



the path to **CATHERINE** a new musical

*It took three strong women to make one GREAT
queen.*

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www.thepathtocatherine.com

“The Path to Catherine”

CAST

Sophie, princess of Anhalt-Zerbst, teens, energetic, pragmatic, self-possessed
Joanna, princess of Holstein, Sophie’s mother, thirties, eager, injudicious
Elizabeth, empress of Russia, thirties, slightly older than Joanna forceful, lonely, extravagant in her emotions and all other things as well

TIME

January-May, 1744

SCENES

Prologue – Out of place and time
Scene One – Zerbst Castle, Germany
Scene One A- Annenhof Palace, Moscow
Scene Two –Carriage en route to Moscow
Scene Three – Annenhof Palace, Moscow
Scene Four– Elizabeth’s quarters
Scene Five – Joanna and Sophie’s quarters
Scene Six - Joanna and Sophie’s quarters /Elizabeth’s quarters
Scene Seven - Elizabeth’s quarters
Scene Eight Hall outside Elizabeth’s quarters
Scene Nine - Elizabeth’s quarters
Scene Ten - Joanna and Sophie’s quarters
Scene Eleven - Outside Sophie’s bedchamber
Scene Twelve – Sophie’s bedchamber
Scene Thirteen – Joanna’s bedchamber
Scene Fourteen – Sophie’s bedchamber
Scene Fifteen - Joanna’s bedchamber
Scene Sixteen - Elizabeth’s quarters
Scene Seventeen - Joanna’s bedchamber
Scene Eighteen - Elizabeth’s quarters
Scene Nineteen- Joanna and Sophie’s quarters
Epilogue – Catherine Palace, St. Petersburg, 1796

Character Descriptions

Sophie, Princess of Anhalt-Zerbst, daughter of Joanna, teens, is energetic and full of life. She is also a bright and curious student. She is a young woman who is wise beyond her years. She is even-tempered, pragmatic, fair-minded and ambitious. She keeps her own counsel more than her mother knows. Under no circumstances does she want to end up with a fate like her mother's.

Joanna, Princess of Holstien-Gottorp, mother of Sophie, thirties, is frustrated for the very good reason of having had the twin misfortunes of marrying a prince far below her in rank, and then having a firstborn girl. She craves society, balls, a court at which she can sparkle. Her hope at this point in life is that since Sophie is now old enough to seek a match for, she herself will have another chance at a brilliant, important position higher up in the echelons of the European aristocracy.

Elizabeth, Empress of Russia, thirties, has a magnificent presence. She is an extreme personality: impulsive, dramatic, unpredictable, sentimental, warm, temperamental, sensual, lusty, religious. Her rages are towering and terrifying: her kindness and tenderness, real. Though she had no desire to be Empress, in fear for life, she was forced to seize the throne in a daring coup two years prior. She now lives in fear for her safety, her throne, and her legacy. She cannot bear children and has never recovered from the deaths of her parents, sister and fiancé, Karl, (brother of Joanna) when she was a teenager. Her lack of a family and a suitable heir weighs heavily on her.

The Path to Catherine Synopsis

There is not much a noblewoman can do in 1740's Germany. She can marry or become a nun if she fails at a betrothal. Or, on the other hand, she can marry. Teenage Princess Sophie plans to marry and do it well. She has had a lifetime of witnessing her mother, Princess Joanna's, frustration, and resentment at the life she lives after being married off beneath her rank. Because Sophie has trouble containing her lively mind and physically active nature. Joanna despairs of Sophie finding a desirable match.

Russia's Empress, Elizabeth, is childless and desperate to find a suitable heir in order to protect herself and her throne. Her nephew and current heir, Peter, is not capable. She invites Joanna and Sophie to visit, implying that Sophie might make a proper wife who can produce a proper heir. Joanna and Sophie are ecstatic at this prospect.

But Joanna also receives a letter from her own King, Frederick. He "asks" Joanna to spy for him while in Russia. Joanna is flattered to become a shadow diplomat and does not tell Sophie. Instead, Joanna instructs Sophie on proper court behavior during the journey to Moscow. However, when they meet Elizabeth, Joanna and Elizabeth take an immediate dislike to one another. Joanna attempts to ingratiate herself with Elizabeth while secretly allying herself with the French ambassador, gathering information for King Frederick.

Sophie wants very much to fall in love with Peter, or at least like him, but he is callow and dismissive. Though disappointed, Sophie resists Joanna's advice to ply Peter with feminine wiles and seeks Elizabeth's counsel instead. Sophie and Elizabeth begin a tentative friendship.

Elizabeth and Joanna vie for Sophie's allegiance. Elizabeth counsels Sophie to consider the slim likelihood of both falling in love and also gaining a high rank. Joanna, stalling for time while she waits for state information, resists the conversion to Orthodoxy which would initiate Sophie's betrothal.

Sophie is torn. She becomes ill. Joanna and Elizabeth disagree about proper treatment and Joanna relents, fearing Elizabeth will discover her espionage. Elizabeth stays by Sophie's side until she pulls through, after which Joanna feels she can safely visit her daughter. When Joanna arrives, she and Sophie quarrel; Sophie declares that she will, indeed, convert to Orthodoxy.

Elizabeth discovers Joanna's treachery and berates her. In a rage, she calls off any more consideration of the marriage. Joanna pleads Sophie's case to no avail. Thinking it through, Elizabeth cools down, concluding that Sophie is nothing like her mother, and will make a suitable wife for Peter. To ensure that Sophie fully understands what her position will be in the royal court, Elizabeth announces that she will ban Joanna. She further requires that Sophie inform Joanna that she is being sent back to Germany, permanently.

Sophie accepts these terms, choosing life in Elizabeth's court. Joanna ruefully understands this choice; Sophie is her mother's daughter.

Elizabeth has accepted her life's role as monarch. Joanna goes home chastened. Sophie has tasted power.

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Prologue

A slight teenage girl enters
(SOPHIE). SHE addresses the
audience casually.

SOPHIE

Hey there! I'm Catherine the Great. I know what you're thinking.
"She doesn't look very great." But what does that even mean?
People look like lots of things. And since I've made it my
business to make a study of people...I can promise you that what
they LOOK like doesn't mean much. Nope, it's what they actually
DO that counts...and the look in their eyes just before they do
it.

I WATCH. I LEARN. I WAIT MY TURN.
OH.

Right now, I don't look like much. Nobody cares what I think. I
just do as I'm told, and I wait...until I DO have a say so. *Then*
I'll say so- you bet I'll say so!

Until then
I'LL WATCH AND LEARN AND WAIT MY TURN.

So, I'm going to tell you who I was before I got called GREAT.

Things got rolling when my mother received a letter from the
Empress Elizabeth - who was Elizabeth? Who was my mother? What's
a letter? Letters used to be how people made things happen.
There will be a lot of letter-writing in this story- a lot of
plans being made- and as an exception to the rest of my life,
none of these letters will be written by me! I didn't have
anybody to write to yet. But I will,

and until then
I'LL WATCH AND LEARN AND WAIT MY TURN
AND SOME DAY I'LL HAVE MORE.
I'LL WATCH AND LEARN AND WAIT MY TURN.

Now, Elizabeth and my mother? Ha! If I'd only known! I'll fill
you in on those two...

(ELIZABETH and JOANNA enter. SOPHIE sings **2.**
Things Don't Always Go As Planned.)

SOPHIE	JOANNA	ELIZABETH
<p>IN RUSSIA 1709, PRINCESS ELIZABETH WAS SIREN BY PETER THE GREAT, A DEMANDING FATE THAT LEFT MUCH TO BE DESIRED.</p>		
<p>SHE NEVER WANTED POWER. BUT SHE REFUSED TO COWER TO THE NOBLEMEN OF THE MOTHERLAND. SHE NEEDS A PROPER HEIR NOW, THE CHILD OF A NEW VOW. SHE'S GOT A KINGDOM SHE MUST COMMAND,</p>	<p>SHE NEVER WANTED POWER. BUT SHE REFUSED TO COWER TO THE NOBLEMEN OF THE MOTHERLAND. SHE NEEDS A PROPER HEIR NOW, THE CHILD OF A NEW VOW. SHE'S GOT A KINGDOM SHE MUST COMMAND,</p>	<p>HE DIED WITHOUT NAMING AN HEIR, WHICH LED TO MANY YEARS CONFUSION, MISRULE, INTRIGUES, PLOTS, COUPS, ALL AMID COLLUSION. NOW, I HAD NO WISH TO RULE, I WANTED A FAMILY TO CHERISH. BUT AS A MAGNET FOR CEASELESS THREATS OF DEATH I HAD TO SEIZE THE THRONE OR PERISH. ALONE, I CHOSE MY SISTER'S SON AS MY ONLY HEIR. BUT HE IS UNFIT AND NOT THE ANSWER TO MY PRAYER.</p> <p>I WON'T COWER TO THE NOBLEMEN OF THE MOTHERLAND.</p> <p>OH, CHILD OF A NEW VOW</p> <p>I'VE GOT A KINGDOM I MUST COMMAND 'CAUSE THINGS DON'T ALWAYS GO AS</p>

<p>IN GERMANY, 1712, PRINCESS JOANNA WAS BORN.</p> <p>JOANNA WANTED POWER. TO BE THE CHARMING FLOWER OF A SPARKLING COURT IN HIGH DEMAND. DIDN'T GET THE PERFECT HUSBAND OR EVEN HAVE THE FIRST SON. SHE'D WON NOTHING BY GIVING HER HAND,</p> <p>THAT I WAS A DISAPPOINTMENT DIDN'T TURN OUT</p>	<p>I WAS THE FIFTH CHILD, AND AS A GIRL, I WAS LESS A ROSE AND MORE A THORN TO MY FAM'LY, THOUGH OUR RANK WAS HIGH, WE DID NOT HAVE MUCH WEALTH. MY MOTHER'S HEALTH WAS POOR AND WHEN SHE DIED, I FOUND MYSELF THE BRIDE OF A PRINCE MORE THAN TWICE MY AGE, AND HALF AS HIGH IN RANK. TO MAKE THINGS WORSE, I BORE A GIRL AND MY PROSPECTS SANK.</p> <p>BE THE FLOWER SPARKLING COURT IN HIGH DEMAND.</p> <p>DIDN'T EVEN GET THE FIRST SON. I WON NOTHING BY GIVING MY HAND, 'CAUSE THINGS DON'T ALWAYS GO AS PLANNED.</p>	<p>PLANNED.</p> <p>JOANNA WANTED POWER. TO BE THE CHARMING FLOWER OF A SPARKLING COURT IN HIGH DEMAND. DIDN'T GET THE PERFECT HUSBAND OR EVEN HAVE THE FIRST SON. SHE'D WON NOTHING BY GIVING HER HAND,</p> <p>SOPHIE WAS THE BABY GIRL WHO DASHED JOANNA'S DREAMS.</p>
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LIKE IT SEEMS. WASN'T NEAR ENOUGH OOOH OF THE LAND EMPRESS OOH LINE WHEN SHE TOOK HER STAND	WHAT HER MOTHER TAUGHT HER NEAR ENOUGH. SHE LEARNED TO TAKE THE POWER. CLIMB THE HIGHEST TOWER. BECOME THE RULER OF THE LAND. A STATESMAN AND AN EMPRESS, SOME CALLED HER A TEMPTRESS. MEN FELL IN LINE WHEN SHE TOOK HER STAND, 'CAUSE THINGS DON'T ALWAYS GO AS PLANNED.	THOUGH SHE WAS HER MOTHERS' DAUGHTER, NEAR ENOUGH SHE LEARNED TO TAKE THE POWER. CLIMB THE HIGHEST TOWER. BECOME THE RULER OF THE LAND. A STATESMAN AND AN EMPRESS, SOME CALLED HER A TEMPTRESS. MEN FELL IN LINE WHEN SHE TOOK HER STAND, 'CAUSE THINGS DON'T ALWAYS GO AS PLANNED.
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JOANNA

No one could know then that this awkward teenage girl would one day become Catherine the Great, the greatest female ruler Russia has ever known.

