CALIX

So be it then.

Calix exits.

ELODIE

That was fun. Anyways, let's go. It was my pleasure to meet you, Prince Amory.

Elodie exits, but Gwyneth hangs back.

GWYNETH

I hope you can attend my ball. Tomorrow.

AMORY

Absolutely/

MAEVE

/We will be there. I promise, milady

Gwyneth exits. Amory gives Maeve a look.

MAEVE

What?

AMORY

Milady?

MAEVE

I'm being respectful.

AMORY

Oh, okay.

Amory shakes his head and laughs at Maeve.

MAEVE

You know, it's a really bold move to tease someone who knows the inner workings of your defense system.

AMORY

Maeve, you can't say things like that. It implies treason.

MAEVE

It's only treason if they can prove it was me.

Amory looks hard at Maeve. He moves and she advances at him. They run off the stage both laughing.

LIGHTS DIM.

SCENE 2

LIGHTS UP ON: BALLROOM

The ballroom is filled with couples twirling around the floor. Gwyneth skirts around the edge of the room. Maeve sees her, and approaches her.

GWYNETH

Good evening, Dame Maeve.

MAEVE

Dame?

GWYNETH

Is that not your title?

MAEVE

No, I mean, yes it is. I just thought that...

GWYNETH

I have watched several of my knights go through their trials. I understand the strength, determination, and effort that goes into it. You've earned your title, and I will respect that.

MAEVE

Thank you, milady.

GWYNETH

Are you enjoying yourself tonight?

MAEVE

Um, it is definitely something.

GWYNETH

What do you mean?

MAEVE

Nothing. It's nice.

GWYNETH

...

MAEVE

It is!

GWYNETH

...

MAEVE

It's just... six roasted pigs?

GWYNETH

What about it?

MAEVE

You don't think it's a little much?

GWYNETH

Well, they're always like this.

MAEVE

Ah.

GWYNETH

What?

MAEVE

You royals really have no clue. When was the last time you left your cozy castle?

Gwyneth freezes and twists the leather bracelet on her wrist.

MAEVE

Look, I don't mean to be rude, but if you actually left this castle and saw your people with your own eyes, you'd understand what I mean.

Calix enters.

CALIX

Talking about me?

MAEVE

You wish.

CALIX

Your *Prince* might be okay with degrading himself by letting you speak without any sort of manners, but when you speak to royalty, you address them as such.

MAEVE

I would not address you as such, even if I was drowning and you were the only person who could save me.

Maeve turns away from Calix, who grabs her arm.

CALIX

You will show me some manners-

MAEVE

Take your hands off of me-

Gwyneth steps between the two of them.

GWYNETH

Prince Calix, let's dance.

Gwyneth places her hand on Calix's arm.

GWYNETH

Please, I love this song.

Calix takes Gwyneth's hand. He looks at Maeve as he speaks.

CALIX

I'd love to.

Gwyneth looks at Maeve as Calix ushers them onto the ballroom floor. The song starts up, and the two begin to dance.

CALIX

This is an exquisite ball. Do we have you to thank for that?

GWYNETH

The Queen is the mastermind behind this. The extend of my influence goes as far as the food, I'm afraid.

CALIX

Oh, I do love a woman with a wit about her.

GWYNETH

It wasn't a- nevermind.

CALIX

I'm sorry you had to witness that unpleasant business.

GWYNETH

Mmhm.

CALIX

Sometimes, it seems, even the Help needs some help.

GWYNETH

But, she isn't "the Help".

CALIX

Excuse me.

GWYNETH

She's not "the Help". She's a member of Chistwore's royal court.

CALIX

You can't really believe that.

GWYNETH

It's not like there's anything to "believe". The Crowned Prince of Chistwore addressed her as a knight.

CALIX

Sure, but she can't really be considered a true knight. Everyone knows that knights are strictly men.

GWYNETH

That rule doesn't seem as *strict* as you deem it to be.

CALIX

So it seems.

GWYNETH

Perhaps, your denial of her rank is why she refuses to acknowledge yours. I believe it's fair to say you disrespected her first. Maybe if you respected her, she would respect you.

CALIX

Dear, Gwyneth, I must say, I love your naivety. You believe the best of people.

GWYNETH

I wouldn't say that-

CALIX

But as someone who knows better, you have to rule with a firm hand. Your people must respect you, no matter what you do. If they don't, then you will be overrun by those who *think* they know best. Like your rebels. Do you understand?

GWYNETH

Yes.

The music comes to an end, and Gwyneth hurries off the floor towards Elodie who is speaking to Maeve and Amory.

CALIX

I enjoyed that very much, didn't you?

GWYNETH

Uh huh.

CALIX

I would like to see you again. Tomorrow.

Gwyneth reaches Elodie.

GWYNETH

Tomorrow doesn't work, I'm afraid. I already have plans to stroll throughout the village with Prince Amory.

We do?

AMORY

Maeve elbows Amory.

We do.

AMORY

Ah. Maybe tomorrow evening.

CALIX

Um, yes, well you see-

GWYNETH

She has to wash her hair.

ELODIE

I have to wash my hair.

GWYNETH

I see.

CALIX

Perhaps another time.

GWYNETH

Absolutely, Your Highness. If you'll excuse me.

CALIX

Calix exits.

Buh bye.

ELODIE

So... we have a date?

AMORY

Yes!

ELODIE

No!

GWYNETH

AMORY

No?

GWYNETH

Yes. (beat.) I mean- I know that men like to be the ones to ask the girls on the date and I didn't mean to *do* the asking.

AMORY

I don't really mind it. If it makes you feel better, I could ask.

GWYNETH

No, that's alright. I suppose we could go for a short walk outside. A very short walk.

AMORY

Absolutely. A very short walk.

GWYNETH

Outside the castle...

MAEVE

I would happily join the party, if you would like more security, Your Highness.

GWYNETH

I'm not scared.

MAEVE

I never said you were.

AMORY

Maeve just wants to go because she's hoping she'll get to stab something.

MAEVE

That's not true.

AMORY

Sure it is. You once got so bored that you stabbed a man for fun.

MAEVE

Firstly, it wasn't a *man*. It was Leon. And secondly, he was wearing chainmail, so the blade barely nicked him.

Amory gives Gwyneth a "See What I Have to Deal With" gesture.

GWYNETH

Well, I'd hate to come back home to see that you've stabbed my favorite *quercus roburs*.

MAEVE

...

AMORY

...

ELODIE

It's a plant.

GWYNETH

Technically, a tree.

ELODIE

Plants are her *thing*. Just in case you were wanting to get on her good side.

AMORY

That is great to hear. Do you have any other interests, milady?

GWYNETH

Not real-

ELODIE

Puh-lease! She has so many interests.

GWYNETH

I really don't-

ELODIE

Prince Amory, come dance with me and I'll tell you everything there is to know about Gwyneth.

AMORY

Sounds like a plan.

GWYNETH

No, it doesn't.

Elodie and Amory move towards the dance floor.

MAEVE

Scared she'll spill all of Zarynia's secrets?

GWYNETH

I'm scared she'll spill all *my* secrets.

MAEVE

(jokingly.)

What's the worst thing you've ever done?

Gwyneth freezes, and holds on tightly to the leather band on her wrist. Maeve notices and pauses.

MAEVE

You know... it's okay, if you're scared.

GWYNETH

I'm n-

MAEVE

Not that I am saying you are. (beat.) But not being scared isn't what makes a person brave.

GWYNETH

Then, what does?

MAEVE

Doing what scares you anyways. Recognizing that fear you feel, but not letting it control you.

GWYNETH

I guess I'm not very brave then.

MAEVE

I wouldn't say that. I mean, you are going outside the castle, even though it scares you. Seems pretty brave to me.

GWYNETH

Yeah.

MAEVE

My advice: don't think too much about it. Your body wants to move. It wants to run and jump and maybe even dance. But our minds have a way of tripping us up. So just, don't think. Move.

Maeve exits, and Gwyneth watches her as she leaves.

LIGHTS DIM.

SCENE 3

LIGHTS UP ON: OUTSIDE THE CASTLE

Gwyneth fidgets with her cloak.

ELODIE

Oh, would you stop? You look gorgeous, thanks to me.

GWYNETH

This is a terrible idea. We should just go back inside.

Gwyneth turns right into Amory's arms.

ELODIE

I could not disagree more. This is a grand plan.

GWYNETH

Sorry/

AMORY

/Sorry/

GWYNETH

/No, I ran into you/

AMORY

/But I should have been watching where I was going/

GWYNETH

/But-

ELODIE

Oh, for the love of all that is holy. Everyone here is forgiven. A thousand times over.

Gwyneth and Amory go silent.

MAEVE

Ooh, teach me your ways. I can never get Amory to stop.

ELODIE

It all about authority, and confidence. And being insanely attractive. People are intimidated by beauty.

MAEVE

I'll say.

Maeve and Elodie share a look, and Gwyneth clears her throat.

GWYNETH

I thought we'd go into the village of Marconia. They always have the most beautiful fairs this time of the year. Everyone decorates their stores with the most vibrant flowers-

ELODIE

(quietly to Gwyneth.)

Gwynny, they don't have that any more.

GWYNETH

What do you mean? Of course they do.

ELODIE

No, they don't. Between the rebels fighting, all the taxes, and the lack of business from, well, your family, they didn't have the funds to do the market anymore.

GWYNETH

Oh. Okay, well, we could still go to Madame Desrosiers'. It's also in Marconia, a little on the outskirts, but not too bad.

Gwyneth looks to Elodie for confirmation, and she nods.
Gwyneth and Amory begin to walk ahead of Elodie and Maeve.

GWYNETH

(to Amory.)

Ellie usually goes there to pick up some buds for my garden. I have never gotten a bud that didn't bloom from her. I still believe that has to do with her being such a kind soul. She once called us kindred spirits. And would make me a crown of flowers for my birthday. She never missed a birthday.

AMORY

Should we get you a crown then?

GWYNETH

...No, that's alright.

AMORY

Of course. (Beat.) Ahem, so do you come around here often?

GWYNETH

Outside the castle? No.

AMORY

Oh, right. Maeve said you don't get out.

GWYNETH

Maeve said that? It's not like I'm a recluse. I just prefer the safety of the castle. There are rebels all around. Is it really that odd?

AMORY

What? No, it's not odd. I never- she never- No one thinks it's odd.

GWYNETH

Okay, good. Because it's not.

AMORY

Of course.

Amory looks around him, and notices a daffodil on the ground near them. He picks it and hands it to Gwyneth.

AMORY

For you. Though its beauty cannot compare-

GWYNETH

Oh this is a *narcissus pseudonarcissus*! You can tell because the tepals are a lighter yellow than the bright trumpet!

AMORY

Oh, I wasn't aware-

GWYNETH

Oh yes, they are quite fascinating. Interestingly enough, one could make a potent poison by crushing the bulb and leaves, and slipping them into someone's meal.

AMORY

...of course. (Beat.) Ahem, but you would not need a poison to kill me, because being around you makes it hard to breath.

GWYNETH

Are you saying I smell bad?

AMORY

What?

GWYNETH

You can't breathe when you're around me?

AMORY

No that's not what I-

GWYNETH

Because I will have you know that I smell of *lavandula* and *gypsophila elegans*! I make my own perfume with only the freshest of flowers, and who are you to say I smell-

AMORY

Princess!

GWYNETH

What?!

AMORY

I was trying to give you a compliment.

GWYNETH

By saying I smell bad.

AMORY

By saying, you are breath taking. Like that you are so beautiful it's "breath taking".

GWYNETH

Oh.

AMORY

I'm trying to court you.

GWYNETH

Oh. (Beat.) *Oh!*

AMORY

This is going great.

GWYNETH

No! It is. Keeping going! Court on.

AMORY

I- this isn't something I am good at. I don't care much for the romance of courting.

GWYNETH

A small tip. Perhaps, don't tell the woman you're courting that you do not care about courting.

AMORY

Ah, you're right. I just mean that I am supposed to be finding a wife, and I don't feel any connection to anyone.

GWYNETH

I know how you feel.

AMORY

But at least with you, I feel a kinship. That we might be happy, if we tried.

GWYNETH

Do you have an army?

AMORY

Yes.

GWYNETH

How big?

AMORY

Massive.

