

Daybreak

A play written by Aidan Cummins, Mackenzie Davenport, and Carter Fangmeyer in 24 hour hours across October 23rd and 24th, 2020.

THE KEMPES ARE THE ROYAL FAMILY IN THE KINGDOM
WE HAVE FOUND IN READING THAT SOME KIND OF BRITISH ACCENT WORKS BEST FOR
ALL CHARACTERS

Characters

Peter Kempe - 16, Wants to be out fighting, but father wants him to be a statesman. (Tony)

Helena Kempe - 14, Proper, Married-Off, Smart. (Molly)

Alexander Kempe - 10, does not understand his station, plays with servants, loves food. (Sasha)

Beatrice Kempe - 9, horse girl, wants to be in cavalry, sassy. (Kate)

Edgar - 14, Servant, dad died in war, blunt. (Carter)

Sara - 12, wants security for her family, sensitive. (Kate 2)

Petra - 30s, the children's tutor, has a dark secret. (Karina)

Leon - 20s, soldier, good man. (Kaedyn)

Frederick - 50s, soldier, old man. (Mack)

Patience the Gong Farmer - 60s, farms gong. (Aidan)

Timothy - 30s, balding, waiter. (Raimy)

Revolutionary 1 - Named Greg, the first revolutionary. (Ryan)

Revolutionary 2 - Named George, the second revolutionary. (Mack)

Act One

Library. Late afternoon. The room is characterized by dark wood, maps, paintings, and a large table at the center, surrounded by chairs. There is a window to the palace entrance stage right. Door to the hallway is stage left. Petra stands, the children sit around the table, and respond with different degrees of enthusiasm.

Petra: La nuit est sombre.

Noble Children: La nuit est sombre.

Petra: Le jour est lumineux.

Noble Children: Le jour est lumineux.

Petra: Le jour viendra.

All but Peter: Le jour viendra.

Petra: What does that mean Peter?

Peter: Why does it matter?

Petra: It means “the day will come.”

Alexander: (Looking out the window:) I thought the day was already here?

Petra: It’s just an exercise, Alexander. Your education is crucial to your futures as the leaders of this country.

Helena: We’ve spent all morning on language though. Can’t we spend a bit of time learning about French culture or something at least a little more exciting?

Peter: French culture isn’t exciting either. Nothing about the French is important. Except their treasury.

Petra: Enough. If you can’t speak the language of the people, you’ll never be able to negotiate with them properly. Now, repeat after me: demain sera un jour meilleur...

(Sounds of horses galloping can be heard from the window.)

Beatrice: Horses!!!!!! Can we go see the horses?!? We’ve been inside for soooooo long!

Petra: No. Sit down.

(Alexander moves to window.)

Alexander: Wait, who are those people riding in? Is there a banquet tonight?

Peter (rising): No, I would have known about that.

Petra: Don't worry about all that, just sit down and focus on the lesson.

Helena: Peasants at the front gate. They're practically climbing over each other to get in. Can't they just ask them to unlock it?

Beatrice: Yeah! Get Frederick to open the gates! Then the horses can make it in too!

Petra: Children! Take your seats! Your father will be very unhappy if I have to call him from his war council.

(The children, except for Peter, begrudgingly take their seats.)

Peter: But I don't know if Father knows what's happening. Maybe I should run and tell him quick.

Alexander: I'll come too! Plus it's almost time for afternoon tea anyways. We could take a break and grab some pastries.

Beatrice: Finally. I feel like I've been spending an eternity in France.

Petra: Very well. I can see it's useless to try to finish this lesson anyway. We shall stop in the great hall to see your father, then get you fed.

Helena: I thought you said Father was in the war council right now?

Petra: Yes yes, I'm sure they're wrapping up. We must hurry along, there isn't much time to spare if you wish to see him and have fresh pastries.

(Screaming and sounds violence are heard distantly. The children stop and stare at the door, afraid of what will come through it.)

Peter: Something is not right.

Helena: It's probably just the court wrestlers going at it again.

Peter: At this hour?

Alexander: It is quite early for wrestling.

Beatrice: I don't want to go out there if they *are* wrestling. Those guys scare me.

Petra: I'm sure it's nothing to worry about. Let's just head to the grand hall to see your father, and we'll probably come across the source along the way. Come on, children.

The door opens. Sara enters. She is skittish and wild-eyed.

Peter: Sara. What's going on out there?

(Sara says nothing)

Helena: Did you see anything out there? What's with all the people?

Sara: I don't know. Everything happened so fast. There was running and shouting and so I started running too. I thought someone was chasing me so I turned the corner to hide in here.

Alexander: What were they shouting about?

Sara: I don't know I couldn't really understand much with all the commotion.

Alexander: Oh. Did you at least see what they looked like?

(Sara just shakes her head and sinks into the corner of the room.)

Peter: What do we even pay you for? So hard to get good help these days. Let's go see for ourselves.

Petra: Right. Let's go, children. Sara, you stay here.

(Petra goes to open the door, when suddenly, Leon breaks down the door and stands in the doorway. The children jump.)

Helena: Who are you?

Petra: Young man, can you escort us to the-

Leon: Is this the one?

(Frederick stumbles into the room)

Helena: Frederick!

(Helena and Peter help him to a chair.)

Alexander: What's happening?

(Frederick catches his breath, grabs Helena's hand. His life drains as he speaks.)

Frederick: They are looking for the children, the mob is in the west hall. I have disappointed your father. I did what I could. I- I disappointed your father. (Frederick slumps in his chair, lifeless)

Beatrice: No!

Helena: (Turning to Petra) Is he alive?

Petra: I don't know.

(Helena falls at Frederick's feet with Beatrice, Peter checks Frederick's pulse on his neck, hangs his head. Alexander looks at Frederick, looks out the window, then looks at Leon.)

Alexander: Who are you?

Leon: I-

Helena: Who's done this to him?

Leon: The people.

Peter: Which people?

Leon: The people in the yard, they broke into the palace, and started the killing. Frederick was taking me to you and they came running at us. Two cut him. I found the room and brought him in.

Helena: Are we to leave?

Petra: I think we should. Let's find your parents in the grand hall.

Leon: No.

Peter: If we are to leave they must come with us.

Leon: They are dead.

Beatrice: What?

Leon: Well, I don't know that they're dead. But the attackers, the people, they stormed the great hall first, I haven't seen any who have made it out. Please, I beg you don't go there.

Alexander: You cannot stop us.

Leon: I am your personal guard now that Frederick is dead, and I am assigned to keep you safe. My name's Leon. I ask you please not to go to the grand hall. You will find harm there.

(Leon moves Frederick's body to an inconspicuous spot in the room.)

Petra: We have never met you, I am responsible for the children, and I think it's of the utmost importance that we locate their parents.

Leon: Do you know where they are? Because if it's anywhere near the main wing, they're in jeopardy, and putting their kids in jeopardy with them won't help at all.

Peter: We can make decisions for ourselves.

Helena: Peter...

Peter: Listening to them is no help.

Alexander: They care for us.

Peter: That doesn't mean they know what's best. We need to find mother and father. It's time to go. The lesson is over. (Peter crosses to the door. Leon stops him.)

Leon: I can't let you do this.

Helena: We don't know you. You brought in our friend, and he is dead now.

Peter: You can't let me go, but you also cannot stop me.

Sara: The grand hall. Don't go there.

Alexander: They have opened the gates. More are coming in.

Helena: Can we leave through another wing of the palace?

Leon: Yes. We can leave through the stables, if we leave now the way should be clear.

Helena: Beatrice, Alex grab your things.

