

Noble Hearts

By

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CAST

*Emilia- Amazon princess. Strong willed, gentle of heart, honest, fierce, hates war, and in love with Flavina.*

*Flavina- Playfellow of Emilia. Ward of the crown. Loyal, sensible, and in love with Emilia.*

*Dorkas- Governess to Emilia. She is not fond of her job. Talks to herself often and in third person.*

*Queen Penthesilea- Recently crowned queen of the amazons. Succeeded from her late mother. Sister of Emilia.*

*Efima- Councilor to the queen; her right hand. Mother of Adoni.*

*Hestia- Captain. In charge of training recruits. Rarely seems to takes life seriously. Has a romantic history with the queen.*

*Leda- Mercenary. Large in stature/strong. Lover of fine foods. Needs money. Sister of Korinna.*

*Korinna- Mercenary. Small in stature. Thinks herself sharper than she is. Needs money. Sister of Leda.*

*Adoni- Daughter of Efima. Full of delusive pride, capable, recruit in the army, and she hates Flavina.*

*General 1/Recruit/Guard/Servant*

*Gerneal 2/Recruit/Guard*

ACT IScene 1

*A woman's voice fills the space in blackout.*

*"I and she were things innocent, and Lov'd for we did, and like the elements that know not what nor why, yet do effect rare issues by their operance, our souls did so to one another."*

*Night.*

*A light from a candle or lantern appears and shines on it's holder. EMILIA, in her nightgown and cloak, sneaks out to the moonlit grass below. She sits and releases her braided hair while waiting for her playfellow.*

*A friendly breeze blows through the clear summer night sky.*

FLAVINA:  
(whistles from the shadows)

EMILIA:  
Flavina!

*Enter FLAVINA, also in nightgown and cloak. Her golden hair a foil to EMILIA's own.*

FLAVINA:  
Emilia, you were to echo back, not to herald my arrival to the heavens.

EMILIA:  
Do let me try once more. Hide yourself in the bushes.

FLAVINA:  
You wish for me to go back to the bushes so that you may whistle?

EMILIA:  
Just so. Go on.

*FLAVINA hides behind the bushes.*

*Beat.*

EMILIA:  
I do wait at the ready.

FLAVINA:  
What for do you wait?

EMILIA:  
Your whistle.

FLAVINA:  
I do wait for your whistle.

EMILIA:  
No, you do whistle, then I. Go on.

FLAVINA:  
(whistles)

*FLAVINA sneaks up behind EMILIA.*

EMILIA:  
(whistles back)

FLAVINA:  
Emilia.

EMILIA:  
Ah!

FLAVINA:  
Quiet. We do not want to be sent back to bed.

EMILIA:  
You should have given that thought before hand.

FLAVINA:  
My apologies princess. The opportunity was much to good to let pass.

*Flavina's bright eyes and smile bring out the same in EMILIA and a moment in shared.*

FLAVINA:  
Dim your light so we may see the stars in their splendor.

*EMILIA does so, and they both lay back to look to the stars that slowly shine into view over the audience.*

*Beat.*

FLAVINA:  
Be there any happy ends in the stars?

EMILIA:

What do you mean?

FLAVINA:

I do try to think, out of all the stories that be in the sky, if there be any with happy ends. I cannot think of even one.

EMILIA:

There- no, pay no mind.

FLAVINA:

What is it?

EMILIA:

I thought of the Northern Crown, but did remember her crown be there only through abandonment by Theseus. Eternal glory is a splendid gift, but I do not think it constitutes happiness.

FLAVINA:

What of Castor and Pollux? They do stand hand in hand forever. Does not that count?

EMILIA:

I concede it is a kind of happiness. But does death not mar it? And what life is there in being a star? I am afraid you may be right. I do wish you were not.

FLAVINA:

Emilia, I did think of one!

EMILIA:

What?

FLAVINA:

Pisces. There is neither death nor sadness. The Gods did but take fright from a giant and change form. Tis all silliness in that star.

EMILIA:

Do not laugh at the Gods Flavina. They may take offence.

FLAVINA:

If my laughter does offend, yours will have to make amends.

EMILIA:

What?

*FLAVINA tickles EMILIA and it turns into a chase.*

EMILIA:

It is not fair. I am ticklish and you are not. I- we will get caught. And you will not be the one facing my sister, the queen. Truce?

*EMILIA holds our her hand.*

FLAVINA:

Truce.

*FLAVINA takes EMILIA'S hand. EMILIA pulls FLAVINA to the ground and does pin her there.*

EMILIA:

Ha. Now we be even.

FLAVINA:

Your hair smells like lilies.

EMILIA:

Which flower is that? I remember not what it looks like.

FLAVINA:

I would happily show you, but I do seem to be trapped.

EMILIA:

Apologies.

*They both sit up.*

FLAVINA:

Let us see. Here.

*FLAVINA pick a lily for her.*

EMILIA:

Tis beautiful. What does it mean?

*EMILIA lays down in the grass and FLAVINA joins her.*

FLAVINA:

Innocence, youth, beauty, love, strength.

*EMILIA holds the flower to her heart.*

EMILIA:  
I am fond of this flower.

FLAVINA:  
It does suit you.

EMILIA:  
Look, a falling star.

FLAVINA:  
Where?

*EMILIA takes FLAVINA'S hand.*

EMILIA:  
There.

FLAVINA:  
Another one.

*They continue to hold hands.*

EMILIA:  
We do each get a wish.

*Beat.*

EMILIA:  
What did you wish?

FLAVINA:  
If we speak it aloud it will not come true.

EMILIA:  
Come, telling should only give it strength to will it  
to fruition.

FLAVINA:  
I will not risk my wish, not even at your harking.

EMILIA:  
Very well. I will not fight you on it.

*EMILIA gets sleepy.*

EMILIA:  
But I will tell you mine. I did wish that-

FLAVINA:  
Shh, let it be. I do not wish for you to lose your  
wish.

EMILIA:

It is about you.

FLAVINA:

Then I do double my sentiment.

EMILIA:

What if I did command you listen?

FLAVINA:

But you would not.

EMILIA:

You know me well.

*EMILIA falls asleep and FLAVINA settles next to her. They sleep holding hands. The sounds of the night their lullaby.*

*Beat.*

*Night passes and sunrise bathes the ground.*

DORKAS:

(off stage) Emilia?

*Enter DORKAS, Emilia's nurse, looking for her.*

DORKAS:

Emilia, you best be kidnapped in the night than have the gal to steal from your chamber in the dead of night yet again. Dorkas, you should not wish ill of your charge. Emilia, you best still have a heart that does beat and breath enough in your lungs to utter apology. I know, I should but tie oneself to the other with strong cord and she will have no choice but to stir me when she does stir in turn. Emilia? And if cord be not enough to deter her wit, what shall I next use? A bear trap? No, I should think Queen Penthesilea would not look to fondly at such. But she may concede to ball and chain or basin of tar to trap the feet. Dorkas, be sure to make note lest you forget. I-

*DORKAS comes upon EMILIA and FLAVINA sleeping. She see's their clasped hands and does smile at their innocence for a moment.*

DORKAS:

Emilia!



*Both FLAVINA and EMILIA startle awake.*

EMILIA:

Dorkas, must you shout so? I fear you did wake the whole isle.

DORKAS:

A question better, must you sneak out in the depth of night and cause a scavengers hunt to be the harold of my mornings?

EMILIA:

I do as such often enough, one would think that a search would not be needed. I return in time.

DORKAS:

I do care more for the flea on a stray sheeps tail than you trapsing about the isle. But if I do lose you, I may lose my head. And if I do lose my head, I shall make a deal with Hades himself so I may haunt your halls til the day you die.

FLAVINA:

Dorkas, I have never beheld such a maid as you, who in mere sentences doth paint the clear sky anew with storm clouds.

DORKAS:

Hush, you. I know it is your words that do pull Emilia out at night. The Queen-

EMILIA:

Please do not put blame of my actions on another. We need not bother my sister. War is at hand and she is like to be very busy this morning. I would-

DORKAS:

The Queen does wish to speak with you presently. Both of you. Come, no more dithering. She did wait long enough while I did seek you out.

EMILIA:

But what of my nightgown surly-

DORKAS:

If only you did sleep in your own bed. A change of clothes would have been on hand. Alas, off we go. Go, go.

*Exit all.*

Scene 2

*The shore.*

*KORINNA and LEDA pull their boat ashore.*

KORINNA:

Our papers did prove true. We have one friend within at the least. Let us send word we have arrived.