GWYNETH

Do you have a garden?

AMORY

Yes.

GWYNETH

How big?

AMORY

Bigger than the army.

GWYNETH

Would I have my own suite?

AMORY

Yes.

GWYNETH

How big?

AMORY

Smaller than mine.

GWYNETH

That might be a deal breaker.

AMORY

I am willing exchange our suites.

GWYNETH

Then, I will think on it.

AMORY

You truly are something else.

GWYNETH

So I've been told.

Amory looks at Gwyneth, a moment of fondness passing between each other. Elodie and Maeve catch up to them.

ELODIE

What is going on here?

AMORY

Gwyneth is educating me on which flowers not to eat.

ELODIE

(to Gwyneth.)

It looks like you two really hit it off.

GWYNETH

Most certainly! And he told me his garden is massive!

ELODIE

(suggestively.)

Are we talking about a literal garden, or is this something more interesting?

GWYNETH

Ellie!

ELODIE

Okay, real garden.

AMORY

Gwyneth, I must say, your kingdom is glorious. I don't think I've ever seen this many flowers in my life.

ELODIE

If you think this is a lot of flowers, you should see the Elyis Fields.

GWYNETH

No, they shouldn't.

ELODIE

(ignoring her.)

It shouldn't be too far up ahead.

GWYNETH

(panicking.)

Ellie/

ELODIE

/It's even more impressive than *this* one's garden./

GWYNETH

/Ellie/

ELODIE

/It's got a bunch of- what do you call it again Gwyn?

GWYNETH

...

ELODIE

What is it?

GWYNETH

You have to go by the Ruins to get to the Elyis Fields.

AMORY

Ooh the Ruins. What's that?

MAEVE

Amory, it sounds pretty self explanatory. The "Ruins"? Go on, take a stab at what that could possibly be.

AMORY

I'm sorry Miss "I-know-everything". Maybe there's a fun little story behind it. Like a little tale. Maybe its *haunted*.

ELODIE

Gwyn is right, we should make our way to Madame's shop. It'll close soon, so-

AMORY

Oh, come on, now I want to see these Ruins.

ELODIE

We really shouldn't-

AMORY

Are you really afraid of some old stones? I will guard you with my life. On my honor.

ELODIE

No it's not that-

Gwyneth stops. In front of her is a field with pieces of a ruined building. Amory looks over at the Ruins. Maeve looks from Gwyneth to the Ruins, and back at Gwyneth again.

AMORY

Woah, that is amazing!

MAEVE

Amory, maybe we should listen to the ladies.

AMORY

Oh, not you too. Look, I will go and get rid of any ghosts for you.

Amory moves to the ruins.

MAEVE

Amory!

AMORY

Okay you ghouls, you must be gone now! Leave the realm.

ELODIE

Prince Amory, honestly!/

MAEVE

/Sire!/

AMORY

/Oh, come on. It's not that serious./

GWYNETH

/Andre! Andre! Stop!

Amory trips falling into the ruins. Gwyneth runs to him, and frantically tries to push him out of the ruins. She is no longer in this moment, but in a distant memory.

GWYNETH

No! Andre, you can't be here. You can't be here! You can't- the rebels! Andre, we have to leave. We have to leave now!

AMORY

Gwyn, Princess, it's okay. There aren't rebels here. You're safe.

GWYNETH

No! No one is safe here. This is a bad place. We are not safe.

Elodie tries to grab Gwyneth, but she flings her off. Amory attempts to grab her as well, but she lashes out wildly. Maeve rushes to her side. She holds her tightly in her arms.

MAEVE

Shh. Shh. It's okay. It's okay.

GWYNETH

Andre, I'm sorry. I'm so sorry. This is all my fault.

MAEVE

It's okay. It's okay. You're okay.

Maeve continues to soothe her, and she starts breathing slower. Gwyneth moves to stand, but Maeve stops her.

MAEVE

(quietly to Gwyneth.)

Just take a moment. Breathe.

Maeve plucks a daisy from the fields.

MAEVE

I'm not much of a flower person. Could you tell me what kind this is?

GWYNETH

It's a daisy.

MAEVE

Is it a special kind of daisy? Should I pocket it, and sell it to a flower connoisseur?

GWYNETH

Not unless you want to be laughed at. It's just an ordinary *bellis perennis*. We don't see them much in the kingdom. Really, this is the only place I've seen them.

MAEVE

Ah, okay. Why don't they grow in the kingdom?

GWYNETH

Probably because of the soil or lack of sun. When I was younger, I believed it to be because of magic. It's why I liked them so much. I thought that coming out here and picking a daisy on your birthday would bring you good luck for the coming year.

MAEVE

And did it?

GWYNETH

It used to.

MAEVE

What changed?

GWYNETH

Andre.

MAEVE

Who's Andre?

GWYNETH

He is- was my brother.

MAEVE

What was he like?

GWYNETH

Um, he was... He...

ELODIE

(to Gwyneth.)

You don't have to say anything. Let's just get you back home.

MAEVE

I'm sorry, I wasn't meaning to intrude.

ELODIE

Well, obviously she doesn't want to talk about him. She doesn't even talk to me about him, so why would she want to talk to *you* about him?

MAEVE

Well I-

GWYNETH

He was fearless. He was always jumping off of ledges, and riding mustangs. I hated it. He was always putting himself in this unnecessary danger. Just to feel a thrill. I envied him. Maybe that's why I really came out here. I knew it wasn't safe, but Andre would've done it. If he really, really wanted something, he would've risked it.

MAEVE

Well, some things are worth the risks.

GWYNETH

That's what Andre used to say. He'd say "Gwyn, nothing worth doing is safe." (beat.) I just wanted to pick a daisy. I did it every year, and I just- I needed to.

MAEVE

Of course. It was going to bring you good luck.

GWYNETH

Yeah. Neighbors were fighting neighbors. And I just thought maybe, just maybe, this daisy would bring us a little extra help. But there wasn't enough knights to escort me, so I came myself. I didn't think anyone would really notice I was gone.

MAEVE

But Andre did?

GWYNETH

He came to bring me back. And, I yelled at him. I told him I wanted to stay, that he wasn't the only one who was allowed to do dangerous things. That I could be brave too. I must've been really loud because the rebels heard us. (beat.) Andre tried to protect me, but there were so many of them. And they were so angry. They were so loud. That's the only thing I really remember. The yelling. The fury. They killed him, and I fell and hit my head on the ruins. I guess they thought I was dead. I thought I was going to die. So I looked at the daisies. It was dumb, but I believed that they might grant us enough luck to make it home. I know, it's stupid-

MAEVE

It wasn't stupid. You held onto the only thing you could. Sure, it was a flower, but it was more than that. It gave you strength. Enough strength to fight to live another day. And that is anything but stupid.

Gwyneth analyzes the flower as if it has taken on a new meaning entirely. She looks back to Maeve.

LIGHTS DIM.

SCENE 4

LIGHTS UP ON: ZADKIEL'S PRIVATE
CHAMBER

Zadkiel is at his desk. He rifles through documents, as a knock sounds at his door.

ZADKIEL

What! Who is it?!

Calix enters.

ZADKIEL

Oh, it is only you.

CALIX

Yes. It is *only* I.

ZADKIEL

That is not how I meant it. I thought you were another one of my knights- (Beat.)
Never mind that. Prince Calix, what is it you need from me?

CALIX

Me? Oh, I was coming to see if I couldn't be of some assistance to you, Your Majesty.

ZADKIEL

And what could I possibly need from you?

CALIX

Well, it is no secret that these *rebels* of yours have occupied quite a few of your outlying cities. It's only a matter of time before they recruit enough volunteers to overthrow the castle.

ZADKIEL

I have no clue where you are getting your intel, but it is wrong.

CALIX

Your Majesty, we may be honest with one another. I do not wish to use this information against you-

ZADKIEL

Then, what is it you *wish* to do?

CALIX

I only tell you this so that you might know that I understand the dire circumstances that you are forced into. I would like to help. The cavalry of Sckessa is a force that doubles your own. They have never lost a single battle. I would be more than willing to extend their strength to you, so that you may, once and for all, put an end to this *rebellion* of yours.

ZADKIEL

And what is it that you would want in return?

CALIX

Gwyneth's hand in marriage. And, when we wed, full sovereign over Zarynia and her people.

ZADKIEL

I might bless the marriage between my daughter and yourself, but my kingdom would remain my own until my passing. Then, it would go to my daughter, and eventually her sons. It is the way it has always been.

CALIX

My armies will not fight under another King.

ZADKIEL

Then, as King of Sckessa, you will command them.

CALIX

I am not to be the King of Sckessa.

ZADKIEL

You- If you are not to be the King of Sckessa, who are you to be offering any sort of aid for Zarynia? They are not your armies to command.

CALIX

If I were to become King of Zarynia, my brothers would come to the aid of my kingdom. Especially, if I had one as large as Zarynia.

ZADKIEL

And say they didn't. What would you do then?

CALIX

Public executions.

ZADKIEL

I beg your pardon?

CALIX

The only way to quell a rebellion such as this, is to show no mercy. We do not bend to their whims. We hang anyone associated with the cause and anyone who dares to speak out against the crown.

ZADKIEL

That is barbaric.

CALIX

It is a necessary evil.

A knock interrupts the conversation. Neither men makes a move towards the door. Another knock sounds.

ZADKIEL

Who is it?

Amory enters.

AMORY

Oh, I didn't realize you had company, Your Majesty. I can come back later.

ZADKIEL

It is not a problem, Prince Amory. Prince Calix was just taking his leave.

CALIX

But, sir-

ZADKIEL

I will think on what you have told me. For now, I wish to speak to Prince Amory. Privately.

Calix exits.

ZADKIEL

How may I help you Prince Amory?

AMORY

Please, Amory is just fine, Your Majesty.

ZADKIEL

And, *Your Majesty* is just fine with me.

AMORY

Of course, Your Majesty.

ZADKIEL

How can I help you, *Amory*?

AMORY

Sir, I would like to ask for your blessing to marry Princess Gwyneth.

ZADKIEL

Really, now?

AMORY

Yes, Your Majesty.

ZADKIEL

And what are you prepared to offer in exchange for my daughter's hand?

AMORY

Well, sir. I understand that Zarynia is in need of a formidable cavalry to help put an end to the rebellion. Chistwore has that army, and when I am King, I will extend them to you.

ZADKIEL

When you are King? So, you are to be the heir of Chistwore?

AMORY

Yes, sir.

ZADKIEL

Ah.

AMORY

I also have a big garden.

ZADKIEL

You have a big garden?

AMORY

Well, that was something Gwyneth asked about. It seemed to make her happy, when I told her about it. (beat.) I guess, I just mean- I could- I will make her happy. That is what I care about most.

ZADKIEL

What would it mean to you if I told you Prince Calix was just in here offering the same thing?

AMORY

I expected as much, so it doesn't change my position. I am offering you an army, which he is probably doing as well. And *heirs* go without question. The only thing I might be able to offer you that he couldn't, is my dedication to your daughter. To her well-being and safety.

ZADKIEL

...I will think about your request.

AMORY

Thank you, Your Majesty.

Amory exits, and Zadkiel turns back to his work.

LIGHTS DIM.

SCENE 5

LIGHTS UP ON: GREENHOUSE

Flowers cover every area of the greenhouse. Gwyneth prunes the flowers and Maeve enters. She watches her, which Gwyneth doesn't notice.

GWYNETH

Wow, Mrs. *Rosa canina*, you are just blooming wonderfully. I do hope you grow just a bit taller. Perhaps, I will move over these *aquilegia*- oh don't fret. I won't hide you away. I'll just move you to a shadier stoop, for the time being. Trust me, you'll love it there. Oh! *Aster novae-angliae*, I almost didn't recognize you! Look at how big you are. You are beautiful, of course, but I am just going to clip you a little bit. If I could just find-

Gwyneth looks around for her flower clippers. Maeve moves quietly, and picks them up. She hands them to Gwyneth.

GWYNETH

Oh, yes, there they are, thank you.

She goes back to trimming her flowers before realizing that she is now not alone.

GWYNETH

Maeve! Geez, could you make a sound? What if I had an axe or something in my hand?

MAEVE

Do you often have an axe in your hand?

GWYNETH

Okay, maybe not an axe, but perhaps these clippers. I could have stabbed you with these clippers.