Peter: Right, Sara, you must come with us. We will accommodate you.

Petra: Children, it may not be possible to find your parents, but don't deny them the opportunity to find you. Even with all the commotion, they could still make it out and to you. It is possible, and even likely.

Peter: If they were looking for us they would have found us by now, they knew we were at lesson when this broke out.

Leon: That is right. We need to move, and now, before they come this way.

Petra: Surely the military will come to our aid here. It cannot be safer to leave the palace than it is to stay. This is your home.

Helena: So we will find another. We will find mom and dad and find another home. This is just a palace.

Petra: It is not just a palace, it is a symbol, a symbol for our rulers, your family. You cannot leave it when terror strikes.

Leon: That is all they can do. If you cared for them you'd push them out. I will check the hall, then we will go.

(Leon exits and checks the hallway. He enters after a brief moment outside)

Leon: This hall is clear, though I hear them coming closer.

(The children have gathered themselves as they can. Helena tends to Sarah)

Peter: Let's move then.

Petra: Do you think it will be better past the palace gates? The outside has nothing but contempt for you.

Alexander: What?

Petra: These people, those who came over the gate, who do you think they are?

Helena: Criminals.

Petra: Did they look like criminals from the window?

Alexander: I couldn't tell, we are too high up.

Petra: Sara, did you see their faces?

Sara: They are ordinary.. They looked like farmers.

Petra: Farmers. Farmers are everywhere, they aren't criminals. Farmers are across the entire country, this is the sort that is attacking the palace.

(The sounds of the mob draw closer)

Leon: Now. We must leave now.

(Helena grabs Beatrice who has sat frozen for that last few minutes. She doesn't move)

Helena: Beatrice come on. Beatrice it is time to leave.

(Beatrice stands, pushes away from Helena, stumbles to the floor. Alexander and Helena run to her.)

Alexander: Beatrice!

(The sounds draw closer.)

Peter: Grab her, let's go.

(Leon steps peeks out of the door. Comes back in and closes it behind him.)

Leon: Stop. It is too late. (He begins to whisper) Hide yourselves.

(The children and Petra hide themselves around the room, Leon stands in the doorway, on the inside of the closed door. Petra is under the table with Sara. Alexander and Helena are behind a bookshelf, and Beatrice and Peter hide underneath a large desk. Voices can be heard outside.)

Beatrice: What's happened in the grand hall?

Peter: I'm not sure. We will find out.

(Leon grips his bayoneted rifle, poised to attack in the doorway, his body tenses as the voices grow louder. Silence. A foot kicks in the door. The children jolt, Petra listens from her hiding spot. Leon is concealed by the now open door. A revolutionary takes one step in, looks around the study, then exits back into the hall. Leon waits a few moments, then quickly closes the door, placing his full body weight against it. Peter steps out from under the desk, others follow gradually from their spots.)

Peter: Are they gone?

Leon: For now, but there are more in the halls. They'll think this room has been checked, we need to remain quiet.

Helena: For how long?

Petra: As long as we need to. Listen to Leon. He's doing his best to protect you.

Alexander: There's no food in here.

Petra: We will get some food soon, just not now dear.

Alexander: (To Sara) Couldn't you have brought something?

Helena: She was busy Alex.

Leon: Peter, check the window. But stay low.

(Peter crouches and goes over to the window, peering out.)

Leon: What do you see?

Peter: The people continue to come in. Some are going out, being taken out.

Helena: Do you see mom and dad?

Peter: I don't know. I see nobles, but we are too high up. They all look like mice from this height.

Leon: They will have made it to the stables by now, so we need to find another way out of the palace. Do any of you know a way?

Petra: I only know of the entrances at each wing.

Peter: We only know those.

Leon: Well, then we will stay here until we find a new way. Prepare for a long stay, avoid the windows, and speak as softly as you can. I will stand at the door, and if I hear anything, I will put my hand up like this (he demonstrates) when I do that, no talking whatsoever. Understood?

Helena: Yes.

Leon: Good. I suppose you can continue with your lesson then.

Alexander: I'd rather we didn't.

Petra: Perhaps you can teach the lesson then Alexander?

Alexander: If I must. How do you say chocolate in french?

Petra: Chocolat

Alexander: Yes chocolate, how do you say it in French?

Petra: That's it. Chocolat.

Alexander: French isn't difficult. Why do you say that it is Peter?

Helena: Because he lacks a passion for the unknown.

Peter: I lack a passion for the novel, we have translators, we must pay them to do something, so why would I learn french.

Petra: You learn French so you can learn for yourself, instead of relying on others to do all your work for you.

Peter: But that is their place, and mine is to rule, not to spend my days stuck in a library.

Helena: Well it's entirely possible you won't spend your days doing anything at all quite soon, so perhaps you can just be grateful for the french you already know.

Alexander: What French do you already know Peter?

Peter: Well. (beat) Je suis, un cheval.

Helena: Are you now?

Peter: What?

Petra: You just said, I am a horse.

Beatrice: No he's not.

Peter: No. Knight, I am a knight.

Petra: Ier. You need to add ier. Je suis un chevalier.

Helena: Chevalier, three little letters was all you had to remember.

Peter: Why do you care for french Helena?

Helena: I enjoy reading the poetry.

Beatrice: Like the kind in your letters?

Petra: You write poetry Helena?

Peter: No, her husband writes poems to her. She can't read them though.

Petra: How do you know they're poetry?

Helena: I know by the way he spaces it on the page. But he won't be my husband for 2 more years. Truly, I have no interest in the letters. They are in Italian and they can remain that way for all I care. It does look like a beautiful language though, all those vowels, I can't imagine how it sounds.

Peter: Better than French I hope.

Helena: Me too. I suppose I'll be hearing a lot of it. If I am to marry.

Peter: Well soon it could be very likely that you'll never have to marry, or do anything of note in fact, so be grateful for the little Italian you were able to look at while you could.

Helena: Quite comforting.

Peter: I am a caring soul at heart.

Sara: I could do well with an Italian husband.

Helena: Could you now?

Sara: Yes. We could live by the sea and I could read his poetry. I'd only have to clean the clothes of my own family as well. (Realizes her misstep) Not that I hate cleaning your clothes. I mean, sometimes.

Helena: It's alright Sara. I'm not sure all Italian husbands write poetry. But mine certainly does.

Beatrice: But he's not your husband yet.

Helena: Quite right Beatrice, he's not my husband yet.

Alexander: I could be your husband Sara.

Peter: Alexander!

(Alexander gives Peter a perplexed look)

Alexander: Well she is the only girl my age who isn't related to me and doesn't want to kill me. It seems a good choice.

Helena: Yes, a good match indeed. Do you think so Sara?

Sara: (Blushes slightly) Yes, I think so.

Helena: Then it is settled and we will all see each other again at the wedding.

(Peter opens his mouth to protest, Helena shoots him a cutting glance.)

Sara: Can my parents live with us Alexander?

Alexander: I think so, I am not sure what we would do if it was just the two of us.

Sara: Good.

Petra: It is. At least some joy was found today.

Beatrice: Who am I to marry then?

Peter: We will find you a man with a lot of horses.

Leon: A cavalryman.

Beatrice: What's a cavalryman?

Peter: A man in the cavalry.

Leon: The cavalry is the group in the army that rides all the horses. They ride beside your carriage when you go to the city.

Beatrice: I would like to be a cavalryman. I don't need a husband.

Leon: Are you sure? It's a tough life.

Beatrice: What do you mean?

Leon: Well, you wake up everyday at the break of day, brush and clean your horse, feed and clean their stall, then you must ride for hours each day and, if you must, even go to battle.