*KORINNA takes a bird from a small cage, ties a note to it's leg, and sets it free to fly.*

LEDA:

Land! Land, by the gods I did miss you.

KORINNA:

Hush Leda, the whole point of going the long way round was to stay unnoticed.

LEDA:

Korinna, come lay with me. Feel the earth at your back. It is marvelous comfort after so long at sea.

KORINNA:

Help me push this to the bushes.

LEDA:

Very well. Oh, no. We be on land so why does it move like the sea?

KORINNA:

Get up. You must walk into your land legs. And we must hide our craft.

LEDA:

Fine. There, now help me walk to find a place of eating I am sore in need of a good meal and better company.

KORINNA:

No, we must make way to the palace.

LEDA:

Well may the gods help you, cause I will not. Not till food is in my belly.

KORINNA:

Give me the map.

LEDA:

No.

KORINNA:

Give it here.

LEDA:

Brawn you have not, sister. Your blows are like unto a pleasant breeze.

KORINNA:

At least I do have brains. I fear you do have a head of lead, or rather, mother did drop you many a time too many. We be not here on holiday. Our task is to travel unknown, take the princess, and leave. We do not have the time to dally.

LEDA:

Do not presume to treat me like a simpleton. I do possess more wit in this finger than you do have wholly.

KORINNA:

If I knew I would need travel with an ass I would have brought the donkey instead.

LEDA:

I am an ass am I? That does seem laughable to come from the mouth of a cow.

KORINNA:

I cannot wait for the day I no longer shall be subject to your face and voice that does make one wish for needles in its stead.

LEDA:

The mutuality is astounding. With much haste I approach the task at hand. The sooner tis done the sooner we part.

KORINNA:

What is the way to the palace?

LEDA:

That way.

KORINNA:

After you.

*Exit LEDA followed by a satisfied KORINNA.*

Scene 3

*Throne room. QUEEN PENTHESILEA, EFIMA, GENERAL 1, and GENERAL 2 stand around a large table downstage of the throne. It has a large map on it.*

QUEEN:

And what of the Northern Border? Any change?

GENERAL 1:

All is clear. A confirmation of reports from the front. They have not surrendered ground and the fleets do keep close eye on the sea. the enemy will be hard pressed to find a path through them.

QUEEN:

What news from Hypolita?

GENERAL 2:

She does ask for three score more warriors for the South East line at Dione. She does believe victory is in sight and it would open supply routes to enable a significant advance.

QUEEN:

Granted. Send word for their arrival in two weeks time. What of casualties?

GERNERAL 1:

The report has yet to arrive, Your Grace.

QUEEN:

What is to be expected?

GENERAL 1:

Little is expected; the terrain of Athos is much like our own. The advantage of being on their homeland will help them naught.

QUEEN:

When we take Dione, what is the likelihood of Kallinicus' call of surrender?

GENERAL 2:

Unless he be more dense than reported, surrender is assured. And if not with the capture at Dione, then surely with Charadrous.

EFIMA:

I would pose a thought, if I may: If we be close

enough for surrender, could we not entertain a truce in its stead? Word does travel of Macedon's kinship with Kallinacus. If they do back him we have not the resource enough to stand.

GENERAL 1:

I find your reason sound, but I disagree. Kallinacus has been left without restraint for far too long. Macedon dare not back him.

EFIMA:

It is unwise, your grace.

QUEEN:

We agree with our generals, and shall keep course for their surrender. We will convene once more after evening meal with any come reports. You are dismissed.

*Exit GENERAL 1 and 2.*

QUEEN:

Efima, take down a message.

EFIMA:

Yes, your majesty.

QUEEN:

To be relayed to all. From General to foot soldier. Those at battle and on the isle. Victory is close at hand. We have answered the threat to our people with strength. Kallinicus will regret the day he did challenge our might. The valor we have shown will live forever in our history and we shall have a heroes welcome upon our return. Our people thank you and we thank you. Fight on.

EFIMA:

That is quite stirring, my Queen. I do imagine it will be met with much enthusiasm.

QUEEN:

I do wish I was with them instead of chained much like Prometheus to my wooden rock.

EFIMA:

If I may, my Queen, it is all for the best. If both Hypolita and yourself were at the front-

QUEEN:

Aye, I know the wisdom in your words. You need not

voice them.

EFIMA:

If I may, I shall use my voice to warn your majesty. Your generals would have you continue with vinegar tipped swords. I suggest honey instead. If you offer truce to Kallinacus you can end this war.

QUEEN:

I value and have taken your council on many occasions. Please trust in me, and the generals, when I say that with Kallinacus, truce is not wise. He not only threatens us, but does heap hurt upon his own subjects as well. He is a danger to our Queendom and must be dealt with.

EFIMA:

I agree your grace. Dangers to our people must be dealt with. I-

*A knock at the door. EFIMA crosses to check it.*

EFIMA:

Dorkas has found Emilia and her friend.

QUEEN:

Send them in.

*Enter EMILIA, FLAVINA, and DORKAS.*

EMILIA:

Good marrow, Penthesilea.

FLAVINA:

Your highness.

QUEEN:

Dorkas, where did we find our night owl of a sister?

DORKAS:

The gardens, my queen.

QUEEN:

And how many times of late does this make?

DORKAS:

It does make the sixth in a fortnight.

QUEEN:

Each time a search sent out, a morning of tutors wasted, and we do have to prepare ourselves for the

possibility of our princess being held by captive hands.

EMILIA:

I do take care to stay within the grounds.

QUEEN:

In times of war one canst take care enough.

EMILIA:

We are always at war. It never touches us here.

QUEEN:

War does touch everything. To think otherwise is foolish fantasy of the young and naive. This has to change. Efima did think of a solution. The first of which being some time apart from your shadow.

EMILIA:

Flavina did nothing wrong.

QUEEN:

We are not asking a break of bond. However, time apart would be of benefit for both. Efima, speak the rest.

EFIMA:

Flavina, as you are a ward of the crown, you will start training with the garrison recruits. My daughter, Adoni, is one of such recruits so you will have the comfort of a familiar face.

FLAVINA:

I-thank you for your generosity.

EMILIA:

You would sentence her to death as a mere pawn in your war games?

QUEEN:

It be not a sentence, but opportunity. She will learn much and there is honor in it. And for you, as you be possessed with such venom against war, you will report to the Efima's study for daily instruction on foreign relations and the art of Embassy. We do need to prepare you for what lay ahead.

EMILIA:

What do you mean?

QUEEN:

We are in talks with several nations. You are of age, and your hand will be of use to cement relations with our allies.

EMILIA:

Why is this the first I hear of it? No, I do not wish to marry a man. Mother would never have asked such of me.

QUEEN:

Emilia, I do think I did grant you more patience than is deserved. Flavina does know her place and so should you. Your life is not your own. By the blood of your kin, you are to serve your people.

EMILIA:

In good faith sister, it tis not fair.

QUEEN:

The gods care not of fairness.

EMILIA:

But I-

QUEEN:

We will not hear it. Efiima, we think now is an opportune time for the first lesson. You are dismissed. Dorkas, take Flavina and this letter to Hestia. It does require response. So do return with haste.

DORKAS:

Yes, your grace.

*All exit except QUEEN. She does sit on her throne.*

#### Scene 4

*Training grounds. The clash of metal and the rumble of many voices set the scene.*

*HESTIA sits on a log and sharpens a sword. ADONI and the other RECRUITS are scattered about doing conditioning/warmups.*

HESTIA:

Focus. Your eyes should be clear of day dreams. Remember: If you are lost in your head,



ALL:  
you are like to end up dead.

*Enter DORKAS and FLAVINA.*

DORKAS:  
Captain Hestia?

HESTIA:  
Hello Dorkas.

DORKAS:  
I am sent by the Queen.

HESTIA:  
(to recruits) Cease, restore your breath.

DORKAS:  
The Queen did send with me this letter and this new recruit.

HESTIA:  
Remind me of your name child?

FLAVINA:  
.....

DORKAS:  
How is it that you have words enough for me when I ask it none, but be silent now. Speak.

FLAVINA:  
Flavina.

HESTIA:  
Be seated and ready your limbs. Then we shall see what you know if any.

ADONI:  
Flavina.

FLAVINA:  
Adoni.

DORKAS:  
The Queen does require response, Captain.

HESTIA:  
Ah, indeed. Take with you my regrets. With all the respect a queen is due, I decline. Of time there is little and there are sure to be matter of more import

than I. You may also relay, with respect of course, my duty keeps me and how I wonder at such ideas of folly.