MAEVE

I am quite certain, you could not.

GWYNETH

What? I could.

MAEVE

You are welcome to try.

Gwyneth turns back to her flowers, pretending to be mad.

MAEVE

I did not mean-

Gwyneth whips back to Maeve, holding the clippers as if she is going to stab her. Maeve skillfully disarms her, and pulls her into her chest.

MAEVE

Woah, I'll admit, you had me for a second there. I truly thought you were cross with me.

GWYNETH

But then how-

MAEVE

-did I stop you? Gwyneth, I have had several years of training. At this point, nothing you could do would surprise me.

They both take in the closeness of their bodies. Maeve release Gwyneth.

MAEVE

So, does speaking to the flowers help them to grow?

GWYNETH

Huh?

MAEVE

You were speaking to the flowers.

GWYNETH

Oh, you heard that?

MAEVE

Hey, it's okay. I thought it was sweet. I have been known to talk to myself every once in a while.

GWYNETH

You have?

MAEVE

Sure. I'll be fighting and I'll say something like, "Maeve make sure you duck during this move or you'll get decapitated" or "Stab them in armpit, so they die a slow, agonizing death".

GWYNETH

That is awful!

MAEVE

What?! It is not. And to think, I said you talking to your flowers was sweet! I take it all back. In fact, I'm going to leave, if I am soooo awful-

Maeve turns to leave, and Gwyneth grabs her hand.

GWYNETH

No, don't! You have my sincerest apologizes. I want to show you something.

Gwyneth drags her over to a section of flowers.

MAEVE

Honestly, Gwyneth, don't you think you have enough flowers?

GWYNETH

Do you think it's too much?

MAEVE

What? No, I was just- No. It is a perfect amount of flowers. I didn't know that there were this many flowers in all the realms.

GWYNETH

These are only the flowers that are in the Kingdom. Some are presents from my father's travels. But, I don't have too many of those. But, this is what I wanted to show you.

MAEVE

What are they?

GWYNETH

They're called *gladioli*, but people tend to refer to them as sword lilies. Most likely because gladius is Latin for sword, but also because they are pointy. Like swords. And you like swords. Or, well, you use swords when you fight. And I've said "swords" so many times. But they just made me think of you. And I thought you might like them.

Maeve is still looking at the flowers. She doesn't tease or laugh at Gwyneth, instead she turns embraces her. They pull back to look each other in the eyes. They are close enough to share a breath, and Maeve leans in to kiss Gwyneth. Elodie enters from off stage.

ELODIE

Gwynny, where are you?!

The two pull apart from each other.

GWYNETH

Here. I'm here.

ELODIE

It's like a forest in here. Where is "here"?

GWYNETH

Just follow my voice.

After a few moments, Elodie and Amory finally emerge.

AMORY

Oh, Maeve. I didn't realize you were here.

ELODIE

Me either.

GWYNETH

Oh, yeah, you see- it was- we were-

MAEVE

The princess was showing me around her greenhouse. It is quite remarkable.

AMORY

I'll say. It's amazing.

GWYNETH

Well, thank you, Amory. (beat.) But, you were looking for me, Elodie?

ELODIE

Yeah... you are late for your lunch with your mother. I figured you'd be out here.

(to Maeve.)

I know her like the back of my hands. Maybe better than that. We are so in sync. In. Every. Way.

MAEVE

Good to know?

ELODIE

Yes, it would be good for you to know. And remember.

MAEVE

...

ELODIE

...

GWYNETH

Uh, Ellie?

ELODIE

What?

GWYNETH

Can you help me get ready? For lunch?

ELODIE

Of course.

Elodie and Gwyneth exit.

MAEVE

What is her problem? Have I been stuck around men for so long, that I've forgotten how to interact with women-

AMORY

I want to marry Gwyneth.

MAEVE

...

AMORY

I want to propose to Gwyneth.

MAEVE

...

AMORY

I don't know exactly how I'm going to propose yet. I suppose I'll have to come up with a plan very soon, so...

MAEVE

...

AMORY

Okay, can you say something? Anything?

MAEVE

Amory, you've just met her. I mean, you barely know anything about her, and you already want to marry her?

AMORY

I know enough.

MAEVE

Like what?

AMORY

She loves flowers and is smart and kind.

MAEVE

That's three things Amory. What about, like, love?

AMORY

Maeve, royals don't *do* love. I mean, our marriages are mainly about what's beneficial to our kingdoms. You know this.

MAEVE

Yes, I knew for most royals it was merely a business transaction, I just thought you were better than that. I thought when you finally got married, it would've been because you loved them.

AMORY

Frankly, Maeve, I don't think I'll ever feel like that for another person-

MAEVE

That's just because you haven't met the *right* person-

AMORY

No! It's not. And I'm tired of everyone saying that! Look, I have never, *ever* felt any sort of attraction to anyone. I just, I didn't get it, and the more I tried to, the more I felt like a fraud. I mean, I shouldn't try and like someone just because it's what people expect me to do, should I? I'm never going to feel like that. I- I'm never going to love someone like you want me to. But, with Gwyneth, at least I feel a bond with her. I think that we could both respect each other, and grow to be amazing friend, or at least allies. And there's nothing wrong with that.

MAEVE

But what about her? Don't you think she might want love in her marriage?

AMORY

... The woman that stood in front of everyone and said that she wanted a husband with a "considerable army"?

MAEVE

She could say that and still want love.

AMORY

Then, she is welcome to look for love while in our marriage. I mean, King's have mistresses all the time. I won't prohibit her from having her own dalliances. And this is a moot point anyway because I haven't even proposed and she hasn't said yes. She may chose not to marry me.

MAEVE

Oh, sure, *she* has that choice.

AMORY

What does that mean?

MAEVE

It means that you and I both know that she has no say in who she marries. If her father gives her to you, she can't refuse.

AMORY

I wouldn't force her to marry me.

MAEVE

That doesn't matter. If you don't marry her, he'll just give her to someone else.

AMORY

What would you want me to do then, Maeve?

MAEVE

I don't know, I just-

AMORY

I don't need your permission. I've already asked for King Zadkiel's blessing. If he grants it to me, I will propose to Gwyneth.

MAEVE

Then, why talk to me about it at all? If you were just going to do it anyways?

AMORY

Because, I thought you'd be happy for me. Or at least support my decision. I mean, we always back each other.

MAEVE

We do. But we also call each other out when we are making stupid decisions.

AMORY

I need a wife. Someone who can help me lead a kingdom. Someone who is serious, but also kind. And, above all, someone I can actually stand to be around. That is Gwyneth. So, you will have to put up with my "stupid decision".

Amory exits, leaving Maeve looking after him.

LIGHTS DIM.

SCENE 6

LIGHTS UP ON: AN OUTDOOR TEA TABLE
IN THE GARDEN

Elodie and Reina are sitting, while Gwyneth stands, fiddling with her leather bracelet.

REINA

Gwyneth.

GWYNETH

...

REINA

Gwyneth!

GWYNETH

Huh.

REINA

You are being so rude right now. You've barely said a word this whole time.

ELODIE

Perhaps she is daydreaming about one of her princes.

REINA

Oh, really? Oh, please say that you are! I would love to plan for a winter wedding!

ELODIE

Oh, with snow and silver all around. It would be absolutely magical!

REINA

We could do a long sleeved dress. Or maybe a cape, instead?

ELODIE

Gwyneth is so delicate, I fear a cape would bury her.

REINA

Oh, but it would be glorious. With some fur lining it? What do you think Gwyneth?

GWYNETH

Sure. The cape is fine.

REINA

Marvelous! Then, there's the matter of the food and orchestra and the floral arrangements-

ELODIE

And the guests of course. I heard the last royal wedding had close to a thousand guests.

GWYNETH

A thousand?

REINA

Oh, well, we could do better than that! We'll have guests coming from all over the world to see my beautiful daughter. We can plan for two, no, three thousand.

GWYNETH

Wait, that-

ELODIE

Three thousand? That's more people than I think I could even fathom!

GWYNETH

Yeah, I-

REINA

But, it has to be big and extravagant! It's what Gwyneth deserves-

GWYNETH

Stop! (beat.) Just... don't you guys think this is all a little much?

REINA

What do you mean?

GWYNETH

Three thousand people? You don't think that that's excessive?

REINA

It's your wedding!

GWYNETH

Exactly, *my* wedding. Doesn't it matter that I might not want three thousand random strangers watching me walk down the aisle?

REINA

Sweetheart, I know you are a little shy, but-

GWYNETH

I'm not shy.

ELODIE

You're a little shy.

GWYNETH

Okay, I'm a little shy, but that's not what this is about.

REINA

Then what *is* it about?

GWYNETH

It's, well, maybe I just want a small wedding.

REINA

Gwyneth, that's just not how it's done. Every royal is supposed to have a big wedding, it's just the way it has always been.

GWYNETH

That's the other thing. Why is it like that? Why do we have to do what everyone else has done before? I mean, all these parties, it's just a lot. And I know they are very expensive, so if we didn't have them, we could use the money for other things.

REINA

You don't need to worry about things like that. We have enough money, and if we didn't, we could always just raise the taxes again.

GWYNETH

Again?

Maeve enters, but stops and listens to the conversation.

GWYNETH

How is that fair? When we could just not have these extreme parties in the first place. Mother, Marconia can't even afford to put up their fairs anymore, while we had six roasted pigs and only ate two of them. It's madness!

REINA

Watch yourself, Gwyneth. You are starting to sound like... *them*.

Gwyneth tenses and fiddles with the leather bracelet around her wrist.

REINA

Now, which of the princes do you like the most, Elodie?

ELODIE

... Prince Amory, ma'am.

REINA

Excellent. I agree, he is kind, and has an fine family.

(to Gwyneth.)

You will do your best to catch his eye, won't you?

GWYNETH

Yes, Mother.

REINA

Good.

Reina stands.

GWYNETH

Mother!

REINA

Yes, dear?

GWYNETH

I will marry him. I promise.

REINA

Good.

Reina exits, and Maeve enters fully.

GWYNETH

Oh, Maeve. Uh- hi- how-

MAEVE

(to Elodie.)

I was looking for you actually.

ELODIE

Really?

MAEVE

Yes. Prince Amory wishes to escort Princess Gwyneth to a private dinner. He has asked that we both be in attendance. If you could get with me to discuss any availabilities that she might have, that would be great.

ELODIE

Aye, aye Captain!

Maeve doesn't smile.

ELODIE

Um, yes. Sorry, I will get with you on her availabilities.

MAEVE

Excellent.

Maeve makes her way across the room to the exit.

GWYNETH

Maeve, wait.

Maeve keeps walking.

GWYNETH

Maeve, *please*.

Maeve reaches the edge of the garden.

GWYNETH

Stop! That is an order.

Maeve turns slowly to face her.

GWYNETH

Elodie, would you excuse us please?

ELODIE

Don't have to tell me twice.

Elodie exits.

GWYNETH

...Maeve, you don't have to be so formal. You can, you know, loosen up-

MAEVE

You are a Princess. And my- our future Queen. I am just behaving as I should, Your Highness.

GWYNETH

Oh. But, I mean, I'm still just me, your frie-

MAEVE

You are a Princess, Your Highness. It is time I treated you as such.

GWYNETH

(exasperated.)

Have I done something to offend you?

Maeve finally looks at Gwyneth.

MAEVE

Have you done something to offend me?

GWYNETH

Well yes- If I did-

MAEVE

If?

GWYNETH

Okay so I did-

MAEVE

You truly don't understand, do you? Can you *truly* not understand why I am upset?

GWYNETH

I-

MAEVE

Do you love him?

GWYNETH

Amory?

MAEVE

No, the other man you are going to *marry*. Of course, Amory! Do you love him?

GWYNETH

I... like him.

MAEVE

You like *friends*. You should love the person you are going to marry.

GWYNETH

Is that what this is all about? (beat.) I promise you, it is not in my intentions to hurt Amory. Or to break his heart. I'm sure that I will come to love him.

MAEVE

I am not worried about you breaking his heart!

GWYNETH

Then what?! Tell me why you are so angry, and I will fix it. I promise. I wish to be your friend-

MAEVE

I don't.

GWYNETH

What?

MAEVE

I don't want to be your *friend*. Friends do not feel for each other the way that I feel for you.