Beatrice: But the horse comes to battle right?

Peter: Yes, the horse comes to battle too.

Beatrice: Are there other horses there?

Petra: Yes, there's other horses there.

Leon: Sometimes there are hundreds, or even thousands of horses there.

Beatrice: Then yes. I will be a cavalryman.

Alexander: Are we to starve here forever then Mr. Leon?

Leon: No, you're only to starve here for the foreseeable future Mr. Alexander.

Alexander: Well that seems reasonable enough.

Leon: We could fry my shoes if you like sir.

Alexander: Won't you need them?

Leon: Perhaps.

Peter: Did you fight in the war?

Leon: Not much of it.

Peter: Father wouldn't let me join the military.

Leon: He is a wise man.

Peter: According to him-

Peter & Helena: -In a world dictated by trade agreements and treaties, a statesman is far greater than a soldier.

Leon: I have no doubt about that sir.

Peter: You may call me Peter, Leon.

Leon: Yes sir, Peter.

Beatrice: I think I'd rather have a soldier than a statesman. Don't soldiers have rifles?

Leon: Most do.

(Alexander begins to play a game with Sara and Beatrice)

Helena: But a statesman is far better at navigating a world dictated by the rule of law and civilization.

Petra: Yes, but there does come a time when those things break down, and we are reduced to a more base desire for power.

Peter: And that is where a soldier is necessary.

Alexander: Like Leon!

Peter: Or Frederick.

Helena: So that is where we find ourselves now then, in need of soldiers, not statesman.

Peter: Well I don't think opening up negotiations with the mob would be wise.

Petra: I don't think they would be eager to listen. We must all be soldiers until we are through this. Beatrice will be the cavalryman.

Beatrice: Yes!

Helena: You must learn how to ride if you're to be a cavalryman Beatrice.

Beatrice: Mother says I am still too small for even a pony.

Helena: Well maybe we will find something even smaller than a pony.

Alexander: A large cat perhaps.

(The children nod in agreement. Awkward pause.)

Petra: Where are you from Leon?

Leon: I am from a coastal village in the east.

Petra: You have a way with words.

Leon: We are known primarily for our fishing exports, if that paints a more vivid picture for you.

(After a protracted silence, the door opens. Edgar enters. Leon stands en garde and confronts him.)

Leon: If you take one step you won't live to take the next.

Edgar: No! It's just me! I didn't do anything wrong! Please!

Alexander: It's Edgar! Leave him alone!

(Alexander rushes in between Edgar and Leon)

Leon: I don't care who he is. He's not a part of the guard or the royal family, which makes him a threat.

Alexander: (Alexander runs to Peter) He's my friend! Isn't that right? Peter, you know him! Helena!

Helena: He's been serving us for years, Leon. Besides, he's too young to be overpowering guards, even you.

Peter: Too weak too. Hardly manages to defend himself in sparring practice. He's no threat to us.

Leon: Just because he can't fight doesn't mean he's not one of them. He could tell the rest where we're hiding.

Helena: Why would he do that? He's hiding with us

(Beat.)

Leon: Very well. But he's not leaving this room. If he so much as looks in the direction of the door, that's the end of it.

Edgar: I wouldn't dream of it. The halls aren't where I want to be, anyways. It's a nightmare out there. (His eyes come to rest on Frederick's body.) Is that...

Helena: Yes. He's gone.

Edgar: I-

(Edgar loses his composure, then quickly regains it.)

Well, it's safe for now. They didn't see me coming here.

Peter: What did you see? Do you know anything about what's happening out there?

Beatrice: Yeah! Do you know anything about Mother or Father?

Edgar: Not so loud. I haven't seen or heard anything about the King or Queen. All I know is that they're looking for children, and hurting anyone who they find with the nobles. They must be looking for the four of you. (At Frederick) When did he?

Alexander: Looking for us? Why would they want us?

Helena: They want to capture the whole royal family. Cut off the line of succession.

Peter: Well, they're welcome to try. This peasant rabble has probably never even touched a sword before they attempted this whole mess.

Leon: This "peasant rabble" managed to take the whole of the palace, Peter. I could hold off a few of them, but if the rest found out where you are, there's no way you would get out of here safely.

Petra: They have no reason to harm the children or the servants. None of us pose a threat. We can walk free.

Edgar: Then why would they be talking about "finding the children" if not to harm them? There's no other important children that I could think of.

Leon: Regardless, I'm not leaving the children's side. I am honorbound to protect the children, to whatever end that may lead.

Beatrice: I don't want to be found. Let's just stay here and see what happens.

Edgar: I don't think that's possible either. They're searching the palace room by room. They have to look in here eventually.

Helena: Then what is there to do? We can't stay here, but we can't move either for fear of being spotted. There's no way out.

Peter: If we make a break for the gates, we could overpower a few of them and be out into the countryside before the mob could catch us.

Helena: Do you really think they're not going to have a guard on the gates, Peter? If they're organized enough to take the palace, they're not going to leave the gates unwatched.

Peter: Since when were you the expert? I've been the one at Father's side on the battlefield. I know military tactics and theory. I say we make for the gate. Who's with me?

(Palpable silence.)

Peter: Whatever. I'll do it myself.

(Leon steps between Peter and the door.)

Leon: As your guardian, I strongly recommend you stay in here, Peter. We don't know what's out there.

Peter: You can't stop me. Let me out immediately. I order you!

Leon: Your highness, I can only let you leave if you can prove to me that you can defend yourself. If you can beat me in a duel, you may pass.

(A tense moment. Defeated, Peter pulls a book from the shelf and angrily stares at its contents.)

Beatrice: Looks like "Our Royal Highness" isn't too strong after all.

Helena: Beatrice, enough.

(The group soon hears footsteps on the approach. They all return to their hiding positions until the footsteps fade. A collective sigh is had)

Alexander: They're gone.

(Sara begins quietly crying in the corner. Alexander moves to comfort her.)

Helena: Edgar, are you sure you didn't see or hear anything that could help us out of here? Their searches are getting closer.

Edgar: No. I've told you everything I know.

Peter (muttering): Useless peasants.

Helena: Perhaps it's attitudes like yours that put us in this situation, Peter. Edgar and Sara have served us well for years, and Edgar brought back important information. It's more than you have done.

Alexander: It doesn't matter. We're all friends, and we're all here. We have to find a way out, and together.

Beatrice: And quickly. Those people out there are scary.

Edgar: What happened to Frederick?

Helena: He was cut by two attackers on his way to us from the grand hall.

Leon: I was with him.

Edgar: Are we going to bury him?

Peter: We hadn't spoken about it.

Helena: I suppose our first thought was for saving ourselves.

Petra: I trust that even the most awful of attackers would take the care to bury those they harmed. I believe the mob has that much decency at least.

Edgar: Did you fight in the war?

Leon: I did.

Edgar: Were you at Threeriver?

Leon: I arrived on the final day, as a reinforcement.

Edgar: On which flank?

Leon: Left.

Edgar: My father led the right.

Leon: Oh.

Edgar: Yes.

Leon: So now is he-

Edgar: Yes.

Leon: I'm sorry.

Edgar: It's alright. After he died, I moved into the palace. There are worse places I could've gone.

Peter: This nation fights an entire war for its people, fathers die, and then they do this. (Looking out the window) Just look at them, ungrateful, filthy people.

(A peculiar knock is heard at the door. The group readies their weapons and hides. Leon lunges towards the door.)

Helena: Wait! I know that knock! (Helena goes to open the door) Timothy!

