

INT. KISMET'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Kismet is whittling away at a bone with a knife, letting the fragments fall into the cauldron.

KISMET

Insolent, he said. Little old woman, they said. What trouble could she cause? A good deal more than that hard-headed self-centered pig of a Sultan already causes, and that's saying something.

She turns the remainder of the bone over in her hand, studying it from all angles. It's a knitting needle now. She sets the needle on a shelf, with three others just like it. They shimmer.

CUT TO:

INT. MERICHEV CASTLE - ILKIN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Yanni is sitting on the end of Ilkin's bed.

YANNI

I remember now! I wanted to know if it was normal for Father not to hear the petitions like he did today. And like he did last month. Is that normal before this? I haven't noticed. But I haven't really paid attention.

ILKIN

Go back to bed, Yanni.

YANNI

But is it normal?

Ilkin finally sits up, the movement motivated by annoyance.

ILKIN

Why does this matter to you?

YANNI

I've been thinking...

ILKIN

Leave the thinking to Father. He knows what's best for us.

CUT TO:

INT. KISMET'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Kismet takes out the fragment of stone from the palace steps and drops it into the cauldron.

KISMET

And trouble for the Sultan of Merichev and his parrot sons will do the world a world of good. If he learns from it, fine! If not, we're better off without any of those men.

She turns to the grouse.

KISMET

Now, the feathers. Where are the parrots?

The grouse opens one sleepy eye and croaks softly.

KISMET

Hmph. You're right. It'll have to be something else..

A shadow flickers across the moonlight, briefly darkening the room. Kismet crosses to the window, looks out.

CUT TO:

EXT. KISMET'S ISLAND - NIGHT - KISMET'S P.O.V.

The shore outside the window is dotted with sleeping birds of all species. A trio of swans land in the water.

CUT TO:

INT. KISMET'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Kismet grins mischievously.

KISMET

Perfect.

CUT TO:

INT. MERICHEV CASTLE - ILKIN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

YANNI

But Idris didn't seem to like it at all. And he's supposed to advise Father, right?

ILKIN

Father knows better than anyone. He's the Sultan. He doesn't need advice.

YANNI

But if Father keeps putting the people off, I don't think they're going to like him very much. They're going to think he doesn't care about them.

Ilkin laughs.

ILKIN

Not like him? A Sultan doesn't have to be liked, Yanni. And he doesn't have to care. He just has to be obeyed.

Yanni bites his lip.

CUT TO:

INT. KISMET'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Kismet drops five long white swan feathers into the cauldron. They spread out across the surface of the liquid.

KISMET

When the feathers of swans meets the stone of their home... How much trouble they will have!

She takes the little bag of feed that Elisavet gave her and holds it over the cauldron.

KISMET

And how much power she will have.

She drops the bag into the cauldron. The instant it makes contact with the water-

CUT TO:

INT. MERICHEV CASTLE - ELISAVET'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Elisavet suddenly wakes up, sits. A bad dream? She looks around the room for the source of what woke her, but there is nothing. Just the wind blowing in from the balcony.

Elisavet shivers. Gets out of bed. Outside the window, the sky is just beginning to lighten, the stars fading away.

CUT TO:

INT. MERICHEV CASTLE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Elisavet, in a dressing gown, walks down the hall. One hand brushing against the wall for guidance in the dark. Searching.

CUT TO:

EXT. MERICHEV CASTLE - DAWN

The sun pokes out from beneath the horizon.

CUT TO:

INT. MERICHEV CASTLE - HALLWAY - DAWN

From above Elisavet--a thud. She stops short. A crash. She looks up.

A scream. Yanni.

Elisavet runs down the hall.

CUT TO:

INT. MERICHEV CASTLE - ILKIN'S BEDROOM - DAWN

Yanni is on the floor, on his back, staring up at Ilkin's bed, where a large swan--Ilkin--is hissing and thrashing about, turning his long neck to look down at his body.

CUT TO:

INT. MERICHEV CASTLE - ILKIN'S BEDROOM - DAWN - ILKIN'S P.O.V.

A short white feather tail. Two gray feet. Two long white wings--he brings them together in front of his eyes. Gaze shifts to Yanni on the floor.

CUT TO:

INT. MERICHEV CASTLE - ILKIN'S BEDROOM - DAWN

Swan-Ilkin makes a pleading trumpet. A heavy thud and shout from behind Yanni draws his attention—in the next room, Alim has fallen off his bed in a bundle of blankets. We see his head emerge from the blankets just as his forehead pales, his nose darkens, and his lips stretch into an orange beak.

YANNI

Alim?!

Swan-Alim struggles to get free of the blanket, trumpeting.

CUT TO:

INT. MERICHEV CASTLE - ESER AND UGUR'S BEDROOM - DAWN

Elisavet runs through Yanni's room and into Eser and Ugur's, where she stops just inside the doorway, eyes wide. Feathers are flying everywhere as two small swans flap around in a panic, bumping into walls and knocking over furniture. They manage to bump through the door, into Alim's room and out of sight.

Elisavet stares after them. Then Yanni screams again, and she hurries on through the bedrooms.

CUT TO:

INT. MERICHEV CASTLE - ALIM'S BEDROOM - DAWN

CLOSE IN on Yanni's feet as he stumbles, trying to walk--first just one is a swan's foot, and the other morphs as we watch. We draw back to see the rest of him as he falls forward against Alim's bed. Eser and Ugur flap over his head and into Ilkin's room. Alim is perched on a nightstand, trumpeting.

Elisavet appears in the doorway. Stares in horror at her baby brother, at the white feathers spreading across his body. He reaches out to her--one hand, the left. Calling out to her as his lips warp into a beak, warping his speech into a swan call.

YANNI

ELISAVET! ELISA--! ELY!

Elisavet comes forward, reaching out to him, her fingers inches from his as they lengthen and flatten into feathers, her fingertips just brushing his wingtip.

Outside the small window, Ilkin, largest of the swans, flaps by, trumpeting a call to his brothers as he turns toward the horizon. Eser and Ugur are following him. Alim and Yanni flutter into Ilkin's room. Elisavet follows...

CUT TO:

INT. MERICHEV CASTLE - ILKIN'S BEDROOM - DAWN

...but she has to stop at the wide window, watching the five swans fly away, her mouth open in a silent scream. She is suddenly all alone in the room, surrounded by feathers.