GWYNETH

You really hold that much hatred towards me? (beat.) Why? Why, if you hate me so, did you come to the greenhouse? And joke and-

MAEVE

Are you really so daft?!

Gwyneth moves into Maeve's space.

GWYNETH

Don't call me daft! You are the one playing games with my mind! You joke with me at balls and comfort me at ruins, and now you say you don't want to be friends?

Gwyneth gets right in Maeve's face.

GWYNETH

It is *you* who is daft! And if you truly hate me, then go on. Leave me be!

Gwyneth shoves at Maeve, who finally snaps. All the composure and formality she had before is non-existent. Maeve grabs Gwyneth, and kisses her. Gwyneth hesitates for a moment, before kissing her back. Maeve shoves her away.

MAEVE

I shouldn't have- I am so sorry, Gwyneth- Your Highness, I-

Maeve turns to leave.

GWYNETH

W-wait, hold on.

MAEVE

I need to go. You are a Princess- I mean, you are going to be a *Queen*. This can't- I shouldn't have done that.

GWYNETH

Maeve-

MAEVE

No, this was a mistake. I shouldn't have come here.

Don't leave. Wait-

GWYNETH

We shouldn't.

MAEVE

Please.

GWYNETH

Maeve turns around and Gwyneth meets Maeve's lips with her own. The kiss this time is less frenzied.

From off stage, Calix enters and sees the two. Maeve and Gwyneth remaining completely oblivious to this invasion.

LIGHTS OUT.

END OF ACT 1

ACT 2

SCENE 1

LIGHTS UP ON: GWYNETH'S BEDROOM

Gwyneth is sitting at her vanity. A knock sounds at her door. She opens the door and is greeted by a bouquet of wild flowers.

MAEVE
(loudly.)

His Royal Highness, Prince Amory, requested these flowers be brought to you immediately.

GWYNETH
(quietly.)

What are you doing here?

MAEVE
(quietly.)

I needed to see you, and I thought we'd need a cover.

GWYNETH
(loudly,)

I will need to speak to that man about his etiquette, but I suppose you may bring them in.

Maeve enters and gives Gwyneth the flowers. She sets them at her vanity, and notices her obvious bed hair. She begins brushing her hair.

MAEVE

What are you doing?

GWYNETH

Brushing my hair.

MAEVE

Okay... *Why* are you brushing your hair?

GWYNETH

My hair is a mess. And obviously, I wasn't expecting company. Not that you being here is... not good. I mean, it's good, great, even. But my hair is just- and I just wasn't expecting you. Here. Now.

Gwyneth's brush gets stuck in her hair.

MAEVE

Do you want-

GWYNETH

I've got it.

She tugs at the brush, but it stays in her hair.

MAEVE

Can I just-

GWYNETH

No.

Gwyneth tugs again, and winces. Maeve walks up, and takes Gwyneth head in her hands.

GWYNETH

Hey, I said-

Maeve gives Gwyneth a look, and it shuts her up. She works quickly to detangle her hair, sweeping it into a simple, but elegant up do.

GWYNETH

Where did you learn to do that?

MAEVE

You know, I *can* do things other than fighting.

GWYNETH

No, I know. I didn't mean to imply/

MAEVE

/Gwyn, I am only kidding.

GWYNETH

Oh, yes, of course.

MAEVE

But, my mother taught me how to.

GWYNETH

Oh, well, it's fantastic. Maybe I should hire her to do my hair for all my events.

MAEVE

Wow, she is rolling over in her grave at the mere mention of that.

GWYNETH

Oh my, Maeve. I'm sorry, I didn't realize- I'm an idiot.

MAEVE

It's alright. It was a long time ago.

GWYNETH

We don't have to talk about it.

MAEVE

I-

GWYNETH

Unless you want to talk about it.

MAEVE

Yeah-

GWYNETH

Because you listened to me talk about Andre, so I want to hear whatever you want to tell me about your mother. If you want to tell me, but you don't have to.

MAEVE

Gwyn.

GWYNETH

Sorry.

MAEVE

No, you don't have to be sorry.

GWYNETH

Okay. Sorry.

MAEVE

Gwyn.

GWYNETH

I know.

MAEVE

You want to say "sorry" don't you?

GWYNETH

So badly, yes.

Maeve moves to sit at the edge of Gwyneth's bed.

MAEVE

She would've loved you.

GWYNETH

Your mother?

MAEVE

Yeah. (beat.) She was all manners and politeness. Truthfully, she was as regal as any nobility. I think that's why we never got along. Don't get me wrong, I loved her. I still love her, but we never saw eye to eye. She never thought what I wanted to do was good enough. It was always, "that's not what a lady should be doing". Me being a knight was her worst nightmare.

GWYNETH

I'm sure that she would be proud of you if she could see you now.

MAEVE

I don't think so.

GWYNETH

But, you work for a Prince- no, a future *King*. Surely, that would count for something.

MAEVE

You'd think so, but it doesn't matter. Being a knight is a *man's* job. Ladies aren't supposed to fight. They're supposed to clean, and cook, and make *babies*. To her, I've failed at being a woman. I'd rather stab myself in the kneecaps, than clean my quarters. Cooking? Don't even ask, I can barely boil water. And babies. I just- I can barely take care of myself. Taking care of something as helpless as a baby? I couldn't. Which is precisely what I told her.

GWYNETH

You told your *mom* that?

MAEVE

It went about as well as you think it did. She forbid me from training. But, I just trained at night, in our barn. Sometimes, the other recruits would join me. There was this one night I was training, and they came to take me out. It was for something so stupid, but I went. And I didn't blow out the candle, which led to the whole barn going up in flames. My parents must've thought I was in there, because they went in and never came out.

Gwyneth turn to open a box on top of her vanity. She pulls out a daisy.

MAEVE

What's this for?

GWYNETH

You told me that this daisy was more than a stupid flower. That it was strength. (beat.) I just thought that you could use some of that.

MAEVE

Thank you, but I'm fine.

GWYNETH

Okay.

MAEVE

No, I promise you, I am fine.

GWYNETH

I never said you weren't.

MAEVE

Okay, good, because I am. Fine, that is.

Gwyneth puts her hand on Maeve's. Maeve looks down, and sees the daisy crushed. She begins to cry, and Gwyneth holds her in her arms.

GWYNETH

It's okay. It's okay to cry. I cry all the time, and I think I am perfectly well adjusted.

Maeve looks at Gwyneth and kisses her. The two are enraptured with each other, when all of a sudden the door bangs open.

ELODIE

Okay, rise and shine.

Gwyneth and Maeve jump apart. Elodie looks from Gwyneth to Maeve. She turns on her heels, and heads out the door, slamming it behind her.

GWYNETH

Crap.

LIGHTS DIM.

SCENE 2

LIGHTS UP ON: SITTING ROOM

Elodie sits besides Amory. Gwyneth stumbles in. She halts when she sees Amory, which causes Maeve to run into her back.

MAEVE

Ow, what the he-

GWYNETH

Amory! What are you doing here?

AMORY

Oh, well, Elodie said you wanted to do a private breakfast, instead of a dinner. Was that still the plan?

GWYNETH

Oh yes, I- Elodie didn't tell me it was *this* morning.

ELODIE

I had planned to tell you earlier, but you were *preoccupied*-

GWYNETH

Yes, about that. May I-

ELODIE

I just figured I'd let you *finish* what you were doing-

GWYNETH

Privately please-

AMORY

Is something the matter?

GWYNETH

No, sorry Amory, I- This looks lovely, I just need to talk to Elodie. About a private matter-

ELODIE

Yes, it's a *women's* issue-

Gwyneth yanks Elodie off towards the side of the room.

GWYNETH

What is wrong with you?!

ELODIE

(angrily.)

Oh, that's rich coming from you.

GWYNETH

...I'm still the same person I was yesterday.

ELODIE

Yeah, sure you are- I just can't believe you didn't tell me/

GWYNETH

/Because I thought you might act like this./

ELODIE

/I mean, we tell each other everything, and you just- What does that say about us?

GWYNETH

...I'm sorry you feel this way. I understand if you wish to be moved to a new position.

ELODIE

(annoyed.)

Gwynny, I'm meant to be the dramatic one. A *new position* isn't required.

GWYNETH

No. If my *situation* with Maeve angers you that much, you shouldn't be forced to attend to my needs.

Elodie has a moment of realization.

ELODIE

Gosh, Gwyn. I'm such an idiot. (beat.) I don't care about your *situation* with Maeve.

GWYNETH

What? Then why-

ELODIE

I was mad that you didn't tell me that you liked her. That you had been keeping this massive secret from me, and I didn't even notice.

GWYNETH

So you don't hate me?

ELODIE

No! Gwyn, I might want to wring your neck at times, but I have not, and will not, ever hate you. And I need you to know that, deep in your heart. (beat.) It hurts that you would ever think that I could possibly hate you. I love you more than I could possibly love another person.

Gwyneth pulls Elodie into a hug. A beat passes, and Maeve clears her throat.

MAEVE

So, sorry to interrupt, but were we going to eat at some point?

ELODIE

Yes, sorry, you must be ravenous-

Gwyneth shoots Elodie a look.

ELODIE

-from all that knightly, sword wielding, stuff, obviously.

Maeve laughs off Elodie, and they go to make their plates. Elodie goes first, followed by Maeve, Gwyneth, and then Amory. Gwyneth and Maeve both reach for a scone at the same time, their hands brushing. They pull back at the same time.

MAEVE

You should take it.

GWYNETH

No, that's alright.

MAEVE

I insist.

GWYNETH

No, *I* insist. And Princess trumps Knight.

MAEVE

Ah, except that-

ELODIE

Fine! It's mine.

Elodie snatches the scone.

ELODIE

(quietly to Gwyneth and Maeve.)

Honestly, you might as well hang a sign around your necks saying, "I read Sappho's poetry".

They finish filling their plates, and make their way over to the main sitting space. A knock sounds at the door, interrupting everyone. Calix enters.

GWYNETH

Prince Calix, uh... hello.

CALIX

Your Highness, I heard you might be hear. I needed to speak with you.

ELODIE

Now? Can't you see she's a bit busy?

CALIX

Of course. It seems that you are always a bit busy. I would've spoken to you yesterday, in the garden, after your lunch with the Queen, but you were also *busy*.

ELODIE

Well, she is a princess-

GWYNETH

Everyone out, please. I need to speak with Calix. (beat.) Now!

Amory, Elodie, and Maeve get up and exit.

CALIX

I was wondering if we were ever going to get to spend some quality time together.

GWYNETH

Is that what you want? Quality time?

CALIX

That would be a nice start.

GWYNETH

What would be a nice end?

CALIX

Ooh, so edgy. Is your girlfriend rubbing off on you?

GWYNETH

She's not- leave her out of this.

CALIX

But, she's what this is all about. Your little *knight* in shining armor. Tell me honestly, what can she do that I can't? I can protect you. I can make you a Queen! Can she do that?

GWYNETH

No. She can't. But she can make me laugh and hold me while I cry and she can make me happy. And... I can love her.

CALIX

Love? Gwyneth, you are so painfully naïve.

GWYNETH

If I am so painful to you, why marry me? There have to be other women that you would be more compatible with.

CALIX

But none in line for their own crown. None that would make me a king.

GWYNETH

Is being a king really worth all the misery we would cause each other?

CALIX

Yes! Once I'm King, no one will be able to tell me what to do, or what to say, or think that I am weak. Because I will have power, and people will fear me.

GWYNETH

Is that really what you want? People to *fear* you?

CALIX

It is what all kings want.

GWYNETH

Amory doesn't want that.

CALIX

Amory is a coward. He could never make Zarynia a powerful kingdom.

GWYNETH

But he could make it a peaceful one. We could make it a peaceful one. One where our villagers could roam throughout the kingdom safely.

CALIX

Perhaps. Or your kingdom would descend into anarchy. Rebels overthrowing you. Villages burnt to the ground. Is that what you want for Zarynia?

GWYNETH

...

CALIX

Think of what is best for your kingdom.

GWYNETH

...

CALIX

Think of what your brother would want.

Gwyneth slaps Calix across the face.

GWYNETH

My brother wanted a kingdom safe for everyone.

CALIX

Gwyneth-

GWYNETH

My brother wanted his people to be cared for.