DORKAS:

You wish me to bring such words before the Queen? If I do not perish by nerves of its speaking I am sure the queens guard will help me on.

HESTIA:

Deliver whichever parts you will. My answer remains, no. Now leave us. I have work to be done an you do have a message to deliver.

DORKAS:

I do wonder if the whole isle does conspire with Emilia to make my duty an unpleasant one.

HESTIA:

Flavina.

FLAVINA:

Yes.

HESTIA:

What do you know of combat?

FLAVINA:

Nothing, I do suppose.

HESTIA:

Supposing does give little to go off. Here.

FLAVINA:

A stick?

HESTIA:

I would supply a sword, but then I am like to have to supply reason for the inevitable impaling of someone or another. So yes, a stick.

FLAVINA:

What do I do with it?

HESTIA:

Try not to get hit.

FLAVINA:

This is hardly fair.

HESTIA:

The gods care not of fairness, least of all in love and war. Adoni, here is yours.

ADONI:

Must I captain? My mother does say that incompetence does spread like unto disease.

HESTIA:

Rest assured it does not. Lest your mother would infect the whole of the isle. Positions. Flavina, match hers. Good. Focus. Set. Fight.

*They dual. Flavina blocks the first strike then gets hit in the side.*

ADONI:

My apologies. Are you hurt?

FLAVINA:

I am fine.

HESTIA:

Once more. You now know what to expect of this. Set. Fight.

*Flavina very sloppily blocks a few of ADONI's blows. This displeases ADONI, and she lands a good hit to Flavina's head.*

RECRUITS AND HESTIA:

ooh

FLAVINA:

All is well. It did not hurt as much as the sound did suggest. I am fine.

HESTIA:

Flavina, at the very least you are equipped to take a hit. You may aspire to be dummy till more skills are acquired. At the ready. Fight.

*ADONI talks easily as she fights.*

ADONI:

I will say it is a surprise indeed to see you here, Flavina. And with out the princess. One would think you both to be conjoined at the hip. My mother does say such love for ones inferior clouds the mind. I do suppose the Queen's ear took to her words. Is today the day of severing for you two? Or did Emilia come

to see how simple you are and break ties of her own accord?

*ADONI knocks the stick from FLAVINA's hand.  
FLAVINA rages at her and in a fit of fury knocks  
ADONI to the ground.*

HESTIA:  
Cease, Flavina.

*ADONI kicks FLAVINA off and HESTIA pulls her to  
the side.*

ADONI:  
You little mollusk. Try once more and see how you  
fair.

HESTIA:  
Adoni, enough.

ADONI:  
But-

HESTIA:  
I will deal with her. You are all dismissed for meal.

*ADONI and the other RECRUITS exit.*

HESTIA:  
Anger does infect the mind and a sword in ones chest  
you are like to find.

FLAVINA:  
I am sorry. I- Adoni is awful.

HESTIA:  
Yes, she is.

FLAVINA:  
She is like a thorn, but in mine ears.

HESTIA:  
It did seem to be more than thorn alone. What did  
cause you to fall in the brier?

FLAVINA:  
I do not know.

HESTIA:  
Might it be enlistment? I do know not all hold the  
same affinity for our wars.

FLAVINA:

I care not one way or another about learning of war.  
Though Emilia does not, I accept it as our culture.

HESTIA:

Ah, miss Emilia. Is she the cause of your tempest  
soul?

FLAVINA:

....

HESTIA:

Unspoken words do but add wind to the storm. The  
heart gets heavy much like lead, and you/are like to  
end up dead.

FLAVINA:

/are like to end up dead.

HESTIA:

Yes, you are quick to learn.

FLAVINA:

The Queen does say she is to be married.

HESTIA:

Penthesilea is to be married? To whom?

FLAVINA:

No, Emilia. Emilia is to be married. I know not who  
or when, but soon she will go where I cannot follow.

HESTIA:

I see. You do remind me of some years past. A soldier  
stood in your sandals. She did care deeply for a  
noblewoman. Whose duty did split their roads.

FLAVINA:

What did she do?

HESTIA:

I hesitate to tell as it did not resolve pleasantly.

FLAVINA:

Please do tell. Mayhaps I will succeed where she did  
fail.

HESTIA:

Mayhaps indeed. The soldier did train to be the best.  
In that she did succeed. She requested to be the  
noblewoman's guard and for a time they were happy.

Never one without the other. Some did say the two did share one heart, but I care not for such folly.

FLAVINA:

That does sound marvelous.

HESTIA:

I wish it did end there. Alas, duty did carry the noblewoman high. To places the soldier could not reach. At the council of another the noble ended their bliss, and cited her duty to be of more import. Ties were severed and they speak no longer.

FLAVINA:

That is a sad tale, but I know no such thing would befall Emilia and I.

HESTIA:

And what if she does marry?

FLAVINA:

Marriage may carry her far, but if I am in her guard I can follow. That is all I wish.

HESTIA:

That is all?

FLAVINA:

All that I can say in words. The rest is in the stars. May we begin again? I am eager to start.

HESTIA:

I council against this course, but to train may very well knock sense to you yet. One condition. I do not want to see any more nonsense with Adoni, do you hear?

FLAVINA:

Yes, Captain.

HESTIA:

Stand. Legs here and here. Sword up. Higher. Bend at the elbow. You hold too tight. If your sword you do clasp, it will fly from your grasp.

### Scene 5

*Palace exterior.*

*Enter LEDA and KORRINA.*

KORINNA:

How are we to find the girl without notice? I did not expect the palace to be so vast.

LEDA:

How is it that an island be most entirely made of mountains? In all this vastness might we also find a room out of Apollo's reach? With a feather bed. Some wine, maybe cheese-

KORINNA:

Leda.

LEDA:

Or a tree to gift us shade. Or even the shrubbery there. I-

KORINNA:

We may find all the shade we please after we get the princess and exchange her for weight in our pockets.

LEDA:

Korinna, you are incessant.

KORINNA:

And you would have us here a fortnight; wasting away what little money we do have on wine. Where would the servants quarters be?

LEDA:

If we wish not to be noticed, donning disguise may hide us from noble eyes, but the other servants will take notice faster than Hermes can fly.

KORINNA:

Do you have an idea better?

LEDA:

I fear my mind is sluggish. If only I had a cool place to rest my head.

KORINNA:

Gods. I should but leave you here and- Some one approaches. Hide, hide.

*LEDA and KORINNA hide.*

*Enter DORKAS.*

DORKAS:

My Queen, Hestia's reply is no. Your Grace, Hestia

declines- Your Majesty, Hestia does send her regrets. As there is much to do- How does one say as such? How does one refuse the Queen? And a refusal to what I do wonder? Dorkas, you should have read the contents of such before you did deliver it.

LEDA:

Who does she speak with?

KORINNA:

It does seem unto herself. I hear tell that such is a sign of madness.

DORKAS:

Though I do loathe to complain, I do loathe my vocation. Oh, that I would have had the fortune to be a fisher, or shepherd, or hostler. Some days I do find I would rather slime or animal droppings to the goings on here. If only I could set sail for a solitary island. I would have more than a moment to myself and such would make it paradise indeed. Dorkas, you must needs be grateful for what you have. Wishing for else does not make it so. Though I do wish Emilia was not such a poltergeist of a girl; traipsing about the garden at all hours. Dorkas, you should not tarry longer lest the Queen be kept in wait. I am stuck. The ground does seem to be of more comfort than my feathered bed.

LEDA:

Now we know she be mad.

KORINNA:

Silence, she was speaking of Princess Emilia.

LEDA:

Do not silence me, you louse.

KORINNA:

I will cut out your unruly tongue if you do not. Another approaches.

DORKAS:

Up Dorkas, up.

*Enter QUEEN and GUARDS.*

QUEEN:

Dorkas, what does keep you? Are you well?



DORKAS:

Ah, yes your Grace. I did but trip over my own foot on my way to give word to you. I am well, not a scratch.

QUEEN:

and what is the word you bring?

DORKAS:

Your Majesty, Hestia does send with me her deepest apologies and regrets. She did cite her duty does keep her and therefore must decline.

QUEEN:

Hestia did say no.

DORKAS:

Aye.

QUEEN:

...Very well, consider your errand complete. You may return to Emilia. I do believe she is with Efima still.

DORKAS:

Thank you, your Grace.

*Exit DORKAS.*

QUEEN:

(to attendants) Stand off aways. We need but a moment to ourselves.

