

EXT. KISMET'S ISLAND - DAY

Elisavet, dripping wet, walks up the island, Yanni right beside her and the three middle-age swan princes not far behind. The slope quickly turns from rocky sand to rocky grass and patches of NETTLES. The path up through the grass forms a curve around the island, around a central grassy rock too large to see over.

As Elisavet follows the path around the island, turning a corner around the central rock, a little wooden house comes into view. Elisavet pauses. Yanni pokes his head through her legs, looks down at the house, and looks up at Elisavet. She looks down at him. She shrugs. She approaches the house.

CUT TO:

INT. KISMET'S HOUSE - DAY

Elisavet pokes her head in through the door of the house, and stops again, staring. She's seen Kismet, her back to the door as she prepares something in the cauldron, humming cheerfully.

The grouse lifts its head, sees Elisavet, and croaks softly at Kismet. Kismet turns around and notices Elisavet standing there.

KISMET

...well, now. I certainly didn't expect to see you here.

She looks the princess up and down, taking in the wet dress.

KISMET

Did you swim the ocean, or did those careless brothers of yours drop you in the sea on the way here?

Elisavet just stands in the doorway, still staring. Kismet shrugs and turns back to the cauldron, taking a small wooden bowl and spoon down off a nearby shelf.

KISMET

Well, you might as well come inside and get dry.

Elisavet steps into the house, cautiously, looking from side to side at the shelves. Yanni sits in the doorway to watch.

Kismet ladles some vegetable soup into the small bowl and offers it to Elisavet. Elisavet hesitates.

KISMET

Don't worry, princess, I clean it between crafts. It won't do to you what it did to your brothers.

Elisavet shoots her a sharp, alarmed look. Kismet chuckles and indicates the stool near the spinning wheel.

KISMET

Sit. Eat. Come now, you must be hungry. You've traveled so far, you've nearly reached Odensa.

Elisavet slowly sits, but doesn't eat, her eyes narrowed as she watches Kismet ladle herself a bowl of soup and swallow a spoonful.

KISMET

There, see? I mean you no harm.

Elisavet looks down at the bowl in her lap. She picks up the spoon, takes up a tiny amount of soup, and sips it. Her eyes brighten. She eats with more vigor. Kismet nods slowly and continues eating.

The grouse makes eye contact with Yanni. Yanni tilts his head to the side. The grouse snaps at him. Yanni winces, withdrawing his head closer to his chest.

Elisavet scrapes the spoon against the bowl to get every last bit of the soup. Kismet sets her own bowl and spoon on a shelf.

KISMET

Now that we've shared a meal together, I believe we can call each other "friend", correct? So, Princess Elisavet, as a friend, I have a question for you.

She comes a few steps closer to Elisavet, crouching down so they are eye to eye.

KISMET

Why in the world are you here on my island, instead of enjoying the comfort of your home in Merichev?

Elisavet sets the bowl and spoon on the floor by her feet. She points at Yanni, sitting in the doorway. Then she holds out one

hand palm-up and puts two fingers from her other hand on the palm. She makes the fingers "walk" like legs. Then, her face set and serious, she points at Kismet.

Kismet laughs.

KISMET

Oh, that's good. Isn't that rich? The princess has come to save the princes. That's one for the storybooks.

Kismet straightens, turning serious.

KISMET

You shouldn't be here. This is your father's fault. He's the one who should be here, begging my forgiveness. It's his trouble to fix.

Elisavet stands quickly. She is taller than Kismet, and stern. Kismet frowns.

KISMET

But you aren't begging.

Elisavet points at Yanni again. Snaps her fingers.

KISMET

I can't just turn them back into men. Magic spells are like words, your highness. Once cast, they aren't easily taken back. It takes work--hard, stressful work--to undo the effects of magic and words... And that work isn't yours to do, Princess.

Kismet turns to walk away. Elisavet grabs her arm and forces Kismet to face her again, shaking her head emphatically.

KISMET

What do you want them back for, anyway? A bunch of stupid boys. Your father's beloved sons, perfect and healthy and always doing and saying exactly as he tells them to. Always talking over you. Treating you like you're dumb and incompetent. Go on, tell me I'm wrong. It's how your people talk about you; how different could it be with the royal family?

Elisavet's expression wavers, her grip on Kismet's arm slackens. Kismet's voice softens, but gains intensity as she monologues.

KISMET

You don't need that. With them gone, you're the only heir left. You're the only hope for your kingdom's future! With them gone, your father will have no choice but to focus on you, to listen to you, to hear you. They all will have no choice but to hear you. Don't you want that?

Elisavet lowers her arm. Kismet paces, gesticulating widely.

KISMET

And if they still don't hear you, who cares? Sultan Erhan and Sultana Melike are old. Soon enough, they will be gone, and you--you will be Sultana! You will rule all of Merichev! You could have anyone who mocked you for your muteness executed, if you wanted. They will have no choice but to respect you. Don't you want that?

Elisavet looks at her feet. Kismet nods.

KISMET

You do want it. Go home, Elisavet. Go rule your kingdom. You will be much better at it than your brothers, anyway.

Elisavet slowly walks out of the house.

CUT TO:

EXT. KISMET'S HOUSE - DAY

Elisavet stops. The four swans (all but Ilkin) are standing there in a group. Looking up at her. Yanni takes a step towards her, tilts his head. Holds out his left wing towards Elisavet. She sighs. Puts her fingertips to his wingtip. Nods.

CUT TO:

INT. KISMET'S HOUSE - DAY

Kismet, at the cauldron, turns around to see Elisavet standing right behind her.

KISMET

I thought I told you to go home?

Elisavet crosses her arms. Glares. The swans poke their heads in through the door. Kismet shakes her head.

KISMET

What a good sister you are. Fine. Fine! I'll tell you how to break the spell. But it won't be easy. You'll have to do exactly as I say. If you mess any part of it up, your brothers will stay swans forever. No more nighttime breaks. Still want to risk it, your highness?

Elisavet nods firmly.

KISMET

We'll see about that.

She takes the four BONE NEEDLES off the shelf.

KISMET

Do you know how to knit?

Elisavet grins.