CALIX

Think about what your doing!

GWYNETH

I am thinking! I'm thinking that *Andre* would've wanted me to lead this kingdom with my heart. He would've trusted that I knew what was best for my people. And you, Calix, are not what is best.

CALIX

Maybe, I'm not. But you forget. I know your secret. I know that you are a blasphemous little-

GWYNETH

And who will believe you?! Hmm? Who will believe your word, over the word of their princess?

CALIX

...

GWYNETH

Exactly. I will marry Amory. Because not only will he protect my people, but he will care for me. As a friend, an ally, and as a Queen. And that is what you *can't* do.

CALIX

You will regret this.

GWYNETH

Maybe I will. But you won't be around to see that. Now get out.

CALIX

...

GWYNETH

Get out!

Calix stalks over to the door, and opens it. Elodie, Amory, and Maeve are all standing there, and Calix pushes through them. They enter.

ELODIE

Gwynny-

GWYNETH

I need to go.

ELODIE

Of course, we can do this another time. Let's go. I'll take you to your room.

GWYNETH

No! (beat.) No. I just- I need to go. By myself.

Gwyneth walks towards the door, and Maeve reaches out and touches her arm. Gwyneth recoils and exits.

LIGHTS DIM.

SCENE 3

LIGHTS UP ON: ANDRE'S BEDROOM

Andre's bedroom resembles Gwyneth's in every way. It's more bare with cloths covering every piece of furniture. Gwyneth sits against the bed.

GWYNETH

Andre, I don't know what to do. I can't do this. I can't do any of this without you. Please, just- can you- I need you.

The door opens and Zadkiel enters. He walks into the room not realizing Gwyneth is there. Gwyneth scoots towards the door, and Zadkiel hears her.

ZADKIEL

Who's there?

GWYNETH

...

ZADKIEL

I said, who's there?!

Gwyneth stands.

GWYNETH

Sorry, I didn't know anyone was going to come here. I can- I'll leave.

ZADKIEL

Don't.

They both stand in silence, until Zadkiel gestures to the bed. She sits far away from Zadkiel.

ZADKIEL

So... Did you enjoy your party?

GWYNETH

Sir?

ZADKIEL

I just... I realized I never asked if you had a good birthday.

GWYNETH

Oh. Um... yes sir. It was nice. Thank you for asking.

ZADKIEL

Very well then.

A beat passes between the two.

GWYNETH

Do you-/

ZADKIEL

/Did you-

GWYNETH

Oh, sorry.

ZADKIEL

That's alright.

Another beat passes between the two.

GWYNETH

Do you-/

ZADKIEL

/Did you...

Zadkiel sighs. Gwyneth laughs. Zadkiel looks over at her, and Gwyneth catches him.

GWYNETH

What is it?

ZADKIEL

I don't think I've heard that in a while. Your laugh.

GWYNETH

Oh.

ZADKIEL

I've missed it. I've missed having the sound echoing in the halls.

GWYNETH

... You always told us we had to be quiet.

ZADKIEL

Well, as the King, I needed the quiet. But as your father... some days, I wished I could join you.

GWYNETH

I didn't know that.

ZADKIEL

...

GWYNETH

Maybe after I get married, you could... we could-

ZADKIEL

Maybe. Have you decided on a suitor?

GWYNETH

I think so. I...

ZADKIEL

What?

GWYNETH

How did you know? Or did you know? Or when did you know-

ZADKIEL

Know?

GWYNETH

That you loved Mother.

ZADKIEL

Oh. Well, it certainly wasn't before we married.

GWYNETH

It wasn't?

ZADKIEL

No. She was obstinate, and annoying. She wanted to fight over every little thing.

GWYNETH

Then why-

ZADKIEL

Her father had access to mines that my father wanted.

GWYNETH

Oh.

ZADKIEL

They practically had to drag me to the alter.

GWYNETH

...

ZADKIEL

But, *now* I do love your mother.

GWYNETH

When did it change?

ZADKIEL

There's no clear moment. It just came over us. I started to spend my moments in council meetings wondering what she'd have to say if she could hear what them. Before I knew it, her voice started speaking in my head, and then out of my mouth. I didn't normally speak out during our meetings, but I would hear her tell me to say what was on my mind. To fight for what I wanted. Reina always got what she wanted at the end of any of our fights. I liked that about her. She had tenacity and fierceness. She was my little lioness. Still is sometimes.

GWYNETH

Do you still hear her?

ZADKIEL

Hmm?

GWYNETH

In your head? Does she still tell you what to do?

ZADKIEL

Okay, she never told me what to do. She just nudge me in certain directions.

GWYNETH

(sarcastically.)

Oh, okay.

ZADKIEL

But yes. I do. But her voice and mine are now so indistinguishable. We've become like one person.

GWYNETH

...

ZADKIEL

Does that help settle your mind?

GWYNETH

It does.

ZADKIEL

Good.

GWYNETH

I would like to marry Amory. I know that you might have to choose whoever is best for our kingdom, and I'll marry whoever that it, but I think that's Amory. And I think you'll see that too. I just-

ZADKIEL

Does he make you happy?

GWYNETH

Huh?

ZADKIEL

Amory. Does he make you happy?

GWYNETH

Yes. He does.

ZADKIEL

Then, I'll give him my blessing.

Gwyneth leans over and hugs Zadkiel. He hugs her back tightly. They pull apart and Gwyneth looks around the room. She fiddles with the leather bracelet around her wrist and Zadkiel notices.

ZADKIEL

Is that-

GWYNETH

(nods)

ZADKIEL

Can I...?

GWYNETH

(nods)

Gwyneth takes off the bracelet and gives it to Zadkiel. He holds it like it's the most fragile thing in the entire world.

ZADKIEL

I remember the day I gave this to him. He had teased you about... something. I can't remember what anymore. But he was old enough to know better, so I called him into my chamber. Immediately, he went on and on about how you were spoiled and a baby and no one cared about him anymore. He was right. About you being spoiled and a baby.

GWYNETH

...

ZADKIEL

But not about no one caring about him. It killed me that he thought that, so I gave him this bracelet. It had been passed on from my grandfather to my father to me, and then to him. I told him that it meant that he was becoming a man, and that men don't always say that they care about each other.

We don't have the time, there's more important things to do. But when he saw this bracelet, he would know. Know that I loved him.

GWYNETH

I'm sorry. I should have taken it. You should have it.

ZADKIEL

No.

Zadkiel fastens the bracelet around Gwyneth's wrist.

ZADKIEL

It's yours now. I want you to have it.

Zadkiel gets up and exits.

LIGHTS DIM.

SCENE 4

LIGHTS UP ON: SITTING ROOM

Gwyneth, Elodie, and Zadkiel are seated down. Reina paces, only stopping to make small adjustments to Gwyneth.

GWYNETH

Mother, would you stop? My hair hasn't moved since the last 30 seconds you combed it.

REINA

Well, is it a crime to want my daughter to look her very best, on this extremely random day?

GWYNETH

No...?

(to Elodie)

What's happening?

ELODIE

(fake confusion.)

Hmm? I haven't the faintest idea.

GWYNETH

You do! What is going on?

ELODIE

Nope. I don't know what you mean.

REINA

Exactly, there is absolutely nothing different about this day.

Gwyneth looks over at Zadkiel. He shakes his head.

GWYNETH

What- this is ridiculous.

A knock sounds at the door. Reina and Elodie both jump out of their seats to open the door. It reveals Calix.

REINA
(politely.)

Oh, it's you.

ELODIE
(rudely.)

Oh, it's you.

CALIX
Yes, it is me. I was just coming to bid you farewell, King Zadkiel. It seems that I am needed back home urgently, and since it seems I am not longer needed here... I should take my leave.

ZADKIEL
Of course, Prince Calix. I'm sure we will have some reason to see you again.

REINA
(excitedly.)
Perhaps at someone's wedding. Anyone's wedding. Weddings are happening all the time now.

CALIX
Perhaps. (beat.) Well, I-

A knock sounds at the door, and Reina and Elodie rush towards the door, knocking Calix into an open seat. The door opens to reveal Maeve and Amory.

REINA
Oh, Prince Amory, what a surprise!

ELODIE
Yes, what a surprise!

REINA
Isn't it a surprise, Kiel?

ZADKIEL
(deadpanned.)
Yes, what a surprise.

GWYNETH

Well, I am actually surprised. Prince Amory, Dame Maeve, to what do we owe this visit?

AMORY

Oh, um, yes. Full house today, haha. Um. I wanted to speak to you, Princess Gwyneth. Well, I actually wanted to ask you something.

Amory looks from Gwyneth to everyone else in the room.

REINA

Just pretend we aren't here, of course.

AMORY

Mmhm.

Amory walks over to Gwyneth, and he kneels, pulling out a ring box.

AMORY

I admire you. I mean, truly, deeply, admire you. You are genuine and raw. Like when you talk about flowers, you shine brighter than every star in the night sky. I would gladly listen to you speak for hours about flowers. Or anything that you love for that matter. Even when you were talking about your brother, you lit up. Passion shines through you, and I can't help but be touched by it. Being around you warms me, which is more than I could ever ask for in a partner. I know, I know in my heart that you are the only one for me. Will you marry me?

A beat passes.

GWYNETH

Yes, I will marry you.

ELODIE

Oh thank the Lord above! Oh, let me see the ring. Amory's a bastard and insisted that you be the first one to see it.

REINA

Yes, yes, let us see.

Gwyneth gives them her hand.

AMORY

What's the verdict?

ELODIE

Oh, it is just beautiful.

REINA

Absolutely, heart stopping.

AMORY

(to Gwyneth.)

I think they're more excited about the ring than the actual proposal.

GWYNETH

It would seem that way. (beat.) But, when did-

AMORY

I talk to your father? He called on me, earlier today-

ZADKIEL

I do think the poor kid was ready to keel over in my chambers.

AMORY

Well, you're right. I thought he was going to behead me or something.

ZADKIEL

I don't have a clue why you'd think that.

AMORY

Had a little to do with the armed escort to your chambers, and the note that only said, "We need to speak, now".

ZADKIEL

Oh, well I supposed that would-

A knight comes in and interrupts Zadkiel by whispering in his ear.

ZADKIEL

Can't this wait?

The knight whispers again frantically in his ear.

ZADKIEL

Are you serious?!

Zadkiel exits.

REINA

...Well, we have a lot of planning to do.

ELODIE

Of course, so much needs to get done. The dress, and the cake-

REINA

And the flowers-

ELODIE

Yes, obviously the flowers. I feel like we can give that to Gwyneth, our flower expert.

REINA

Yes, yes.

GWYNETH

Absolutely. I can do that. Why don't you two get working on that, and I just need a moment with Amory.

REINA

Well, yes. Of course, you do.

Reina and Elodie exit.

CALIX

I suppose congratulations are in order.

Calix ignores Gwyneth, and grasps Amory's hand aggressively.

CALIX

Congratulations.

Calix exits.

AMORY

He is certainly an intense fellow.

GWYNETH

You don't know the half of it.

AMORY

So...

GWYNETH

So...

AMORY

I know this is all sudden.

GWYNETH

Yeah.

AMORY

I understand that you might not love me, or even care for me. And we still have a lot to learn about each other. But I just know that this is a good match. I just know it.

GWYNETH

In your heart?

AMORY

No. In my head.

GWYNETH

Yes, yes, of course. (beat.) I know it too. And not just because you have an army, but because you are kind. You have a good heart, and you are smart. You are who I want to run my Kingdom with me.

AMORY

Thank you, Gwyneth.

Amory turns to exit, and Maeve follows after him.

GWYNETH

If you wouldn't mind, may I speak with Maeve? Alone? Just about some... uh... stuff?

AMORY

I don't see why not.

Amory exits.

GWYNETH

I'm sorry.

MAEVE

Gwyn, it's okay.

GWYNETH

No, it's not. No when we- when I- It's just-

MAEVE

"The way it's always been"?

Gwyneth slumps down in a chair. Maeve goes to sit by her.

MAEVE

Would it make you feel better if I told you that Amory has given you permission to have a mistress?

GWYNETH

That's not funny.

MAEVE

I'm really not joking. I believe his exact words were that you would be permitted to have "dalliances".

GWYNETH

And you would be that? A "dalliance"?