(The server, Timothy enters, he is 30 or so, balding, holding a dinner tray with a lid on it. He is covered in spices and his hair is all messed up, he has seen some things in the last few minutes.)

Timothy: I apologize for my lateness, your highnesses, dinner is served.

Alexander: Yes thank the lord. Praise be. (He begins digging into the food on the plate.)

Petra: Wait Alexander! Let one of us taste it first to check for poison!

Alexander: (His mouth is full) It's fine, I've got it.

Helena: Alexander has attempted on multiple occasions to become the official royal poison checker, just so he can eat first.

Peter: Well if he's eating, I will too. (The noble kids dig in. Alexander passes food to Edgar, Sara and the others.)

Leon: Thank you. (Eating, thinking, to Timothy) Who are you?

Timothy: Well I could ask you the same thing good sir.

Leon: I am Leon.

Petra: He is from a remote fishing village.

Timothy: Is that supposed to impress me.

Leon: No.

Petra: It's just a character detail.

Leon: Wait, does that mean it disappoints you?

Timothy: Well you can't expect me to be taken by you just from the mere fact that you come from a fishing village.

Leon: I will have you know fishing makes up 40 percent of the food supply of this nation.

Timothy: That may be true, but our economy is built on textile exports.

Leon: 40 percent is a significant minority.

Helena: (Referencing her siblings) We were also a significant minority, look where it's gotten us.

Leon: Don't make this about you four. This is about fish.

Alexander: Is there fish also?

Timothy: No no my young prince, there is only what I brought.

Leon: How did you make it to us from the kitchen?

Timothy: I must say, it was like a usual day. You see the kitchen was just starting dinner when the strangers began coming in. 4 out of the 5 courses burned on the stove as the cooks fled or joined the fighting. I am not one for fighting myself, I am far more skilled in carrying food and then presenting said food, so I took my leave and cowered in the spice closet. As I was sitting there, hiding amidst the chaos, praying they wouldn't find me, I found my senses assaulted by the myriad of smells in the room. You see, ever since I was a child growing up amidst the cherry trees outside the capital, I have always had an aversion to turmeric. Any dish containing it would cause me to sneeze and if I ate it, I found myself red in the face for at least 2 days thereafter. So I have always avoided it, that was until today, when I had no choice but to hide amidst the turmeric, or meet my death another way. As the turmeric pierced my nostrils, I could no longer hold back its assaults, and I sneezed, heartily and loudly, shaking the spices from their containers. After that I was covered in a disarray of paprika and pepper, I looked as if I had been through war. It was precisely at this time that I realized that the shepherd's pie which you all have just eaten would be ready, and if I did not save it it would burn. I did fear for my life, but I fear more for the day when our world breaks down to the point where the royal family misses a dinner, so I left the spice closet, retrieved the pie, and after it was placed on a tray and was made presentable, I walked, swiftly and plainly, to the library where I expected to find you all. I passed many of the infiltrators on the way, and I cannot say I was truthful with them. When confronted, I presented a vicious lie, a thought so heinous I wish not to repeat it, but in pursuit of ultimate truth I will share it with you all now. When the attackers asked me who I was, and where I was taking this tray, I told them the tray contained the severed head of the tax collector, and I was walking to place it on a pike in the courtyard. I apologize for this graphic image, and am glad you know it not to be true, today the tray in question did carry only pie.

Alexander: You are the hero of the day.

Timothy: I may be Mr. Alexander, I may be. But alas, I am but a humble servant. And I must serve our guests, I'd imagine those men are tired from all their running and killing, and they will require some food.

Leon: Wait, you cannot tell them where we are?

Timothy: I would never. Haven't you heard of server-served confidentiality?

Leon: I haven't.

Timothy: Perhaps you should study a discipline outside of stabbing and fishing then. Good day to you children, I will have breakfast for you in the morning, if I can find you. (Timothy takes the empty tray, places the lid back on it, and daintily exits the room.)

Edgar: Wait, that's it! If we look like them, we could pass. They're trying not to harm the servants, just those who are with nobility.

Leon: That's not a bad idea. Ditch the royal clothes, pick up some servants', and walk out in plain sight.

Edgar: Sara and I already look the part - we could go find you some clothes.

Sara: No! I won't go out there. I've seen what they're doing to people.

Edgar: Not our people, Sara.

Sara: Does it really matter who? They're hurting people. I don't want to be hurt.

Edgar: If we can help our friends, we should.

Peter: Alright, enough. You should give Beatrice and Alexander your clothes, since they're the youngest. The rest of us will make do.

Alexander: That's ridiculous! We're not leaving you! Besides, Edgar's twice my size. I wouldn't be able to get anywhere with my pants around my ankles.

Leon: If we're going anywhere, we're going together.

(Long silence. Petra begins laughing.)

Helena: What's the matter with you? This is a serious situation.

Petra: You are all ridiculous. Hell, I'm ridiculous. Look at us! Six children in a room with one soldier boy and me, quaking at the thought of a couple of peasants catching our scent. Why are we sitting here? Let's just turn ourselves in and get it over with. It will be less painful than being stuck in this room deciding whether or not to wear clothes.

Peter: Wow. To think you were teaching us French a little while ago.

Helena: Petra, I know it's hard being in the situation we're in, but we have to stick it out. Surely the army will get here before they find us, or we'll think of a way out. If we give up, who knows what they will do to us.

Petra: Do to *you*.

Leon: Enough, Petra. Scaring the children amounts to treason at this point, and you're already riding a thin line with me.

Petra: Then do it. Get me out of the equation. I'm tired of being stuck in this room.

Alexander: And we're already out of food!

Beatrice, Peter, Helena: Alexander!

Alexander: What?

(A loud crash is heard outside the door, followed by the sound of a crowd of people approaching the room.)

Leon: Everybody, hide! They're coming!

(Everybody finds a hiding spot in the room. Peter just readies himself in front of the door.)

Leon: Peter! Now!

Peter: No! I'm fighting my way out of here. I've had enough of this.

(Leon throws Peter on the ground by the collar of his shirt, and posts up next to the door.)

Petra: I don't care what you say, I am leaving this room. I'm not waiting here just to be stabbed to death for teaching you all French. Stay with Leon if you feel so safe. But I do not. Beatrice, Alexander, please come with me. I'm tired of waiting. I'm going now.

(Petra opens the door and exits, and immediately walks backwards back into the room. She is held at swordpoint by a revolutionary)

Revolutionary 1: Well look at what we have here. We've been looking for you

(The revolutionary notices the children. Leon immediately charges him. The revolutionary tosses Petra to the side as him and Leon fight. Alexander carefully sneaks by and closes the door again as they fight. Leon is apprehended, the revolutionary corners the children, and grabs Beatrice. But before the revolutionary can strike, Edgar stabs him in the leg, giving Leon enough time to recover. Leon then promptly kills the revolutionary)

Leon: Beatrice! Are you alright?

Beatrice: I'm fine. He only grabbed me.

Alexander: You saved our lives Edgar.

Edgar: It's nothing. If you were me you would have done the same thing.

Peter: If only I had a sword. I could have been a bit more useful.

Sara: *(Picks up the revolutionary's sword)* Here. Take this one.

(Edgar swipes the sword before Peter can grab it)

Edgar: You can have the knife.

Peter: Give me the sword. I need to be able to defend us all.

Edgar: Peter, I don't have to take your orders anymore. You can have the knife.

Peter: So now my own servant is disobeying me.

Edgar: I'm not your servant, I'm your father's servant, and as far as any of us know, he is dead.

Peter: If that's so, then I am the king, making you my servant. Give me the sword.

Petra: I don't think it's wise to concern ourselves with the matter of succession yet Peter. Not with the kingdom in a state like this.