*Exit GUARDS.*

*Beat.*

QUEEN:

.....

*LEDA starts to come out of hiding to sneak up on the Queen; KORINNA stops her.*

*Exit QUEEN.*

*LEDA and KORINNA come out of hiding.*

LEDA:

Why did we not just take the Queen? That surly would have filled our purse beyond imagination.

KORINNA:

Though you be thick as oak, do try to keep your head from being so. The Queen is not one to trifle with. She would have broke many a bone in us both before you or I could land but a breathe on her person. Royals here be not for show. Our charge stands. Did you not hear the maid of madness talk of the princess?

LEDA:

Aye. Tis a shame her madness be so vague.

KORINNA:

We shall take up post in the gardens. It does require patience to wait for ones prey, but they are not guarded like unto the palace walls. And in the garden there is like to be fruit in the trees for our labor.

LEDA:

There had better. Else, dash it all to secrecy. I will storm the kitchens, and such a tempest they have never seen.

KORINNA:

Let us depart before your winds do carry.

### Scene 6

*The study.*

*EFIMA lectures and EMILIA listens with reluctant ears.*

EFIMA:

The art of Embassy. Listen well, Emilia. I have much knowledge to impart before the hour comes to an end. First and foremost, meaning it to be the brick where unto all else is built, there is first impressions. You may make only one. And without one well done, all else is in peril. The first of the first and foremost be your garments. When embarking on an Ambassador's mission, with you being a princess, the color purple must be present in your cloth at all times. When meeting with generals or chancellors or minor nobles you may wear a purple deep like wine. But if in the presence of someone above your station do not, and I feel I must say it again, do not wear more than a kiss of purple. A purple so light, we might dare not call it purple. To wear any purple deeper in such a

case would cause insult and offense to the monarch that rules that land. Emilia? Emilia do you listen?

EMILIA:  
What?

EFIMA:  
Must I search your ears for wax or wilt thou listen?

EMILIA:  
My apologies. There is much on my mind.

EFIMA:  
If it will help your mind refrain from the wanderer's road you may take written notes.

EMILIA:  
I may not listen, but I do hear. Wear purple, and also do not wear purple as it will cause war where there was none. You may proceed with your teaching.

EFIMA:  
The second part of the first most brick in our castle of embassy is greetings.

EMILIA:  
Hello, and good day.

EFIMA:  
I will ask that you contain any retorts young princess. Greetings hold a larger part of impression than your dress. When greeting a foreign dignitary that is lower than your station a simple bow of the head will suffice. Like so. For those above your station, namely kings and some princes in your instance, it is expected of you to bow with the body. Like so.

EMILIA:  
I mean no attack at you obvious grace, councilor, but it does seem laughable. Does it not? Why employ such fuss when simplicity could suffice.

EFIMA:  
This is no matter to laugh at. The time you do have to learn all is short. This is politic and your future.

EMILIA:  
How is bowing politic? A bow will not move a man's heart to humility and mercy. The bending of my knee

will not be tethered to their battle flags. The way I bow will not stop a war.

EFIMA:

True, it cannot do such things. It can however open a door or even create a path were there was none. Imagine yourself in a boat. With intention set, you would like to be on your way, but your sails are flat. You fall to your knee and offer prayer to Poseidon. The wind returns and you continue on the journey. The prayer did not bring the wind. Poseidon did so, but the prayer did indeed catch the mighty Gods ear.

EMILIA:

So you are saying I should treat man like unto Gods?

EFIMA:

Of course not. If you did but pay attention you would see that man and woman have more alike with the creators than not. And such fuss, as you call it, can open ears otherwise closed.

EMILIA:

Should not reason be enough?

EFIMA:

One would think so, but tis not. Now, after the bow, the gesturing of the hands does come next.

EMILIA:

If kneeling does open the ear, what must one say to sway the mind within?

EFIMA:

A plea based in equal parts flattery and factual reasoning does most often reap a fruitful crop. But one cannot sow aught without proper hand-

EMILIA:

And Where might I find the histories of foreign nations?

EFIMA:

The contents of the east section of the library should not be your concern. Now, hand gestures-

*A familiar looking bird lands in the window sill with a note attached to its leg. EMILIA dumps some sand out of the hourglass while EFIMA reads the note. It is pleasing news.*

EMILIA:

Oh look, Efima. Sadly our hour is at an end. Twas a pleasure, as always. I did find much more use for your words than what is usual. Good day.

*Exit EMILIA*

EFIMA:

Did time slip so unnoticed? I would swear to it-

*EFIMA finds the escaped sands. She does let it run from her hand, and day turns to night once more.*

Scene 7

*Night.*

*FLAVINA, stick in hand, practices her new learned drills on a sturdy tree.*

FLAVINA:

Take that. Who be the mollusk now? Adoni, I will show thee mercy and use only my weaker arm. Surrender. Victory.

*FLAVINA sits and plays with the grass.*

FLAVINA:

Is it foolish to wait for her? .... How am I to tell her? She is like to call it foolishness. Mayhap it is. I do plan to risk limb and life only to ensure that I may look upon her face. To hear her voice for all of my days. I am undone. My life, my heart is not mine own. If there be a chance I shall seize it; whichever form it does take.

*HESTIA lies awake in her rooms; reading and re-reading the queens note.*

*QUEEN sits at a desk in her chambers writing. She crumples it, throws the page, and starts again.*

*LEDA and KORINNA start making camp in another part of the garden.*

LEDA:

I am out of apples.

KORINNA:

And I am out of strength. We shall settle here.

LEDA:

You mean to tell me this is where we shall lodge for the night?

KORINNA:

Not here. In the bushes there.

LEDA:

In the bushes?

KORINNA:

Hush yourself. Would you rather a rock?

LEDA:

I would rather a bed. I see not why we canst go to an inn.

KORINNA:

We canst be seen. I see not why I must remind you of such over and again.

LEDA:

I know as much, but do heartily disagree with how we are to go about it. We should take note from the chimera. The best way to render oneself invisible is but to blend in. We should go to a tavern and blend.

KORINNA:

You speak of a chameleon; a dragon much smaller. Though in regard to you chimera is indeed more apt.

LEDA:

I should just leave you to it. See how you fare without me.

KORINNA:

Ha! I would fare better than fair.

LEDA:

Can you haul an unwilling body back to the boat?

KORINNA:

Can you navigate the sea?

LEDA:

Who put you in charge?

KORINNA:

Kallinicus. It is the only sense he did put in this plan.

LEDA:

I wish for the day I am rid of you. I will take my money and go far away. I can almost smell the sweet breads I will buy. I will dine and devote my life to that of Dionysus. With so much wine they will think me more grape than woman.

KORINNA:

Ha!

LEDA:

Do not laugh at my dream. It is might better than anything your mind could weave.

KORINNA:

I will get a house in the countryside with a horse.

LEDA:

In truth?

KORINNA:

Aye, what of it?

LEDA:

I would laugh in turn, but such does make me want to sleep. How is it you do not bore your own self? To have wealth beyond your imagining and spend it on a farm like the one we left behind-

KORINNA:

It will not be the same. It will be mine. And I will listen to you no more, goodnight.

LEDA:

Tis for the better. My own dreams are better company.

*They both turn in for the night.*

*HESTIA still stares at her note.*

HESTIA:

"We would have words with you. Come presently."

*HESTIA crumples the note, tosses it aside, and turns herself over to sleep.*

*QUEEN still writes.*

QUEEN:

Captain, We- regretful as we are.... Hestia, words have passed and I-

*QUEEN does abandon her efforts, but cannot sleep.*

*FLAVINA still waits and settles in to wait some more.*

### Scene 8

*Same night. Emilia's room.*

*DORKAS lays sleeping. EMILIA lays not sleeping.*

*EMILIA, after making sure of Dorkas' sleep, slowly tries to get out of bed. She is stopped by a piece of cord, secured to her braid, tying her to Dorkas.*

*EMILIA unties herself.*

*EMILIA grabs her cloak and heads for the door. It is locked from the outside. She goes to the window and it is stuck with tar.*

*EMILIA grabs a book, gets in bed, and throws the book to the ground.*

DORKAS:

What? Who? Why?

*EMILIA feigns sleep.*

*DORKAS looks to Emilia.*

DORKAS:

May sweet dreams find you, Emilia.

EMILIA:

And may goblins plague yours, Dorkas.

