

Life is a Dream: A New Vintage

Magical Realism Adaptation

by
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CHARACTER NAME

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

AGE

GENDER

ACT I

We hear whispers echoed as if in a cave. The lights come up on Segismundo sleeping in his cell held by chains and lit by a tine lamp. He is dressed in rags and animal skins.

The whispers become clear bible verses, studies of the universe, all seem to swirl around the man. As the scene mounts, the whispers beckon him "Wake Up, Wake Up, Wake Up"

HIGH ON A MOUNTAIN. THE WIND HOWLS AS THE SUN SETS. ROSAURA, DRESSED IN MALE SAILING ATTIRE, COMES UP FROM BEHIND THE BACK OF THE MOUNTAIN.

ROSAURA

Damn You, Poland. You give an ill welcome to a foreigner. Your blood stained sands mark an unwanted entrance into your lands. Don't you know how long I've traveled, how far I've come? Hardly have I voyaged without struggles and torment- 'Tis in my blood. But when have the unfortunate ever been delivered mercy?

Clarín, Rosaura's servant, comes around the mountain, panting heavily, carrying luggage like a pack mule.

CLARIN

Don't speak for me, Lady-- as a lackey on your revenge quest, I should resent being added to your anguish, but not your speech to the stars.

ROSAURA

I refrained from giving you a share in my laments, Clarín, so as not to deprive you of your own soliloquy, your own philosophical answer to a rhetorical whine. A wise man once said, man takes so much pleasure in lament, he'd seek misfortunes galore, for an excuse to cry.

CLARIN

That philosopher was a drunken old goat! Oh, I'd like to give him a thousand slaps in the face! Then he could complain about my fist. My lady, what are we going to do? We're utterly lost. There's no one here, the mountain is deserted, the light is waning, and I'm terribly hungry.

ROSAURA

Shh... cease your moans. I think I see a building, perhaps it's a mirage.

CLARIN

My eyes may be falling to desires, but I can make out the trace of it too.

ROSAURA

There. Amid the bare rocks. A place so small it scarcely dares to behold the sun. It's almost like a boulder that has rolled down from the summit.

CLARIN

Staring at it won't bring it closer, my lady. Let's venture up and beg mercy from those within. If anyone lives there--

ROSAURA

The door is open.

CLARIN

I'll be... It is dinner time. I'm sure they'll have enough for two extras. You barely eat anyway, your thirst for vengeance seems to satisfy--

A clamor of chains.

My Lady! I'll protect you!

Clarín runs behind Rosaura, who draws her sword. She ventures forward.

Don't my lady! I'm not that hungry. Honestly. My lady, don't! It may be a wildebeast, or worse, the spirit of a galley slave! That must be it. My senses tell me so.

ROSAURA

Don't be so superstitious.

SEGISMUNDO

(Waking up)

Ooohhhh

CLARIN

Galley Slave. Knew It. Don't go my lady, he'll capture your soul forever!

SEGISMUNDO

Oh, wretched, wretched man!

ROSAURA

It's not a spirit... What a sad voice he has... I see a light, dimly... I see a man... pale as a ghost--

CLARIN

Because it is a ghost--

ROSAURA

Shh... He looks so sick... so lonely...

SEGISMUNDO

Wretched. Filthy. Awful Awful Beast. Stars above, what crime have I committed? What am I being punished for? Come, come, Segismundo... You were born, that's the worst crime you could ever commit. Awful beast. Wretched. Dangerous. But what else? Besides the fact that I was born, which I could not help, by the bye. How else have I offended you? Wasn't every other man on this Earth born? What makes me so special, to be so grossly punished? The bird, grown to maturity, flies it's nest once it can take flight, yet I, who have more soul, have less liberty. The beast, who suffers at the hands of mankind, and learns cruelty, must rely on it's animalism for defense. But I, with more naturally refined instincts, have less freedom. The fish, which cannot breathe air, the being with the smallest brain on Earth, will stupidly measure the vastness of the ocean, simply to feast on algae. Yet I with more intelligence, am confined to this small cage. What law, what God would keep a man from the basic rights allowed to a fish, a beast, and a bird? What have I done? For twenty score I have lived here, only hearing about the marvel of the sun, seeing singular constellations by season out of my tiny window. Please Heavens, when can I go?

ROSAURA

Oh.

SEGISMUNDO

Who's there? Is it you, Clotaldo?

CLARIN

Say yes! Then we'll flee!

ROSAURA

Lie to such a heartbroken creature? Never. Good evening, misanthrope. It's I who has overheard your melancholy.

Rosaura goes to touch his hand in warmth. Segismundo seizes her by the collar, and lifts her off her feet.

SEGISMUNDO

You've been spying on me?

ROSAURA

No! No, we were passing by--

SEGISMUNDO

Is that so? Well let my weakness die with you.

CLARIN

Don't worry about me! I'm deaf. I didn't hear a thing.

ROSAURA

Please, sir--

SEGISMUNDO

Sir?

ROSAURA

Yes, I heard your lament, but I also heard your passion. A man so soft and so frightened, could not sacrifice his humanity with the murder of a poor, empathetic traveler.

SEGISMUNDO

No one's ever called me sir... Nor spoken of me as a human... Who are you, man? Sir? I know very little of the world, forgive me if I offend you with my ignorance. This tower has been my cradle and my grave, the only thing I know is the wilderness. I've only know one other man my whole life, but I'm learned, he's tutored me in many aspects of the world. Though my mind has grown... I fear I have no way to apply it. I live like a human beast... Sorry I don't mean to stare, my eyes must be morbidly thirsty... Think you I might have a soul?

ROSAURA

Of course, why wouldn't you?

SEGISMUNDO

I'm not sure if it's something easily lost. When you live like an animal, you may be mistaken for one, and lose your soul entirely.

ROSAURA

You have a name, yes?

SEGISMUNDO

Segismundo.

ROSAURA

Therein lies your soul.

SEGISMUNDO

What is yours?

ROSAURA

I haven't one. My mission is my name.

CLARIN

He's avenging his honor.

ROSAURA

Quiet, Clarin.

CLARIN

If it's such a secret, why do you announce it to the heavens every half mile?

ROSAURA

My name is not important. Let me tell you this, Segismundo, Heaven, which you curse so, has guided me here today to give you consolation. A tale is told of a wise man--

CLARIN

Another one?

ROSAURA

Who once was so poor and indigent that his sole nourishment was a few herbs he picked off the side of a road. "Can there be another man," he would ask himself, "poorer and sadder than I?" One day, while picking his daily meal, he turned his face, and he found the answer, beholding another man gathering the leaves he had discarded. Before I heard your beautiful and sad cries, I too was weeping to the heavens, asking myself if there were anyone more wretched than I. If by chance my sorrows can soothe you, take any that are too many for me.

Clotaldo followed by guards, are heard running through the castle.

CLOTALDO

This way, towards the cell-- I hear them afar.

SEGISMUNDO

That's Clotaldo, my jailer. You must run.

ROSAURA

Whatever for?

SEGISMUNDO

I've never known the reason for my captivity, you think they'd have due course for you?

CLOTALDO

Hurry, before they escape! Either seize them or kill them!

CLARIN

My lady. Time is of the essence. Perhaps we can hold this reunion when we're not about to be brutally murdered?

GUARDS

Treason! Treason!

Guards and Clotaldo enter, spears drawn, scarves covering their faces.

CLOTALDO

Make sure they don't see you.

CLARIN

Guards, since you allowed us to enter here and have given us our choice, seizing us is easier than killing us.

CLOTALDO

Silence, fool. You wayfarers, who in ignorance have invaded the bounds of this forbidden palace--

CLARIN

We didn't know it was forbidden--

ROSAURA

Hence the ignorance.

CLOTALDO

You are found in violation of the royal decree. Surrender your weapons, or face instant death.

SEGISMUNDO

Clotaldo, you Heartless Rat. I'll tear you to shreds if you harm one hair on their heads.

CLOTALDO

Don't speak with arrogant fury, Segismundo. Haughtiness does not become a man in shackles. Guards, stand by his prison doors.

SEGISMUNDO

Forgive me, Clotaldo. My temper has no bounds.

ROSAURA

Master Clotaldo, I see that my pride has offended you, but your king knows nothing of my existence, nor my offense. I humbly beg you for my life.

CLARIN

And in my station, I don't have the liberty of pride, so I humbly ask you to protect us.

CLOTALDO

You there.

SOLDIER

My lord?

CLOTALDO

Relieve them of their weapons. And bind their eyes, so they don't know the way to the castle.

A Soldier goes for Rosaura's sword.

ROSAURA

Don't touch that!

SOLDIER

Insolent boy. Shall I kill him, my lord?

ROSAURA

You can't touch it. My lord, I ask that you alone handle this weapon. No lowly soldier can take my sword.

SOLDIER

Bullocks.

CLOTALDO

I'll oblige you, stranger. What, pray tell is so special about this weapon?

ROSAURA

Frankly I know not. It holds great mysteries, and dear personal history. Relying on it alone, I've come from Russia to--

CLARIN AND ROSAURA

Avenge myself for an affront.

Clotaldo pulls the sword from his sheath. He seems to instantly recognize it.

CLOTALDO

Holy God. Boy. Boy, who gave you this steel?

ROSAURA

A woman, sire.

CLOTALDO

What woman? What is her name?

ROSAURA

I'm afraid I must conceal her name, sire. Forgive me.

CLOTALDO

What makes you think this sword holds secrets, boy?

ROSAURA

She, the woman who gave it me, said "Leave for Poland, and make it your business that you are seen with this sword by nobility, for one of them will volunteer to become your patron and protector." She said not who, nor why, but it's kept me from harm... until now.