MAEVE

I think I would prefer any other word other than dalliance. But yes, I would, if you'd let me.

GWYNETH

But, how would that be fair to you? We'd never be allowed to be seen together in public.

MAEVE

Well, *now*, we wouldn't. But I happen to believe in the new world you are going to create.

GWYNETH

What do you mean?

MAEVE

I mean, this isn't the world you want to live in. I mean, you said it was madness that you over tax your citizens in order to pay for your parties-

GWYNETH

You heard that?

MAEVE

Well, yes. But I also just know you. I know that you see a different world. A better world. And I believe in that. I believe in you.

GWYNETH

Calix says it'll never work. That the villages will just descend into anarchy-

Calix enters from off stage, and opens the door. They don't notice him.

MAEVE

Well, forget Calix. He uses his own people as cannon fodder, so I'm not sure he's really who you want to be taking advice from.

GWYNETH

The advisors will never go for it. They'll think I'm crazy. That it's crazy-

MAEVE

Then, let's be crazy. (beat.) Gwyn, with all due respect, nothing you have done has stopped this rebellion. Isn't it time to try literally anything else?

GWYNETH

...I want my kingdom to be safe again. I want to make it a place where anyone can speak their minds, and live the way they want to. To love anyone they want to love.

MAEVE

Then make it so.

GWYNETH

You make everything sound so easy.

MAEVE

Sometimes, it is that easy.

GWYNETH

Okay.

MAEVE

Okay?

GWYNETH

I'll try. For my people, for my family, for *you*, I'll try.

Maeve pulls Gwyneth closer to her.

GWYNETH

Can you... Would you... Will you please keep me company tonight?

MAEVE

I would *love* to keep you company tonight.

Calix stomps away, and Gwyneth and Maeve stay in blissful ignorance.

LIGHTS DIM.

SCENE 5

LIGHTS UP ON: ZADKIEL'S PRIVATE
CHAMBERS

Zadkiel sits at his desk, rummaging through papers. He picks up a paper weight and throws it across the room towards an opening door. Calix enters.

CALIX

... Am I interrupting, Your Majesty?

ZADKIEL

Oh, Calix. Weren't you supposed to be leaving?

CALIX

I was, yes. But, I had to speak to you before I did.

ZADKIEL

Get on with it then. But if this is more insolent chatter, don't bother. Just leave me be.

CALIX

If that is what you wish, Your Majesty. I just thought you might want to know if a coup was happening under your nose, but I suppose that wouldn't matter to you.

ZADKIEL

What are you talking about?

CALIX

Me? I guess it is nothing to you. It's just "insolent chatter", right?

ZADKIEL

I will not be mocked in my own chambers! If a coup is being planned and you know about it, I suggest you start talking. Now! Before, I lose my composure.

CALIX

This is you composed?

CALIX

Okay! (Beat.) After hearing of Princess Gwyneth's acceptance of Prince Amory's proposal, I congratulated them, before retiring back to my room. However, I had to turn back, because I forgot something. By the time I arrived, I was too late. Amory's lady *knight* was defiling the princess.

ZADKIEL

You're lying.

CALIX

It gives me no pleasure to tell you this.

ZADKIEL

Maybe it does! You wanted to marry Gwyneth. How do I know you aren't lying yourself, and trying to start your own coup?!

CALIX

Think rationally, Your Majesty-

ZADKIEL

I am thinking *rationally*. Doesn't it make more sense for you, a childish prince with no crown for himself, to make up outlandish lies about Amory's knight in order to try and garner some favor with me?

CALIX

I am not childish-

ZADKIEL

Exactly what a child would say.

CALIX

And just because I do not have a crown for myself doesn't make me any less than Amory or you.

ZADKIEL

I would watch yourself boy. You are treading very thin ice.

CALIX

Well if I am treading on ice then you are treading through water! Trying to keep up with the increasing rebel attacks. Traitors coming from all sides. And you don't listen when legitimate threats are inside your own walls? No wonder you are losing.

Zadkiel picks up his sword from the desk and swings it at Calix. Calix falls back, and Zadkiel stands over him, the sword level at his throat.

ZADKIEL

How do you know of these attacks? Hmm. Perhaps it is you. Perhaps you are the threat within my walls.

CALIX

Or perhaps I took a page out of your son-in-law's book! Diplomacy. Turns out it might be more my style.

ZADKIEL

Diplomacy or espionage?

CALIX

Aren't they one in the same?

ZADKIEL

You are just like the rebels. What is it *you* want from me? Money? Power? My daughter? All of the above? (beat.) Well, I will not have it.

CALIX

I can prove it!

ZADKIEL

What?

CALIX

I can prove it.

ZADKIEL

How?

CALIX

The knight is keeping your daughter company later tonight. You'll only have to go to her chambers, and you will have your proof.

ZADKIEL

If you are lying-

CALIX

If I am lying, I will lay myself down at your mercy.

Zadkiel examines Calix.

ZADKIEL

Leave.

Calix exits. Zadkiel is left alone in his office.

LIGHTS DIM.

SCENE 6

LIGHTS UP ON: GWYNETH'S BEDROOM

Gwyneth paces around her room. A knock sounds at her door. She runs for it and opens the door. Maeve stands, hiding something behind her back, and Gwyneth pulls her in.

MAEVE

Geez Gwyn, not even a hello? Honestly, you're all hands.

GWYNETH

I- I- just, uh, I- I'm not-

MAEVE

Relax, it was a joke.

GWYNETH

Oh, oh. Right. Um, what do you got there?

Maeve pulls out a bouquet of flowers from behind her back.

MAEVE

These are for you.

GWYNETH
(teasing.)

From Amory.

MAEVE

No. I actually picked these out myself.

GWYNETH

Oh, really?

MAEVE

Yeah, I just, well- you like flowers, so...

Maeve trails off, with the flowers still extended. Gwyneth takes the flowers, as Maeve closes the distance between them.

MAEVE

What is it?

GWYNETH

Nothing.

MAEVE

You are a seriously bad liar.

GWYNETH

I- am- not.

Maeve laughs, and leans down to kiss Gwyneth, who pulls away suddenly.

GWYNETH

Water! These need water. In a vase. Obviously.

Gwyneth runs off stage. Maeve stays right where she was, looking at the place where Gwyneth was. Gwyneth runs back on stage with the flowers now in a vase. She sets it on the table, and fusses with the arrangement.

MAEVE

So, I don't really know what these flowers are. I just picked them because they looked nice.

GWYNETH

Mhmm.

MAEVE

Maybe, you could tell me what they are.

Gwyneth takes a breath, and Maeve reaches out to touch one of the flowers.

GWYNETH

Well, that one is a *primula vulgaris*.

Maeve nods. She moves around Gwyneth, and touches another flower.

MAEVE

What about these?

GWYNETH

They're *tanacetum vulgare*.

Maeve wraps her arms around Gwyneth, holding her against her body. Gwyneth relaxes fully. Maeve points at another flower.

MAEVE

And those?

GWYNETH

Achillea millefolium.

Gwyneth holds onto Maeve. They stay there looking at the flowers.

GWYNETH

I'm scared... of everything. Scared of the rebels. Scared of what my dad thinks about me. Scared of leaving this castle. I mean, scared of you, even. (beat.) You make me want to be something bigger than I ever thought I could be, and it scares me. It scares me that you believe in me. Believe that I can be brave. Brave enough to take risks and change the world? I mean, I don't understand it.

MAEVE

I- can't really explain it myself. I just feel it from you. That you want more than this. That you need more than this.

GWYNETH

I do. But, I don't know if I can do it. And I'm scared, that if I can't, you're going to realize that I'm not the kind of person you want to be with.

MAEVE

Gwyn, I want you. For better or worse. No matter your flaws. No matter your fears.
I want you.

The two kiss, softly, and deliberately. They move towards the bed, but the door slams open. Zadkiel, Calix, Reina, and several armed knights come storming in.

ZADKIEL

You!

CALIX

I told you I was speaking the truth.

ZADKIEL

I invite you into my kingdom. Give you food and a place to sleep, and this is how you repay my generosity!

Zadkiel raises his sword, and advances on Maeve.
Gwyneth steps between the two.

GWYNETH

Father, stop!

ZADKIEL

Move.

GWYNETH

No.

ZADKIEL

Move.

GWYNETH

No!

ZADKIEL

I said move!

Gwyneth and Zadkiel stare each other down. Reina stands by Zadkiel's side.

REINA

Kiel, please! Stop this! She is a child.

ZADKIEL

Even a child wouldn't dare to behave like this. Disrespecting her father, no, her *King* in this manner. Even a child would have more respect for themselves to not allow themselves to be degraded like this. (beat.) I had hoped it wasn't true. I told myself it couldn't be true. But look at the state of you. Are you not ashamed of yourself?

Gwyneth does not back away. She stands firm.

ZADKIEL

Answer me!

Amory enters, and slowly walks to Zadkiel.

AMORY

Your Majesty-

Zadkiel whirls on him with ferocity. Sword raised to meet Amory's face. Amory backs up.

ZADKIEL

Don't you, "Your Majesty", me! You've lied to me from the moment you stepped foot in my kingdom.

AMORY

I assure you, I have done no such thing. Please, sir, let's lower the sword and talk about this.

CALIX

Sure, that's just what he should do. Your Majesty, that's just what they want. For you to lower your defenses, so they can stab you in the back.

ZADKIEL

Yeah, that's just what you want. To stab me in the back.

AMORY

Sir, I promise you, I don't want to stab you in the back. I came here to make peace.

CALIX

Oh, *peace*. Please, they came to seduce the Princess into revealing the kingdom's weaknesses so their army could infiltrate with ease.

ZADKIEL

Exploit our weaknesses, yes. Exploit our weaknesses. Exploit my weaknesses.

Amory looks from Calix to Zadkiel. The realization dawns on him.

AMORY

Please, Your Majesty, you are being manipulated. Chistwore has no ill will towards you. We are to be allies. Please, see reason.

ZADKIEL

Reason? Reason! I see reason. I see your spying eyes and lady knights and false flags. I will not lose this time. I will not *lose*!

Zadkiel raises his sword to attack a defenseless Amory. Maeve moves to block the blow.

AMORY

Maeve, don't-

GWYNETH

Maeve!

Zadkiel and Maeve begin to fight each other. Maeve fights for her survival while Zadkiel fights for vengeance. Maeve is the more skilled swords person. She fights swiftly, and binds Zadkiel's sword causing it to clatter to the ground far from him. She drops her own sword. Zadkiel stands and chokes her. Amory and Gwyneth start to move.

ZADKIEL

I wouldn't! I will snap her neck before either of you makes it to me.

GWYNETH

Please don't.

ZADKIEL
(to Maeve.)

Why?! Why would you come here?!

GWYNETH

Father, please!

ZADKIEL

What is it with you rebels?! We give you an inch, and you take a mile. Why isn't it ever enough for you?!

GWYNETH

Daddy! Stop. Please, stop!

ZADKIEL

You cannot have her too! You can't have her too!

Maeve starts to lose consciousness, and Gwyneth tries to run to her. She gets stopped by the guards, and she frantically kicks and claws at the hands around her. Calix steps forward and clears his throat.

CALIX

Your Majesty!

ZADKIEL

What! What is it?!

CALIX

Perhaps, she is the perfect example to the rebels.

Zadkiel ponders this, and then releases his grip on Maeve. She crumples to the ground.

ZADKIEL

Yes. An example.

AMORY

What do you mean *example*?

ZADKIEL

Tomorrow, at dawn, Maeve is to be executed.

AMORY

No! We have an alliance! Any punishment dealt to my citizens is to come from myself. You can't do this!

ZADKIEL

Our *alliance* is the only thing keeping you alive at the moment.

Gwyneth runs to her Zadkiel. She holds onto him with all her strength.

GWYNETH

Please, Father, *please*. I will do anything you ask. I have never asked you for much. Just this. Just her. Please, don't kill her. It was my fault. It was me. Just, punish me. Marry me off, send me to a nunnery, anything! Just don't kill her. Please. I'm your daughter!

Zadkiel rears his hand back, and slaps Gwyneth hard on the face.

ZADKIEL

You are *not* my daughter.

(to the knights.)

Get that *girl* to the dungeon at once.