Peter: So we are leaderless?

Leon: We have to work as a group Peter, your family and those of us who have chosen to stay with you.

(Peter looks at the knife.)

Peter: Alright. What do we do?

Helena: We can't stay in here. It won't be long until someone starts looking for that one (*points at dead revolutionary*)

Leon: You're right. Let's get moving.

Petra: Where? They probably have the whole palace locked down by now.

Leon: If we stay quiet and move quickly we might be able to make it out in one piece.

Alexander: Might?

Edgar: Well it's better than staying here and definitely dying.

Leon: That's right. Everyone get behind me. We move in a single file line and you don't say a word. Listen to my every command and we'll be fine.

Edgar: Aren't you new here? Do you even know where anything is? I'll lead. I at least blend in with the workers.

Leon: Right. Fine. You lead. But everyone else just follow my command. Ready? (*Everyone but Sara nods*) Lead the way.

(*Everyone starts to exit, Sara stays in the corner. Alexander goes to talk to her*)

Alexander: Come on. Aren't you coming?

Sara: I don't want to die today.

Alexander: Neither do I. But if you stay here with the dead body then they'll kill you.

Sara: But if they see me with you then they'll kill me too.

Alexander: Well, it's better to die with a friend than die alone.

(Peter reenters)

Peter: Alexander come on we're leaving.

Alexander: Come on. Please?

Sara: Okay. I'll go with you.

(They all leave the room. Fade to black)

ACT 2

(Lights open up on the ballroom. There is a chandelier hanging from the ceiling, large windows covered with fine curtains line the walls. Vases and glasses are broken on the floor. Some curtains are ripped, moonlight begins to pour in as it grows darker. The door is again at stage right. There is a single revolutionary occupying the room. He is messing with the multiple globes)

Revolutionary 2: Why would anyone need more than one globe? It's not like the earth is going to alter its shape. It's a sphere, you only need one globe to know that. I mean I would understand if these were different iterations of the world, but these all feature the mercator projection, which disproportionately shifts the size of countries at either pole, and makes equatorial nations appear smaller, contributing to a eurocentric focus. It's really just irresponsible to reinforce that with 3 different globes. *(Starts touching the curtains)* These look more valuable than everything I own.

(Starts trying to take it down. Revolutionary1 enters)

Revolutionary 1: Oi George. Whatcha doing?

Revolutionary 2: Take a look at this bloody curtain. How much you reckon that cost Greg?

Revolutionary 1: More than the royal undergarments at least I take it.

Revolutionary 2: The egregious spending of the royalty is absolutely atrocious. I mean look here. They have five whole copies of Titus Andronicus. I wouldn't even be willing to spend the money for one copy of Titus Andronicus. To be fair, I also can't read.

Revolutionary 1: Eh that's not too much of a loss. Reading is just a way to keep the working class down.

Revolutionary 2: I'm not quite sure that's right.

Revolutionary 1: No I'm pretty sure- wait. Maybe? What was that quote again?

Revolutionary 2: What quote?

Revolutionary 1: You know, the one about education.

Revolutionary 2: "Freedom of education shall be enjoyed under the condition fixed by the law"

Revolutionary 1: Ah yea that's right. Freedom from education. Very important.

Revolutionary 2: No no. Freedom of education.

Revolutionary 1: What's the difference?

Revolutionary 2: It means that education is a right for everyone and not just those who can afford it.

Revolutionary 1: That sounds like a lot of work.

Revolutionary 2: Well yeah Greg. Taking the ownership of the wealth is quite an undertaking. You gotta get educated, seize the means of production, obtain class consciousness. It's a lot of work.

(Revolutionary 1 opens a cabinet and finds a bottle of fancy wine)

Revolutionary 1: I dunno George. This here seems to be a pretty large sum of wealth. *(He drinks the wine)* And it was pretty easy to take ownership of it if you ask me.

Revolutionary 2: That's simplifying a lot of very important steps that we took to get here though. It undermines all the sacrifices we took to get this far. Give me that *(Revolutionary 2 takes the wine from revolutionary 1)* Not to mention cutting through noble fat really takes a lot out of you.

Revolutionary 1: Oh lord I know. I haven't had a workout like this since our bull got loose last year.

Revolutionary 2: Oh yeah he was a stubborn bugger that bull.

Revolutionary 1: That he was. Classic Bill.

Revolutionary 2: I always liked that name. Bill the Bull.

Revolutionary 1: He was a good Bull. Really worked the field he did.

Revolutionary 2: Are you gonna keep working on your farm now that society has been turned upside on his head?

Revolutionary 1: You know, I haven't decided for certain. To be honest, I always wanted to get into a slightly more exciting career field.

Revolutionary 2: Well politics are quite exciting and I hear some important positions have just opened up.

Revolutionary 1: Well yeah but there's the whole illiterate thing. That makes it pretty hard. I'd like to do something I'm good at you know?

Revolutionary 2: Yeah I get that. You're a good farmer though.

Revolutionary 1: Aye thanks. It's just getting old. And I'm getting old too. I don't know how many more years my back has left in it.

Revolutionary 2: Well there's plenty of cushy jobs available now. Maybe you could get into finance?

Revolutionary 1: Don't you think I'd need to read for that?

Revolutionary 2: I doubt it.

Revolutionary 1: What are you gonna do with your life now George?

Revolutionary 2: Well to be honest, I think I'd just like to sit back and watch my children live in this free world we built for them.

Revolutionary 1: That's a pretty thought there George.

Revolutionary 2: Thanks Greg. After all the work my wife has done for them, and all the work I've done today in securing a good life for them, I think a rest is well deserved.

Revolutionary 1: I'll drink to that. (*He drinks to that*) Look at us George. We're at the top of the world right now. I'd never thought I'd see the day where I could drink wine in a palace.

Revolutionary 2: I never thought I'd see the day where we don't live in a monarchy anymore. The world is changing Greg. I love to see it.

Revolutionary 1: I love to see it too George. It's a miracle.

Revolutionary 2: Hey Greg?

Revolutionary 1: Yeah George?

Revolutionary 2: Wanna help me steal these curtains?

Revolutionary 1: Oh you know I'd love to George.

Revolutionary 2: I think the wife would love them.

Revolutionary 1: Oh yea Mary would swoon over these beauty's

Revolutionary 2: Just how in the hell do you take this down?

(The store slowly starts to open. The revolutionaries hides. Edgar enters the room, he signals Leon in, who signals in the rest.)

Leon: I thought you knew the way around this place. This looks like a dead end.

Edgar: It is.

Helena: So what do we do?

Edgar: I don't know. They have every exit covered.

(Edgar sits down and sets down the sword)

Peter: What do we do Edgar?

Edgar: I don't know.

Peter: Leon?

Leon: I think we'll be safe in here. At least safer than staying in the library. Are we anywhere near to an exit?

Edgar: Somewhat. The stables are just down the hall there. I don't see us making it that far.

Beatrice: Maybe if we run for the horses we'll be safe.

Leon: That's too noticeable. I say we continue to hide out until everyone clears out. Then slowly we all sneak out.

Sara: Where will we hide?

Leon: This room seems big enough.

(Peter suddenly goes to a globe and opens it. There are jewels inside. He rushes to stuff his pockets with as much as he can. The revolutionary slowly emerges from the curtain.)

Helena: Peter!