ELIZABETH

But she wasn't Russian, her name wasn't Catherine, and she was never meant to rule.

ELIZABETH/JOANNA

'CAUSE THINGS DON'T ALWAYS GO AS PLANNED.

Scene 1

Zerbst Castle, Zerbst, Germany,
1742. SOPHIE enters running. SHE
is disheveled and out of breath;
exhilarated. She has just been for
a wild ride on her chestnut mare,
Lightning. She was supposed to
have been home half an hour ago to
have a lesson in deportment from
her mother, JOANNA. **3. More Than
Me**

SOPHIE

OH, WHAT A WILD RIDE!
LIGHTNING SURE HIT HER STRIDE!
FLYING FAST IS HOW I LIKE TO BE.
IT WAS LIKE I WAS BIGGER, GREATER, SO MUCH MORE,
MORE THAN ME

LEFT THE RULES IN THE DUST.
CAUSE I'D RATHER COMBUST
THAN JUST SIT WITH KNITTING AT MY KNEE.
IT WAS LIKE BEING ON FIRE, BURNING AND SPREADING
SO MUCH MORE, MORE THAN ME.

MAMA SAYS PRINCESSES DON'T GET TO RUN IN THE RAIN.
THEY SHOULD SIT LIKE FLOWERS
LOOKING UP AT THE SUN.
WELL, I CAN WRITE FOR HOURS
BUT MY FACE REMAINS PLAIN.
AND I JUST HATE SITTING...
JUST SITTING...
WHEN I COULD JUMP, WHEN I COULD RUN.
BUT STILL...
MAMA WANTS ME TO BE A THING THAT SMELLS SWEET
TO HAVE PETALS, NOT FEET.

TO BE ONE FLOWER'S NOT OKAY.

I WANT TO BE THE WHOLE BOUQUET.
NOT ONE, NOT TWO, NOT EVEN THREE.
I WANT TO BE EVERY CHERRY IN THE PIE.
EVERY CLOUD THAT'S IN THE SKY,
ALL THE WORDS STILL IN MY QUILL,
ALL THE PAGES I WILL FILL.
I WANT TO BE MORE,
MORE THAN ME.
MORE THAN ME.

(SOPHIE notices the audience.**4. News In a
Letter) <Track 4>**

SOPHIE

OH, I DIDN'T SEE YOU THERE.
I THOUGHT I WAS ALONE.
THIS IS EMBARRASSING.
MY NAME IS SOPHIE.
I'M A PRINCESS.
NOW DON'T BE TOO IMPRESSED.
I'M ONLY ONE OF 200 HERE IN GERMANY,
SO I'M NOT VERY SPECIAL.
IF YOU WANT TO BE SPECIAL
YOU HAVE TO MARRY
A VERY GREAT MAN.

TO BE GREAT YOU HAVE TO FIND A MATE
THAT IS HOW YOU CLAIM YOUR FATE.
AND THAT'S WHAT I INTEND TO DO,
WITH MAMA'S HELP,
AND I NEED HER HELP
BECAUSE I LIKE TO RIDE AND READ
AND DO THE THINGS
THAT MEN DON'T THINK MAKE YOU ATTRACTIVE.
BUT MAMA'S GONNA SHOW ME HOW.
THERE'S SOME TRICK.
SHE'S GONNA SHOW ME SOME TRICK.
MAMA'S WAITING FOR NEWS IN A LETTER,
NEWS IN A LETTER...

JOANNA

(calling from offstage)
Sophie! News in a letter! Guess wha...

OH SOPHIE! YOU'RE A MESS. YOUR BEST DRESS!
YOU JUST PUT IT ON TWO HOURS AGO.

SOPHIE

I JUST...

JOANNA

I KNOW!
YOU WENT RIDING ON LIGHTNING.
GOT DIRTY, MADE A LOT OF NOISE, FORGOT THE TIME AND BEAT ALL THE
BOYS.
How am I going to make you a match?

SOPHIE

I...

JOANNA

You've got to be a good catch.
Girls win boys with poise, not force,
not by being good on a horse.
Do you want to end up like your Aunt Hedwig?

SOPHIE

I don't give a fig!

JOANNA

A nun?

SOPHIE

But it was such fun!

JOANNA

Oh, I know you think I'm a prig,
But men want to kiss pretty
or at least not dirty as a pig.
Do you want to miss out on wedded bliss?
I can't believe my daughter didn't inherit more of this!

We've had news in a letter,
such news in a letter,
news in a letter!

You must try harder to learn from me.
It's a concern to me that you keep forgetting.

SOPHIE

I'm sorry for upsetting you. Am I in trouble again?

JOANNA

Of course not, schatzi, my little hen.
We've had word from the empress.

SOPHIE

And?

JOANNA

Well... guess!

SOPHIE

She asked about me?

JOANNA

Well, yes!

SOPHIE

And, what else?

JOANNA

I won't tell you unless...

SOPHIE

What? What?!

JOANNA

I GOT NEWS IN A LETTER,
SUCH NEWS IN A LETTER.

SOPHIE

Mama!

JOANNA

OH. NEWS IN A LETTER!
But you must behave better.
Do all I say and I'll show you how.

SOPHIE

Yes!

JOANNA

You must vow,

SOPHIE

I do!

JOANNA

Here and now,

SOPHIE

Yes!

JOANNA

Ok. We're going to Moscow, schatzi.

SOPHIE

Moscow?!

(to audience)

Wow!

(back to JOANNA)

DOES SHE WANT ME TO MARRY PETER?

JOANNA

I DON'T KNOW, SCHATZI, IT'S HARD TO READ HER.
But I think that's what she intends.
Wasn't I smart to make sure we've stayed friends?

SOPHIE

(to audience)

COUSIN PETER IS HER HEIR.

(back to JOANNA)

IF I MARRY HIM I'LL BE THE GRAND DUCHESS.

JOANNA

I'm well aware.

CALM DOWN, GIRL, DON'T JUMP THE GUN

BEWARE OF PUTTING ON AIRS BEFORE THE DEAL'S EVEN DONE

Are you willing to do as I say?

SOPHIE

Yes, mama.

I'll try it your way.

JOANNA

Now run along. Get the dirt off your skirt,
and in future no more such exertions.

(SOPHIE begins to exit, running.)

JOANNA

Stop!

(SOPHIE stops abruptly, her back to JOANNA.)

Walking! And brush your hair, it's all askew.

Remember the back, you've got hair back there, too!

SOPHIE

Yes, mama.

(directly to audience)

I guess one doesn't don't *run* to Moscow. One *walks*.

*(SOPHIE exits, walking slowly,
deliberately.)*

JOANNA

I'VE GOT MORE NEWS IN A LETTER.

THERE IS A SECOND LETTER.

THIS ONE IS FROM OUR OWN GERMAN KING.

I DIDN'T TELL MY DAUGHTER.

SHE CAN'T KNOW A THING.

HE WANTS ME TO USE MY TIME ABROAD

TO INFLUENCE RUSSIA, GIVE HER A PROD

NOT TO GIVE AUSTRIA'S NEW TREATY THE NOD.
SURE, IT WILL BE FRAUD,
BUT WHAT CAN I DO?
MY HUSBAND IS INDEBTED TO FREDERICK THE TWO.

FREDERICK'S RIVAL IS MARIA-THERESIA,
THE KAISERIN OF AUSTRIA,
WHOSE TREATY ALL BUT GUARANTEES
THE LOSS OF SELESIA. WHICH FREDERICK'S BARELY WON.
HE NEEDS ME TO MAKE SURE THAT THAT'S NOT DONE.
I'M TO ALLY MYSELF WITH THE AMBASSADOR FROM FRANCE.
HE'S FRIENDLY WITH THE KING AND I ALREADY KNOW HIM IN ADVANCE.
FINALLY THIS IS MY CHANCE!

GOOD NEWS IN THE LETTER
GOOD NEWS IN THE LETTER

I HAD TO MARRY LOWER THAN I OUGHT.
I WILL MAKE DAMN SURE THAT SOPHIE DOES NOT.

Scene 1A

ELIZABETH sits at a desk in her chambers. She writes excitedly.

4a. Letter to Bestushev/Something Tells Me

ELIZABETH

My Dear Chancellor Bestushev,
I'm glad to hear that all goes well at the court of Empress Maria Theresia in Austria. I believe you when you say you have met a number of suitable young noblewomen for me to consider for Peter's wife. Yes, I understand that Russia needs this alliance with Austria to better stand against our common enemy King Frederick of Germany. I get it. I hear you. How many times do I have to say it? Nevertheless, I have invited Princess Joanna of Holstein, Germany to bring her daughter here and she has written back that she is on her way. Nevertheless, *sir...*
Something tells me that I should choose a candidate. And not just go along with yours 'cause you demanded it. I know King Frederick is a cruel and ruthless foe. And I agree that Germans are dangerous to know.

But something tells me in this singular case the Holstein family could earn a central place. They chose to honor my betrothal to their son even though my parents and no position could be won.

You say since I've been told
I'll never have my own child,

I've become reckless,
ungovernable and wild.
But I AM the government,
and I rule by holy covenant.
I will make the throne's decision
and I won't stand over-ambition from you.

Something tells me
it's my chance to choose my kin.
A sister, a daughter,
a new family could begin.
And though my happiness
may not be your concern,
after all these years alone,
something tells me it's my turn

I want a family, and this is my stance.
I could throw my support behind this German romance
After 17 years, I've earned this chance.

Good news in the letter,
good news in the letter,
good news in the letter.

I've been alone much longer than I ought.
I will make damn sure to fix what God has not.

Scene 2

SOPHIE enters carrying a packed valise. **5. Yes, Mama**

SOPHIE

SIX WEEKS IN A CARRIAGE
HOPING THIS WILL LEAD TO MARRIAGE.

(JOANNA bustles in. SHE and SOPHIE get into a carriage bound for Moscow as ELIZABETH exits.)

JOANNA	During the following, SOPHIE addresses her replies to JOANNA, but often exchanges looks with the audience.)
NOW THE PEOPLE LOVE THEIR EMPRESS VERY MUCH. THEY SAY SHE HAS THE COMMON TOUCH.	SOPHIE
WITH THE TEMPER OF A DEVIL IF SHE'S CROSSED. SET HER OFF AND IT'LL COST.	YES, MAMA.
HER COURT IS SUMPTUOUS, HERSELF IS "BUMPTUOUS". WE CAN'T AFFORD ANY MISTAKES.	YES, MAMA.
WE MUST ACT WITH APLOMB.	YES, MAMA.
SHOW NO QUALM.	YES, MAMA.
MANNERS ON.	YES, MAMA.
ALWAYS CALM.	YES, MAMA.
	YES, MAMA.