The knights pick up Maeve's limp body and drag her outside. Calix exits next, followed by Zadkiel. Reina waits for a moment, before exiting.

Elodie scurries in, and sees Gwyneth. She runs to her side.

ELODIE

What happened?

AMORY

I need to go.

Gwyneth follows after him. She steps in front of him and reaches her hand out. He backs away.

GWYNETH

Amory, please I-

AMORY

What? What could you possibly have to say to me?!

GWYNETH

I'm sorry-

AMORY

You're sorry. Sorry?! For the love of- ugh!

Amory walks away from her, further into the room.

GWYNETH

I didn't mean for this to happen-

AMORY

But it did happen! It happened and now- there's nothing I can do. I'm going to lose her. I'm going to lose her. I'm going to-

Amory backs into the table and the vase with Maeve's bouquet topples over, shattering. Amory drops and begins to clean up the shards. Gwyneth leans down, and picks up the flowers.

GWYNETH

I'm sorry. I'm just so sorry.

AMORY

She's more to me than any knight. She's closer to me than any of my family even. She knows me, heart and soul. She saved me from myself. Do you know what that's like? To hate yourself so much that you wonder why you are here. That you wish your enemies would kill you because you can't? You want to know the great story of how Maeve saved my life? She fought off ten thieves herself, when I wouldn't even bother to pick up my own sword. I just wanted to be over. But she saved me, and stayed with me, day after day. She was the only person I would talk to for ages. And now I can't even- I can't save her. I can't save-

Amory sobs violently, and Gwyneth goes to sit next to him. Together, they pick up the broken vase. Elodie moves over to help. In silence, they clean.

LIGHTS DIM.

SCENE 7

LIGHTS UP ON: ZADKIEL'S PRIVATE
CHAMBERS

Zadkiel paces, muttering under his breath.

ZADKIEL

An example. We need an example. But Gwyneth. No. Gwyneth just doesn't understand. No one understands. These rebels. It's always these damned rebels.

Reina enters into his chambers and walks to him.

REINA

Kiel.

ZADKIEL

The rebels. Always the rebels.

REINA

Kiel.

ZADKIEL

A child. *My* child.

REINA

Kiel!

Reina grabs onto Zadkiel, and he grips her tightly.

ZADKIEL

No one understands! Don't you understand that?! No one understands.

REINA

Kiel, sweetheart, what is going on?

ZADKIEL

The rebels-

REINA

The rebels have always been a threat. They've been a threat since our children were born. What is going on with *you*?

ZADKIEL

They've got her.

REINA

Gwyneth?

ZADKIEL

Yes. It starts with this lady knight, then the coup, and then they'll kill her. They will. It's never enough. They always want more.

REINA

Stop. Come and sit with me for a moment.

ZADKIEL

No time. There's no time. Never any time.

REINA

There's enough time for this.

Reina takes Zadkiel's hand in hers and walks them over to his couch. They sit next to each other.

REINA

Geez, Kiel. When was the last time you cleaned yourself up? You look like a Viking for god's sake.

ZADKIEL

No time. You don't understand.

REINA

Help me understand.

ZADKIEL

I tried. I tried to do things their way.

REINA

The rebels?

ZADKIEL

I wanted to be different. Different than my father, and his before. I thought if we listened to our people, we could be stronger. But it was too difficult. Crops weren't getting out when they were supposed to. Lower factions were fighting over resources. We were weaker than we had been before. We had to go back. We had to go back to our old ways. But they didn't like that. They wanted to fight. We would give an inch, they wanted a mile. They wanted power. Always power. They told me, I would live to regret my decisions. Now I do. I regret it every day. (beat.) They killed him. They took our boy. My Andre. I'm so sorry, Rei.

REINA

It wasn't your fault, sweetheart. It wasn't.

ZADKIEL

You understand then.

REINA

Understand?

ZADKIEL

Why I must kill the girl.

REINA

Wait, Kiel- no, I don't-

ZADKIEL

I was never my fault. It was them. They did this to us. They destroyed this family. And they tried to again. But I'm not going to let that happen. Gwyneth will be safe from them. As soon as the girl is dead, and that Prince goes home. She'll stay here with Calix. They will rule. She'll be safe.

REINA

Kiel. If you do this, she'll never forgive you.

ZADKIEL

I don't need her forgiveness.

REINA

She'll be destroyed.

ZADKIEL

But she'll be alive.

REINA

At what cost?! She'll be miserable and broken for the rest of her life. You can't fix that Kiel.

ZADKIEL

She'll be alive.

REINA

Are you listening to yourself?!

Zadkiel moves away from Reina.

ZADKIEL

I have important matters to attend to that don't require your assistance. You may leave.

REINA

I may leave?!

ZADKIEL

Yes.

REINA

Kiel. If you do this, *I* will never forgive you.

ZADKIEL

You'll be alive.

Reina exits.

ZADKIEL

They'll be alive. That's what matters. They'll be alive.

LIGHTS DIM.

SCENE 8

LIGHTS UP ON: GWYNETH'S BEDROOM

Gwyneth sits as Elodie does her makeup.

ELODIE

You can barely see the redness anymore.

GWYNETH

...

ELODIE

Gwyn, what do you need from me?

GWYNETH

...

ELODIE

Gwyn, what can I do?

GWYNETH

...

ELODIE

Geez, Gwyn, talk. Say something.

GWYNETH

What? What do you want me to say Ellie?

ELODIE

Anything! Anything is better than this. I mean, you act like nothing ever fazes you. Like you just don't care.

GWYNETH

Is that what you think this is? That I just don't care?

ELODIE

Gwyn-

GWYNETH

I mean, come one, what exactly do you want me to do? Cry? Scream? Throw myself off a tower? Well, alright. That makes two of us. (Beat.) You want me to “care” more? I don’t. I *wish* nothing fazed me. I wish that I had no emotions because then I wouldn’t feel like *this* all the time. I could just talk mindlessly for hours with my mother about what colors we should decorate the guest rooms with, or when our next ball should be. I could actually stand to be in the same room as my father without thinking about how I am the reason his only son is dead. I could stop thinking that everything would be so much better if it had been me who died.

ELODIE

Gwyn, I didn’t know.

GWYNETH

Of course you didn’t know. Crazy people don’t go around advertising to everyone that they’re crazy.

ELODIE

You are not crazy.

GWYNETH

Really, because I feel crazy. I mean, nothing about my life has felt right since Andre died. Until Maeve, and look where that got me.

ELODIE

Gwyn, I promise, I will fix this. I- I’ll break her out. I know people. I’ll get her out, and you two can go somewhere far away-

GWYNETH

No. My father would never let me leave. Even if I managed to escape, he would never stop looking for me.

ELODIE

I don’t understand. Don’t you love her?

GWYNETH

Ellie. You know how, my whole life, you told me love stories about maidens and their lovers who travelled years and years to find each other.

ELODIE

Yeah?

GWYNETH

I never understood them, and that was okay. In the real world, love was not something that I needed to have. Respect and peace with an ally was perfectly acceptable. Then, I met her. She ruined everything. It was like I kept my heart caged in. Out for everyone to see, but still my own. Protected. In her laugh and smile was the key. Since then, my heart has only ever been hers. It will only ever be hers. And if she dies, my heart dies as well. Love is too simple of a word, Ellie.

ELODIE

Then, why will you not leave with her?

GWYNETH

If my father ever found us together, his first order would be to kill her. I will not allow her to die because of me. Not when she could have a chance to live a full life without me.

ELODIE

What if she can't live her life without you? Don't you think that she might feel the same way about you?

GWYNETH

It's different.

ELODIE

How is it different?

GWYNETH

I took away her dream. Amory will have to strip her of her knighthood. She can never ride into battle and honor her family. That meant more to her than life itself. I can only hope that she will go far away, and find another kingdom that will knight her again.

A beat passes.

ELODIE

Well, let's go break your girl out of jail.

LIGHTS DIM.

SCENE 9

LIGHTS UP ON: JAIL CELL

There is a small cot in the corner of the cell with a small blanket, and a bucket next to it. Maeve is the center on the jail cell. She is dirty and battered. She move through different parries and attacks. She is precise and slow.

A creak sounds. Maeve stops moving and tenses.

MAEVE

Who's there?

Another creak sounds in response.

MAEVE
(louder)

I said, who's there?

Elodie enters.

ELODIE

Oi! Would you be quiet? This is supposed to be a covert operation.

MAEVE

Elodie?

Elodie carries a small pack on her side, and has a torch in her hand. She turns to Maeve.

ELODIE

In the flesh. Now hold this please.

She passes Maeve a torch, and pulls out a pin from her hair.

MAEVE

Elodie, what are you doing?

ELODIE

Well, currently trying to pick the lock.

MAEVE

Yes, I can see that. Why are you picking the lock?

ELODIE

So that this door will be unlocked. Obviously.

MAEVE

Elodie, you can't do this.

The door unlocks and swings open.

ELODIE

Always nice to be doubted.

MAEVE

No, I mean, I can't break out. What about Gwyn? She'll freak out.

ELODIE

I don't think she will.

MAEVE

Have we met the same Gwyn? She'll totally freak out if I am somehow gone before my execution and I didn't tell her.

ELODIE

You aren't going to leave until you see Gwyn, are you?

MAEVE

Nope.

ELODIE

Fine.

Elodie leaves and comes back with Gwyneth.

ELODIE

You have 5 minutes.

MAEVE

Gwyn!

GWYNETH

I'm so sorry/

MAEVE

/I'm so sorry/

GWYNETH

You have nothing to be sorry for. This is all my fault. You wouldn't even be here if it wasn't for me.

MAEVE

Okay, I am pretty sure I made the first move. Which definitely makes this my fault.

GWYNETH

Don't joke.

MAEVE

Who said I'm joking? I clearly charmed my way into your heart. And I wouldn't have done a single thing differently.

GWYNETH

Even knowing that I would've ended up getting you into jail, and stripping you of the only dream you have ever had in your entire life?

MAEVE

Gwyn. Being a knight was my dream, yes. But that is not the only dream I've ever had in my life, or will have.

GWYNETH

We don't have time for this.

MAEVE

We have enough time for this.

GWYNETH

No, we don't. The guards are on a strict rotation, and we only have a couple minutes before the guards come back from patrol. You need to be gone way before then.

MAEVE

Why are you acting like this?

GWYNETH

Like what?

MAEVE

You're different. Colder. This isn't you.

GWYNETH

Maybe it is. Maybe you just don't know me.

MAEVE

Okay. Fine. Walk me through the plan.

Gwyneth walks past Maeve and grabs the pack on the ground. She makes her way over to the small cot in the corner. She pulls out a blanket from the pack. She looks around the cell.

GWYNETH

Pass me that bucket.

Maeve does this. Gwyneth starts arranging the blanket and bucket to resemble a person sleeping. She steps back to look at it from a distance.

GWYNETH

Okay. That should fool them for a while. Just long enough for you to have already left the castle.

MAEVE

Alright. What's next?

GWYNETH

You're going to go out this way, and go left. There's a statue that looks like an old wizard with a crazy long beard. Behind him is a giant tapestry. It hides a passage that leads to the stables. There's a horse waiting for you.

MAEVE

Okay-

GWYNETH

Ellie has some distant relative on the outskirts of Eladora. They're merchants. So you can stay with them and-

MAEVE

Gwyn-

GWYNETH

There's a ship that will be passing through two days from now. Her family is going to send you with the shipment to Istrid-

MAEVE

Gwyneth. Stop.

GWYNETH

This is important.

MAEVE

I know it is. Believe me I understand the importance of this. But, there's not a whole lot of "us" going on in this plan. So, when are we going to meet up?

GWYNETH

...

MAEVE

Because we are meeting up right? Right?

GWYNETH

...

MAEVE

Come on, Gwyneth, talk to me. Look at me.

GWYNETH

I can't.

MAEVE

You can't what?

GWYNETH

It'll be better this way.

MAEVE

For who?

GWYNETH

Please, you have to understand.

MAEVE

Oh, I understand perfectly, Your Highness.

GWYNETH

Don't do that.

MAEVE

Do what? I mean, that's what this is all about right?

GWYNETH

You're wrong-

MAEVE

Why would a damn princess give up anything for a lowly knight?

GWYNETH

You don't know what you are talking about.

MAEVE

Then explain it to me!