### Scene 9

*Morning. Throne room.*

*EFIMA waits for the Queen.*

*Enter QUEEN.*



EFIMA:

Good morrow, your Grace. I hope you did sleep well.

QUEEN:

Well enough. What is on the agenda for today?

EFIMA:

There be audiences with each of the respective guilds, a hearing with the council, you must look over and approve the new tax order, and the armory requested a word with you for your thoughts on production. Also, scrolls that were awaited have arrived from Abdera, Sestos, Troy, and Larissa. They detail offer of alliance and pledges should their princes wed Emilia.

QUEEN:

We did not expect her to rile against it so. We forgot how much fire she has.

EFIMA:

Fire or no, she has her duty and you have yours. Without alliance our next war could be our last. The world grows larger with each passing day. We cannot fight them all.

QUEEN:

We know as much, and we will thank you not to think you see weakness in us where there is none.

EFIMA:

My apologies, your Grace.

*Knock at the door.*

*Enter DORKAS.*

DORKAS:

Pardon, your Grace. Emilia waits on Efima for instruction.

QUEEN:

(to Efima) You are dismissed. Do send a page after you to take note while you are absent.

EFIMA:

Yes, my Queen.

*Exit EFIMA.*

QUEEN:  
Dorcas.

DORKAS:  
Yes, your Majesty?

QUEEN:  
I have another letter for Captian Hestia. Deliver it.

DORKAS:  
Yes, your Grace. Dorkas, I do think not, but do you be the only servant within these castle walls?

*Enter HESTIA.*

DORKAS:  
Oh! Um- your Grace, it seems my service is not needed.

*DORKAS hands the letter to HESTA and exits.*

QUEEN:  
Good morrow, Captain. We are glad you could spare us time this morning.

HESTIA:  
....

QUEEN:  
If you do not have words to speak, we do-

HESTIA:  
I have words, but you will not be pleased with them. What is this? Was it not enough to fix knife in my heart? Must you indulge further by sending ink to twist the hilt with the curve of your letters? I did not take you to be filled with such spite.

QUEEN:  
You had best watch your tongue. You forget you do speak to your Queen.

HESTIA:  
It is you who forget. I do think my tongue has done you enough service. Leave me to wick my wounds or I will sail for the front lines that you did keep me from.

QUEEN:  
...

HESTIA:  
 Good day, your Grace.

*Exit HESTIA.*

Scene 10

*Garden 2.*

*Enter DORKAS.*

DORKAS:  
 Dorkas, I do believe Emilia's new lessons to be a turn of good fortune for us. Do you hear the silence? Nothing but the soothing sound of ones own voice to fill the space of our time alone. What should we speak of?

*KORINNA stands from behind a bush and silently yawns. She see Dorkas and ducks.*

KORINNA:  
 Leda. Leda, wake up.

*LEDA stands.*

LEDA:  
 What is it?

KORINNA:  
 Quiet and get thee down. Tis the princess' keeper.

LEDA:  
 The mad one?

KORINNA:  
 How does she stumble upon us yet again?

LEDA:  
 Mayhaps we should ask her where about the garden the princess does roam?

KORINNA:  
 I often question your intellect but none as much as I do so now.

LEDA:  
 She speaks to herself. Might we not be just voices in the throng?

KORINNA:

You do sound as mad as she. We will try as we might to slip past unnoticed. Come.

DORKAS:

It seems my mind is content to rest. Dorkas, you would do well to follow suit.

LEDA:

(trying to match the voice of Dorkas) What of the princess?

DORKAS:

Efima has hold of her care at this moment. Dorkas, I forbid you to waste any of your worry on her. She does take much of your life as it is.

LEDA:

But what if she does disturb your peace in this haven.

DORKAS:

Dorkas, I am done with your foolishness. Even if she be free of her tutor this be not the plum tree. This be my spot and mine alone.

LEDA:

(in her own voice once more) A plum tree!

DORKAS:

What?

*LEDA and KORINNA disappear from view.*

DORKAS:

What is there?

*DORKAS looks around and goes to the bushes. LEDA and KORINNA come round to the front. Round and round they all go.*

DORKAS:

Dorkas, I do believe your ears deceive you.

*A bell tolls in the distance.*

DORKAS:

And now you must return. Dorkas, imagine what you would do with an entire day to oneself. I do think I would sleep the whole day through.

*Exit DORKAS.*

LEDA:

To the plum tree!

KORINNA:

Must you carry on so? We must break camp; cover our tracks.

LEDA:

Really, you will say nothing of my wonderful wit?

KORINNA:

Even the witless look sage when they trade blows with a fool.

LEDA:

Your tune will change for the sweeter when my lead does lead to the capture of our prey.

KORINNA:

You best pray we do find the plum tree.

LEDA:

If I were a mighty plum tree, where would I be.

KORINNA:

Would you at the very least make an attempt to blend in.

*Exit LEDA and KORINNA.*

Scene 11

*Emilia's room. Late morning.*

*EMILIA sits pouring over scrolls.*

*Enter DORKAS.*

DORKAS:

Come Emilia, you have much else to do today.

EMILIA:

Quite contrary, I have not. I have sent word that all other lessons are cancelled.

DORKAS:

Prey tell what mischief will replace them?

EMILIA:

Not a thing.

DORKAS:

What riddles do you speak?

EMILIA:

Find yourself an adequate seat, Dorkas. I do intend to spend my day here to read.

DORKAS:

In truth? Surely you jest.

EMILIA:

Do I seem to be? Settle yourself, or do not. Stand for all I do care, but you shall get weary.

DORKAS:

Very well. Dorkas, I think it best to keep a steady eye. She may have schemes yet.

EMILIA:

Oh, I do have schemes, but not for you. I make my nets for bigger fish.

*DORKAS sits, EMILIA reads, and time passes. With each scroll read or page turned the day carries on. And as it does EMILIA find more and more within those pages to give her hope. Soon enough it is night.*

*A bell tolls. DORKAS starts awake.*

DORKAS:

Where? Why? How?

EMILIA:

Dorkas I have found all I do need. I must tell Flavina.

DORKAS:

Hold and stay thy horses. You are to bed. Dorkas, will not risk her head for what you may tell Flavina come mornings light.

EMILIA:

Please Dorkas, I have not seen her in more than a days passing and I have news that she must hear.

DORKAS:

No.

EMILIA:

Dorkas, I command you let me through.

DORKAS:

The Queen's orders do give me power to refuse. And you may call Dorkas a liar if she did say I did not enjoy it.

EMILIA:

How much?

DORKAS:

What?

EMILIA:

How much will you charge for but a moment to speak with Flavina? Ten drachma? Twenty? Fifty? Fifty drachma and a fortnights holiday where ever you may wish.

DORKAS:

A deal is struck. Go and speak your words, but if you do not return with haste I will raise the whole castle, nay, the whole isle to find you and all such blame will rest on your shoulders not Dorkas'.

EMILIA:

Agreed.

*Exit EMILIA.*

DORKAS:

Do not dally. Dorkas, methinks you should have taken to taking bribery long before this. Let us find a map; your deserted island awaits.

### Scene 12

*Night. The garden.*

*FLAVINA enters. Catching her breath she searches for Emilia. Crestfallen she waits beneath the tree once more.*

*A whistle comes from off stage. FLAVINA answers it. EMILIA enters.*

FLAVINA:

You did remember this time. I did not know if you would come tonight with your absence before.

EMILIA:

Dorkas did all manner of things to keep me there. Tonight I did bribe her with coin and she did grant me but a moment to see you. She lies in wait so I cannot stay till dawn lest we receive more unpleasant consequence. I am sorry that my sister did punish you as well. It was not called for.

FLAVINA:

It is I who should not have let you fall to sleep yester night.

EMILIA:

Do not take blame when clearly it is not yours.

*Beat.*

FLAVINA:

So, you are to be married.

EMILIA:

Only if my plan goes not as intended.

FLAVINA:

Plan?

EMILIA:

I did read all these past days long and do believe I have found what is needed to sway my sister's mind. If all goes well I can secure my freedom from matrimony and secure yours from war.

FLAVINA:

That is wonderous news, but I do not know if such words exist to change her mind so. She did seem frightfully firm in her decision.

EMILIA:

Do not fear, I will prevail. There are many an instance recorded in the histories that depict marriages of alliance crumbling like unto a spice cake. I will make my sister see reason. I can serve the kingdom just as well, or better even, as an ambassador. There is no need to auction me off for the sake of a peace that is not assured.

FLAVINA:

Your resolve does inspire some hope in me, but I to have tidings. I did come upon another way should the queen not be swayed.