DON'T WANT TO CATCH YOU RUNNING IN THE HALLS OR BOUNCING BALLS OFF ALL THE WALLS.	YES, MAMA.
BE SENSITIVE TO PETER'S EVERY MOOD. AT MEALTIMES DON'T EAT ANY FOOD.	YES, MAMA.
YOU MUST BE GRACIOUS, AND NEVER LOQUACIOUS. KEEP YOUR OPINIONS TO YOURSELF.	YES, MAMA. YES, MAMA.
WE HAVE ONE SHOT.	YES, MAMA.
TO GET HIM CAUGHT.	YES, MAMA.
AND TIE THE KNOT.	YES, MAMA.
SO SMILE A LOT.	
LAUGH AT HIS JOKES. LAUGH AT HER JOKES.	WHAT IF THEY'RE NOT FUNNY? WHAT IS THE POINT?
THAT'S NOT THE POINT!	
YOU CATCH A BEAR WITH HONEY.	BEAR? WHAT? WHY?
YOU LAUGH TO MAKE THEM FEEL GOOD SO THEY'LL DO WHAT YOU THINK THEY SHOULD.	
BECAUSE IT DOESN'T WORK THAT WAY!	BUT WHY CAN'T I JUST SAY TH-?
ALWAYS SHOW A CHEERFUL FACE OR WE WILL END UP IN DISGRACE.	YES, MAMA.
YOU MUST PLEASE THEM BOTH OR BE SENT BACK, END UP A NUN DRESSED IN BLACK.	
BE AN OLD MAID, ALL SHUTTERED	NO, MAMA!

UP TO FADE IN THE CONVENT WITH ALL OF YOUR AUNTS.	NO, MAMA.
HIDE YOUR DREAD!	YES, MAMA!
LAUGH INSTEAD!	YES, MAMA!
TOSS YOUR HEAD!	YES, MAMA!
AND YOU'LL BE WED!	YES, MAMA!

JOANNA

And speaking of your aunts, the nuns, you know you must convert to Orthodoxy.

SOPHIE

Well, yes, but what is it?

JOANNA

Nothing to worry about, schatzi. It's still Christianity, just like Lutheranism! But with a lot more decorations.

SOPHIE

WILL PAPA APPROVE?

JOANNA

(spoken sing-song)
Papa won't be there!

(SOPHIE leans down and picks up a letter Joanna dropped. Not knowing what it is she reads a little.)

SOPHIE

YOU DROPPED A LETTER.
WHO WROTE THIS LETTER?

JOANNA

OH, SOPHIE, UH...

SOPHIE

Mama! THIS LETTER IS FROM FREDERICK, OUR KING!

JOANNA

YES, NOSY GIRL, HE'S HOPING YOU'LL GET THE RING.

SOPHIE

WHY? I THOUGHT THAT RUSSIA WASN'T HIS ALLY.

JOANNA

ONCE YOU'RE THE GRAND DUCHESS THINGS WILL CHANGE BY AND BY.

SOPHIE

WHY IS THAT?

JOANNA

SCHATZI, CURIOSITY KILLED THE CAT!

SOPHIE

But, Mama, the old French ambassador?

*(SOPHIE turns to the audience and silently mouths)
The old French ambassador?!*

COULD IT BE THE SAME CHETARDIE WHO TRIED SO HARD TO BE
MORE THAN HE WAS?

JOANNA

DON'T JUDGE.
UP TIL NOW HE'S BEEN A MAN WHO KNOWS MORE THAN HE DOES.

SOPHIE

Yes, Mama.

(JOANNA exits.)

(directly to audience)

SOPHIE

Now just because I'm agreeing with mama, don't think I'm a
pushover. Sometimes, the best way to get where you want to go is
to agree with the people who need to be agreed with. Mama's that
kind of person.

...I LEARN

But just because you agree with them, doesn't mean you agree with them. You agree with yourself, and that's what counts.

Scene 3

Annenhof Palace. SOPHIE and JOANNA take in their elegant new surroundings. SOPHIE shares a look with audience, jaw agape. JOANNA looks pleased. JOANNA primps herself and gives SOPHIE a few pokes and prods. When ELIZABETH sweeps in they are overwhelmed at her stature and bearing. My goodness, she is imposing! 6.

Annenhof Palace

SOPHIE

ANNENHOF PALACE, 1744.
THE RECKONING BEGINS
IT'S WHAT WE CAME HERE FOR.

(ELIZABETH proffers her hand for JOANNA and then SOPHIE to kiss, gives SOPHIE an appraising look.)

ELIZABETH

YOU ARE MOST WELCOME HERE IN RUSSIA.
WE ARE SO GLAD YOU CAME.
SIX WEEKS OF TRAVELLING TO RUSSIA
IN DEAD OF WINTER, SNOW AND FREEZING RAIN.

JOANNA

WE DON'T MIND A LITTLE SQUALL.

ELIZABETH

YOU MUST BE TIRED.

JOANNA

IT'S REALLY BEEN NO TROUBLE AT ALL.

ELIZABETH

COME BY THE FIRE.

JOANNA

WE'RE NOT TIRED. LOOK AT SOPHIE,

SO FULL OF VIM AND VIGOR.
TRULY WELL-WIRED, HER APPETITE JUST COULDN'T BE BIGGER.

ELIZABETH

(to herself)

SHE LOOKS HEALTHY ENOUGH!
BUT WE'LL HAVE TO WAIT AND SEE IF SHE'S GOT THE RIGHT STUFF.

ELIZABETH

THE GRAND DUKE'S EXCITED TO MEET YOU.
HE'D LIKE A FRIEND HIS OWN AGE.
HIS TUTOR WON'T LET HIM GREET YOU,
WHEN LEARNING RUSSIAN YOU CAN'T SKIP A PAGE.

JOANNA

SHE'S BEEN STUDYING FOR WEEKS,
SPEAKS LIKE A NATIVE.
SHE'S POSITIVELY BEEN ON A STREAK,
SO COGITATIVE!

ELIZABETH

HE'S BEEN HOPING TO SPEAK GERMAN
BUT I WON'T LET HIM DO THAT.
IT'S PART OF COPING.

JOANNA

NO WORRIES, SOPHIE ALREADY KNEW THAT!
(to SOPHIE, sotto voice)
I KNOW HOW TO HANDLE HER.
IT WON'T BE LONG BEFORE OUR FUTURE IS ASSURED.

JOANNA

(back to ELIZABETH)

It's hard to believe we're finally meeting, after all these
years. We! Who almost became sisters!

(ELIZABETH stares at JOANNA, taking her in for a long moment. Finally, in a hoarse whisper, SHE sings.)

ELIZABETH
YOU LOOK SO MUCH LIKE HIM, KARL, YOUR BROTHER.
I WAS ONLY SEVENTEEN. I'VE NEVER LOVED ANOTHER.
HE WAS THE YOUNG MAN FOR WHOM I'D PRAYED.
SUCH A WONDERFUL HUSBAND HE WOULD HAVE MADE.
IT'S BEEN A LOSS THAT TIME DOES NOT ASSUAGE.
I MIGHT HAVE HAD A DAUGHTER ABOUT YOUR AGE.

JOANNA
(spoken to SOPHIE)
Ha ha ha, yes, you would have been your own cousin!

(SOPHIE giggles too. ELIZABETH immediately darkens. SOPHIE, realizing her mistake, stops, but it is too late. ELIZABETH, angry, addresses JOANNA)

ELIZABETH
A LUCKY WOMAN CAN MOCK OTHERS.
AS FOR ME, I DON'T MIND.
BUT LAUGHING AT THE DEATH OF YOUR BROTHER!

JOANNA
OH NO, I DIDN'T MEAN TO BE UNKIND!
I JUST SOUGHT TO LIFT THE MOOD.
I'M INJUDICIOUS.

(SOPHIE shares an "Oh, shit!" look with the audience.)

ELIZABETH
THERE WAS NO NEED TO BE RUDE
AND CRUEL AND VICIOUS.

JOANNA
OH YOUR HIGHNESS, PLEASE FORGIVE ME.

ELIZABETH
PAGE! TAKE THEM TO THEIR WING!

JOANNA

IT'S A KIND OF SHYNESS...

ELIZABETH

STOP TALKING NOW. DON'T SAY ONE MORE THING!

(ELIZABETH stalks out.)

SOPHIE

(directly to audience)

I think the empress is another one who needs to be agreed with.
Maybe mama will catch on...

JOANNA

Isn't she miss High-and-Mighty?
On top of that she's batty and flighty!

(still to audience)

SOPHIE

See that? Mama doesn't observe people as carefully as I do. If
she did, she wouldn't have stepped in it just now.

I WATCH, I LEARN...

So now I know I'll have to be careful with this lady. She's...a
lot.

SOPHIE

Mama! Don't say that! She is the Empress!

MAMA, THE EMPRESS IS SCARY.

JOANNA

Oh, schatzi,
SHE'S JUST CONTRARY.
RUSSIANS ARE LIKE THAT,
AS YOU'LL LEARN,
MAKING SCENES AT EVERY TURN.

SOPHIE

BUT MAMA, SHE'S ALSO EXTRAORDINARY,

SO GRAND!

JOANNA

WELL, THAT'S NOT NECESSARY!
IF YOU MEAN LARGE,
THEN I AGREE.
THEY GROW 'EM BIG ON THAT FAMILY TREE!

JOANNA

Schatzi, run ahead and make sure they unpack my gowns correctly.
(SOPHIE begins to exit, at a run.)

JOANNA

Stop!
(SOPHIE stops abruptly, her back to JOANNA.)

Walking!

SOPHIE

(to audience)
She *did* say, "run ahead", right?
(SOPHIE exits, walking at an exaggeratedly
slow pace. JOANNA hangs back.)

JOANNA

I WAS FEELING A BIT TORN ABOUT SPYING.
BUT AFTER THAT OUTBURST
I'LL BE GLAD TO DIE TRYING.

Scene 4

ELIZABETH strides into her chambers. SHE is shaking, unable to keep her emotions on an even keel. **7. If I Could Close My Eyes**
<Track 7>

ELIZABETH

(upset, disappointed, shaken)

To think I was hoping she'd be like a sister to me!

WHAT A HORRIBLE WOMAN!
THAT SYCOPHANT!
USING HER DAUGHTER
TO FEEL LESS INSIGNIFICANT.
WHILE I'M JUST TRYING TO NOT GET MYSELF MURDERED
SHE SEES A CHANCE TO CLIMB UP FURTHER.

SHE THINKS MY LIFE IS POWER AND GLAMOUR,

(slips into planning, thinking, strategizing)
DOESN'T HEAR THE CLAMOR OF THE WOULD-BE BRIDES,
THE NOBLEMEN OF RUSSIA WHO STRIVE TO UNSEAT ME,
THE AUSTRIAN EMISSARIES WHO LINE UP TO MEET ME,
ONE AND ALL WITH DAUGHTERS SHORT AND TALL,

WITH A POSSE OF ALLIES SEEKING THE GRAND PRIZE.
BUT THESE GERMAN PRINCESSES HAVE NO SUCH FRIENDS,
NO POWERFUL OR WELL-CONNECTED HELP TO REACH THEIR ENDS.

(pleased, calming down)

THAT'S GOOD.

VERY GOOD.

(sudden angry outburst)

BUT, THESE PEOPLE,
GREEDY, NEEDY PEOPLE,
TREACHEROUS, DANGEROUS PEOPLE!

(hoping, thoughtfully strategizing)
BUT MAYBE THIS GIRL WILL BE THE PEARL,
THIS PETTY GERMAN PRINCESS

BE THE ANSWER TO THIS NONSENSE.

(breaks off abruptly, sighing)

Ooooh- I'm just so tired of the endless plotting; so tired of sleeping with one eye open!

IF I COULD CLOSE BOTH EYES,
IF I COULD JUST REST EASY,
IF I KNEW TOMORROW'S SUNRISE
WOULD FIND ME WELL.
IF I DIDN'T NEED TO BE ON GUARD
FOR THE TRICKERY OF MEN,
IF EVERY DAY WEREN'T QUITE SO HARD
THEN I COULD LAUGH AGAIN.

IF I COULD CLOSE BOTH EYES,
IF I COULD SLEEP ALL NIGHT,
IF I COULD TELL THE TRUTH FROM LIES
MY ADVISERS TELL,
IF I DIDN'T NEED TO ALWAYS GUESS
WHO MIGHT BE A FRIEND
IN THIS RUTHLESS GAME OF CHESS
THEN I COULD TRUST AGAIN.