(Peter turns as revolutionary 1 swings his sword. Peter ducks under the swing and runs away. Revolutionary 2 charges Edgar. Revolutionary 1 chases after Peter but is stopped by Leon. They fight. Edgar picks up the sword and joins in the fight, but is quickly incapacitated by revolutionary 2 and suffers a small wound. Leon kills Revolutionary 1. Before revolutionary 2 can finish Edgar, Leon attacks him again. After an exchange, Leon disarms him. Then suddenly Peter takes out the knife, and stabs the revolutionary in the back.)

Sara: Edgar!

Edgar: I'm alright. He barely grazed me.

Helena: Peter.... Are you alright?

Peter: I'll be fine.

Leon: I'm going to check the hallway, stay quiet, and barricade the door behind me. (Leon leaves. Petra and Helena check on Edgar and Peter. Alexander admires the chandelier.)

Petra: I don't like being stuck in here.

Beatrice: Why?

Alexander: It's a palace, there are worse places to be stuck.

Peter: Don't you live in the palace Petra?

Petra: I do, but my apartments aren't exactly palatial. I do enjoy my window though.

Peter: There you go, a window, that's nice.

(Beatrice has started galloping across the ballroom, Sara gets up to join her.)

Helena: Girls, you can't do that right now. There are people below us who could hear. We've got to stay quiet.

(Leon knocks on the door.)

Leon: (Offstage) It's me

(Helena lets him in.)

Leon: They have moved past here but I expect them to come back. We don't need to move just yet.

Petra: Well that's good.

(Leon nods.)

Edgar: I'm sorry Peter. I didn't want you to have to hurt anyone.

Peter: You don't have to be sorry. I was trained for it. Maybe you should've given me the sword.

Leon: Neither of you should have to use a weapon in the first place. It's my fault.

Peter: Give me one now and you won't have to fight alone!

Edgar: There's nothing to fight for anymore, Peter. We've lost.

Peter: That doesn't mean we can simply give up, I won't just give up.

Edgar: Well, you're slightly outnumbered, I'm afraid.

Helena: Edgar's right Peter. There's no use fighting right now.

Peter: No use? So what? We're just going to abandon this life? Abandon the palace?

Helena: I'm not exactly a political expert, but it seems to me that the kingdom actively does not want us here right now.

Peter: The kingdom doesn't know what it wants. That's why we're here. We have to tell the people what they want. We have to *rule* them. Or else they'll starve and die.

Helena: We are not going to be ruling anything after today.

Peter: Ruling is our birthright.

Helena: *Was* our birthright. Our family is likely dead and the workers are more than likely going to be the rulers now.

Alexander: Are we sure they're dead?

Peter: Well-

Helena: Yes, yes we are sure Alex.

Beatrice: So we won't see them again?

Petra: No you won't.

Peter: They could've-

Helena: -If they were going to find us they would've by now. They are the reason the mob is here, I don't think they'd let them go. It's the only eventuality.

Leon: I think you are right Helena-

Peter: What are we to do now?

Helena: I don't know, survive?

Alexander: Where are we going to live?

Leon: I know of a remote fishing village.

Helena: Leon- (to Petra and Leon) Can you two just let us speak as a family for a moment.

(Petra and Leon acknowledge this, stepping away. Helena gathers Alexander and Beatrice around her and Peter, Edgar and Sara remain close.)

Helena: Mother and father are gone, they have been hurt, and maybe worse by the people who attacked the palace, and we won't be able to see them again, not now and not ever. But even though they are gone, it doesn't mean they aren't thinking about us. Right now, they still are worried for us, and want us to remember everything they taught us. They taught us to be kind and brave, and we need to remember those things now, if we are to leave here and move on to a safe life somewhere else.

Beatrice: Will we go to Italy?

Helena: We might yes. We need to leave the palace, and find a new home.

Peter: I'm going to stay and fight.

Alexander: There's nothing we can do now Peter.

Sara: Leaving and finding a new home could be good for all of you.

Peter: Leaving your entire life behind is a good thing to you? Everything you've ever known. All your friends, your house, your livelihood - everything I've been raised to do just disappears, and I'm just supposed to accept it? Be Happy?

Edgar: Yes. You are. You have to. It's what I did.

Peter: What? You've always been a servant!

Edgar: No. That's all you know me to be, I was never asked about who I was. I speak when spoken too, that is all. When my father died in the war, at Threeriver. It's what I had to become, a servant, I didn't choose this. Without my father, I had no station in life. No money, no relatives, no real skills. The only thing that saved me was the friends he made. They had connections, and managed to get me a job here. A place to have a roof over my head, food to eat, and a chance at *life*. So yes, my life in your eyes is that of a peasant, a servant, a cleaner for your boots, but we all come from somewhere, Peter. We all go somewhere, and right now, you are going away from the life you knew - get ready for it, because life changes without your permission, and you will find yourself at the mercy of the people around you.

(The entire room seems to lurch from the confession. Peter looks Edgar in the eyes.)

Peter (quietly): I'm sorry.

Edgar: It's fine. Let's just get out of here.

Petra: Wait, we're in the ballroom, correct? I've heard talk of a secret passage in the hallway that connects to the northeast side of here. If we head down that hallway, I'm sure I could find the panel and get us out of here!

Alexander: Really? Well what are we waiting for? We've got to get over there, quick!

(Alexander runs off, but Leon catches him by the arm.)

Leon: Hold on. I may not know this palace very well, but I don't think there are "secret doors" and "secret panels" here. That sounds like something out of a fairy tale.

Petra: This is the royal palace, Leon. Do you think they wouldn't build in ways for the royal family to escape?

Leon: Look, I'm just trying to be safe. We're out in the open here. There's no way to know when the revolutionaries are going to round the corner.

Petra: You're willing to throw away our chances to escape just because you're unwilling to take a risk?

Leon: Look, I don't -

Petra: Kids, I think it might be time to leave Leon behind. He's holding us back. If we don't get out of here soon, they'll surely find us.

(General confusion among the kids)

Peter: Leave him behind? He's risked his life for us! He's killed people for us? And you just want us to abandon him?

Helena: Besides, he's our only protector. You couldn't fight off any revolutionaries.

Leon: Thank you. Edgar, have you heard of any secret passages or anything of the like?

Edgar: The groundskeepers talk sometimes about their "special" routes through the palace to get places faster, but I've never heard of panels or secret doors opening.

Leon: Very well. Since Edgar can't confirm what you say, I don't think this is a risk worth taking. We stay here and hide if anyone comes near.

Petra: Really? You're going to throw away our only chance at escaping? The only chance to save these pitiful children's lives?

Leon: We don't have a choice.

Petra: Your irrational focus on safety isn't allowing you to *see* the choice right in front of you.

Leon: We've already fought three men. Edgar is wounded. There are no more risks that are worth taking. Not with the children's lives at stake.

Petra: Who are you to even speak for us? You have no authority. You are a pawn. A toy soldier to be disposed of by these brats when they get tired of you. You should be working with the revolutionaries, not these tyrants-to-be!

(Shocked silence)

Helena: The revolutionaries have been killing everyone, Petra. They're not bringing reform, they're bringing death.

Petra: Perhaps the only way to reform is to destroy what's left.

Leon: That's ridiculous. Enough of this. We're staying here for the sake of the children, and that's the end of the story.

Petra: It will be the end of the story when they find you all. I'm not staying here. Meet your fate however you wish.

(Petra goes to leave, but Leon gets in her way.)

Leon: I can't let you do that. If you get captured and tell them where the kids are hiding, there will be nothing we can do.

Petra: You can't stop me. I'm not a child that follows authority blindly.

Leon: Don't make me restrain you, Petra.

(A tense beat is shared. Leon goes to raise his rifle, but in a swift and unexpected movement, Petra brandishes a hidden knife and stabs Leon. Leon goes down instantly.)