EMILIA:

You did find a way out of the garrison? Do tell.

FLAVINA:

Tis not a way out, but a way to carry on and advance.

EMILIA:

What?

FLAVINA:

If I do see my training through, and prove myself in battle to be worthy of such, I may request to be of your royal guard.

EMILIA:

So you would stay?

FLAVINA:

Yes, and given time I could then be wherever-

EMILIA:

So you do wish to die a hero's death in wars more pointless than a sphere?

FLAVINA:

I do not wish for death.

EMILIA:

That is all war is.

FLAVINA:

I-

EMILIA:

No, I do not understand you. You will not go to war, and I will not be married. My plan does-

FLAVINA:

The Queen will not head your words, Emilia. Do you not see I have no road but this? You are a noble and I am not. You must marry by order of the Queen, and just as I am, she or your husband may order me from your life. If I am in your guard I may follow wherever you may go, and serve a purpose. I will be of such skill they would not dare to replace me. I do not wish to die. Where you go I follow. That is what I wish. That is what I tell the stars and pray that the Gods do hear. I wish to never know life without you.

EMILIA:

I do wish the same.

FLAVINA:

What?

EMILIA:

I did try to tell you yester night, but you would not hear it. My wish on that passing star was to have our hearts forever entwined. I did but hope you did feel the same. Now I may give voice to the longing my heart has long held. Your smile does linger in my mind long after you depart. Your voice does echo in the depths of my soul like unto a symphony meant for I alone. At the clasp of your hand I feel as if I will float up to make my life among the clouds. I could talk till the morning light of how my heart does overflow with love of you. And at the mere thought of you on the battlefield within danger's reach, I swear Zeus does take all air from the world.

FLAVINA:

You do love me?

*EMILIA kisses FLAVINA.*

EMILIA:

Now do you see why any such plan where I am bound to else but you holds no sway.

*FLAVINA kisses EMILIA.*

FLAVINA:

I do not want you to be married.

EMILIA:

I do not want you to go to war.

FLAVINA:

My heart is so full I know not what to say else.

EMILIA:

You might concede your plan and allow me chance to change my sister's will?

FLAVINA:

Of course. My Faith is yours. Shall I be there?

EMILIA:

I think it best you were not. It does appear as of late she has lost heart. So I do intend to appeal to

her mind. I do not know if I can keep my heart  
restrained if you be there. Do not fret. I will find  
you as soon as it is done.

FLAVINA:

You will find me here.

EMILIA:

Tis fitting. I must away, Dorkas may wake my sister  
should I tarry.

FLAVINA:

I do not think I shall sleep at all tonight.

EMILIA:

If I do, It will be only to dream of you.

FLAVINA:

I wish to stop the sands of time and stand in this  
moment forever.

EMILIA:

Goodnight, dear heart.

FLAVINA:

Till tomorrow.

EMILIA:

Yes, tomorrow.

FLAVINA:

Emilia?

EMILIA:

Yes?

FLAVINA:

I love you.

EMILIA:

And I love you.

*Exit FLAVINA and EMILIA.*

*From the bushes LEDA and KORINNA rise; a plan of  
their own having been formed.*

ACT TWOScene 1

*Efima's chambers. Early morning. EFIMA is seated at a table to eat her morning meal.*

*Enter ADONI.*

*EFIMA addresses SERVANT.*

EFIMA:

Deliver this order to the Lieutenant at the north wall. Their garrison will be relieved and assigned to inventory detail. The Queen wants all weapons accounted for by weeks end.

*Exit SERVANT.*

EFIMA:

Good morn daughter, do sit and eat with me. The apples are wonderful crisp. How does your training go? ADONI, we are not common people, you will use the implements afforded us.

*ADONI dissects her apple with a knife and fork.*

ADONI:

It goes well. Captain Hestia, though she will not speak such aloud, does think me the best swordswoman of the lot.

EFIMA:

Do you excel at nothing else? To further your status you must not dwell in mediocrity my dear. You cannot hold to my coattails forever. I know you are no scholar, but you must apply yourself if you are to rise anywhere in this world.

ADONI:

Yes mother. I am sure, with time, I will gain more proficiencies.

EFIMA:

How fares the urchin girl?

ADONI:

She knows nothing. At present she is only fit to act as a dummy to rail upon. It would be laughable if Hestia did not dote on her already. It has been only days past and Hestia does award more praise to her

than what I have got in months time.

EFIMA:

That does not surprise me. They are both cut from the same plain linen. Both common fools who wish to stitch themselves to better cloth than they. But tis no matter. I did deal with it afore and will do so again.

ADONI:

What is your meaning?

EFIMA:

I mean to ask something of you. Do keep an eye on Flavina. Keep her far from the princess. I do not want the welp distracting dear Emilia. She has much to learn and I do believe she will need use of it sooner than she thinks.

ADONI:

Mother, must I? Flavina is a spine in my foot, but Emilia is quick of wit and surely will soon see the error in the placement of her affections.

EFIMA:

Will not even my own daughter listen to my counsel?

ADONI:

Mother, I-

EFIMA:

Listen well my child. We are at the precipice of a new era. We are a ship in the midst of a storm. We are a sheep ripe for slaughter. We are Icarus in flight, and I do strive to keep us from a deathly plummet. If left unattended in the hands of our battle blind nobles we would already be rotting away within the ocean's tide. I will not let us drown.

ADONI:

I do not understand.

EFIMA:

Understand this. Emilia has her part to play, and your could very will be done by some other simpleton. Must I call for another?

ADONI:

No, mother.

EFIMA:  
You will insure Flavina does not leave your sight  
this day?

ADONI:  
Yes mother.

EFIMA:  
Very good. Now off you go. We must all rise to what  
this day will bring.

*The first morning bell rings.*

Scene 2

*Throne room. Morning.*

*EMILIA waits for the Queen.*

*Enter QUEEN and EFIMA. EMILIA gives a small bow  
in greeting.*

QUEEN:  
Emilia, we are surprised to see you awake at this  
hour. Did you sleep? Or are you unable if it be not a  
grassy knoll?

EMILIA:  
I did sleep quite fitfully, your Grace. You do honor  
me with such concern on my behalf.

QUEEN:  
Efima, naught but days hast gone by and our sister  
stands before us thus. What magic have you wrought?  
Which god favors you so?

EFIMA:  
I know not, my Queen.

EMILIA:  
If I may have but a moment of your time, I have a  
matter of urgency to lay before your highness.

QUEEN:  
Your manner does make us wonder. Speak.

EMILIA:  
Might I request a private audience?

QUEEN:  
You may. Efima, leave us.

*Exit EFIMA.*

QUEEN:

What is it that you bring before us?

EMILIA:

My sister and Sovereign, your words of yesterday have occupied my thoughts.

QUEEN:

It was our hope that they would do so.

EMILIA:

It is my hope that we may talk of it again. I do not question your judgment, but I do question the need of my betrothal. To walk in the way of peace is noble and good, but peace bound in wedding bands are subject to wither with time at best and at the worst do cause the collapse of a nation.

QUEEN:

Your concerns are unfounded. We will find an ally that is worthy. You need not worry yourself.

EMILIA:

With all due respect, I disagree. It seems to me that I shall serve a purpose greater as ambassador without the ties of matrimony. And the threat of alliance based on such is not only founded, but proven. A king may take many wives and the line of succession is muddled. The worse if there are many kingdoms to account for. And, though you may try to secure our throne, I have neither heard nor met a man who can rally against the call to conquer. Your effort at peace will lead to war one way or another. I did spend but a day in study and found instances in many major kingdoms.

QUEEN:

Emilia-

EMILIA:

Arcadia, Thrace, Macedon, Thessaly, even Illyria. I have set the scrolls aside, you may see them for yourself. I-

QUEEN:

Emilia-

EMILIA:

It is even written in our stars. Have you forgot,

Theseus did leave Ariadne with bonds broke on a foreign isle.

QUEEN:

Silence. Emilia, our mind will stay its course. Take comfort and know-

EMILIA:

I will not be married. I will gladly serve my people, but I will not marry to do so. My heart is bound to another and I will not sever its ties.

QUEEN:

Though we my not need to wonder at all, do pray tell us who might they be?

EMILIA:

Flavina.

QUEEN:

Your bond is naught but a passing fancy, but that does not-

EMILIA:

Would you call the force of the moon a passing thing? Though it shows not the outward force of the sun, it lights the sky affects the ocean waters still. I am young, but I know myself. I will not marry for politic. No man will hold my heart the way she holds mine.