CLOTALDO

That's all she said?

ROSAURA

Indeed, sir. On my honor, what's left of it.

CLOTALDO

It's a beautiful instrument.

ROSAURA

Thank you, sire. In case of my death, will you, with your noble blood, keep it safe?

CLOTALDO

It may not come to that... I must take you to the king. I'll plead on your behalf, as foreigners your ignorance will speak volumes. Fear not, in Poland, misery has many a friend.

*All exit, save Segismundo, the captors blind folded.
Clotaldo holds the sword dear to him.*

INSIDE THE CASTLE

Astolfo, a handsome prince enters with soldiers. Estrella enters from the other side, with ladies in waiting.

ASTOLFO
Cousin.

ESTRELLA
Cousin.

ASTOLFO
Fine weather.

ESTRELLA
For Poland.

Silence.

ASTOLFO
Well.

ESTRELLA
Well.

ASTOLFO
I must say, this music becomes you.

ESTRELLA
Must you say it?

ASTOLFO
My dear lady, you are saluted by all of nature, all of man, as queen of Beauty.

ESTRELLA
Take note, Astolfo, dear, it is a base deed to throw bouquets to a woman with your lips, while you kill her in your thoughts.

ASTOLFO
You don't find me sincere, Estrella?

ESTRELLA
Can sincerity seethe?

ASTOLFO
Fine, we'll toss the courtly manners.

ESTRELLA
As well as our courtly history.

ASTOLFO

What do you wish to talk of? Politics? Economics? Fashion, Perhaps?

ESTRELLA

Business, if you please. Straightforward.

ASTOLFO

Well then. We're here for a reason, Cousin. King Basilio is getting old, we, as his only heirs, are both eligible for the throne. I, more than you--

ESTRELLA

I more than you. My mother was the eldest.

ASTOLFO

Ah, but I'm the only male heir--

ESTRELLA

I can wed.

ASTOLFO

Yes! Indeed. You can wed. Here's what I propose, Cousin. This land is torn apart. What with an aging king, and the common folk divided almost equally in support of us--

ESTRELLA

More in support of me--

ASTOLFO

Regardless. Would it not be the best for both the people, and our own interests, if we joined forces?

ESTRELLA

What exactly is it your proposing?

ASTOLFO

A proposal.

ESTRELLA

You can't be serious.

ASTOLFO

Quite.

ESTRELLA

I despise you.

ASTOLFO

Marriages have been built on worse foundations than utter loathing.

ESTRELLA

We haven't any shared philosophies or interests. The only thing we have in common is our bloodline.

ASTOLFO

A royal bloodline. Pure. Untainted. I'll tell you Estrella, when Uncle Basilio called us here, I knew it wasn't to settle a simple familial rivalry. If he has any sense left, which I'm sure he does, he's undoubtedly thought of this same juncture. Were we to accept each other, and deliver our answer to him promptly, we could rule the kingdom all the sooner.

ESTRELLA

Astolfo, your reason is sound. But I fear I cannot accept. There was a time once, when your charm and tongue had wooed me, yet I see the same reason I grew to hate you still hangs around your neck. How could I live as your wife, while your wear that portrait?

ASTOLFO

I'll prove my fidelity in due time.

Trumpets within.

But soft. The king approaches.

King Basilio enters with court.

ESTRELLA

Wise Thales...

ASTOLFO

Learned Euclid...

ESTRELLA

You who amid the zodiac--

ASTOLFO

You who amid the stars...

ESTRELLA

Are ruler today..

ASTOLFO

Reside today...

ESTRELLA

Permit me, in humble windings--

ASTOLFO

Permit me, in tender embraces.

TOGETHER

To be the ivy clinging to you, the tree.

BASILIO

Niece and Nephew, abandon the pomp and embrace me. Faithful servants you are, I shall leave neither of you lamenting, and insure you're both treated with equity. However, some matters must take precedence, and I ask you to first let me speak, as the decision I have made will undoubtedly impact the futures of you both.

ASTOLFO

Whatever you say, Uncle.

ESTRELLA

Please, King. Tell us your troubles. You seem in quite a state.

BASILIO

Aye, that I am. I have lived a very long time children, oh, but you are not children anymore. See how my age deceives me. I have ruled this country with fairness and justice all my life, gaining not only the reputation of a respected king, but a learned astrologer. You've matured with my name hummed throughout the scientific world, the great Basilio, King of Poland, reader of the stars. But oh, my blood, how my achievements have been my downfall. Nights and nights I spent studying the stars, the orbits of the planets, the revolutions of the earth, the faces of the moon. Would it had pleased heaven to make my life the first victim of it's wrath. Oh, my dear kin, for four and twenty years I've been harbouring a horrid disgraceful secret.

ESTRELLA

Fear not, Uncle. We are blood, no judgment will befall you.

BASILIO

Yet the secret lies in our blood. You see, by Cloriene, my dear wife, and your late Aunt... you never knew this I'm sure... I had a son. An unlucky son, during whose gestation, the heavens showed no mercy and exhausted all miracles. Even before he emerged into the lovely light from the ill-fated womb, God marked him damned. Infinite times his mother, waked in fevered sweats from nightmares of her entrails being ripped from within, by a monster in human skin, dyed in her blood, killing her, and walking among our race as an unstoppable tyrant. The day she went into delivery, her forecasts came true.

The beast was born at such an astrological junction, that the sun, tinged with blood, was fiercely entering into a joust with the moon. The two celestial lamps were struggling, light to light, and the greatest, most terrifying eclipse not seen since the death of Christ, took hold of the sky. The heavens were darkened, buildings shook, clouds rained stones, rivers ran blood. Under all this, my son, Segismundo was born, and, as Cloriene had predicted, she died as the monster took breath. I looked frantically through my books, and finding the alignment, referring to the constellations, I found in ancient prophecy, that my son, my blood, would grow to be a most insolent man, a cruel prince, and an impious monarch, who would fragment and divide his kingdom, and one day, set his foot on my neck. I would find myself groveling before his terrible power.

ASTOLFO

Dear Uncle--

BASILIO

What was I to do, knowing I had bred this creature of potential evil? I had no choice, I had to lock up my only heir, and see whether a wise man could prevail over the stars. It was announced that the prince was stillborn, and a tower was erected, publicly to commemorate his honor, and the death of the dear queen. In truth, amid the rocks and crags, beneath the monument, I harbored Segismundo, where he grew up as a prisoner. Only our noble Clotaldo has spoken to him, kept him company, and taught him the ways of the world. I tell you this because, in the recent days, as I've faced my mortality head on, I've come to reflect on the decisions in my life. I love my country, and its people, and made my decision to free them from oppressive service to a tyrannical king. However, depriving my own flesh and blood of the rights he was given is not Christian charity. No law ever stated that, to prevent another man from being tyrannical and insolent, I should act that way myself. It was a tremendous mistake to lend easy credence to the predictions of events. And so, Tomorrow, without knowing he's my son and your king, I shall place Segismundo on the throne. You, my court, will swear obedience to him. If he is prudent and beneficent, you will all enjoy the presence of your natural prince. If he insolently and cruelly gives free reign to his vices, I shall have complied with my obligations to the prophecy, and when I return him to his prison, it will be out of punishment and necessity, not cruelty. And here, is where you come in, my patient kin. If the prince is the latter, out of my love for you, I shall give you monarchs more worthy of the crown and scepter... by bringing you into agreement by the sacrament of marriage, you will both have what you deserve. I ask that you comply with my decree, as your King and as a father.

ASTOLFO

King Basilio, I have always considered you more than an uncle, you have been a father to me. Let Segismundo appear. I'd like to meet my brother.

ALL

Give us our prince! Let us see our Natural King!

BASILIO

Vassals, I can't thank you enough for these kind words. Tomorrow, indeed you shall see him. Ready my chambers. Begin a grand meal. We'll create the greatest welcome a prince could ask for!

ALL

Long live the great king Basilio!

All but the king exit. Clotado enters with soldiers, Clarin, Rosaura. Clotado approaches Basilio.

CLOTALDO

My king, may I speak with you?

BASILIO

Clotaldo, so glad you've arrived. What have you there? Prisoners?

CLOTALDO

Yes, sir. Trespassers in the forbidden tower.

BASILIO

Oh dear.

CLOTALDO

This handsome youth caught sight of the prince, sire. He and his servant are travelers, and did not know the law. I humbly beseech you show mercy on them. You see he's... he's...

BASILIO

Clotaldo, Clotaldo. There will be no death today. Don't worry yourself.

CLOTALDO

There won't?

CLARIN

There won't?

BASILIO

Not on a day of such rejoicing!

CLARIN

Hurrah! Praise the heavens.

CLOTALDO

What are we celebrating sire?

BASILIO

Well, the festivities really begin tomorrow, but I'm feeling awful generous today. You fellows picked a good day to break the law. I have divulged the secret to the entirety of the court, Clotaldo. All know of Segismundo. Oh, I have so much to tell you. See me later, we have plans to discuss. Travelers, I give you pardon.

Exit King Basilio.

CLOTALDO

Great lord, may you live a thousand centuries! You're free friends.

ROSAURA

Clotaldo, I cannot thank you enough.

CLARIN

Where's the kitchen?

ROSAURA

My lord, you have given me life, and for that I am eternally your slave--

CLOTALDO

Arise, boy. When a man of good birth has been affronted, a vile life is no life at all. You owe me nothing. However, I believe it's time the promise of this sword is fulfilled. Take it back in your possession, when dyed in the blood of your enemy, it will avenge you fully. And I will honorably help, in any way I can.

ROSAURA

In your name, I gird it for the second time, and swear on it my revenge. No matter how powerful he may be.