Children: LEON!! NO!

Peter: I'll kill you!

(Peter brandishes Leon's sword but it is quickly disarmed by a surprisingly agile move by Petra.)

Petra: Will you now? Without your virtuous slave protecting you? What are you but an insolent, pampered child?

(Petra corners the children. She kicks the sword out of their reach and approaches with the knife. Patience the gong farmer enters)

Petra: Your parents were dead when they entered that war council. If it hadn't been for Leon's interference, this moment would have come much sooner. Say your prayers children. May the lord have mercy upon your stained souls.

(Before Petra can continue, Patience dumps a bucket of liquid feces on top of Petra. She screams. Patience calmly takes the knife out of her hand as she continues to scream.)

Patience: Ello' kids. You alright?

(Petra starts dry heaving)

Helena: She didn't harm us yet, thanks to you. (Hesitantly) Are you with the revolution?

Patience: Me? Oh no. Well, I mean I'm not against the revolution. I mean the workers have been exploited for all too long if I may say so. And really I mean really would it kill the king to divide the wealth a bit more evenly across the kingdom? Well now that I think of it I guess it did kill the king. Sorry about that by the way.

Peter: "Sorry about that?"

Petra: Patience. Help me. The revolution is almost won. We just have to dispose of the children and we'll finally be free.

Beatrice: You two know each other?

(Edgar picks up the sword and points it at Patience and Petra)

Patience: Aye. I saw her at a couple of meetings. Before I stopped going to them.

Peter: Meetings for what?

Patience: For this. The uprising of the workers. I was pretty invested early on but you know how it goes. Radicals take up a leadership position. The secret handshakes gets more elaborate. The meetings got longer with less chance for open discussion. They really let bureaucracy get in the way of progress. Not to mention that once Petra got involved, they were really pushing for child decapitation. I mean really Petra, don't you think that's a bit far?

Petra: It is the only way to ensure that they won't come back for the throne.

Patience: Well I don't know about that. You kids don't really wanna rule anymore do you?

Peter: Well actually-

Helena: (*referring to patience*) I'm sorry, but I still don't know who you are.

Patience: Well we're not supposed to run into each other much. The king made that very clear to me. He said "No one wants to see you. You smell bad and you make us feel bad by looking at you." Bit of snooty toady if you ask me. Oh right, sorry, still haven't introduced me'self yet. Patience at your service.

Alexander: And you are a servant here?

Patience: Aye. I'm the gong farmer.

Beatrice: Gong farmer?

Patience: Aye. It's my job to clean the poop out of the outhouses.

Peter: How regal of you.

Patience: Aye lad. I appreciate it. So. What do you kids suppose you'll do with smelly here?

Peter: Kill her.

Patience: Oh.

Edgar: Is that really the best course of action?

Peter: She betrayed us. She'll know that we survived. Edgar, she's seen your face. You might as well be traitors in her eyes.

Helena: What right do we have to kill her?

Peter: They killed our parents! She let them kill our parents and then she was going to kill us herself. If they had the right to revolt, then we have the right to defend ourselves.

Alexander: Do we?

Helena: We aren't the law anymore Peter. We can't just live how we want anymore. If we kill her, it's murder.

Patience: Aye. As far as murders go though, there are worse ones than this.

Beatrice: Maybe we should ask Petra what she thinks we should do?

Peter: Fine. State your case traitor. Do you deserve to live or die?

Petra: I've done my duty in order to establish freedom for my people. If you kill me you'll certainly be saving yourself. But is that all you care about? Have you learned nothing from today? There are struggles bigger than your own. Yet you cannot fathom anything but your own interests. If you spare me though, perhaps I can help you salvage your legacy. A bit of mercy goes a long way. Perhaps the people would be able to forgive your crimes against them.

Peter: Crimes? What crimes have we committed? Being born? My father ruled, made hard decisions. I was going to rule yes, and make hard decisions, but I haven't. Yet you were willing to kill us. Just for being born.

Petra: Don't act so innocent. You never cared about us. You didn't care about Edgar, or Sara. You certainly don't care about Patience. Do you Peter?

Peter: You have a point.

Patience: After all I've done.

Peter: Sorry.

Patience: No no carry on.

Helena: Can you ensure our safety if we let you live?

Petra: I will do what I can.

Beatrice: How can we trust her? She killed Leon. She was going to kill us.

Petra: I did what I had to do for the people. But if the people see that you are capable of mercy, then perhaps they will return the favor.

Helena: I care about our people. I truly want what's best for them. Even if that means that I no longer rule. Maybe we should let her go Peter.

Peter: I know what you're saying, and I agree with you. But I just don't trust that she won't kill us.

Helena: But what right do we have to escape justice? If the people demand I answer for my crimes then who am I to deny them?

Peter: You haven't done anything wrong though Helena. You were born and then forced to marry an Italian. Even if that is a crime it's not your fault. And would you really risk death for it? And that's the worst case scenario. Best case is they lock you in the dungeon for years.

Petra: But if you show the people that you were willing to listen, while abdicating your title, you would live to see the light of day.

Peter: How fortunate. Somehow I still don't believe you.

Petra: That's because you are a stubborn child who cannot fathom a life where you do not sit on a throne carried by the aching backs of the working class.

Sara: If the people would be merciful to the Kempes, would they take mercy upon us as well?

Petra: Why of course. You were just fulfilling your role in the established system. You would have been spared.

Edgar: Oh really? How are we supposed to believe you? Leon was just doing his role. He simply wanted to let us escape. He had no desire of continuing their rule. He was just doing his job.

Petra: He was an adult. He made his choice to fight for the ruling class. He had every opportunity to join the winning side of history. But he chose to die for a system that was destined to fail.

Alexander: He didn't choose to die. You killed him.

Petra: But he chose to be a guard. He could have been a cobbler. Or a priest.

Edgar: Could he really choose that? You have to admit, in order to live a comfortable life in this world you have to bend your morals a bit.

Petra: Which further illustrates why we needed to overthrow the rulers. Which means we would have to deal with the kids. It's not too late Edgar. You're the one with the sword now. You could end this all now. Kill them for the people.

Edgar: My father did not die for me to kill children. The people don't need me. And the people don't need these children to die.

Peter: Enough. *(Peter grabs Petra's hair, and holds a knife up to her neck)* We decide if we kill her. Right here, right now.

Petra: You're no better than animals.

Edgar: She's more harm to us alive than dead.

Alexander: She killed Leon. I don't care what happens to her.

Petra: You'd never care about anyone other than yourselves.

Helena: I don't think it's right. What would Mom and Dad think?

Alexander: They're gone now.

Peter: Helena. Could you live the rest of your life comfortably with Petra knowing that you are still alive, and that you never faced mob justice.

Helena: I think the people would understand. We're just kids. We had about as much authority as any other kid in the world.

Sara: That's not true. You had more freedoms in this world than my parents have to this day. The people are angry. I'm not, but they're thirsty for blood. I don't think there's any escaping it.

Helena: Right. *(Taking a moment to consider)* If you must kill her Peter, make it quick.

Peter: Beatrice, I'm so, so sorry to put you through this. It's not fair that you had to face this violence at this young an age. But you are a part of this family. What do you think?

Beatrice: *(calmly, without hesitation)* Kill her.

Peter: *(Takes a deep breath)* It's settled then.

Petra: Burn in hell you savages. You'll never give up will you? You'll take and you'll take until there's nothing left. To think people saw you all as moral. To think anyone could ever fathom you as a leader. You'll never be better than me, or better than anyone else. Some day you'll all end up in the same place I am. But there will be cheers following your death and dances on your gr-

(Peter slits her throat)

Peter: Until then.