ELIZABETH	JOANNA/SOPHIE
<p>I ONLY WANTED A FAMILY, NEVER WANTED TO RULE. LOOK WHAT THE WORLD HAS GIVEN ME. I AM FORTUNE'S FOOL. SPECIAL TO NO-ONE, EXALTED BY EVERYONE, I'M SOMEONE TO GET THINGS FROM, THAT'S ME. TRULY ALONE, I HAVE NO "OTHER". NO ONE'S DAUGHTER, NO ONE'S SISTER, NO ONE'S WIFE AND NO ONE'S</p> <p>When I chose Peter as my heir, I hoped he would be like a son to me. But I had no idea then what he was like; that I would</p>	<p>MOTHER. NO ONE'S MOTHER OOO OOO</p>

<p>be just as alone as I was before. Without his future son to secure my throne, every day I live is a gamble. I need a new heir. I need him now!</p> <p>IF I COULD CLOSE BOTH EYES, IF I COULD KNOW SOME PEACE, IF IT WEREN'T ALL LOWS OR HIGHS FASTS AND FEASTS, IF I DIDN'T HAVE TO KNEEL AND PRAY 'HOLY FATHER, PLEASE, AMEN', IF I DIDN'T HAVE TO LIVE THIS WAY, THEN I COULD LIVE AGAIN.</p> <p>YES, I COULD LAUGH AGAIN.</p> <p>I COULD TRUST AGAIN.</p> <p>AND I COULD LIVE AGAIN.</p>	<p>OOO</p> <p>OOO</p> <p>MOTHER NO ONE'S MOTHER</p> <p>MOTHER NO ONE'S MOTHER</p>
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Scene 5

JOANNA AND SOPHIE'S chambers.
JOANNA, alone, writing a letter.

8. Letter to the King <Track 8>

JOANNA

(speaking brightly as she writes)

Your Majesty, King Frederick,
All continues to go well here at Elizabeth's court. My daughter
and I have fit right in to the social whirl and are very popular
and in-demand. Elizabeth herself has become a great friend. Or
rather, she believes me to be a great friend. (giggles.) Indeed,
I am on my way to visit with her right now. Sophie has been
spending time with...

(pushes letter aside)

Ugh! Peter!

(shrugs and sighs)

WELL, LIKE MY MOTHER TOLD ME
WHAT CAN YOU DO?

(begins writing again)

HE WAS ECSTATIC TO MEET HER
AND SHE WAS, TOO.

(puts letter aside, stands and paces)

THE GOSSIP SAYS IT'S NOT GOING WELL.
HE SEEMS QUITE BORED,
BUT SOPHIE CAN'T TELL.

(back to letter)

HE'S LOST HIS HEART TO HER.
HE'S ALL ASWOON.
AND, CHETARDIE
HAS PROMISED ME THAT SOON...

(breaks off, troubled)

KING FREDERICK IS ANNOYED THAT I DON'T HAVE ANY NEWS.
IF THE RUSSIANS SIGN WITH AUSTRIA
THERE'S TOO MUCH TERRITORY TO LOSE.
HE WANTS TO KNOW WHAT THEY HAVE PLANNED,
INFORMATION TO FORCE THEIR HAND.
BUT HE DOESN'T UNDERSTAND.
IT'S A SNAKEPIT HERE, A DEN OF SPIES.
IT TAKES FINESSE,
IF I'M SEEN WITH CHETARDIE, THEY'LL REALIZE.
IT DOESN'T HELP THAT I'M A NERVOUS MESS
TRYING TO MANAGE ELIZABETH.
AND THOUGH SOPHIE ISN'T ONTO ME YET,
SHE'S SMART ENOUGH TO GUESS BUT TOO YOUNG TO GET.

(JOANNA pauses, frustrated.)

Once Sophie becomes Grand Duchess she's going to have to learn the complexities of political relationships. And I, as her mother- the mother of the Grand Duchess- (and most trusted secret agent of the king) will avail my daughter of all I know.

(SHE brightens as her thoughts turn to the future. **9. The Mother Of) <Track 9>**

I'LL BE THE MOTHER OF, THE MOTHER OF
THE MOTHER OF THE WIFE OF THE HEIR OF THE RUSSIAN THRONE.
AND THAT ALONE WILL GIVE ME RANK OF MY OWN.
I'LL SHARE MY OPINION WITH REGAL DOMINION AND
PEOPLE WILL KNOW THAT IN POLITICS I AM WELL-VERSED.
KING FREDERICK WILL RICHLY REWARD ME.
AND YES, I WILL THANK HIM, BUT BOREDLY.
'CAUSE OTHERS WILL ASK FOR MY WISDOM
BUT SOPHIE'S OPINION WILL ALWAYS BE ASKED FOR FIRST.

I'LL BE THE MOTHER OF, THE MOTHER OF
THE MOTHER OF THE DAUGHTER WHOSE FATHER COULD NOT HAVE PLANNED
HOW SHE'D GIVE HER HAND, MAKING ME THAT MUCH MORE GRAND.
THE DUCHESS OF BRUNSWICK IS SURE TO BECOME SICK
COVETING WHAT I'VE ACHIEVED IS THE CROSS SHE WILL BEAR.
I'LL HAVE GOWNS OF THE FINEST BROCADE,
WITH FURS, SO PLUSHLY ARRAYED.
BUT WHILE I HAVE THE SMARTEST GARB I'VE EVER HAD
SOPHIE'S BOUND TO HAVE CLASSIER GOWNS TO SPARE.

WELL, LIKE MY MOTHER TOLD ME
WHAT CAN YOU DO?
I COULD SAY I'M EUPHORIC,
BUT IT'S NOT TRUE.
I MARRIED LOW
AND TO THAT I AM RESIGNED.
NO MATTER HOW CLOSELY I SHADOW MY DAUGHTER
I'LL ALWAYS BE ONE STEP BEHIND.

I'LL BE THE MOTHER OF, THE MOTHER OF,
THE MOTHER OF THE GIRL THAT THE AUNT OF THE DUKE PREFERS,
THE FAV'RITE OF HERS AMONG RUBES AND AMATEURS.
WHO WANTS TO BE RAISED HIGH AND PETTED AND PRAISED BY
THESE HICKS ON A PILE OF SNOW IN THE BACK OF NOWHERE?
'CAUSE AT EACH STATELY FORMAL AFFAIR
HERE COME STRUTTING THE YOUNG ROYAL PAIR.
WHILE I AM SLUMMING AT THE BACK OF THE PACK,
THERE SHE'LL BE ON THE ARM OF THE HEIR WITH HER NOSE IN THE AIR.

I'LL BE THE MOTHER OF, THE MOTHER OF,
THE CANDIDATE WHO WILL BE CHOSEN.
THOUGH I MAY BE FROZEN OUT FOR MY DEVOTION,
PAYING THE PRICE AS A MEMBER OF THE NOBLESSE.
MAKE WAY ALL YOU PLEBS, FOR THE MOTHER OF THE GRAND DUCHESS!
ONLY ONE CAN GET ABOVE THE MOTHER OF!

(SOPHIE drags in looking dejected. JOANNA
quickly covers the letter from Frederick.

10. Love and Duty) <Track 10>

SOPHIE

Peter says he's in love with another girl!

JOANNA

What? He told you this?

SOPHIE

YES, MAMA! IT'S ONE OF THE LADIES-IN-WAITING.
PETER SAYS HE FINDS HER CAPTIVATING.

JOANNA

SCHATZI, I'M SORRY.

SOPHIE

BUT WHAT DO I DO?
SAYS HE'LL MARRY ME ANYWAY IF HIS AUNT WANTS HIM TO.

JOANNA

WELL, THEN THERE'S NOTHING TO FRET ABOUT.

SOPHIE

HOW CAN YOU SAY THAT? WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

JOANNA

I'M AWARE THAT IT'S DISAPPOINTING,
BUT, SCHATZI, DON'T MAKE A SCENE.

JOANNA
THERE IS LOVE AND THERE IS DUTY,
AND YOU GET THE ONE YOU GET.
THERE IS LOVE AND THERE IS DUTY,
NEVER THE TWO HAVE MET.

SOPHIE

BUT, MAMA, HE DOESN'T LOVE ME.

JOANNA
Yes, I HEARD YOU
AND I KNOW WHAT YOU WANT.
BUT AS LONG AS HE UNDERSTANDS
HIS DUTY, THE SACRED DUTY
THAT HE HAS TO HIS AUNT,
WE'LL BE FINE...

SOPHIE
I'm not fine!

JOANNA
That's enough! PRINCESSES DON'T GET TO WHINE!

SOPHIE
THERE IS LOVE AND THERE IS DUTY.
THEY CAN BE A TRUE DUET.

JOANNA
THERE IS LOVE AND THERE IS DUTY.
WHY BE SO UPSET?

SOPHIE
But I want him to love me, mama!

JOANNA
Don't be silly! Well, ok, since there's not much we can do about
your, umm, looks...

HAVE YOU DONE AS I INSTRUCTED
AND CONDUCTED YOURSELF
IN A DAINTY WAY?

SOPHIE

Yes, mama!

JOANNA

HAVE YOU NEVER INTERRUPTED
AND AGREED WITH EVERYTHING HE HAS TO SAY?

SOPHIE

(rolls eyes to audience)

(addresses JOANNA)

Yes, mama!

JOANNA

WELL, MAYBE YOU DIDN'T DO IT RIGHT.
IT TAKES A WOMANLY INSIGHT.

SOPHIE

Really mama?
IS THAT ALL YOU'VE GOT NOW, MAMA?
THIS SAME SILLY PLOT AND DRAMA
TO GET PETER CAUGHT
AND TIE THE KNOT. AND MAMA...

SOPHIE

Is that how you "caught" Papa? Because I've seen what your
marriage is like. You never even tried to love him, did you?
You just tried to trick him into loving you!

JOANNA

Sophie! How dare you!

SOPHIE

I'LL GO SEE PETER, AND I WILL TELL HIM HOW I FEEL
EVEN IF I AM NOT HIS IDEAL...

JOANNA

No, SOPHIE DON'T DO THAT.
IF YOU PUSH HIM HE MIGHT DROP YOU FLAT.
WORSE THAN THAT, HE MIGHT TELL HIS AUNT
AND THAT'S SOME THING WE DON'T WANT...

SOPHIE

You don't want! I WANT SOMETHING ELSE.
I'M NOT A COWARD. I'LL TELL HER MYSELF.

JOANNA

That's enough! YOU'LL ONLY GET HURT
AND ASSERTING YOURSELF WILL ONLY CAUSE TEARS.
REMEMBER NO ONE IN OUR FAM'LY HAS
MARRIED FOR LOVE IN FOUR HUNDRED YEARS.

JOANNA/SOPHIE

THERE IS LOVE AND THERE IS DUTY.

JOANNA

AND YOU GET THE ONE YOU GET.

JOANNA/SOPHIE

THERE IS LOVE AND THERE IS DUTY.

JOANNA

AS NOBLES, THAT'S OUR DEBT.

JOANNA/SOPHIE

THERE IS LOVE AND THERE IS DUTY.

SOPHIE

THEY CAN BE A TRUE DUET.

JOANNA/SOPHIE

THERE IS LOVE AND THERE IS DUTY.

SOPHIE

I WON'T GIVE UP YET.

JOANNA

You stay here. I will handle this.

(JOANNA exits.)

SOPHIE

(to audience)
Can she?
I'm beginning to wonder.

I WATCH, I LEARN...

Scene 6

SOPHIE is alone. **11. When You Know Love <Track 11>**

SOPHIE

(to audience)

Look,
I know there are girls more beautiful than me.
Well, I know there are beautiful girls
But, maybe love makes you beautiful.
Or maybe it makes someone see you as beautiful, when you're
actually not.
But I'd like to how love changes you...