CLOTALDO

Is he very much so?

ROSAURA

More than I dare say.

CLOTALDO

A strong knight, is it?

ROSAURA

No sir, he hasn't an ounce of courage for battle.

CLOTALDO

A ship's captain, then?

ROSAURA

I doubt it, sir. He sickens on horse, let alone at sea.

CLOTALDO

He's not a noble, is he?

ROSAURA

I'm afraid so, sir. I fear your opinion of me might diminish, if I say any thing further.

CLOTALDO

What is he, a Lord?

ROSAURA

No.

CLOTALDO

A dignitary?

ROSAURA

Higher.

CLOTALDO

Blasted, boy. Who is he, you've sworn revenge on?

ROSAURA

Astolfo, Duke of Muscovy.

CLOTALDO

You're out for the blood of the next king of Poland!?

ROSAURA

It sounds worse when you phrase it that way.

CLOTALDO

The man was your ruler, he can't have affronted you.

ROSAURA

But he did, sir.

CLOTALDO

Even if he insolently slapped you in the face, his station gives him power--

ROSAURA

The affront to me, Clotaldo, was greater than any slap.

CLOTALDO

What was it?

ROSAURA

I haven't the courage. You've been so good to me... All I can tell you is... these external trappings of mine are a riddle, the one they clothe isn't what she seems. If I'm not what I seem... and if Astolfo has ventured here to marry Estrella-- I've told you too much. Forgive me, Clotaldo, I must go. Come, Clarin.

Rosaura starts to exit.

CLOTALDO

Lady... 'Tis best to disguise yourself in your natural form. Don't fight who you are, your voice is bound to break.

Rosaura and Clarin exit. End of Act I.

*As Segismundo sleeps, the set changes around him.
People dress him and alter his surroundings to rich and beautiful things.*

ACT II

The king, Basilio paces around his throne, worried. He looks at the clock, at the sunrise. Clotaldo enters.

CLOTALDO

My lord.

BASILIO

Clotaldo, there you are! What's taken so long?

CLOTALDO

Forgive me, My liege, he's a bull of a man. It took three rounds of drugged possets to put him out, over an hour of just him drinking, then we moved him, under guise of night, of course, so no one would see us. With the blunderheads moving in pitch black, that took an additional several hours. But he's now lodge in your room, the women have bathed and dressed him. I tell you, My Liege, if I didn't know any better, I'd say he looked like a prince.

BASILIO

Wonderful. Wonderful news. He's still asleep.

CLOTALDO

Quite. The potion should ware off soon though.

BASILIO

Good... How does he look?

CLOTALDO

Regal, as I said--

BASILIO

No, I mean... does he look peaceful?

CLOTALDO

Quite, my lord.

BASILIO

Healthy?

CLOTALDO

Indeed, my lord. Though he lives in the wilderness and smelled quite foul, I assure you, we took care to feed him properly.

BASILIO

All's well.

CLOTALDO

You've never asked before, sir.

BASILIO

Indeed... I haven't... this is all strange and new, Clotaldo, for both of us. I'm... I'm not sure how he'll react... Will he recognize me, how could he?

CLOTALDO

You speak like a father, sire.

BASILIO

A rotten one.

CLOTALDO

I can understand, sir.

BASILIO

I'm afraid you can't, Clotaldo... If he fulfills the prophecy, I'll have more than egg on my face. I'll have lost a son, twice over. Never before have I understood the motives of Oedipus' father, til this moment... perhaps it would have been kinder to kill him.

CLOTALDO

You worry too much, King Basilio. You've done the right thing, a second chance. He's never known the wrong he's done, and has always cursed his birth. For his sake, and the sake of our dear queen's memory, you owe him this. At least a chance.

BASILIO

Thank you, Clotaldo.

CLOTALDO

Shall I fetch him?

BASILIO

I can't face him, Clotaldo. Not yet. You have been his one link to the world. Though tough, and cruel you may have been at times, he will listen to you. Tell him, I'll see him at supper. Thank you, friend.

Basilio exits. A servant enters.

CLOTALDO

You, alert me immediately of Segismundo's awakening.

SERVANT

As you wish, Lord Clotaldo.

Enter Clarin eating a turkey leg.

CLOTALDO

Clarin, how does your lady?

CLARIN

The food here is impeccable. My Heavens, incredible. Have you tried the duck? Superb.

CLOTALDO

Your lady, Rosaura, how is she?

CLARIN

Well.

Clarin continues to eat his turkey leg.

CLOTALDO

That's all?

CLARIN

She did everything you asked.

CLOTALDO

...And?

CLARIN

And... continues to follow your orders...

CLOTALDO

Can you please send lady Rosaura to me? I think I'll find better progress with her.

CLARIN

If you need me, I'll be in the kitchen. I smelled cabbage and onions!

Clarin exits. Astolfo enters with Estrella.

CLOTALDO

If I make it through this day alive, it will be a miracle.

ASTOLFO

Come, Come Estrella, there's no need for such rash behavior.

ESTRELLA

Oh?

ASTOLFO

No! You and I are bound to be one--

ESTRELLA

Is that so?

ASTOLFO

Yes. You heard the king--

ESTRELLA

IF, and only IF, Segismundo proves an ill-fitting heir.

ASTOLFO

But then neither of us will have the crown.

ESTRELLA

And I won't have to bear you.

ASTOLFO

What, Estrella, turned you so sour against me? You loved me once, I know.

ESTRELLA

Yes, but as the seasons change, so goes love.

ASTOLFO

What did I do?

ESTRELLA

You shared your love, Astolfo. I saw your pendant, the portrait of the lady you wear so close to your heart. She alone deserves your verbal bouquets.

Rosaura enters, she sees Astolfo and hides.

ASTOLFO

I'll see to it this portrait leaves my breast, so that your image can enter into it. Wherever Estrella enters, there is no place for shadow, just as no star remains after sunrise.

ESTRELLA

Then let me have it.

ASTOLFO

What?

ESTRELLA

The portrait. Let me have it.

ASTOLFO

I shall, my dove... in due time. It's practically welded, I fear I won't get it off so easily, without an axe to my neck. Pray, let me return it to you within the hour.

ESTRELLA

I shall send my woman to retrieve it.

ASTOLFO

At your leisure.

Estrella exits. Astolfo pulls the portrait out and looks at it, lovingly. He strokes the picture inside. Rosaura watches him, torn. Clotaldo makes his presence known.

My lord Clotaldo.

CLOTALDO

My liege.

ASTOLFO

Any news on ol' cousin Segi?

CLOTALDO

Not of yet, my liege, he is gaining strength from a well-deserved rest.

ASTOLFO

Well, very well.

CLOTALDO

Your future wife seems on the melancholy side.

ASTOLFO

Lovers quarrel. You know women.

CLOTALDO

I do, indeed, my lord.

ASTOLFO

How do you find Cousin Segi? Hm? Fit to rule?

CLOTALDO

That remains to be seen, I suppose.

ASTOLFO

Aye, but in your opinion?

CLOTALDO

I think he will have to tackle a learning curve as all rulers would, if found in his position. He has not had the luxuries you have, Astolfo. He will struggle to find his own voice and balance.

ASTOLFO

Aye, fair enough.

Tell me, Clotaldo, have you seen Estrella's new lady-in-waiting? I heard she just arrived this morning.

CLOTALDO

Ahh... no, no I have not.

ASTOLFO

'Tis rumored she is stunning.

CLOTALDO

Sounds like a rumor.

ASTOLFO

Send her my way, when you meet her, eh? I'm known to break in the new Stallions. Alert me when our king awakes!

Astolfo exits.

ROSAURA

Pig.

CLOTALDO

The coast is clear. You can come out now.

Rosaura shuffles out of hiding slowly.

My, oh my.

ROSAURA

It's the dress, isn't it? I knew the color wasn't becoming, but Estrella insists on this shade for all of her ladies-in-waiting.

CLOTALDO

You look beautiful, my dear.

ROSAURA

Really?

CLOTALDO

Quite befitting the rumors.

ROSAURA

Ugh, men. Accusing us of being gossiping hens, while they run amok... It's strange, I feel as if I'm in a sort of get-up. Months of travelling in pants, makes you envy the opposite sex.

CLOTALDO

Everything is moving swiftly.

ROSAURA

Aye, Estrella has become quite taken with me. I'm not sure what it is. But Astolfo is bound to recognize me.

CLOTALDO

As he should. Why would you hide?

ROSAURA

To better take his life.

CLOTALDO

To be so brazen and young. Speak with him first, confront him. You may have no reason to cause your own death.

ROSAURA

He's had plenty of opportunities--

CLOTALDO

Talk to him, Rosaura. If my gray hair gives me any wisdom, you'll listen.

A servant enters.

SERVANT

My lord, the King awakes.

CLOTALDO

Alter the lighting, rouse the musicians. Play. Rosaura, run to Estrella, he's never seen a woman before. Best to break him in slowly.

ROSAURA

At your command.

Rosaura exits. The lights dim, music plays. Segismundo dressed in finery wakes in his same position, but on a throne. Everyone flocks to him.

SEGISMUNDO

My head.

CLOTALDO

Hail, Segismundo, King of Poland.

SERVANTS

Hail, King Segismundo.

SEGISMUNDO

What's this? Who are you all?

CLOTALDO

My lord, these are your servants, and your people. You reign over them as king.

SEGISMUNDO

Me... King... what? Heaven help me. Heaven help me-- is this real?

CLOTALDO

Perhaps.

SEGISMUNDO

It... it feels real... this crown, these clothes... my senses all tell me it's real. I smell of-- what is this smell?

CLOTALDO

Lavendar, my lord.