GWYNETH

My father-

MAEVE

Your father-

GWYNETH

Yes, my father. I- he- there are things that I have to do. I have a duty to my kingdom, I can't just leave. He would never let me.

MAEVE

And that's why you aren't coming with me? *Your duty to your kingdom?*

GWYNETH

Yes.

MAEVE

That's ridiculous.

GWYNETH

What? It's not ridiculous-

MAEVE

It is ridiculous, and you know it. You'd rather live a lonely, sad life. With your stupid balls and teas, that you don't care about, then believe that we could make it.

GWYNETH

No. I'd rather know you were out there, living your life, happy and *breathing*. I don't want to live in a world where you aren't. Even if that means letting you go.

MAEVE

What about what I want? Have you even taken one second to consider me in all of this?

GWYNETH

Maeve, what's the alternative?

MAEVE

Us! Together!

GWYNETH

We could never live a normal life.

MAEVE

I don't care about normal. I just want to be with you.

GWYNETH

You wouldn't.

MAEVE

Don't tell me what I want.

GWYNETH

You would end up hating me. We would always be on the run. You think you know my father, but you don't. He would never stop looking for us.

MAEVE

That's a sacrifice I'm willing to make.

GWYNETH

I'm not.

MAEVE

What?

GWYNETH

I can't lose you.

MAEVE

I can't lose *you*. You want me to travel to some far off land, and leave you behind forever, to what? Stay alive? What does that matter if I can't be with the person that I love? What kind of life can I hope to have if I can never hear your laugh, or hold you in my arms?

GWYNETH

Maeve. Please.

MAEVE

Life is only worth living when you have someone to share it with.

Maeve backs up into the cell.

GWYNETH

Maeve, stop. What are you doing?

Maeve grabs the cell door in her hands, and slams it shut.

GWYNETH

No!

Gwyneth grabs the doors with and starts pulling as hard as she can. The doors are locked. Elodie runs into the room.

ELODIE

Hey, I gave you two as much time as I could but we need to go...

GWYNETH

You need to pick the lock again-

MAEVE

Don't bother-

GWYNETH

I can buy us some time-

MAEVE

I'm not leaving.

GWYNETH

Oh, yes you are!

MAEVE

What are you going to do Gwyn? Force me? I've been training in combat for as long as I've been walking. Fighting you would be like fighting a child.

Gwyneth goes back to the cell door. She is pulling at it again. Maeve puts her hands over Gwyneth's.

MAEVE

It's time to stop.

GWYNETH

Please, Maeve.

Maeve reaches out and touches Gwyneth's face. She kisses her fiercely. When they pull back, they are both crying. They are interrupted by voices.

MAEVE

You have to go now.

GWYNETH

No.

MAEVE

Elodie, she needs to go. You both need to get out of here before they catch you.

GWYNETH
No! I'm not leaving you!

ELODIE
Gwyneth, we need to go!

Guards flood into the space. Gwyneth rushes forwards.

GWYNETH
I tried to release the prisoner. I am guilty of treason/

ELODIE
/Don't listen to her. She doesn't know what she's saying/

GWYNETH
/Yes I do. And I know our laws. You have to kill me too. You have to kill me/

MAEVE
/Gwyn, stop it!

GWYNETH
Kill me. Just kill me.

The guards take hold of Gwyneth, and drag her off stage.

ELODIE
Wait, don't-

Elodie runs after them. Maeve presses herself against the bars.

LIGHTS DIM.

SCENE 10

LIGHTS UP ON: ZADKIEL'S PRIVATE
CHAMBERS

Zadkiel sits at his desk and the guards enter with Gwyneth.

ZADKIEL

What is this?

GWYNETH

I was helping the prisoner escape.

ZADKIEL

...

GWYNETH

It's treason.

ZADKIEL

...

GWYNETH

You have to execute me too.

ZADKIEL

Leave us.

The guards exit.

GWYNETH

You have to kill me.

ZADKIEL

I'm not going to kill you.

GWYNETH

It's the law!

ZADKIEL

I don't care about the law, I'm not killing my daughter.

GWYNETH

I thought I wasn't your daughter anymore.

ZADKIEL

...

GWYNETH

Because that's what you said. That I was no daughter of yours. So just kill me.

ZADKIEL

I'm not going to kill you.

GWYNETH

Fine.

Gwyneth looks around and grabs a poker from the fire place.

ZADKIEL

What are you doing?

GWYNETH

You either kill me, or I'm going to kill you.

ZADKIEL

You're not going to kill me.

GWYNETH

Really? Watch me!

Gwyneth lashes out at Zadkiel. Her moves are erratic, and Zadkiel easily evades it. She slashes, and Zadkiel instinctively blocks it with his sword, that was on his desk. He disarms her.

ZADKIEL

Enough! Stop this.

GWYNETH

I won't. I'll never stop. If you won't kill me, then I will.

Gwyneth grabs the blade of Zadkiel's sword and pulls it towards herself. Zadkiel rips the sword away, slicing through Gwyneth's hands.

ZADKIEL

Why? You would kill yourself for *her*. Why?

GWYNETH

... She's in my head.

ZADKIEL

... What?

GWYNETH

I can hear her in my head.

ZADKIEL

...

GWYNETH

Like you could with Mom.

Zadkiel backs away from Gwyneth, realization settling across his features.

GWYNETH

I love her.

ZADKIEL

No, you don't

GWYNETH

Yes, I do.

ZADKIEL

No, you can't-

GWYNETH

Yes I can. I love her! I love her! I love her!

His doors burst open, revealing the guards.

ZADKIEL

Take her away.

GWYNETH

What- no!

Gwyneth lashes out and hits him. The guards grab her.

ZADKIEL

I want her under heavy guard.

GWYNETH

You can't do this!

ZADKIEL

She is not allowed to be alone.

GWYNETH

You can't kill her!

ZADKIEL

Don't leave her alone.

Gwyneth is dragged from the room.

LIGHTS DIM.

SCENE 11

LIGHTS UP ON: A COURTYARD

A hangman's noose stands on the stage. Zadkiel and Reina sit on thrones with Elodie and Amory stand in front of them. Maeve enters, being dragged towards the noose. She looks up, making eye contact with everyone, before finally resting on Zadkiel.

REINA

Kiel, please. Don't do this.

ZADKIEL

It is already done-

REINA

No, it's not, please-

ZADKIEL

As soon as she's gone, we will be safe.

REINA

Kiel-

ZADKIEL

Enough. It's time.

A hangman takes up his position and tightens the noose around Maeve's neck.

MAEVE

Wait! (beat.) Aren't I allowed to say goodbye, or have any last words?

ZADKIEL

...

MAEVE

Please.

ZADKIEL

Alright.

MAEVE

Tell her- Tell my love, that my heart only ever beat for her. In time with every step she took. With every breath that she breathed. That it only stilled in the moments when she awarded me the luxury of hearing her laughter. Tell her to laugh more when I'm gone and not less. Because my only regret as I go to my death is that I did not have more laughs with her. That I did not hold her sooner. And lie with her longer. I may not be with her in body after today, but I will always be by her side. In every blade of grass that she walks in, in the babbling brook that flows by her garden, I will be there. I will dance with her as the wind on a summer's day, and sing her to sleep with the crickets at night. I will be in each daisy that lie in the ruins. Tell her she will not need to fear them anymore. I will be her daisy. Forever and always.

Maeve holds her gaze with Zadkiel. Before he can give the order, Gwyneth rushes in with a sword. She slashes the noose, dropping Maeve to her knees. She pushes the hangman off the platform, and they land on the ground, knocked unconscious. Zadkiel stands stunned.

MAEVE

What- Gwyneth, what are you doing?

GWYNETH

I'm so sorry.

MAEVE

Sorry?

GWYNETH

You were right. Of course, you were right.

MAEVE

Gwyn, this is crazy. You need to go.

GWYNETH

No! My life isn't worth living if I don't have you to share it with-

ZADKIEL

(regaining his composure.)

Guards! Seize the prisoner!

The guards hesitant as Gwyneth raises the sword to protect her and Maeve.

Amory rushes up to the platform, unarmed.

MAEVE

Amory, you can't.

AMORY

Don't even start. I'm not going to go down without a fight this time.

MAEVE

They will kill you!

AMORY

So be it! I am not losing you. So either we make it out of this, or we die trying.

ZADKIEL

Guards!

Gwyneth and Amory surround Maeve as the guards start to approach. Elodie slips through the guards and moves on the platform, next to Gwyneth.

GWYNETH

What are you-

ELODIE

(shakily.)

Well, I was feeling a little left out. You know how much I hate that.

GWYNETH

You don't have to-

ELODIE

I know.

The guards stop advancing.

ZADKIEL

Fine. I'll do it myself!

Zadkiel moves off his throne, and moves towards the platform. He passes a guard, and steals his sword. Reina follows after him.

REINA

Kiel!

ZADKIEL

It'll all be over soon!

REINA

Stop this!

Zadkiel moves up the platform. Gwyneth pushes her way forward.

ZADKIEL

This has gone on far enough, Gwyneth.

GWYNETH

You're right. It has.

ZADKIEL

I am just trying to save you!

GWYNETH

By killing the one I love?

ZADKIEL

No. From killing a threat to you. You can't see it. Only I can.

GWYNETH

And you don't see the problem with that? Please, this is all a fantasy. A delusion in your head.

ZADKIEL

... Move.

GWYNETH

No.

ZADKIEL

I said move!

Gwyneth stands firm. Zadkiel moves to strike Gwyneth down, and Reina throws herself in front of Gwyneth. Zadkiel pauses.

REINA

Stop. Zadkiel, it is time to stop. Can't you see? You are doing more harm than the rebels ever could.

ZADKIEL

How- how could you say that? They killed Andre.

REINA

And you are killing the rest of this family. With your tirades and your hatred. After you kill this girl, what will you expect to happen next?

ZADKIEL

I- I- Gwyneth will be safe.

REINA

Gwyneth will never be safe. There are always going to be things that hurt her. You can't protect her from everything.

ZADKIEL

Yes I can.

REINA

No. You can't. Because there are things in this world that are so painful, but out of that pain comes beauty. Beauty like Andre. And like Gwyneth.

GWYNETH

Daddy, please.

A beat passes as Zadkiel takes in his wife and daughter. The sword drops from his hand, and he takes them both into his arms.

ZADKIEL

I'm so sorry.

GWYNETH

I know.

ZADKIEL

I just wanted to protect you.

GWYNETH

I know.

ZADKIEL

I needed to protect you from the rebels.

GWYNETH

It was not their fault.

ZADKIEL

What?

GWYNETH

It was never their fault. It was ours.

ZADKIEL

But Andre-

GWYNETH

Yes, Andre. But how many of their own did we kill? How many of their brothers were lost because they starved?

ZADKIEL

...

GWYNETH

How many fathers and mothers and daughters?

ZADKIEL

...

GWYNETH

How many lovers killed themselves because of our stupid rules?

ZADKIEL

I- I tried.

GWYNETH

Well, then we try again. It is our duty to not only our people, but ourselves to make Zarynia a place where we come together. Not tear each other apart. Not where we kill over and over again.

ZADKIEL

You don't understand

GWYNETH

No, I don't. And I don't want to. Your reasons why not, are just more reasons why we need to try again.

ZADKIEL

...

GWYNETH

Just try. That's all I'm asking you to do.

ZADKIEL

Okay.

GWYNETH

Okay?

ZADKIEL

I'll try. For you, I'll try anything.

A beat passes before Zadkiel turns to Maeve. It's tense as he helps her to her feet.

ZADKIEL

I... I don't- I just wanted to- (beat.) Dame Maeve, you are hereby, formally pardoned.

Maeve nods at Zadkiel, and Gwyneth pushes through to embrace her tightly. Zadkiel, Reina, Amory, and Elodie look at the two of them. They all move off stage as Maeve and Gwyneth stay.

GWYNETH

I heard you.

MAEVE

Huh?

GWYNETH

When you thought you were going to die. I heard you.

MAEVE

Oh, well- I...

GWYNETH

Maeve.

MAEVE

Yeah?

GWYNETH

You're mine too.

MAEVE

...

GWYNETH

You are my daisy.

The two look at each other. Everything out in the open, and honest for the first time. They kiss.

LIGHTS OUT.

END OF PLAY