ARE YOU BEAUTIFUL?
ARE YOU STRONG?
ARE THE TWO OF YOU MORE
BECAUSE YOU BELONG?
DO THE STARS SEEM CLOSER TO YOU?
IS THE NIGHT A VELVET BED?
WHAT IDEAS ARE IN YOUR HEAD
WHEN YOU KNOW LOVE?

(Elizabeth's quarters. JOANNA looks out a window while ELIZABETH sits.)

SOPHIE	JOANNA	ELIZABETH
	<p>I MUST SAY THAT</p> <p>PETER IS TRULY A DELIGHTFUL YOUNG MAN.</p> <p>SOPHIE'S JUST TICKLED PINK BY HIS WIT!</p> <p><i>(awkward pause)</i></p> <p>THEY'VE BEEN WALKING TOGETHER EVERYDAY.</p> <p>SHE TELLS ME SHE LIKES HIM QUITE A</p>	<p>MMMM</p>

	<p>BIT.</p> <p>(awkward pause)</p> <p>DOES PETER TELL YOU HE FEELS THE SAME WAY?</p> <p>DOES HER SMILE MAKE HIS BLUE EYES SHINE?</p> <p>And you? Do you find Sophie agreeable?</p> <p>She's usually a much more forthcoming girl...but, you see, she's rather afraid of you.</p> <p>(awkward pause)</p> <p>Well, enough about the children! I hear Empress Maria Theresia isn't too happy about-</p>	<p>MMMM</p> <p>PETER'S FEELINGS ARE IRRELEVANT.</p> <p>IT'S NOT HIS DECISION, IT'S MINE.</p> <p><i>(enjoying JOANNA'S discomfort)</i> I haven't seen much by which to judge yet. She is very quiet.</p> <p><i>(refusing to be drawn out)</i></p> <p>Mmm.</p>
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<p>ARE YOU COURAGEOUS?</p> <p>ARE YOU WISE?</p> <p>DOES THE WORLD LOOK LIKE A DIFFERENT PLACE</p> <p>SEEN THROUGH THE SAME EYES?</p> <p>IS THERE TENDERNESS IN YOUR GAZE</p> <p>ONCE YOU'RE PIERCED BY CUPID'S DART?</p> <p>WHAT SECRETS ARE IN YOUR HEART</p> <p>WHEN YOU KNOW LOVE?</p>	<p>I'M AWARE OF THE SACRAMENTS.</p> <p>I WOULD NEVER TRY TO</p>	<p>HEAR THIS!</p> <p>I'VE SUMMONED YOU HERE</p> <p>FOR A DISCUSSION ABOUT THE ORTHODOX CHURCH</p> <p>AS A CONDITION OF THIS POSSIBLE MARRIAGE,</p> <p>I WILL REMIND YOU SOPHIE MUST CONVERT.</p> <p>YOU WERE TOLD THIS WHEN I ASKED YOU TO COME.</p> <p>BUT FATHER SIMEON TELLS ME</p> <p>IT HASN'T BEEN DONE.</p>
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<p>ARE YOU BEAUTIFUL? ARE YOU STRONG? ARE THE TWO OF YOU MORE BECAUSE YOU BELONG?</p>	<p>HOLD OUT, BUT WE ARE LUTHERAN AND MY DEAR HUSBAND IS QUITE DEVOUT.</p> <p>They do, of course! He sets much store by my maternal wisdom...</p> <p>I can write my husband.</p> <p>I CAN WRITE HIM THIS EVENING.</p> <p>HE WON'T BE HEADSTRONG.</p> <p>I'M SURE I CAN PERSUADE HIM.</p>	<p>Do I understand you're Just his silent mate And your wishes Carry no weight?</p> <p>That's just grand! 'CAUSE THERE'S AN AUSTRIAN PRINCESS WHOSE FATHER IS A PRACTICAL MAN.</p> <p>You do that.</p>
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<p>DO THE STARS SEEM CLOSER TO YOU?</p> <p>IS THE NIGHT A VELVET BED?</p> <p>WHAT IDEAS ARE IN YOUR HEAD?</p> <p>WHEN YOU KNOW LOVE? WHEN YOU KNOW LOVE?</p> <p>WOULD I BE RAPTUROUS?</p> <p>WOULD I BE GRAVE?</p> <p>WOULD I BE MORE OF MYSELF</p> <p>BECAUSE OF WHAT I GAVE?</p> <p>WOULD THE DAWN'S BREAK BE OH SO SWEET?</p> <p>WOULD MY REAL LIFE FINALLY START?</p> <p>WHAT SECRETS WOULD BE IN MY HEART</p> <p>IF I KNEW LOVE, IF I KNEW LOVE, IF I KNEW LOVE?</p>		
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SOPHIE

(to audience)

I need to know. And since it's something Mama will never be able to teach me about, I'll ask the Empress.

Scene 7

Elizabeth's quarters. ELIZABETH is writing at a desk. SOPHIE has had a moment to calm down from her disagreement with Joanna and finds she is still scared of Elizabeth after all. She pauses on the threshold. **12. Love Is a Lot To Ask. <Track 12>**

(addressing the audience)

SOPHIE

Well, she's still scary!

(approaching Elizabeth timidly, screwing up her courage)

I WATCH, I LEARN...

SOPHIE

Excuse me, your Majesty.

ELIZABETH

(angrily, without looking up)

I said not now!

SOPHIE

(after a moment, gently)

It's me, Sophie.

ELIZABETH

(now calm)

Oh, Sophie! What brings you here?

SOPHIE

May I speak with you? If you have a moment?

ELIZABETH

Of course you can. Come in. What is it?

SOPHIE

You cried when you spoke about my Uncle Karl. You two must have been very much in love.

ELIZABETH

(tenderly)

Oh yes! He was such a sweet young man. I was so looking forward to becoming his wife.

SOPHIE

How did you do it? How did you make him love you? Even though the marriage was arranged, it was love. It was a love that outlived death.

ELIZABETH

Yes, yes it was. It was a love that outlived death. We would have had many blessed years together.

SOPHIE

I want to be like that with Peter, but he doesn't seem very interested.

ELIZABETH

Well Peter is...

(to HERSELF)

SHE'S SERIOUS ABOUT BEING IN LOVE.

HOW SHOULD I ANSWER?

DO I TELL HER HE'S THE LAST BOY

SHE SHOULD WANT TO ROMANCE HER?

DO I SAY HE'S JUST TROUBLE

AND TO NOT HOLD HER BREATH?

THAT HE IS UNLOVABLE,

ONLY TOLERABLE AT BEST?

(to SOPHIE)

NOT ALL ARRANGED MARRIAGES

TURN INTO LOVE,

BUT THE LIFE YOU'D LIVE WOULD BE SO RARE.

YOU MAY FIND THAT YOU WON'T CARE.

THE VIEW IS DIFFERENT FROM UP HIGH.

WITH A FAMILY AND WITH CHILDREN OF YOUR OWN

YOU'LL ALWAYS HAVE SOMEONE.

YOU'LL NEVER BE ALONE.

ELIZABETH BUT THE KIND OF LOVE YOU MEAN,	SOPHIE	JOANNA THE KIND OF LOVE YOU MEAN,
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<p>LOVE IS A LOT TO ASK. LOVE IS A LOT TO ASK. THE KIND OF LOVE YOU MEAN, LOVE IS A LOT TO ASK. LOVE IS A LOT TO ASK.</p> <p>What? No! I</p>	<p>But I already have a family! I want... (to HERSELF) WAIT A MINUTE, SOPHIE, LISTEN AND SLOW DOWN. SHE WOULD KNOW IF THERE'S A CHANCE OF PETER COMING AROUND. SHE COULD LIE TO ME, TELL ME I'VE NOTHING TO FEAR. IT'S EASIER THAN TELLING ME WHAT I DON'T WANT TO HEAR.</p> <p>(to ELIZABETH) BUT WITH KARL DID YOU THINK THAT LOVE WAS A LOT TO ASK? LOVE WAS A LOT TO ASK? WITH KARL DID YOU THINK THAT LOVE WAS A LOT TO ASK? LOVE WAS A LOT TO ASK?</p> <p>Did Karl feel like family to you?</p>	<p>LOVE IS A LOT TO ASK. LOVE IS A LOT TO ASK. THE KIND OF LOVE YOU MEAN, LOVE IS A LOT TO ASK. LOVE IS A LOT TO ASK.</p> <p>WITH KARL DID YOU THINK, LOVE WAS A LOT TO ASK. LOVE WAS A LOT TO ASK. WITH KARL DID YOU THINK, LOVE WAS A LOT TO ASK. LOVE WAS A LOT TO ASK.</p>
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<p>mean...well...Karl was a special young man. We fell in love at first sight, really.</p> <p>(ELIAZABETH chuckles.) (to <i>HERSELF</i>) LOOK AT HER SO FULL OF HOPE EARNEST IN HER EXPECTATION. BUT WERE KARL AND I REALLY IN LOVE OR IS IT JUST FABRICATION? I'M NOT SURE, BUT WHAT I KNOW IS HE WAS HANDSOME AND TALL. ASIDE FROM THAT WHAT ELSE DID WE HAVE? IN TRUTH, I HARDLY KNEW HIM AT ALL.</p> <p>When he passed, I was unmarriageable. The bastard daughter of a dead monarch. Then mama died, and my sister too. Karl was my light in the dark. I know what I've needed to believe, But am I pushing the envelope? The truth is I don't know anymore. Is it fair to let her hope?</p> <p>(to <i>SOPHIE</i>) KARL WAS A SWEET BOY AND I THOUGHT IT WAS LOVE,</p>	<p>Love at first sight! How romantic!</p>	
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<p>BUT I DON'T WANT TO MISLEAD YOU. I KNOW I WANTED IT TO BE TRUE. I WAS ONLY SEVENTEEN. IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN A GREAT ROMANCE. IT COULD HAVE GROWN WITH TIME IF WE HAD HAD THE CHANCE.</p> <p>Or maybe it wouldn't have.</p> <p>WHEN A MARRIAGE IS ARRANGED LOVE IS A LOT TO ASK. LOVE IS A LOT TO ASK. WHEN A MARRIAGE IS ARRANGED LOVE IS A LOT TO ASK. LOVE IS A LOT TO ASK.</p>		<p>WHEN A MARRIAGE IS ARRANGED LOVE IS A LOT TO ASK. LOVE IS A LOT TO ASK. WHEN A MARRIAGE IS ARRANGED LOVE IS A LOT TO ASK. LOVE IS A LOT TO ASK.</p>
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SOPHIE

So you think I would do better to give up the idea? That I should hope for friendship, family and like that?

ELIZABETH

(gently)

Yes. I do. Why did you come here, Sophie?

(SOPHIE doesn't answer.)

ELIZABETH

Did you come here to fall in love? Or to become Grand Duchess?

SOPHIE

Both.

ELIZABETH

And if you can't have both? Which do you want more?

(SOPHIE doesn't answer.)

What's the alternative if you go home? A different marriage your father arranges?

(SOPHIE doesn't answer.)

ELIZABETH

And what do you think the odds are that you'd fall in love with that boy?

(SOPHIE doesn't answer.)

ELIZABETH

And what are the odds you'd become anything more than a princess of some feudal anthill rather than the Grand Duchess of Russia, the greatest Empire on earth?

SOPHIE

None.

ELIZABETH

And what are the odds you'd become Grand Duchess if you stay here and marry Peter? IF you marry Peter?

SOPHIE

That wouldn't be odds. It would be fact.

ELIZABETH

I'll let you give *THAT* some thought.

(SOPHIE exits. We follow her.)

Scene 8

(SOPHIE stops in the hall. **13.**
Still a Chance) <Track 13>

SOPHIE

Thank you, Your Highness.