SEGISMUNDO

Lavendar... lavendar, you've told me of lavendar. My God it smells divine.. This... this fabric, what is it?

CLOTALDO

Velvet, Sire.

SEGISMUNDO

Velvet... Sire-- you called me Sire.

CLOTALDO

Aye, I am yours to command.

Clotaldo kisses Segismundo's hand. Segismundo pinches his face with his fingers.

SEGISMUNDO

How came I here?

CLOTALDO

My lord, I ask that you remain calm and--

SEGISMUNDO

You don't order me, anymore, jailer. I order you. Tell me what's happening to me.

CLOTALDO

Your father, Basilio, king of Poland, came to know of a prophecy, the day you were born. It said, were you to live, you'd cast a horrible shadow over the land, and wreck it and it's people beyond repair. In love and pity, he did not kill you, but instead kept you away, in the dungeon you called home. He now wishes you return to your rightful throne, and reign as king. He's seen his wrong--

SEGISMUNDO

Have you seen yours? You beat me, treated me as an animal--

CLOTALDO

I only did what was necessary, to keep your temper at bay. Your anger is as wild as a savage beast--

SEGISMUNDO

As I have thought my whole life. But now this beast is in finery, and you are his dinner.

CLOTALDO

Please, Segismundo, I was only obeying my king--

SEGISMUNDO

By damning the heir to the throne? By thwarting one king for another? Traitor. Sheep. You, boy, what is the sentence for treason against the King?

SERVANT

Death my lord, but--

SEGISMUNDO

Then Death it shall be.

Segismundo takes Clotaldo's dagger and holds it over his head. A servant stays his hand.

SERVANT

Sire, please.

SEGISMUNDO

Don't you dare interfere with me, worm. I'll throw you out the window as quick as slit his throat. That goes for all of you. Anyone who goes against me will meet a quick end.

SERVANT

Run, Clotaldo!

Clotaldo runs.

CLOTALDO

Don't let your thoughts define your actions! This is your chance! Redeem!

Clotaldo exits. Segismundo rears around on the Servant, and grabs him by the throat. Clarin enters with a slice of cake.

SEGISMUNDO

Wretch.

SERVANT

Sire, please be reasonable.

SEGISMUNDO

You dare to disobey your king?

SERVANT

He was only following the kings orders--

SEGISMUNDO

I was his prince.

SERVANT

If he had questioned the motives, he would have been thrown in the stocks. Or hanged!

SEGISMUNDO

You defend him?

CLARIN

Of course, he doesn't, my lord! No one would be so foolish as to speak against you. You, servant. Stop pulling the Prince's leg, and bow to your master.

VASSAL

Who gave you permission to speak, urchin?

CLARIN

I took it upon myself.

SEGISMUNDO

I know you, don't I?

CLARIN

Indeed my lord. From yesterday. The jail cell. You were filthier then.

SEGISMUNDO

Tell me, friend, is this a dream or reality?

CLARIN

Hard to say, my lord, as we are all masters of our own reality. But I can say, this cake is delicious.

SEGISMUNDO

What's your name?

CLARIN

Clarín, my lord. A professional busybody, and master of my trade, as I'm the nosiest person I've ever known.

SEGISMUNDO

Of all these people who pretend to serve me, you alone have pleased me.

CLARIN

Sire, my secondary profession is being a pleaser of Segismundos.

Astolfo enters.

ASTOLFO

So here he is, in the flesh! Haha!

(as if speaking to a deaf person)

Good Morrow! How do you this FINE DAY!

CLARIN

The king is not hard of hearing, my lord.

ASTOLFO

(slower)

How do, cousin!

SEGISMUNDO

Cousin?

ASTOLFO

Oh, fine he speaks English. I didn't know, they said you were raised in the wilderness, I was expecting a feral halfbreed to be honest.

SEGISMUNDO

And how do you find me?

ASTOLFO

Not a half breed to be sure. No, you seem to clean up well.

SEGISMUNDO

Is this how most gentry address a monarch?

ASTOLFO

Oh, forgive me. You're so new to the throne, I've forgotten all of my courtly graces in lieu of familial gentility. Ahem. O Prince, when you show yourself as the sun of Poland, filling with splendor and joy all these horizons with such divine red glow, you emerge like the sun below the mountains. Emerge then, and even though your brow is wreathed so belatedly, with the glorious laurel, may it be equally slow to die! All hail King Segismundo! Long may he live.

SEGISMUNDO

... God keep you.

ASTOLFO

God keep you... ahem... I realize sir, that you are new to my presence, not only are we blood, but actually, at one point, vied for the same throne. You couldn't have known that of course, you were ignorant of the history, however, not to worry. I am unoffended. But you should know, for future addresses, that I am duke of Muscovy. And your cousin. Cousins are the offspring of two siblings--

SEGISMUNDO

I know what cousins are.

ASTOLFO

Cousin good, wow. You speak so well. I'm impressed. Truly impressed, Segi.

SEGISMUNDO

Segi?--

ASTOLFO

And never fear. I will be by your side this whole time, helping to instruct you on courtly manners. So... Let us stand on equal terms... We'll try again... All hail King Segismundo! Long may he live!

SEGISMUNDO

Does "God keep you" not satisfy you? Cousin? Must you insist on boasting about your rank, and lord your breeding over me to feel as you say "on equal terms" with me? Would you feel more satisfied if you kept your boot on my face as you sat on the throne owed to me, but that we both "vied for"? How about this, Cousin? I will change my response the next time I receive you, and instead ask God not keep you.

SERVANT 2

Your highness, my lord Astolfo was right to correct you--

CLARIN

Do you all want to die?

SERVANT 2

Since he was born in the hills, and was second to the throne up til only yesterday, he should be addressed--

SEGISMUNDO

He insulted me. No man deserves my respect if he acts like such a pompous ass. How can he even speak with such a large silver spoon in his mouth?

SERVANT 2

He's a grandee.

SEGISMUNDO

I am grander yet.

SERVANT 2

However that may be, it's only proper that between such blood as yours, there should be a great respect.

SEGISMUNDO

I warn you, cretin. Don't ruffle me so. I cannot be held accountable for my actions.

Estrella enters.

ESTRELLA

Your highness. May you be welcome to the throne that gratefully receives and desires you. May you live revered in eminent, and may you reign for centuries.

SEGISMUNDO

Now that's an address. Good morrow, Madam. And who might you be?

CLARIN

This is your other cousin, sire. Estrella.

SEGISMUNDO

A woman.

CLARIN

Yes, sire a woman.

Segismundo smells her ravenously.

SEGISMUNDO

What is that? You smell as I do, but better.

ESTRELLA

Rose lips, my lord.

SEGISMUNDO

Rose lips. And does the smell of rose carry to your lips?

ESTRELLA

I know not, My Lord.

SEGISMUNDO

I'll taste them and see.

SERVANT

Sire, Duke Astolfo is set to wed the woman you currently hold in unbridled passion.

SEGISMUNDO

Didn't I tell you not to meddle in my business.

SERVANT

The king decreed--

SEGISMUNDO

What King? I said nothing.

SERVANT

Your father, sire.

SEGISMUNDO

Well I say differently--

SERVANT

It's not right to--

SEGISMUNDO

Nothing is right to me, if it goes against my grain. Take heed, peasant.

SERVANT

Sir, you said earlier it's proper to--

SEGISMUNDO

You've also heard me say I'm capable of hurling anyone from the balcony who disobeys me.

SERVANT

That can't be done to men of my station.

Segismundo lets go of Estrella.

SEGISMUNDO

Oh, is that so? Well then, I must test it out.

Segismundo grabs the servant by the scruff of the neck and hurls him off the balcony. A great cry and splash is heard.

ESTRELLA

My heavens!

ASTOLFO

Guards! Guards!

SEGISMUNDO

Would you look at that, he flew right off the balcony into the sea. It WAS possible.

ASTOLFO

Are you mad!?

SEGISMUNDO

Perhaps. Or dreaming. Perhaps.

ASTOLFO

Please, King, reflect on your actions more calmly. People's lives are in your hands. You are a monarch!

SEGISMUNDO

If you persist so eagerly in speaking from your heart, maybe you won't have a head to speak out of.

Astolfo exits. King Basilio enters.

BASILIO

What's all this?

SEGISMUNDO

Nothing. I threw a plebian from the balcony.

BASILIO

The devil! Why?

SEGISMUNDO

He annoyed me.

BASILIO

How dare you--

SEGISMUNDO

How dare I? How dare you, old man? You wish to join him in the sea.

CLARIN

Careful, my liege. It's the King. Your father.

SEGISMUNDO

My father?

BASILIO

Less than an hour, and you've already cost the life of an innocent man.

SEGISMUNDO

He told me it couldn't be done. I won the bet.

BASILIO

Is this really how you wanted to see me? For the first time in your life, is this the thing you wanted me to see?

SEGISMUNDO

What were you expecting, sire?

BASILIO

A prince! Or at the very least, a man. But what I see before me is a base, inhuman monster. No more fit to wear the crown than a savage beast. I had hoped you would triumph over your fate. When else would a man receive the opportunity to change his stars? And you throw it away. How can I now lovingly embrace you, when you've used your arms so destructively?

SEGISMUNDO

Who wants your embrace? I've gotten along fine without your love.

BASILIO

I hoped you would want the love a father--

SEGISMUNDO

Father? A man who is capable of imprisoning his son? Raising me as an animal, treating me as a monster? And you're shocked with what you find? You made me this way--

BASILIO

It's in your nature--

SEGISMUNDO

You don't know my nature. You know nothing of me. You hid me from your sight and left me to rot! No one needs your embrace, or your magically conjured love, old man.