(Long pause.)

Patience: Right then. Now that THAT problem is taken care of. Let me just drag her off here. *(drags her to Leon and the revolutionaries bodies)* There. That looks like a believable death scene don't it?

Sara: As believable as any.

Edgar: So, what do we do now?

Peter: Hide. Wait until it's darker.

Patience: Hide? Don't you kids wanna leave?

Helena: It's a bit hard to leave when all the exits are guarded by people who want to kill us.

Patience: Aye, but what about the secret tunnel?

Edgar:*(holding his sword to Patience)* We are not falling for that trick. There is no secret exit down the hall.

Patience: Down the hall? Why would there be a secret exit down the hall? The secret tunnel is in this room.

Edgar: I've never seen any secret tunnel in this room?

Patience: Well you've never cleaned the cesspit now have you?

Edgar: No. No I haven't.

Patience: Well that, and also I mean, it is a after all secret. Luckily for you all, I have the key.

Peter: How do we know you won't just lead us to our deaths?

Patience: If I wanted to do that, I'd just open the door. Listen, I'm all about the workers finally taking ownership. It's long overdue. There needs to be systematic change in order for us to return to a functioning society, and compete with other industrialized nations on the global market, I know that. However, I draw the line at killing children. I find the killing of adolescents for the cause to be a moral grey area, but I have not yet firmly established my stance on that issue therefore I will not partake today. This is to say that even though I take no combative action for the revolution, I wish them the best of luck. I might even get involved with the politics me'self. But since I'm the only competent adult that's left around here, I think it's only fitting that first I get you all to safety.

(Patience puts the key into a hole by the fireplace. An entrance opens)

Alexander: So there really was a secret tunnel all this time.

Patience: You can always trust the gong farmer. *(The kids start to leave)* Hold it. Leave the weapons behind.

Peter: How are we supposed to defend ourselves? What if you betray us?

Patience: I will do no such thing! Besides all I have is me bucket. Not a good murder weapon if I'm being honest with ya. Besides, I can't trust you as much as you can't trust me. After all I do believe in the abolishment of property. And you all happen to be the sole owners of vast sums of property. So I'd be much comfortable leading you all to safety if you couldn't stab me in the back.

Helena: We'll leave the swords. *(She shoots a look at Edgar and Peter. They drop the swords)* Thank you so much.

Patience: It's no problem lass. Now come on, before they come.

(They all exit into the tunnel. Fade to black)

Act 2 Scene 2

(The group emerges from the tunnel on the edge of the palace grounds. It is dark, but dawn is peeking over the horizon. The trees cast shadows along the stage, and fallen leaves cover the ground. Birds can be heard in the distance, faintly at first, then growing to a polite morning greeting. The air is brisk and the children take a deep breath, feeling its cold and fresh embrace against their skin.)

Patience: Well kids, here we are. I didn't think I'd be taking royalty through me secret tunnel. It seems quite opposite to me political values, but I suppose it's better than dead children on the conscience.

Helena: We can never thank you enough ... uh...

Patience: Patience.

Helena: What?

Patience: That's the name. Patience. You lot really should get yourselves in the habit of learning people's names.

Helena: Well, thank you Patience. Your knowledge and compassion has saved us. How could we ever thank you?

Patience: No, no don't you worry about it. I'm quite content with me job. Somebody's got to do it. I just hope I'll get paid now that the monarchy has been disassembled. Maybe I'll even have access to healthcare! Get to meet my first doctor! Best get to it. God save ye all.

Children: Goodbye!

(Patience exits. The children share a moment of silence.)

Alexander: Well, what do we do now?

Helena: I suppose we have to leave the capital. The revolutionaries aren't going to stop looking for us.

Peter: Well, we can't go to France. None of us can speak the language.

Helena: We have connections in Italy, but I would rather leave that behind me. He sent me a portrait of himself and it was a traumatizing ordeal.

Edgar: When father died, we had to leave the family estate. I don't think anyone ever bought the land, so we could go there.

Peter: How would we feed ourselves? What would we do?

Edgar: We would work the land. Keep livestock, grow crops.

Peter: That's not our...

(Helena shoots Peter a deadly glance)

If it's what we have to do to survive, it's what we'll do.

Beatrice: Wait, we get to keep animals? Can we get a horse?!?!?!?

Helena: I suppose we could.

Beatrice: I can be a cavalryman!

Alexander (Looking back at the castle): I'm gonna miss them.

(Sara sidles up to Alexander and takes his hand. Alexander sheds a few quiet tears.)

Peter: I will too. So many gave up so much to get us out safely.

Helena: Not even just because we were the royal family either.

Edgar: Though, admittedly, that was a large part of it.

Peter: I still don't understand. Why did they do all of this? Father was a great ruler. He never abused the people.

Edgar: People can't live forever with no voice about what happens in their lives. At some point they'll want something more than what somebody tells them to do.

Peter: What my father proscribed was for the good of the country.

Edgar: Good for the country, not for the people.

Peter: Are you really sympathising with them? After they murdered every resident of the palace? My parents? Leon?

Edgar: No, I'm just saying that one person can't hold all the wealth and all the power and expect the people to -

Peter: Stop. I've heard enough. I'm not going to sit here and listen to you align yourself with those murderers. They've destroyed this country. Admit it.

Edgar: They did wrong by killing people, but they've only destroyed a government. Something new and maybe better will take hold, in time.

Peter: Something built on murder cannot be better than what was.

Helena: Enough. The sun is rising. We need to get away from this palace. Which way to your land, Edgar?

Peter: No. I'm not going there to sit and watch as this kingdom descends into anarchy. There's work to be done.

Helena: What are you going to do, Peter? They're looking for you! We have no allies anymore!

Peter: That's not true. There will be soldiers still loyal to the crown in the countryside. I'm going to find them and restore order to this country.

Beatrice: You're going to leave us?

Peter: If you won't go with me, I have to. I'll be ok, I can handle myself.

Alexander: Somebody has to go with you. It's dangerous to go alone.

Peter: I'll be ok. No one's going to hurt a kid who's got nothing to lose.

(Beat.)

Sara: We'll miss you, Peter.

Alexander: You'll know where to find us.

Helena: Goodbye, Peter. I know we'll see you again.

Peter: Farewell everyone.

Edgar: Wait. Take this with you.

(Edgar hands Peter Leon's knife.)

He gave everything for you. He'd want you to be able to defend yourself.

Peter: Thank you, Edgar.

(They share a moment of camaraderie.)

Here. You'll need these to get the farm started.

(Peter hands them the gems taken from the palace.)

Sara: Wait, Peter, we can't take all these. You'll need something to feed yourself. Take at least one with you!

Edgar: Yeah, we won't need all of this to survive. Take just a little bit with you.

Peter: I suppose you're right. Maybe I should've paid more attention to Petra when she was teaching economics.

(They all laugh. He hugs each of the group in turn. He hugs Helena last.)

Helena: You don't have to go

Peter: You know that I do.

(Peter exits. They all watch Peter leave stage left.)

Alexander: Do you think he'll make it?

Edgar: Maybe. I just hope he'll realize that doing the same thing will have the same end.

Helena: He'll find who he is outside of this family eventually. I know it.

Edgar: We need to get going. We have a long walk ahead of us.

Beatrice: Walk? Can't we find some horses or take a carriage or something?

Edgar: No, we need to walk. And find you all some new clothes.

(Exit all but Alexander stage right. Alexander lingers and stares at the castle. Sara enters from stage right and takes Alexander's hand, and then they both exit.)

fin.