QUEEN:

We will not-

EMILIA:

How are you so cold? It is as if your heart has forgot itself and lays like a stone in your breast. I too lost a mother.

QUEEN:

How dare you raise our mother's death in your defense.

EMILIA:

I did not mean to-

QUEEN:

Cold? Forgot itself? Every morn I feel my heart rend itself anew as an everpresent reminder of its beating. I have given this crown everything that I once had. I gave up my freedom, my life, my love; all



for this crown and my people.

EMILIA:

And you would require the same of me?

QUEEN:

Our lives are not our own. We are not shepphards or smiths, bound only to the wishes of our hearts. I am beholden-We are beholden to the needs of-

EMILIA:

Are we not beholden also to our own happiness? If that be not so, then what praytell is the purpose of the heart that beats within?

QUEEN:

....

EMILIA:

You are not alone in your grief or your expectations. She was just and true and kind. You may follow in her step. Please I beg you. Penthesilea, sister, do not ask this of me.

*Beat.*

QUEEN:

I have heard your words. You will keep on with your lessons with Efima. They are of need if you are to be Ambassador.

EMILIA:

Do you speak true? Do not raise my hope if you do intend to dash it.

QUEEN:

I promise upon the crown: I shall not give your hand unless you so permit. Alliance will be forged another way.

EMILIA:

And what of Flavina?

QUEEN:

Consider her bond to the brigade broken. She may do as she pleases.

EMILIA:

Thank you!

*They embrace.*

EMILIA:

Dear sister, thank you.

*EFIMA knocks and enters.*

EFIMA:

My appologies, your Grace. The Generals are here.

QUEEN:

Yes, we will see them. And we do think you have glad tiddings to deliver, sister.

EMILIA:

Oh, yes indeed. Again, many thanks over, your Grace.

*Exit EMILIA.*

### Scene 3

*Training ground.*

*HESTIA throws small bags of rice at the RECRUITS and FLAVINA while they try to dodge them. They have little success.*

HESTIA:

Come now, you are all dead at least four times over. Agility. If you are not agile, you are bound to wear a dead man's smile.

*Enter ADONI.*

HESTIA:

You are tardy.

*HESTIA throws a rice bag and ADONI dodges it.*

ADONI:

My apolgies. My mother did call-

*HESTIA throws another and ADONI dodges again.*

HESTIA:

If I had wanted an excuse, I would have asked for such.

ADONI:

Yes, captain.

HESTIA:

Clear the ground and partner for drills.

*The girls clear away the rice bags.*

*HESTIA gives instruction to the RECRUITS off to the side, and FLAVINA and ADONI are left to partner again.*

FLAVINA:

Good marrow, Adoni.

ADONI:

You are of strange countenance this day. I always had thought a smile to make one more attractive. It does seem I am mistaken.

FLAVINA:

Your barbs go to waste. For not a thing could turn my mood this day.

ADONI:

I welcome the challenge.

*They begin the same stick sword sparring as before. ADONI still clearly more skilled.*

FLAVINA:

Do you recall the time of our almost friendship? Or did you hurl such memories to the sea when you took me for your foe. I have oft thought you to possess a sharp wit, and yet you continue on as Sisyphus. Pushing me away pushes her farther still. Emilia has such a kind heart. Forgiveness and friendship are yours but for an apologie.

*ADONI's blows are unrelenting.*

ADONI:

What does she see in you?

FLAVINA:

I do think the more apt inquiry is what does she not see if you?

*ADONI freezes and FLAVINA lands her first blow.*

*The second bell rings.*

FLAVINA:

With that I must leave you. I have my love to meet.

*Exit FLAVINA.*

*ADONI pauses before throwing down her stick and following after her.*

Scene 4

*Garden.*

*FLAVINA sits plucking petals from a flower.*

FLAVINA:

She loves me. She loves me. She loves me. She loves me. I did not imagine such joy to exist.

*Enter LEDA and KORINNA sneaking in on either side of the stage.*

*KORINNA whistles to Flavina.*

FLAVINA:

Emilia?

*LEDA deals a blow to FLAVINA's head knocking her unconscious. LEDA poses FLAVINA as if in sleep. Both LEDA and KORINNA hide once more.*

EMILIA:

Flavina?

*Enter EMILIA.*

EMILIA:

Flavina, what joyous words I bring to you. Darling, how are you asleep? Flavina? Flavina, awake.

FLAVINA:

Emilia?

*LEDA and KORINNA emerge; binding EMILIA's mouth and hands.*

FLAVINA:

Emilia!

KORINNA:

I thought you did rap her hard?

LEDA:

I did so. She should be down still.

*LEDA pushes FLAVINA back down.*

FLAVINA:

Let her go.

*KORINNA produces a knife and stabs FLAVINA in the stomach. FLAVINA sinks to the ground.*

LEDA:

What happened to stealth? No one was to die.

KORINNA:

We must make haste to the boat before this scene is discovered.

*LEDA throws EMILIA over her shoulder. Exit LEDA and KORINNA with EMILIA.*

*FLAVINA tries to stand.*

*Enter ADONI.*

ADONI:

There you are. Hiding away in the garden will not save you from what we have yet to finish.

FLAVINA:

Get help.

ADONI:

Hestia will not help you now. Do you bleed?

FLAVINA:

ADONI, they took Emilia. Get help. They have a boat. North. Get help.

ADONI:

what of you?

FLAVINA:

Get help for Emilia.

ADONI:

Apply force. Do not move, I shall alert the guards.

FLAVINA:

Make haste.

*Exit ADONI.*

*FLAVINA gets to her feet and follows after the kidnapers.*

Scene 5

*The shore.*

*LEDA and KORINNA ready the boat.*

*EMILIA, still bound, struggles.*

KORINNA:

(to Emilia) Stop your squealing or we shall make you do so.

LEDA:

I thought she was to be brought unharmed?

KORINNA:

Hush, she need not know as such. Besides one without a tongue is not much harmed and be living still. Kallinacus may even pay more if she is unable to talk back.

LEDA:

There is much violence in this. No one was to die.

KORINNA:

Keep on. The boat shall not load itself. Only the ocean stand tween us and gold of such we did but dream of. (to Emilia) Stop your sniveling.

LEDA:

No one was to die.

KORINNA:

Leda, load the boat.

LEDA:

I must cease. This is my business no longer.

KORINNA:

What?

LEDA:

I am no better than the murderer I do assist.

KORINNA:

We have not the time for a crisis of conscience.

LEDA:

I am not deserving of wine and cheese when the girl will eat no more.

KORINNA:

Open thine ears and listen well, Leda. You shall not cost me my gold. You shall not be the ruin of my dream. You will load the boat and put the princess in it. I will not go back to that farm and our father. Do you wish to return to thy life before? Food little better than gruel. Drink like unto a puddle on a city road.

*Enter FLAVINA. She hides and makes herself known to EMILIA.*

KORINNA:

And you should not take blame or stain upon thy soul for actions which are not your own. Do not punish yourself where none is due. Come, load the boat. I-

*EMILIA makes a raucous. Both LEDA and KORINNA look to her and FLAVINA sneaks closer.*

*KORINNA pulls out her knife and pulls off EMILIA's gag.*

KORINNA:

(to Emilia) I shall make your tongue a sacrifice to Poseidon.

EMILIA:

Sacrifice what you wilt, but know that no God will answer your prayers. (to Leda) She hast killed just now. What if she does wait till the ocean to choose you as her new sheath. The whole of the bounty to keep for herself.

KORINNA:

Nonsense.

LEDA:

Is it though?

*FLAVINA makes her way past the distracted kidnappers to get closer to Emilia. FLAVINA hides.*

KORINNA:

Of course. If I was to kill you I would have done so many times over before now.

LEDA:

Ha! I would like to see you try.

KORINNA:

You think I could not?

LEDA:

I do know it.

*There is the sound of a search party a ways off.*

KORINNA:

What was that?

*FLAVINA darts to hide behind EMILIA and begins to untie her.*

EMILIA:

Tis most like the cavalry come to rescue me. If I were you I would abandon your task, take to your boat, and depart. For if they find you it is surely a painful death.

KORINNA:

I should have cut your tongue out before.

*Enter HESTIA.*

HESTIA:

Ah, here you are. I count two; the odds seem to be in my favor. Are there more you would rally or is this all you have to offer?

FLAVINA:

Run Emilia!

EMILIA:

I will not leave you.