BASILIO

Would you were never born, I wouldn't have to hear this rashness--

SEGISMUNDO

Would I were never born, I would never have suffered your tyranny. Your hate against a newborn babe, a child of your blood! If you had never given me life at all, I'd have no complaint against you. But you did. And you have made me what I am. You bred the monster you see.

BASILIO

A fine way of thanking me for finding yourself changed so. A humble prisoner to a prince.

SEGISMUNDO

Thank you? You tyrant over my free will, why should I thank you? Should I thank you for finally giving what I had coming to me? I'm not obliged to you for this crown, Sire. And as your new King, I could ask for a reckoning of all my years wasted, deprived of the base human allowances: freedom, life, and honor. So it is really you who should be thanking me, for not collecting on your debt.

BASILIO

Insolent Barbarian. Heaven has kept it's word. Pay close attention to me, boy. Take your time to ponder your actions. Be humble. You may be dreaming, though you think you're awake. And all your actions will guide and haunt you the remainder of your days.

King Basilio exits.

SEGISMUNDO

Dreaming. Again, dreaming. I know what I feel. I know what I was, and I know what I am. I always felt it, but I never knew what it was. Even if you sigh and grieve, you can never undo the fact that I was born heir to this crown! You created this, King! This hybrid of man and beast!

CLARIN

Well said, sire.

SEGISMUNDO

Silence.

CLARIN

Noted.

SEGISMUNDO

Anyone else care to chime in?

Silence.

SEGISMUNDO

That's better.

Enter Rosaura looking around for Astolfo. Segismundo grabs Clarin.

Who is that?

CLARIN

Th-that? That. Oh, that. That's um...

SERVANT 2

One of Duchess Estrella's ladies in waiting. Newly arrived, sire.

SEGISMUNDO

And taking residence in my heart. If I were to wonder anything in the world, it would be the beauty of women. I've read of them, sure, but they truly are a marvel in the flesh.

Rosaura's train becomes entangled. She becomes flustered, unaccustomed to the dress.

I read once that the creation that cost God the greatest effort was man, because he is a world in miniature; but now I suspect it was woman, since she has become a heaven in miniature... and even more, as the one I espy--

ROSAURA

Oh... Prince? King Segismundo? I shouldn't be here. Forgive me for disturbing you, I'll be on my way.

SEGISMUNDO

Stop where you are, woman. Don't let the sunset so immediately follow the sunrise by escaping.

CLARIN

Smooth talker.

SEGISMUNDO

Upon second glance... have I met you before?

CLARIN

How could you, my lord, you've not seen a woman before today.

SEGISMUNDO

Nay, but I've dreamed of them before... so much softer in person...

ROSAURA

The fool is right, I'm afraid, my Leige. We've never met before.

SEGISMUNDO

How is it you've come to serve a woman of lesser beauty?

ROSAURA

I painfully and humbly, must disagree, King, I am no match in the beauty of my lady. I venerate your kindness, but please let my silence be an eloquent reply. When reason is so sluggish, the best speaker is the one who's most silent.

Rosaura begins to walk away. Segismundo grabs her arm.

SEGISMUNDO

You may not withdraw. I command you stay. How can you leave my mind in the dark?

ROSAURA

I request your highness permission to go.

SEGISMUNDO

To leave so impetuously is not asking for permission, but seizing it.

ROSAURA

If you refuse to grant it, my lord, I must seize it.

Rosaura stomps on Segismundo's foot. She tears away, but only makes it a few steps before he grabs her full force. Clotaldo has entered and is watching.

SEGISMUNDO

You make me change my tone of courtesy to coarseness. Resistance is bitter poison to my patience.

ROSAURA

If that poison should overcome your patience, it wouldn't dare, it couldn't, overcome your respect for me.

SEGISMUNDO

I'm highly inclined to the impossible. Today, I threw a man from the balcony who said it couldn't be done. To see whether or not my lack of patience can outweigh respect is a very tricky gamble. Would you like to see whether or not I can throw your honor out the window?

ROSAURA

Please no, My lord.

SEGISMUNDO

Hard to stomach Humility in the presence of your king?

ROSAURA

Fear, my lord.

SEGISMUNDO

You should have thought of that before you refused me.

ROSAURA

It wasn't for nothing your tyranny was predicted. But what is a man to do, when there is nothing human about him except his name?

SEGISMUNDO

A man once told me within a man's name lies his soul.

ROSAURA

He was wrong. You are not a man. You are a soulless beast.

SEGISMUNDO

It was to keep you from insulting me that I showed so much courtesy... But after my compliments, my polite declarations... I am still seen as a brute... a monster... Well if you call me a soulless beast, I shall give you reason to say it. All you, servants, leave us alone. Lock that door, and make sure no one comes in.

All servants exit save clarin and clotaldo.

ROSAURA

Please my lord, I have nothing left--

SEGISMUNDO

I'm a tyrant, aren't I? What else is a mindless, soulless king to do, but conquer?

Segismundo goes to take Rosaura, Clotaldo bursts out and rips Segismundo away from her.

SEGISMUNDO

You feeble, crazy old man. Have you so little regard for my vexation and severity?

CLOTALDO

I wish not to anger you, Segismundo. But look at yourself. You are a king! And you're acting as a Mongrel! Please! Think of what you're doing! Just because you are the master of us all, does not mean you can take anything you want! Remember this may all be a dream--

SEGISMUNDO

I'm tired of that! I'm done with that stupid logic! You want to see whether this is a dream, or reality? How well do you bleed in dreams?

Segismundo grabs the knife again, and goes to stab Clotaldo. Clotaldo hold him at bay.

CLOTALDO

Clear your head, Segismundo. Don't let your anger rule you!

SEGISMUNDO

Take your hand away!

ROSAURA

Heavens! Stop! Stop it, you'll kill him.

SEGISMUNDO

Then we'll know this isn't a dream, won't we?

ROSAURA

Help! The King is mad! Clotaldo is being killed!

Segismundo wheels around on her.

SEGISMUNDO

You dare call the king Mad!?

Astolfo enters brandishing steel.

ASTOLFO

Step away from the girl, Cousin.

SEGISMUNDO

Don't call me that. I am your king.

ASTOLFO

And you're behaving like a barbarian. Lay down your steel.

SEGISMUNDO

Lay down yours.

ASTOLFO

You attack a defenseless girl, and an old man? Return your unstained dagger to its sheath.

SEGISMUNDO

Not til I see it dyed in this traitor's blood.

ASTOLFO

He's claimed sanctuary at my feet. My arrival has some effect.

SEGISMUNDO

Let it have the effect of your death.

Astolfo and Segismundo struggle and fight. Segismundo cuts Astolfo on the palm. King Basilio and Estrella enter. Astolfo dodges a strike from Segismundo, who is about to stab the King.

CLOTALDO

Don't harm him, Segismundo!

BASILIO

Drawn swords, I see.

SEGISMUNDO

I ought to let this dagger fall.

BASILIO

Continuing your reign of terror, Segismundo?

ASTOLFO

He tried to kill Coltaldo.

BASILIO

Three in one day, Son? Have you no concept of life? Have you any respect?

SEGISMUNDO

You want me to respect gray hair, when even yours may find its way beneath my feet?

BASILIO

How would you feel if you woke up tomorrow, and this was all a dream?

SEGISMUNDO

I don't know. It won't happen.

BASILIO

But it might. Your velvets will turn back into rags. Your finery will become feces and filth. Your stench will return.

SEGISMUNDO

It won't. I know this is real.

BASILIO

Do you?

Segismundo, overtaken, runs out of the room. Basilio heaves, holding back tears.

You there, boy.

SERVANT 3

Yes, my Lord?

BASILIO

Alert the guards. Tell them to watch for the king.

SERVANT 3

As you wish, Sire.

Servant exits.

CLOTALDO

I am forever indebted to you, Lord Astolfo.

ASTOLFO

Think not on it. 'Twas only decent. You did well in protecting that maiden.

BASILIO

Clotaldo.

CLOTALDO

Are you hurt, Sire?

BASILIO

Put him back to sleep. Relieve him of my sight.

CLOTALDO

It was a valiant effort, Sire.

BASILIO

I wish never to hear his name spoken again. Lock him away.

CLOTALDO

Please, don't blame yourself, sire?

BASILIO

Who else can I blame? Get him out of here. Go.

Clotaldo exits.

ESTRELLA

Come, Uncle. We'll wipe your head with eucalyptus, perhaps some music will suit your fancy.

As she exits with the king, she catches Rosaura's attention.

Astrea, that lord over there is the Duke of Muscovy, and my betrothed. Retrieve from him a locket. He's promised to give it to me within the hour.

ROSAURA

Madam, I am your humble servant, but perhaps you would prefer to gain the locket yourself?

ESTRELLA

I cannot face him. I understand you've had a difficult time, but please, I ask you as a friend. Retrieve the portrait from him. You're the only one I can trust.

ROSAURA

As you wish, Madam.

Estrella and King Basilio exit. Astolfo, who's wound has been dressed and cleaned by a servant, dismisses the rest of the party, and stands alone with Rosaura. He looks to her.

ASTOLFO

An eventful day, to say the least.

Rosaura turns her back to him, trying to hide herself. She alters her voice.

ROSAURA

Indeed, my lord.

ASTOLFO

Did he harm you, madam?

ROSAURA

Only my pride, sir. I have little honor to spare.

ASTOLFO

You're the new arrival, aren't you? Of Estrella's train?

ROSAURA

Aye, sir. Astrea.

ASTOLFO

Let me have a look at you. It's only proper I know my wife-to-be's entourage.

ROSAURA

You are engaged then?

ASTOLFO

Indeed. And after the misfortune today, I will be ruler of this kingdom, and my own. I hope you'll learn to serve me well.