(to audience)

Oh, no! She thinks the same thing as mama!

I could go home!
I could still go home.
Mama won't make me marry him
If I say I don't want to.
And maybe I don't want to.
Not when there's still a chance...
still a chance...
a chance.

And then what?
What would happen then?
Papa would find me a match,
a man much like him.
Not too bad, not too good,
a man who does what he should.
And just maybe
I'd even love him.
And I'd begin a new life
in a dreary garrison town

with this new man.
Not too good, not too bad,
a life like the one I've already had
a man who'll only bring me a ring,
and who follows far
behind his king.

I could stay here!
I could still stay here.
The empress could still choose me
If she sees that I want it.
And maybe I want it.
Now, when there's still a chance...
Is there still a chance?
A chance.

And then what?
What would happen then?
I'd marry the role, not the man.
But the man would be grand.
Not too bright, not too kind,
who doesn't know his own mind.
He would need me
but I wouldn't love him.
I'd begin a new life
where big decisions are made.
So exciting!
Not for pawns, fit for queens,
a life I've lived only in dreams
with a man whose title makes him stand tall
and who will stand
in front of them all.

But I can't have both.
I could still lose both.
I could end up with neither
if I make the wrong choice now.
I must make a choice now.
But it will be my choice.
While there's still a chance.
This is my chance.

My choice.

(SOPHIE returns to her room.)

Scene 9

ELIZABETH has returned to her quarters. She paces. **14. Dammit**
<Track 14>

ELIZABETH

Now I like her!

DAMMIT! THAT WASN'T SUPPOSED TO HAPPEN.
NOW SHE'S GOT ME GRAPPLIN'.
HOW CAN I TAKE HER FROM HER HOME
WHEN IT'S ALL SHE'S EVER KNOWN?

I'M NOT GOD, I DON'T HAVE MANY CHOICES.
MY MINISTERS' VOICES
ALL SHOUT I NEED AN HEIR.
I CAN'T HELP IT IF IT'S NOT FAIR.

BUT SHE'S NOT AN ORDINARY GIRL. IT WON'T BE EASY,
BUT SHE WON'T BREAK.
I CAN'T FALTER NOW.
IT'S A DECISION I MUST MAKE

Scene 10

One week later. JOANNA and
SOPHIE'S quarters. SOPHIE is
staring moodily out the window.
JOANNA bustles in. **15. What We
Came Here For <Track 15>**

(SOPHIE coughs a little.)

JOANNA

I've spoken to Chetardie. He tells me the Peter is not in love
with that Lopukhina. It's just a silly crush is all. Evidently
he chooses a new girl to 'fall in love with' every few weeks.
And of course they think he's just a silly child. None of them
have given him the slightest encouragement, nor could they have
done so with a straight face.

(Sophie coughs a little.)

JOANNA

SCHATZI, you look pale.

SOPHIE

I'M FINE, MAMA.
IT'S JUST THAT, YOU SEE,
MY GIRLFRIENDS ALL TOLD ME HE'LL NEVER WANNA HOLD ME.

JOANNA

I THINK HE WILL COME AROUND slowly.

SOPHIE

Mama, THAT'S NOT THE SAME THING, THE MAIN THING IS
HE'S JUST AN INGRATE, WHO DOESN'T EVEN RATE,
THINKS THAT HE CAN CHOOSE HIS MATE
INSTEAD OF MAKING DO WITH ME.

JOANNA

I AGREE, SCHATZI. HE'S GOT A LOT TO LEARN.

SOPHIE

FIRST HE OFFENDS, AND THEN, HE TURNS AROUND AND DEFENDS
HIS ASININE POINT OF VIEW.
BUT YOU NEED A CREW IN THIS COURT TO GET BY.

IF HIS AUNT CHOOSES ME HE'LL NEED ME AS HIS ALLY.

<p>JOANNA</p> <p>I KNOW IT'S LESS THAN PERFECT, BUT WHEN WE LEFT HOME I SWORE I WOULD MAKE THIS MARRIAGE HAPPEN. THAT'S WHAT WE CAME HERE FOR. OH SOPHIE, IT'S A SHAME THAT OUR NAME HAS BEEN DRAGGED THROUGH THE MUD BY THIS DUD.</p> <p>BUT YOU KNOW HE'S JUST A FOOL WHO LIVES BY RULES THAT HE MAKES UP AS HE GOES.</p> <p>THOUGH I KNOW IT'S FAR FROM PERFECT, THERE'S A FACT WE CAN'T IGNORE. THERE'S NO BETTER OPTION IS THERE? IT'S WHAT WE CAME HERE FOR.</p> <p>YOU JUST GOT HERE AND YOU'VE ALREADY LEARNED HOW TO NOT GET BURNED FOR YOUR SPOT TO BE EARNED. You must keep your eyes on the prize. THAT'S WHAT I ADVISE. As for the rest of</p>	<p>SOPHIE</p> <p>I know!</p> <p>THOUGH HE NEEDS FRIENDS, EV'RYDAY HE MAKES A LOT MORE FOES.</p>	<p>ELIZABETH</p> <p>PERFECT.</p> <p>PERFECT.</p> <p>PERFECT.</p> <p>PERFECT</p> <p>PERFECT.</p> <p>PERFECT.</p> <p>PERFECT.</p> <p>PERFECT.</p>
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<p>it...</p> <p>That's my girl!</p> <p>We're noblewomen! One question... Still want to marry him?</p>	<p>I PROMISE I WILL MAKE THE BEST OF IT.</p> <p>We don't marry for love. We're noblewomen!</p> <p>Of course I do, Mama.</p> <p><i>(to audience)</i> I want more.</p> <p><i>(back to JOANNA)</i> THAT'S WHAT I CAME HERE FOR!</p> <p>I DIDN'T COME HERE FOR PERFECT. IT'S NOT JUST EITHER/OR. I HAVE TO DO WHAT I SET OUT TO DO THAT'S WHAT I CAME HERE FOR.</p>	<p>PERFECT.</p> <p>PERFECT.</p> <p>PERFECT.</p> <p>PERFECT.</p>
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(SOPHIE coughs.)

JOANNA

I hope you're not coming down with a cold.

SOPHIE

I'm fine. But I think I should stay in my room for the rest of the day.

JOANNA

Yes, you better. We don't want the empress thinking you're weak.

Scene 11

Outside Sophie's bedchamber. SHE
is dangerously ill. **16. I'LL
HANDLE THE SITUATION <Track 16>**

(JOANNA is pacing, very upset.)

JOANNA

(to herself)

No, no, no, no, no.

(ELIZABETH, alarmed, hurries in.)

ELIZABETH

Sophie fainted? Why wasn't I called?

(JOANNA looks up, shocked to see her. She
stammers.)

JOANNA

Y-y-your Majesty! What are you doing here-? But you were on
retreat at Troitsky monastery. I-I didn't want to bother-

ELIZABETH

I know where I was! What is wrong?

JOANNA

It's nothing at all! Really!

I'LL HANDLE THE SITUATION.
IT'S REALLY JUST A SMALL CONCERN.
LEAVE IT TO ME; YOU CAN ADJOURN.
AN EVERYDAY SORT OF BOTHERATION,
YOU REALLY NEED NOT BE INVOLVED.

ELIZABETH

Where is Dr. Boerhave?

JOANNA

WE DON'T NEED HIM, 'CAUSE IT'S JUST A LITTLE COLD.

ELIZABETH
SHE'S UNCONSCIOUS! WHY WASN'T I TOLD?
DOCTOR BOERHAVE WILL APPEASE OUR FEAR.

JOANNA
DOCTOR LeBLANC IS ALREADY HERE.

ELIZABETH
THE FRENCH DOCTOR? What does HE say?

JOANNA
She'll likely be okay.

ELIZABETH
(PAUSE as she waits for JOANNA to respond)
WELL? WHAT DOES HE SAY WE SHOULD DO?

JOANNA
HE WANTS TO bleed her but, my God, I DON'T WANT TO!

ELIZABETH
NO ONE'S BLED FOR JUST A COLD.

JOANNA
UNLESS IT'S WORSE, BUT I'M NOT SOLD!

ELIZABETH
WHAT DOES HE THINK IT MIGHT BE?

JOANNA
Possibly pleurisy.
I WON'T HAVE HER BLED.

ELIZABETH
WHAT IS WRONG WITH YOU?

JOANNA
I WON'T BE MISLED!

THEY ALWAYS WANT TO BLEED THEM AND THEY END UP DEAD.

ELIZABETH
NOW COME ON JOANNA, YOU KNOW THAT'S NOT TRUE.

JOANNA
MY MOTHER DIED THAT WAY. I WON'T LOSE SOPHIE TOO!

(ELIZABETH pauses to gather herself to speak
gently.)

ELIZABETH
IF THE DOCTOR WANTS TO BLEED HER, THAT'S WHAT WE SHOULD DO.

I'LL HANDLE THE SITUATION.
YOU'RE OBVIOUSLY MUCH TOO DISTRESSED.
LEAVE IT TO ME; GO GET SOME REST.
BLEEDING IS A SAFE OPERATION.
IT'S SOMETHING THAT'S DONE EVERYDAY.
IT'S THE ENLIGHTENED, MODERN WAY.

(ELIZABETH starts to go into SOPHIE'S
bedchamber.)

JOANNA
No! I won't let you! He'll kill her! I'm the mother, it's my
decision!

ELIZABETH
I'm the Empress! It's mine!

JOANNA
I don't care who you are. She's my daughter and I will tell my
doctor how to proceed!

(ELIZABETH is furious but, managing to
control herself, pauses and shares a look
with the audience. SHE collects herself,
then speaks calmly and deliberately.)

ELIZABETH
YOUR DOCTOR? HOW DO YOU KNOW HIM ANYWAY?

JOANNA

I'M NOT SUCH A WALLFLOWER...

ELIZABETH

THIS ISN'T PLAY!

JOANNA

I DO HAVE SOME FRIENDS...

ELIZABETH

French friends I NOTICE
OF ALL THE PEOPLE HERE THE FRENCH ARE THE LOWEST.
WHY DIDN'T YOU CALL THE PALACE PHYSICIAN?

JOANNA

I THOUGHT...

ELIZABETH

YOU WERE HOPING TO HIDE HER CONDITION!

JOANNA

Don't be absurd! I THOUGHT BY NOW SHE'D BE CURED.

ELIZABETH

YOU TRIED TO KEEP IT SECRET AND YET STILL I HEARD!

ELIZABETH

(menacing)

What are you playing at, Joanna?

(JOANNA, realizing the danger of her
situation, takes a step back from ELIZABETH,
who presses forward.)

ELIZABETH

I'LL HANDLE THE SITUATION.
YOU'RE OBVIOUSLY MUCH TOO DISTRESSED.
LEAVE IT TO ME; GO GET SOME REST.
LESSER DEEDS HAVE LED TO RUINATION.

I don't think you came here to be ruined, Joanna. Step aside.

(JOANNA, frightened, shares a nervous look with the audience, then steps aside to allow ELIZABETH to cross into Sophie's bedchamber.)

Scene 12

SOPHIE'S bedchamber. ELIZABETH
holds the unconscious Sophie.17.

We Could Be Family <Track 17>

ELIZABETH

YOU POOR DEAR, SO PALE AND DRAWN.
YOUR PATH UNCLEAR, A PRETTY PAWN.
I'M SORRY I MADE YOU SCARED OF ME.
I DID THAT ON PURPOSE.
CAN'T CARE FOR POPULARITY
WHEN YOU'RE MASTER OF THE CIRCUS.