*LEDA and KORINNA charge at HESTIA. HESTIA kicks KORINNA to the ground. KORINNA changes focus and goes after FLAVINA and EMILIA. HESTIA deals with LEDA. EMILIA distracts KORINNA and FLAVINA strikes her with an oar. EMILIA ties KORINNA'S hands and legs. The skirmish is over. HESTIA blows a horn.*

HESTIA:

The guard will follow to gather this waste. Penthesilia will want to know from whom they be sent. Are you both well?

EMILIA:

Flavina does bleed.



HESTIA:  
Where?

FLAVINA:  
I am well enough. There is no need for-

*FLAVINA faints.*

EMILIA:  
Flavina!

Scene 6

*Castle Interior. Emilia's room. DORKAS is packing for her trip.*

DORKAS:  
Oh, Dorkas. You are almost gone. My mine does take me even now. The wind through my hair. Wine in my hand. Alone with my thoughts unless I wish otherwise. Do you taste that Dorkas? It be the sweet juice from a fig of freedom. Lesbos I come for thee.

*EMILIA bursts into the room followed by HESTIA carrying an unconcious FLAVINA.*

DORKAS:  
Gods, what commotion-

EMILIA:  
There is no time. Clear the bed. Where is the healer?

HESTIA:  
They have been sent for. Dorkas apply pressure here. Emilia you need to wake her.

*HESTIA starts ripping the bedding for bandages.*

EMILIA:  
Flavina. Flavina, awaken. Tis not the time for sleep.

*Enter QUEEN.*

QUEEN:  
Emilia?

HESTIA:  
She is safe, your grace.

QUEEN:  
Flavina?

HESTIA:

She took a mighty blow to the head and a knife to the gut. I fear that more blood does escape within the body than does without. She did faint and has not awoken. I fear she is not long for this world.

QUEEN:

Does Emilia know the severity of it?

HESTIA:

Aye, but she does hold to hope like a spear in mighty battle.

QUEEN:

Flavina is strong and may surprise us yet. Thank you, Hestia.

HESTIA:

I- I only fulfill my duty, your maj-

QUEEN:

Hestia. If you would hear it, I am sorry.

EMILIA:

Flavina? I think she wakes. Flavina?

FLAVINA:

Emilia?

EMILIA:

Yes, I am here.

FLAVINA:

Where am I? Are you hurt?

EMILIA:

I am well. You did save me and Hestia did come to our aide. All is well. You may rest easy as all our trouble is at an end. Even the Queen did release us of our bonds to marriage and war.

FLAVINA:

You are brighter than any star in the heavens. I should have known your mind would be victorious. I think myself foolish to have doubted for even a moment.

EMILIA:

Do not trouble yourself over such.

FLAVINA:

I have pain. What is its source?

EMILIA:

Those demons did stab you, but safety is now your harbor. A healer will be here soon.

FLAVINA:

Emilia?

EMILIA:

Yes?

FLAVINA:

I am scared.

EMILIA:

No, Flavina, no- there is no need. I am here and I will not leave you. Just give it time and you will be well again. You will be fine. Hestia, do tell her. You will get well. You have to.

FLAVINA:

Emilia, I love you. Whither I go that love belongs to you.

EMILIA:

I will not let you go. You must stay and live and grow old with me. You can not leave me.

FLAVINA:

I do not think we have a say in the matter this time. I believe my farewell is at hand.

EMILIA:

You are not to leave. You must rest and save your strength.

FLAVINA:

I would let our story run its course over and again without change for the moments of a joy so complete I felt the sunrise in my heart. Death cannot take that away from me. The Gods may even grant me a star. You can look to the sky and I will be there to watch over you. It is so cold. I feel ice upon me.

EMILIA:

Please do not go. Flavina, I love you with my whole self.

*EMILIA kisses FLAVINA's head.*

EMILIA:  
 Flavina? Flavina? Oh Gods, no.

Scene 7

*Throne room. QUEEN is seated on her throne.  
 EFIMA is on her audience right.  
 GUARDS/ATTENDANTS are present. LEDA and KORINNA  
 are on their knees before the throne; both are  
 bound with ropes.*

QUEEN:  
 The majority in us would have you drawn and quartered  
 or subject to torture till the end of your days. Our  
 library is vast and we are assured that there are  
 volumes that contain such acts that even we have not  
 thought of. We would find great pleasure in it.  
 Breath fills your lungs still for one reason only:  
 your have knowledge. We care not of why. That is your  
 own and does not change the color of your actions. We  
 would know: who and how? Who did send you hither? How  
 did you penetrate our defenses? Answer wise and true.  
 This be your only chance to escape the fullness of  
 our wrath.

LEDA:  
 Kallinacus did send us.

EFIMA:  
 That does confirm suspicion, your Grace. Surly we may  
 now bring death upon them. I-

*QUEEN silences EFIMA with a gesture.*

QUEEN:  
 A boat was found.

LEDA:  
 We did sail here.

QUEEN:  
 How did you elude our ships?

LEDA:  
 The cover of night was our aide, and my sister did  
 have paper to tell of your ships.

QUEEN:  
 Where is such?

KORINNA:

.....

QUEEN:

Do you care so little for your life?

LEDA:

It is on her person still. In her belt.

*A GUARD takes the papers and gives them to  
QUEEN. She reads them.*

QUEEN:

Do you know of the papers origin?

LEDA:

No, we do not.

ADONI:

Your Grace?

EFIMA:

Silence daughter. We need not-

QUEEN:

You may speak.

ADONI:

I have reason to believe my mother the author.

EFIMA:

What is the meaning of this?

QUEEN:

Adoni, you do realize the weight of such words?

ADONI:

I do.

EFIMA:

Your Majesty, my daughter is clearly unwell. Mayhaps  
with her training she has taken a blow to the head. I-

QUEEN:

That is enough Councilor. Adoni, we will hear your  
reasoning.

ADONI:

When taken in their solitude my mother's actions  
appear harmless. But in the light of all that has

transpired around those actions I would be remiss if I did not speak. This morn I was witness to her issuing the north wall garrison away from their post. She did claim it your Grace's doing. She did also slander the crown and allude to a plan that was set in motion. My Mother then charged me with the task of Flavina's keeper. To ensure her separation from Princess Emilia.

*EFIMA produces a dagger and tries to stab the QUEEN.*

ADONI:  
Mother!

*The QUEEN disarms EFIMA and the guards bind her.*

QUEEN:  
You treasonous leech. They are one and the same. You have betrayed Queen, country, daughter, and self. A child is dead. I demand you speak to your crime. Speak!

EFIMA:  
I did try to make you see reason. You would not listen. Macedon poses to back Kallinaucus. Their power is great. An alliance would guarantee safety; he did promise as such. You would not by choice, so we sought be force. If he took Emilia to wife, the alliance would be the only path.

QUEEN:  
You chose a monster over your own people. Have you no shame?

EFIMA:  
Have you none? You will bring about the ruin of us all. My thoughts were for my people.

QUEEN:  
You do betray to protect. I thought you to be good enough to see the fallacy in such logic. Take her to the jail to await trail. Pray to the Gods for mercy for you shall have none from me. Take them all.

*Exit all but the QUEEN and ADONI.*

### Scene 8

*Garden.*

*EMILIA sits holding a single lily.*

*Enter DORKAS.*

DORKAS:

The day is gone and your bed awaits.

EMILIA:

My heart fools my head. I do look and wait for her to step out from behind the trees or hear her voice rise to call my name. I feel her though she be gone. Why must my senses torment me so?

DORKAS:

Dorkas, a few words of comfort you must surely manage. I- I have not a thing.

*Enter QUEEN.*

QUEEN:

How fares she?

DORKAS:

Not well, your grace.

QUEEN:

You may leave us.

*Exit DORKAS.*

QUEEN:

Emilia?

EMILIA:

She did say my scent was of lilies. Did she know that hers was of roses and sunlight? I cannot remember if ever I did utter such aloud.

QUEEN:

Emilia, you must rest. Please come away.

*EMILIA lays down.*

EMILIA:

I shall sleep here tonight among our memories. I do not want to forget.

*QUEEN sits.*

QUEEN:

Love does chisel such things into the heart. Kept in

our breast it is safe from rain and wind and time  
itself; acting as both curse and comfort. Now take  
comfort and leave the rest for another day.

*As we softly fade to black, the Woman's voice  
from the beginning comes once more.*

*"This rehearsal has this end: that true love  
'tween maid and maid may be more than sex  
dividual."*

*END*