ROSAURA

You speak to all women in such a contentious manner, or only those who don't know any better.

ASTOLFO

Quite a mouth on you.

ROSAURA

You should know.

Rosaura turns to face him.

ASTOLFO

Rosaura?

ROSAURA

Why does my highness look so stupified? Really, that visage is unbecoming.

ASTOLFO

Rosaura... I-- You're here.

ROSAURA

Rosaura? I know not that name my lord, you must be confusing me with someone else. I am Astrea, Lord Clotaldo's niece.

ASTOLFO

Enough deception, Rosaura. The soul never lies, it loves you and knows you by that name.

ROSAURA

Your soul must be quite fooled then. For if I understand correctly, you have another woman in your heart. My lady Estrella. How can your soul know me, if it only knows one woman?

ASTOLFO

What are you doing here?

ROSAURA

I came to-- Retrieve the portrait you promised my lady. That of a woman? Give it to me, please, so I may take it to her.

ASTOLFO

Rosaura, enough with this dissemblance. Talk to me please.

ROSAURA

I have nothing to say to you. Give me the locket.

ASTOLFO

How about this, humble lady in waiting, tell the princess that I so esteem her that merely giving her the portrait seems impolite, insulting in fact. Because I value her so highly, I'm sending her the original. You.

ROSAURA

Forgive me, sir, if I find your humor ill-fitting, and loathsome. Give me the portrait, your highness. I'm not going back without it.

ASTOLFO

And if I don't give it to you, how will you manage to bring it?

ROSAURA

This way.

Rosaura grabs the necklace around his and rips it off. She turns to flee, but is caught by Astolfo and pulled into an embrace. They struggle.

ROSAURA

Let go of me, philanderer.

ASTOLFO

Don't fight me. It's love that lives in that locket.

Rosaura spits in his face.

ROSAURA

I'll kill you before I see another woman in your arms. You lowlife, pig.

ASTOLFO

Stop fighting me, Rosaura. Submit.

ROSAURA

Never. You treacherous cyst. You expect to take me, like your many whores? Cheap disease ridden filth!

He slaps her. She slaps him. They each hold their wounds. Astolfo grabs Rosaura and kisses her. She disengages and slaps him again. Then kisses him again. Estrella's voice is heard. They come apart again.

ESTRELLA

Astrea! Astrea. Oh... Astolfo. What the devil has been going on. You two look like you've been in a hurricane.

ROSAURA

My lady, I just came to retrieve your portrait.

ESTRELLA

Have you been taking liberties with my lady-in-waiting, Duke?

ROSAURA

No, madam. I'd never. He just simply refused to give up my locket.

ESTRELLA

Your locket, Astrea?

ROSAURA

Well Madam, while I was waiting for him to retrieve the locket, which he left in his chamber, I took the time to check my own portrait, and item, I've always hoped to give to a man who would honor and cherish me until the end of our days... Anyway, while waiting for the Duke of Muscovy to return, I brought out my own portrait to examine. He startled me on his return, and it fell to the floor. Astolfo retrieved it, and was so reluctant to give up the one you asked for, instead of giving one, he wanted to take two.

ESTRELLA

Your ego has no bounds, Cousin.

ASTOLFO

Estrella--

ROSAURA

Insisting on retrieving my portrait back, I became angry and impatient, and tried to take it back from him.

ESTRELLA

Astolfo, stop acting a child, and give the girl her damn locket. It's cruel you holding it from her, when it's meant for her love.

Astolfo hands Rosaura the portrait.

Thank you.

ROSAURA

Thank you my lady.

ESTRELLA

Someday a man will be proud to wear your vissage on his breast.

ROSAURA

Thank you, my lady.

ESTRELLA

You may go now.

Rosaura leaves, but hides to over hear the rest of the conversation.

Enough foolishness, Astolfo, hand over the locket.

ASTOLFO

I can't, Estrella.

ESTRELLA

You are the poorest excuse for a suitor--

ASTOLFO

I don't have it on me--

ESTRELLA

And before it was practically fused to your skin. If you refuse to give yourself to me, wholly and completely, if you insist on continuing your meaningless philadelring, and worse, holding that girl in your heart so dearly, I cannot stomach matrimony. There will be no wedding. Enjoy your base gentry, Duke. No kingdom is worth you as a husband.

ASTOLFO

Estrella, please listen to me. That girl is--

Estrella storms out.

Damn you, Rosaura.

Astolfo exits.

ROSAURA

Is this enough revenge on my part? No. Not until I'm rectified completely.

Rosaura exits. Clotaldo enters, carrying a pie, he runs into Clarin, who eats half of a roast chicken and drinks a pint of ale.

CLOTALDO

Clarin.

CLARIN

(mouth full)

How do, my lord?

CLOTALDO

Have you seen the king?

CLARIN

The elder or younger? The damned or the damnder? The dead or the deader?

CLOTALDO

The newer.

CLARIN

What's that?

CLOTALDO

A pie for the King. His evening supper.

CLARIN

What kind of pie? Mince meat, mutton, strawberry, blackberry, blueberry, apple, cherry, cranberry, tangerine, lamb--

CLOTALDO

It's his favorite. A secret delicious recipe made special by the chef.

CLARIN

I'll take it to him!

CLOTALDO

No, no, your hands are full.

CLARIN

No they're not!

Clarín gulps down his ale, and finishes his chicken.

See? Empty.

CLOTALDO

Make sure he gets that, now.

CLARIN

I will indeed, sire!

*Clarín runs off with the pie. Clotaldo is left alone.
Rosaura comes in.*

ROSAURA

Clotaldo?

CLOTALDO

My dear Rosaura, how goes the ruse?

ROSAURA

Ended. I revealed myself.

CLOTALDO

And?

ROSAURA

I had every opportunity to end him... but I couldn't.

CLOTALDO

You love him.

ROSAURA

And why should I? What has manifested between us but lies, heartbreak, grueling exhaustion, and a pulled hamstring?

CLOTALDO

My dear, you do not have to be strong every hour of the day. I will not see you in any dimmer light if you open your heart.

ROSAURA

Never. How can you ask that of me?

I will not leave until my task is fulfilled... but I can't do it myself. You couldn't understand, Clotaldo. I am completely alone in this world. I haven't a brother or father to avenge me. I thought by posing as a man, I might infuse myself with masculine strength... but I can't.

I'm not as strong as I thought I was. You said you could look on me with love, I ask you, please, avenge me, Clotaldo.

CLOTALDO

I can't do that, Rosaura.

ROSAURA

Why not?

CLOTALDO

There are other ways. This man is the next king of Poland, and I am nothing if I stoop to treason. This man saved my life, Rosaura.

ROSAURA

And you saved mine--

CLOTALDO

Don't ask me to choose between your love, and my definitive devotion-- Would you strike me down after what I've done for you? How can you expect me to carry this out against him?

ROSAURA

I thought you were my friend--

CLOTALDO

I am--

ROSAURA

I thought you cared for me--

CLOTALDO

I do.

ROSAURA

No, you're just another sycophantic beaurocrat licking the boots of another Tyrant. You think supporting that self-involved ladder climber will do Poland any better than the man you helped imprison? You're delusional, and so is the king! If you can't discern right from wrong, even in a case like this, how can I trust you?

CLOTALDO

Keep your head, Rosaura.

ROSAURA

I'll do no such thing. You disgust me, you wayfarer-- A man whose sails follow wherever the crown blows. Never speak to me again. Thank you for this new fire. Now that I know there's no one on my side, there's new ember to ignite my passion. Adieu.

Rosaura runs off stage.

CLOTALDO

Rosaura! Don't do this, you'll get yourself killed. Rosaura!

Clotaldo makes his way through the castle, he comes to the kitchen, and hides once he sees Segismundo stuffing his face. Clarin enters with the pie.

CLARIN

Sire! There you are!

SEGISMUNDO

Here I am, and what of it, fool?

CLARIN

I've been looking everywhere for you.

SEGISMUNDO

Why? The King wants his crown back? He can forget it. He's awakened the monster, now he has to stare it in the eyes.

CLARIN

I know of no other king, but you, My Lord.

SEGISMUNDO

The more you speak, the more I like you.

CLARIN

Have you tried the goose?

SEGISMUNDO

Heaven. I've never tasted food like this in all my days.

CLARIN

Get used to it, my lord, there's more to come.

SEGISMUNDO

No more raw meat and spoiled turnips.

CLARIN

No more dirty rags.

SEGISMUNDO

No more tired nights.

CLARIN

Freedom, sire.

Segismundo pours Clarin a glass of wine. He toasts.

SEGISMUNDO

To freedom.

They drink.

I should have wrung the old man's neck when I had the chance.

CLARIN

Whose?

SEGISMUNDO

The Kings. My supposed father.

CLARIN

That would not have been wise, my lord.

SEGISMUNDO

It would have been decent. Fair.

CLARIN

But unwise. If I may speak freely, my lord, it seems part of ruling a country is finding the appropriate response to interpersonal conflicts... a time and place to express anger.

SEGISMUNDO

My damn temper... I can't help it. Could he really expect me to love him so easily?

CLARIN

He could hope, sire.

SEGISMUNDO

Hope. What gall. Was there hope for me in my 20 years a prisoner?

CLARIN

I don't know.

SEGISMUNDO

No. The answer is no.

CLARIN

Oh. I was confused because you are here now... a king... so there must have been some hope.

SEGISMUNDO

And what was all that tripe about dreams? As if he could punish me. Only God could correct his error. And he did.

CLARIN

That he did, sire. However, he left the rest up to you, and can easily take it away.

SEGISMUNDO

What mean you by that?

CLARIN

I fear to speak further, on pain of unwilling dive.