BUT YOU ARE JUST A GIRL, MUCH LIKE I WAS.
HOPING FOR A DAZZLING LIFE, AS YOUTH DOES.
I KNOW I'VE BEEN A DEMON SINCE YOU'VE ARRIVED,
BUT I COULD BE YOUR ANGEL, HELP YOU SURVIVE.
SHOW YOU WHAT I'VE LEARNED OF THE SNARES YOU DON'T YET SEE.
WE'VE BOTH HAD BAD LUCK WITH FAM'LY, HAVEN'T WE?

If I choose you, Sophie, life will be hard married to my nephew,
for he will never grow into a man of honor. But your life has
already been hard with your mother being...as she is. Perhaps her
difficult ways will have taught you skills that will help you
negotiate Peter. Perhaps you and I could learn to manage
together.

I COULD SHOW YOU HOW TO BE WHAT YOU'D NEED TO BE.
I COULD BE YOUR ANGEL.
I COULD BE YOUR MOTHER.
I COULD BE MORE THAN YOUR MOTHER IF YOU AND I AGREE.
WE COULD BE FAMILY...YES, FAM'LY.

Scene 13

JOANNA, alone in her bedchamber.
**18. Love and Duty Reprise <Track
18>**

JOANNA

I DON'T DARE VISIT SOPHIE.
THAT DAMN ELIZABETH GUARDS HER AS A TROPHY.
I THINK I MUST LOOK SUSPICIOUS,
AND THE KING'S MAD I'VE NOT BEEN EXPEDITIOUS.
THOUGH I FEAR FOR SOPHIE'S RECOVERY
TO VISIT HER NOW, I MIGHT RISK DISCOVERY.
STILL MY DAUGHTER'S ALWAYS BEEN SUCH A STRONG GIRL,
SHE'LL BE FINE, I KNOW

THERE IS LOVE AND THERE IS DUTY.
I'LL KEEP MY DUTY TO MY KING.
THERE IS LOVE AND THERE IS DUTY,
AND STILL GET SOPHIE HER RING.

Scene 14

SOPHIE'S bedchamber. SOPHIE has pulled through and is convalescing. SHE is sitting up in bed with a book of orthodox catechism in her lap. ELIZABETH sits by her. THEY are laughing merrily. **19. Growing Closer <Track 19>**

ELIZABETH

...I said "You know I am the daughter of Peter the Great! Follow me!" and all three hundred Preobrazhensky guardsmen did. They followed me on horseback shouting and swearing they would kill my enemies, but I said "No Russian blood shall be spilled". I entered the Winter Palace and the coup d'etat was complete! I was Empress.

SOPHIE

Wow! You were so brave!

ELIZABETH

I was indeed! That's how badly I didn't want to end up in a convent!

(They laugh heartily together. JOANNA enters, unseen, and stands watching in the doorway.)

SOPHIE

When did you decide that you would never have anyone executed?

ELIZABETH

Oh, I always knew that. I am a woman. Women take no pleasure in killing.

SOPHIE

You are both brave and good!

ELIZABETH

One must always try one's best.

SOPHIE

(eyes shining with admiration)
Yes, Aunt Elizabeth.

JOANNA

Knock, knock!

(SOPHIE and ELIZABETH look up. There is a tense silence. Finally, ELIZABETH looking pleased at the uncomfortable mood, speaks.)

ELIZABETH

I suppose you two have some catching up to do.

(SHE exits, having to pass JOANNA on her way out. Both cut their eyes away. This is the first time JOANNA has visited SOPHIE since SHE quarreled with ELIZABETH. Throughout the scene JOANNA attempts to maintain a light tone, but it SHE is worried and strained.)

JOANNA

Hello, schatzi-
IT'S LOVELY TO SEE YOU LOOKING SO WELL.
I'VE BEEN RUN RAGGED WITH COMMITMENTS.

SOPHIE

Mmm.

JOANNA

THERE ARE SO MANY PEOPLE I HAD TO MEET,
ALL AT ELIZABETH'S INSITSENCE.

SOPHIE

(to audience)

Mmm.

JOANNA

SCHATZI, I'VE MISSED YOU. I WAS SO WORRIED,
BUT YOU'VE GOT COLOR BACK IN YOUR CHEEKS.

SOPHIE

IT'S GOOD OF YOU TO NOTICE, MOTHER.
I'VE BEEN SICK FOR WEEKS.

JOANNA

(snapping)
REALLY, SOPHIE. IT'S NOT NECESSARY TO SULK.

SOPHIE
SO THAT'S HOW YOU'RE GOING TO PLAY THIS?
YOU ARE AWARE I VERY NEARLY DIED?

JOANNA
OH SCHATZI, HOW DO I SAY THIS?
YOU'LL UNDERSTAND THESE THINGS WHEN YOU GET OLDER.
BUT YOU DON'T NOW, AND THAT'S A FACT.

SOPHIE
BUT I CAN MARRY A MAN WHOM I DON'T LOVE,
I'M OLD ENOUGH TO DO THAT?

(JOANNA is silent.)

SOPHIE
Aunt Elizabeth says-

JOANNA
(snaps)
What's with this 'AUNT' business?

SOPHIE
What?

JOANNA
And what's that book?

SOPHIE
It's the Orthodox Catechism. Father Simeon has been instructing
me. He's been a great comfort to me while I've been ill.

JOANNA
I hope he doesn't think you're thinking of being baptized.

SOPHIE
Of course he does. Why else would he be here?

JOANNA
I'll not have you converting to that barbaric religion.

SOPHIE
(shares an incredulous look with the audience)
What are you talking about? It's a condition of the marriage
contract. You never objected before.

JOANNA
Well, I object now!

SOPHIE

Why would you object? And why now?

JOANNA

Because you and I had grown so close and now it's all, "Aunt Elizabeth says...

SOPHIE

(Exasperated, SOPHIE scoffs.)

SINCE I WAS TINY, I HAVE KNOWN
MY BIRTH WAS YOUR SETBACK.
AND ALL THE LOVE YOU HAD TO GIVE
MY YOUNGER BROTHERS HIJACKED.
ME, A GIRL YOU'VE ONLY TOLERATED,
THOUGH I TRIED, HOW I TRIED. HOW LONG I WAITED.
ALL THE WHILE HOPING FOR A SIGN
THAT WE WERE GROWING CLOSER.

SUDDENLY YOU TURNED TO ME
AS I BEGAN ASCENDING.
AND THOUGH IT WASN'T REALLY LOVE,
IT WASN'T HARD PRETENDING.
THOUGH I HOPED YOUR KINDNESS WOULD SUSTAIN ME,
I HAVE FOUND WHAT YOU CALL LOVE HAS ONLY DRAINED ME.
AND NOW YOU HAVE TURNED AWAY AGAIN
AS THE WEDDING'S GROWING CLOSER.

ARE YOU AT CROSS PURPOSES IN YOUR MIND
FINDING OUR FORTUNES SO INTERTWINED?
TRYING TO MAKE UP FOR WHAT YOU LACK.
CLIMBING HIGHER BUT ONLY ON MY BACK.
I HATE THINKING THIS ABOUT YOU,
BUT THE EVIDENCE SAYS IT'S NO DOUBT TRUE.
BECAUSE THE WAY OUR FATES HAVE BEEN CONTRIVED
IS THAT YOUR CLIMB HAS ENDED WHILE I HAVE JUST ARRIVED.

THE EMPRESS LOVES ME AS I AM,
I KNOW 'CAUSE SHE STAYED BY ME.
SHE USED HER LOVE TO PULL ME THROUGH
THE ENDLESS NIGHTS SHE PRAYED BY ME.
THOUGH SHE NEEDS ME TO FURTHER HER AMBITIONS,
I FEEL HER LOVE. I KNOW HER LOVE'S WITHOUT CONDITIONS.
BUT AS YOU HAVE TURNED AWAY BY CHOICE,
SHE AND I ARE GROWING CLOSER, OH.

Mama, I'm going to be baptized. The moment I do, I will be betrothed. Then I will outrank you. Then we'll see who needs to do some growing up.

SHE AND I ARE GROWING CLOSER.

Scene 15

JOANNA, alone in her bedchamber.

**20. Joanna Bides Her Time <Track
20>**

JOANNA

KING FREDERICK'S BREATHING DOWN MY NECK
ABOUT THAT DAMN ACCORD.

BUT IT'S ANYBODY'S GUESS WHICH SIDE ELIZABETH'S LEANING TOWARD.
AND SOPHIE'S SO ANGRY I NEVER CAME.

I CAN TAKE HER BLAME, 'CAUSE IT IS NOT A GAME.

IF I WERE TO TELL HER THE REAL REASON,

HER RESOLVE COULD WEAKEN AND SHE'D END UP IN TREASON,
LOSE HER CHANCE HERE FOREVER BECAUSE OF MY ENDEAVOR...NO
"AUNT ELIZABETH!" WELL, I NEVER!

Scene 16

ELIZABETH, livid, holds a sheaf of papers. JOANNA, frightened, enters. **21. Risked Everything**

<Track 21>

ELIZABETH

I INVITE YOU TO RUSSIA,
WELCOME YOU AS A SISTER.
BUT NOW I LEARN YOU'RE REALLY
JUST A WOULD-BE TRICKSTER.
YOU IMPERILED RUSSIA
FOR YOUR OWN GRATIFICATION
TRYING TO CLIMB HIGHER
ON THE BACK OF MY NATION.

YOU BROUGHT SOPHIE HERE
NOT FOR THE FUTURE THAT I HELD OUT
BUT TO USE HER OPPORTUNITY
TO HELP YOURSELF OUT.
SO YOU SET TO SPYING
THINKING YOU WENT UNWITNESSED.
YOU CREPT ABOUT AND GOT CAUGHT OUT
BECAUSE YOU'RE SO DAMN WITLESS, YEAH.

JOANNA

PLEASE FORGIVE ME,
YOUR MAJESTY!
PLEASE FORGIVE ME!
SOPHIE DIDN'T KNOW.
WHAT COULD I DO?
HE IS MY KING.
AND MY HUSBAND'S IN HIS DEBT.
I'D HAVE DONE ANYTHING, ANYTHING, ANYTHING.

SOPHIE

I KNEW YOU WERE UP TO SOMETHING
THAT WOULD FURTHER YOUR INTERESTS AT BEST.
BUT THAT YOU'D RISK EVERYTHING WE CAME FOR,
I COULD NEVER HAVE GUESSED.
YOU RISKED EVERYTHING WE HOPED FOR...
OR RATHER YOU RISKED EVERYTHING I HOPED FOR.

SOPHIE (CONT.)

(to audience)
And she didn't even do it well.

ELIZABETH

YOU CAME HERE TO RUSSIA
FOR A MARRIAGE OF ROYALTY.
THEN YOU BETRAYED MY TRUST.
THAT'S YOUR LOYALTY.

ELIZABETH

AND NOW YOU PROB'LY THINK THAT I'LL ALLOW YOU TO STAY
IN A LAND I UNDERSTAND THAT YOU PLANNED
TO HAPPILY BETRAY.

SOPHIE

MAMA, HOW WILL I EVER FORGIVE YOU?
MAMA, HOW CAN I EVER LIVE WITH YOU?

ELIZABETH

THIS ARRANGEMENT WE HAD IS NOW RESCINDED.

SOPHIE

No!

ELIZABETH

I AM OUTRAGED BY THIS CHARADE AND I'LL REPAY
FOR HOW YOU'VE OFFENDED.

JOANNA	SOPHIE	ELIZABETH
WHAT COULD I DO? HE IS MY KING. MY HUSBAND'S IN HIS DEBT. I'D HAVE DONE ANYTHING.	MAMA, HOW WILL I EVER FORGIVE YOU?	I HAVE BEEN PLAYED. I'VE BEEN BETRAYED.
WHAT COULD I DO, HE IS MY KING. MY HUSBAND'S IN HIS DEBT. I'D HAVE DONE ANYTHING!	MAMA, HOW CAN I EVER LIVE WITH YOU?	I HAVE BEEN PLAYED. I'VE BEEN BETRAYED. I HAVE BEEN PLAYED. I'VE BEEN BETRAYED.