SEGISMUNDO

Speak freely, I will allow it.

CLARIN

And not change your mind in a sudden rage?

SEGISMUNDO

Please, tell me.

CLARIN

Only this, sire. Your father was right about one thing. How often does a man get to change is stars? You were granted a gift, by whomever, and so far you have not shown your father was wrong in locking you up. On the contrary, you've repeatedly proven him right.

SEGISMUNDO

How else am I to act?

CLARIN

With patience... charity, maybe... I don't know for sure, I've never been a monarch.

SEGISMUNDO

I can't help it.... It's all new... I'm afraid if I don't take it, it will be taken from me.

CLARIN

Sire, you are a King. And if you rule with decency and respect for your people, you will be a great one.

SEGISMUNDO

How do I do that?

CLARIN

By showing the same mercy you exhibited while still in rags. Your surroundings may have changed, but you have not. Deep down, I believe you are a good man.

SEGISMUNDO

Thank you, Clarin.

CLARIN

Any time, Sire.

SEGISMUNDO

What's that you have there?

CLARIN

A... um... a pie, Sire.

SEGISMUNDO

What kind of pie?

CLARIN

I'm not sure. It was sent for you, by the chef.

SEGISMUNDO

Bring it over.

Clarin sets the pie down. Segismundo begins to dig in.

How about I take this moment in my first step towards ruling gracefully. Clarin, will you share with me?

CLARIN

Of course, sire.

They eat the pie gleefully as the lights fade. In semi darkness Clarin disappears, the whispers return as Segismundo finds his way to his original position.

End of Act II.

During Intermission Segismundo's finery is stripped away, and he returns to his rags and animal skins.

Act III

LIGHTS RISE ON SEGISMUNDO'S CELL

Segismundo, in his original position at the start of the play stirs awake. He see his chains and conditions again.

SEGISMUNDO

Of course. Why would I ever think I deserved a chance as wonderful as that.

Clotaldo enters with raw meat on a plate.

CLOTALDO

Dinner time, Segismundo.

SEGISMUNDO

Thank you, but I'm not hungry.

CLOTALDO

Don't you feel well? You've slept most of the day away.

SEGISMUNDO

And I'm not sure, even now if I've awoken. The dream I had, Clotaldo was so real. I can still taste the food.

CLOTALDO

You dreamt you had a hearty meal?

SEGISMUNDO

More than that! Things I had never tasted before! Food I couldn't even comprehend! Clothes, fabric, smells! Lavendar, Clotaldo! I know the smell of Lavendar! At least in my mind... it was so very very real, Clotaldo.

CLOTALDO

What did you dream?

SEGISMUNDO

I dreamt I awoke King of Poland... Of all things... Thousands of people at my beck and call. You yourself were loyal to me. You delivered the news of my ascension!

CLOTALDO

You must have rewarded me handsomely for such news.

SEGISMUNDO

Not at all, actually. I tried to kill you... twice.

CLOTALDO

What did I do to deserve that?

SEGISMUNDO

I was lord of all, and thus was taking revenge on all. You were patient with me. Giving and kind, though I tried to hurt you, and you feared me.

CLOTALDO

Even in dreams, good deeds are never wasted.

SEGISMUNDO

You're right, Clotaldo. My fierce nature must be restrained. I've seen the effect now, myself, and it is a tyrannical force. I only wish I had the chance to try it again, this time, with knowledge. Patience. Well, maybe when I dream again, I'll have the chance. The king dreams that he's king, and lives in that deception, giving orders, making decisions, and that acclaim, which he receives as a loan, is written on the wind and changed into ashes by death. Perhaps I'm dreaming that I'm here, laden with these shackles, as I dreamt that I found myself in another, more flattering position. What is life, Clotaldo? An illusion, a shadow, a fiction. Our greatest good is but small... for all of life is a dream... even dreams are dreams.

CLOTALDO

I think you need some time alone. We'll resume your studies on the morrow. It sounds as if your dreams are guiding you. Listen to them, let them in your heart. Sometimes our dreams are wiser than we know.

Segismundo rests against the wall of his cell as Clotaldo exits.

SEGISMUNDO

How would I rule, if given the chance again? What chance, Segismundo, you were never king.... But I felt it... I knew it to be true... in my heart. To have a father... a real father... to have a place to live... that's something to be grateful for, is it not? To rise above all this. Don't carry the pain with you. Leave it in the dirt. Embrace the possibility instead.

Segismundo falls asleep against the wall. Lights come up on Clarin, crawling out of the dark holding his head.

CLARIN

Dear Lord. What an awful headache! Where am I? This... I know this place... this is that tower wherein the king was held! Wha--why-- hey! Hello! Someone! Aw jeez... Why'm I?... The pie.... THE DAMN PIE! DAMN YOUR STOMACH CLARIN! I'll never eat again!.... Let's not make promises we can't keep.

SOLDIER (OFF STAGE)

Through there! That's where the'yre keeping him!

CLARIN

Ohhhh God, they're going to kill me. Why does everyone want to kill me! WHAT IS WRONG WITH POLAND?

*Clarín starts running around his cell looking for an exit.
Soldiers enter.*

SOLDIER 1

Here he is!

CLARIN

No he's not.

SOLDIER 2

All right boys--

CLARIN

There must be some mistake-- I'm not--

ALL SOLDIERS

Hail King of Poland!

CLARIN

Come again!

SOLDIER 3

Hail our rightful heir to the throne. Our ruler.

CLARIN

Are you drunk?

SOLDIER 2

You are our prince. We will accept no one but our natural lord.

ALL SOLDIERS

Long live our great prince!

CLARIN

Is it customary in Poland to arrest people and then make them Prince? Is that a thing?

SOLDIER 1

We have all told your father--

CLARIN

My father

SOLDIER 1

That we recognize you alone as prince. Not the man from Muscovy.

He spits.

CLARIN

Oh well... Yes... those Muscovites... rotten bunch.

SOLDIER 3

Come out and re-claim your soveringty! Long live Segismundo!

Segismundo wakes up

CLARIN

Segismundo must be the name they give all their new princes.... Yes... that makes sense...

SEGISMUNDO

Who called for me?

CLARIN

Oh...

SOLDIER 3

Wait.

SOLDIER 2

Which one is Segismundo?

Beat.

CLARIN

You're the ones who Segismundized me.... I'm just a pawn!

SOLDIER 3

Great Prince, your father, King Basilio, has announced he will deprive you of your freedom throne, in favor of the Duke, your cousin. He assembled and told his court, but we, your people, upon hearing of your right to kingdom, as our natural successor, refuse to let a foreigner, a Muscovite.

All Soldiers spit.

CLARIN

Yeah.

Clarín spits.

SOLDIER 3

We're behind you, Sire. Your people join you, to overtake the kingdom.

Voices clamour outside "Long Live Segismundo!"

SEGISMUNDO

A second chance, heavens? You give me more than I deserve. Can I be mad? Out you, I wish not to partake in this folly. I'm done with dreams. I'm done with lies.

SOLDIER 1

If you think we're fooling you, turn your eyes to those arrogant mountains, and see the soldiers waiting to obey your orders!

SEGISMUNDO

You don't know friend, all the magic I've seen in the last day. I saw, I smelled, I tasted, I felt-- and yet it all dissolved. Regardless of what was told to me, I engaged with my whole heart, and it melted through my fingers. You are a dream. You are all a dream! And I am done playing.

SOLDIER 2

Sire, dream or not, we are calling on you to claim your right. To fight with your people! We want you, King, no one else! Please, sire. We need you.

CLARIN

Your people have spoken, Sire.

SEGISMUNDO

Clarín... then maybe...

SOLDIERS

Please, sire, please. Et al.

SEGISMUNDO

Sound the alarm. You shall see my boundless valor. Clarín, you must come with. I plan to take arms against my father, and make heaven's prediction true. I shall soon see him at my feet.

SOLDIERS

Long live Segismundo!

Enter Clotaldo

CLOTALDO

What in heavens name?

SEGISMUNDO

Clotaldo!

CLOTALDO

Segis-- Sire. I fall at your feet.... Forgive me of my treason, I know my death is imminent.

SEGISMUNDO

Arise, father. It is because of you I maintained any shred of humanity. I will not let you die. I wish to do good. Good deeds aren't wasted. Even in dreams.

CLOTALDO

I'm proud of you, Segismundo... but if you wish to take arms against the king, I fear I cannot support you.

SEGISMUNDO

I understand... Go and serve the king. We'll meet on the battlefield.

Clotaldo exits.

Fortune, let me reign. Don't awaken me if I'm asleep... please God don't let me be asleep... but even if I am... do Good. Do Good, man... bury the beast... you are king...

Segismundo gets ready for battle. Clotaldo runs to King Basilio who is about to Corinate Astolfo as King of Poland.

BASILIO

What news, Clotaldo.

CLOTALDO

My Lord, your plan is amok. The commoners, your people, have broken into the tower and from it's depths, have released your son to come and overtake you. They aim to bring the prediction to life.

BASILIO

My people have turned against me?

CLOTALDO

Word spread, my lord. They wish to have your blood continue--

BASILIO

A horse! Get me a horse! I'll let my steel conquer where my astrology erred.

Basilio exits, Clotaldo goes to follow.

ASTOLFO

This is war, Cousin.

ESTRELLA

Yes.

ASTOLFO

Will you give me your kerchief as a blessing?

ESTRELLA

Clotaldo, do you think... might he succeed?

CLOTALDO

He has a fire in him. You've been witness yourself... where he may lack finesse... he rules in passion.

ESTRELLA

Passion...

ROSAURA

Sounds like our new leader will rule with an iron fist. Pardon me, Madam.

Rosaura begins to exit. Astolfo stops her.

ASTOLFO

Where do you think you're going? We're off to war!

ROSAURA

I know. Release me.

ASTOLFO

You should go with Estrella and hide in the cellar.

ROSAURA

On the contrary. Duke. I'm off to battle.

ASTOLFO

What do you mean?

ROSAURA

I'll see you on the field, Astolfo.

ASTOLFO

Rosaura! Rosaura!

Astolfo follows her off. She comes on again and runs into Clotaldo.

CLOTALDO

Rosaura.

ROSAURA

Where is my sword?

CLOTALDO

Why would you want that?

ROSAURA

Can you please retrieve it for me?

CLOTALDO

It's here on my person.

ROSAURA

Give it me, please.

Clotaldo hands her the sword.

CLOTALDO

What do you mean to do with it?

ROSAURA

Serve the rightful heir of the throne. And find the perfect excuse to exact my revenge.

CLOTALDO

Rosaura, you can't. There are strong well-trained men out there who will kill you in an instant.

ROSAURA

You take liberties with me, Clotaldo, only allowed to a father. I've never known a father, and thus will not allow a stranger such an honor.

CLOTALDO

Please be reasonable. Astolfo will be your king--

ROSAURA

Not if I fight--

CLOTALDO

And the husband of Estrella.

ROSAURA

Never! I will slay him a hundred times before I see him claim what he has not earned!

CLOTALDO

This is madness--

ROSAURA

I can see that--

CLOTALDO

Then overcome it.

ROSAURA

I can't--

CLOTALDO

You'll lose--

ROSAURA

I know--

CLOTALDO

Both life and honor--

ROSAURA

I believe so--

CLOTALDO

Then what, in God's name are you aiming at--

ROSAURA

My death. You do not understand. You haven't been able. My life doesn't matter, my name does. That bastard Muscovite stole from me more than just my honor... he stole my heart. And I intend to rip his from it's resting place as atonement.

Rosaura runs off, brandishing steel.

CLOTALDO

God in heaven, protect her. No, Clotaldo... not God... you. Well, my girl, if you must ruin yourself... let's all ruin ourselves.

Clotaldo runs after her. Segismundo appears at the top of the mountain with his followers before him.

CLARIN

How do you feel, my Liege...

SEGISMUNDO

If Rome at it's height could see me today... How fortunate am I to be granted such a rare opportunity. I thank you, brethren, followers, my people, for letting a dejected, wild animal lead your mighty army. I lack much in taste. I am uncouth, but I am learning. I am slow, but I aim to do good. And though I was reared a monster, I will lead you to victory-- It is in the stars, and where that prophecy will succeed, it will end there. For I promise, on my death, to rule you as the greatest, most benevolent King ever to live in Poland.

SOLDIERS

Long Live the King!

CLARIN

Sire, I see a vision in the distance... I can't tell if it's man or woman.

SEGISMUNDO

She is blinding.

Rosaura enters wearing a combination of her lady-in-waiting dress and her male disguise. She carries her sword.

ROSAURA

Noble Segismundo. Rightful King, whose heroic majesty emerges into the day of his Good, out of the night of his darkness, dawn upon the world, Sun of Poland. I beg you to bring into your warmth an unhappy and righteous woman, who throws herself at your feet. Thrice you have gazed on me with wonder, not knowing who I am. I was born of a noble mother in Muscovy who was deviantly seduced by amorous compliments thrown from a most insidious man. He promised to wed her, she fell in love, and on the day of her wedding, she was abandoned. I grew not knowing my father, and promising myself I would never fall prey to such a man. Yet I have, my lord. I have become a Carbon Copy of my mother, an heiress to her lot. My name has been stolen, My Lord. By your enemy, Astolfo, who left me at the altar to marry a woman of class-- nobility, which I have no proof of my own.

I pray you, King, that we may marry our causes, and clash steel for one another against our common enemy. As a woman, I have come to soften your heart; as a man, I have come to aid in your army.

SEGISMUNDO

Madam, you have moved me as much with your words, as you have with your vissage. The love I bear you must now be restored. Take arms with me, and we shall restore your honor, and my crown. Friends! Today we fight for all that is human! For all that is dear to our race! To love, to victory, to our nation's pride!

SOLDIERS

Here, here! Long live our unconquered king! Long live our liberty!

The soldiers, Segismundo, and Rosaura exit. Clarin stays behind.

CLARIN

Yes! Long live liberty... and everything! I'm just going to hang back... watch... I won't be of any help...

Soldiers, Rosaura, Segismundo, Astolfo and Basilio all enter, engaged in battle. Rosaura fights with a soldier, back to back with Segismundo. They fight with vigor. Astolfo makes his way through the crowd. Rosaura turns and is face to face with Astolfo. They are about to speak, when Rosaura raises her sword upon Astolfo. They fight. Basilio takes a break from the fighting with Clotaldo protecting him.

BASILIO

Is there an unluckier king in this world?

CLOTALDO

The traitors remain the victors. We're losing, Basilio.

BASILIO

Let us flee. Fall back!

A sound of pain rings out. Clarin falls from his hiding place holding a wound.

CLOTALDO

Clarin?

CLARIN

The irony hurts more than the wound. Fleeing from death, I literally ran right into it... There is no place one can hide from death, my Lords.

BASILIO

I've been a fool, Clotaldo. How every effort man makes against a greater cause is in vain! To free my country from murder and tyranny, I have handed my people the very thing. If it's God's will that I die today, at the hands of my own blood... I will await it face to face.

SOLDIER 1

The King is Hiding, Sire.

SEGISMUNDO

Find him. Keep him alive. He is my quandry, no one else's.

CLOTALDO

Flee sire.

BASILIO

To what end?

CLOTALDO

I'll protect you, sire.

BASILIO

No, Clotaldo. How great is a king who hides? Segismundo!

The fighting ceases.

If you're looking for me, prince, I am now at your feet. Let the snow of my hair be a white carpet for your soles. Tread on my neck. Step on my crown. Topple and drag my dignity. How foolish of me to think a man could change his stars. Let fate receive it's homage, let heaven keep it's word.

SEGISMUNDO

Yesterday, my King, I would not have argued with you, taking at face value the gift of redemption bestowed on me. Today, I am renewed. Illustrious court of Poland, hear me. That which God hath writ with his finger on the indigo black sky, never deceives, never lies. The one who lies and deceives is the man who misinterprets, and makes bad use of words of God. My father here, to exempt himself from the rabid fury of my prophesied nature, made me an animal, a human beast. I might have been born humble and tractable, but was never afforded the chance. And now, the same fate falls upon him. Even if my rage had been a sleeping beast, fortune is not overcome by injustice and revenge, which only egg it on the more. The man who wishes to overcome his fortune must do it with prudence and temperance. Now, my father, your king, grovels at my feet. His hubris was to believe he could change the stars, and now he sees it is impossible... and yet.

I stand before you, not as a beast, but as a ruler. And a son. Who may not know his father, but must harbour love for him, deep within the recesses of his soul. I am not an animal. I am a man. Rise, sire. You are the rightful king, my father. And it is your choice as to whom inherits your throne.

BASILIO

My son. A noble action the likes of which I never expected. You are Prince. To you the laurel and palm are due. My blood. My son. My King.

Basilio bestows the crown on Segismundo.

ALL

Long live King Segismundo!

SEGISMUNDO

I thank you all. My promises made before coronation have not been forgot. I will rule with an equal hammer and olive branch. As my first order as King, I must fix that which brought my right hand to my side. Rosaura and Astolfo shall be married at once, and the debt owed shall be immediately repaid.

ASTOLFO

My King, though I am not one to complain, and greatly love Rosaura, I fear there is more at stake than just honor... she is not of noble birth, and she is a bastard, I will fall from my position in marrying her, and there will be no one to care for either of us--

CLOTALDO

On the contrary, Duke. Rosaura is as noble as you.

ASTOLFO

There is no proof.

CLOTALDO

The proof lies in her hands. It has championed her on this field. The sword of her father. My sword.

ASTOLFO

What's that you say?

CLOTALDO

She is my daughter.

ASTOLFO

And now my wife.

Astolfo goes to kiss her, she slaps him.

ROSAURA

Wait a minute. My king, I humbly request that you-- I wanted him dead not wedded--

CLOTALDO

Rosaura, daughter, he may be a fool, but you cannot fight your love for him. Let you be wed.

ASTOLFO

I promise to love, honor, and--

ROSAURA

Save it. Your words mean nothing. You must prove to me your love.

ASTOLFO

All the rest of my days.

ROSAURA

If that's how long it takes.

She kisses him.

SEGISMUNDO

Estrella, since I have removed your suitor, I ask humbly that I step in his place. Rule with me as Queen of Poland. I may not be his better, but I hope to be his equal.

ESTRELLA

Rosaura can have him. He could use a good kick in the pants. I gain so much more by your hand, my King.

SEGISMUNDO

Clotaldo, as the only father I've ever know, and a man, who knowing my boundless temper, resolved to not betray is rightful king, I am at your service. Whatever you ask, I will do for you.

CLOTALDO

I ask for nothing but to serve you, my lord, as I did your father.

SEGISMUNDO

To my people... though I am grateful for your support and love, I must defer to my father, who was King at the time of our uprising, and thus labels us traitors. Father, what shall we do.

BASILIO

Too long have I lived as the tyrant I feared. Let bygones be bygones, son. May you rule with love and tenderness, and an open heart.

ALL

Hail King Segismundo! Hail! Hail! Hail! Hail!

The people continue to say "Hail" and "Long Live", but as the whispers re-enter, the words turn into "Wake up, Wake Up, Wake Up!" Blackout.

End of Play.