ANYTHING!	YOU RISKED EVERYTHING WE HOPED FOR.	YOU RISKED EVERYTHING WE HOPED FOR.
ANYTHING!	YOU RISKED EVERYTHING WE HOPED FOR.	YOU RISKED EVERYTHING WE HOPED FOR.
	YOU RISKED EVERYTHING WE HOPED FOR.	YOU RISKED EVERYTHING WE HOPED FOR.

Scene 17

JOANNA, alone in her bedchamber.

22. Yours/Mine <Track 22>

JOANNA

What have I done? How could I? I love my daughter! I only wanted...I...

WHEN I WAS A CHILD WE WERE THE POOR RELATIONS
OF THE HOUSE OF BRUNSWICK ON MY MOTHER'S SIDE.
SHE SENT ME THERE TO BE RAISED BY THE DUCHESS
WHO OWNS EVERYTHING SHE TOUCHES.
OH, THE DUCHESS! MY AUNT.
IT WAS THERE I LEARNED TO WANT...AND WANT...

THE PORCELAIN DOLL WAS LIGHT
AND SO TINY SHE'D FIT IN YOUR POCKET JUST RIGHT.
IN HER TAFFETA DRESS WITH A FAN IN HER HAND,
YOU HAD TO BE CAREFUL TAKING HER FROM HER STAND.
BUT SHE BELONGED TO COUSIN ADELE,
LIKE THE PAINTS AND THE JACKS AND THE FRAGILE SEASHELL.
WHEN YOU TURNED OUT YOUR POCKETS NANNY WOULD YELL
BECAUSE NONE OF IT WAS YOURS.

THE CLEVER YOUNG PRINCE WAS KIND.
WITH A GAP IN HIS TEETH, HE WAS BEAUTY DEFINED.
HE ON-PURPOSE FELL SHORT WHEN YOU PLAYED HIDE AND SEEK,
'CAUSE THAT'S HOW YOU COURT WHEN YOU'RE TOO SHY TO SPEAK.
BUT HE BELONGED TO COUSIN ADELE.
YOUR UNCLE DETERMINED THAT SHE'D MARRY WELL.
AND SO YOUR HEART BROKE WHEN THEY TOLLED THE CHURCH BELL
BECAUSE HE WAS NEVER YOURS.

IT WAS NEVER GONNA BE ME.
IT WAS NEVER GONNA BE MINE.
TO THE LEFT, TO THE RIGHT
OUT OF REACH, OUT OF SIGHT.
IT WAS NEVER GONNA BE ME.
IT WAS NEVER GONNA BE MINE.

THE RANK YOU WERE OFFERED WAS HIGH.
IT COULD ALMOST MAKE UP FOR THE LUCK THAT SLIPPED BY.
YOU LEAPT AT THE CHANCE TO OUTDISTANCE YOUR LOT,
THAT YOU'D NOT BEEN FORGOTTEN BY FATE, AS YOU'D THOUGHT.
BUT IT BELONGED TO YOUR DAUGHTER.
IT SHOCKED YOU TO WISH IT WAS YOU AND NOT HER.

NOW YOU'VE LOST HER 'CAUSE SHE'S LEARNED MUCH MORE THAN YOU
TAUGHT HER,
AND SHE'S NO LONGER YOURS.
NO LONGER YOURS.
SHE'S NO LONGER MINE.

Scene 18

ELIZABETH's quarters. 23. **I RULE
ALONE <Track 23>**

ELIZABETH

I AM THE EMPRESS OF A GREAT NATION.
I MUST FULFILL MY STATION.
IT'S TIME TO CAST MY LOT
AND ACCEPT WHAT CHOICE I'VE GOT.

I'M NOT GOD, WHO WON'T GIVE ME A FAM'LY
THAT WAS A FANTASY.
WHAT I'VE GOT IS AN EMPIRE TO LEAD
IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT I NEED.

IT'S NOT AN ORDINARY LIFE. IT WON'T BE EASY,
BUT I WON'T BREAK.
I RULE, AND RULE ALONE
NO MATTER HOW MY HEART WILL ACHE.

ELIZABETH

(calls out)
Bring me Sophie!

(SOPHIE enters and stands before ELIZABETH.)

YOU KNOW YOUR MOTHER'S CONDUCT HAS BEEN GHASTLY.
BUT YOU HAVE KEPT YOUR HEAD DOWN SO STEADFASTLY.
I KNOW YOU'RE A YOUNG WOMAN A OF GOOD SENSE AND GRACE,
SO I'LL ALLOW THIS MARRIAGE TO TAKE PLACE.
YOUR BAPTISM AND BETROTHAL WILL BE RIGHT AWAY.
BUT FROM NOW ON, I'LL BE WATCHING YOU EV'RY DAY.

SOPHIE

Yes, Your Highness.

ELIZABETH

Another thing: immediately after the ceremony, your mother will
leave for Germany.

(after a pause)
And she will never return.

(SOPHIE is too shocked to speak.)

ELIZABETH (CONT.)

(another pause)
And it is up to you to tell her.

SOPHIE

I...

(SOPHIE turns to the audience, taking a moment to process what ELIAZABETH is requiring of her, and why.)

(to *ELIZABETH*)

Yes, Your Highness. I will.

(SOPHIE exits.)

AND NOW IT'S MY TURN

Scene 19

JOANNA and SOPHIE'S
quarters. **24.Until Then <Track 24>**

(SOPHIE enters.)

SOPHIE

Mother?

JOANNA

Sophie?

SOPHIE

The Empress has changed her mind. I am going to marry Peter.

JOANNA

Oh, schatzi, that's wonderful! Congratulations.

(pauses)

I'm sorry. I'm so sorry.

SOPHIE

I know, Mother.

(THEY embrace.)

SOPHIE

Mother-Mama, I have to tell you something. You're not going to like it. I don't like it. Her Majesty is sending you home. Today. She will not be allowing you to come back.

JOANNA

Not ever?

SOPHIE

No, Mama. Not ever.

JOANNA

Never come back? I can't bear it!

SOPHIE

You can, Mama. We are noblewomen, remember? We do our duty first and *then* find a way to be happy.

JOANNA

You're my daughter, not hers. She can't take you away from me!

SOPHIE

(a long look to the audience before speaking to JOANNA)
I'm no one's daughter anymore. Not yours, not hers. I am a woman now. I will soon be Peter's wife.

JOANNA

I don't want to leave you, schatzi. This place is treacherous; I should know. How will you survive? How will you know whom to trust?

SOPHIE

I will know, Mama. And I will be fine.

JOANNA

And Elizabeth? How will you handle her?

SOPHIE

I don't know yet. But I will. I promise I will, Mama. And we will see each other again. When Peter is Emperor

JOANNA

Yes. Until then.

SOPHIE

Until then, Mama.

Epilogue

Catherine Palace, St. Petersburg,
1796. **25. Epilogue**

(Catherine addresses the audience.)

CATHERINE

MY NAME IS CATHERINE.
I'M AN EMPRESS.
SOME PEOPLE ARE IMPRESSED.
THOSE PEOPLE CALL ME CATHERINE THE GREAT
AND I'M 67 years old now.
AND IF YOU WANT TO KNOW HOW
I GOT HERE
WHEN I WAS 32 I OVERTHREW
MY HUSBAND
'CAUSE *SOMEONE* HAD TO!

DURING MY REIGN EXPANDED RUSSIA'S BORDERS
BY MY ORDERS. I'VE MOVED RUSSIA FORWARD.
BROUGHT US INTO EUROPE AS AN EQUAL NATION.
AND CODIFIED THE LAW INTO ORDERLY SUMMATION.

CATHERINE FOR THE FIRST TIME COMPOSERS, WRITERS, PAINTERS OF THE FEMININE PERSUASION HAVE THE CHANCE TO FLOURISH IN THEIR VOCATIONS. OH, AND CLOSEST TO MY HEART, I'VE FOUNDED THE FIRST GIRL'S SCHOOL IN RUSSIA, OH, AND SO MUCH MORE! TO BE THIS EMPIRE'S RULER TURNS OUT THAT'S WHAT I CAME HERE FOR.	JOANNA OOH OOH RUSSIA RUSSIA WHAT SHE CAME HERE FOR.	ELIZABETH OOH OOH GIRL'S SCHOOL GIRL'S SCHOOL. WHAT SHE CAME HERE FOR.
Much has been written about me,		

<p>not all of it unflattering (<i>chuckling</i>). Who do you think wrote those accounts? Women? I couldn't educate the entire western world! My life has been full and I am satisfied. (SHE begins to exit, turns around.) I never did see my mother again.</p> <p>'CAUSE THINGS DON'T ALWAYS GO AS PLANNED.</p> <p>OF THE LAND</p> <p>THERE IS LOVE AND THERE IS DUTY. THERE IS WHAT YOU GET TO DO.</p>	<p>SHE LEARNED TO TAKE THE POWER. CLIMB THE HIGHEST TOWER. BECOME THE RULER OF THE LAND. A STATESMAN AND AN EMPRESS, SOME CALLED HER A TEMPTRESS. MEN FELL IN LINE WHEN SHE TOOK HER STAND.</p> <p>SHE LEARNED TO TAKE THE POWER. CLIMB THE HIGHEST TOWER. BECOME THE RULER OF THE LAND. A STATESMAN AND AN EMPRESS, SOME CALLED HER A TEMPTRESS. MEN FELL IN LINE WHEN SHE TOOK HER STAND.</p> <p>THERE IS LOVE AND THERE IS DUTY. THERE IS WHAT YOU GET TO DO.</p>	<p>SHE LEARNED TO TAKE THE POWER. CLIMB THE HIGHEST TOWER. BECOME THE RULER OF THE LAND. A STATESMAN AND AN EMPRESS, SOME CALLED HER A TEMPTRESS. MEN FELL IN LINE WHEN SHE TOOK HER STAND.</p> <p>SHE LEARNED TO TAKE THE POWER. CLIMB THE HIGHEST TOWER. BECOME THE RULER OF THE LAND. A STATESMAN AND AN EMPRESS, SOME CALLED HER A TEMPTRESS. MEN FELL IN LINE WHEN SHE TOOK HER STAND.</p> <p>THERE IS LOVE AND THERE IS DUTY. THERE IS WHAT YOU GET TO DO.</p>
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<p>THERE IS LOVE AND THERE IS DUTY. WHAT'S BETWEEN IS TRUE.</p> <p>THERE IS LOVE AND THERE IS DUTY. YOU BUILD YOU LIFE BY YOUR OWN HAND. THERE IS LOVE AND THERE IS DUTY. AND THINGS DON'T ALWAYS GO AS PLANNED. THINGS DON'T ALWAYS GO AS PLANNED. THINGS DON'T ALWAYS GO AS PLANNED.</p>	<p>THERE IS LOVE AND THERE IS DUTY. WHAT'S BETWEEN IS TRUE.</p> <p>THERE IS LOVE AND THERE IS DUTY. YOU BUILD YOU LIFE BY YOUR OWN HAND. THERE IS LOVE AND THERE IS DUTY.</p> <p>PLANNED.</p> <p>PLANNED.</p> <p>PLANNED.</p>	<p>THERE IS LOVE AND THERE IS DUTY. WHAT'S BETWEEN IS TRUE.</p> <p>THERE IS LOVE AND THERE IS DUTY. YOU BUILD YOU LIFE BY YOUR OWN HAND. THERE IS LOVE AND THERE IS DUTY.</p> <p>PLANNED.</p> <p>PLANNED.</p> <p>PLANNED.</p>
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