

EXT. THE KINGDOM OF ODENSA - TOWN SQUARE - DAY

The execution pyre is complete at the center of the square. A wooden platform is at one end of the square. A crowd fills the square, all the people gathered to see the execution.

The crowd shifts to let two guards pulling a small wooden cart into the square. On the cart sits Elisavet, four shirts piled at her feet, working on the fifth. The shirt's body is complete, and she is attaching one sleeve. The other side of the shirt is still sleeveless. The people murmur and sneer as she passes. She ignores them, clearly exhausted but knitting tirelessly.

Ruben and Henrik step up onto the platform, easily seen above the crowd. The cart draws up next to the pyre. Another guard steps forward, bearing a lit torch.

RUBEN

My people--

VIOLA (O.S.)

Ruben, that's enough!

Viola's voice carries throughout the square. She steps up onto the platform and strides to stand beside her brother. She calls to the guard with the torch.

VIOLA

Douse that flame! As your princess, I command you.

The guard looks at the torch and then back at the platform, clearly confused. Henrik takes Viola's arm, whispers harshly.

HENRIK

Viola, what are you doing?

VIOLA

This isn't right, Uncle.

HENRIK

The people have asked for help, and their ruler has spoken.

Viola shoves away his hand. The crowd gasps.

VIOLA

And their ruler is wrong! Elisavet is not a danger

to us! She is the one in danger, from the whims of foolish men!

RUBEN

Viola, I--!

VIOLA

You what? You know what's best? No, I don't think you ever have!

Ruben looks towards the guards, opens his mouth to speak again.

VIOLA

Go on, call the guards, have me dragged out of the square and thrown into the dungeon. Let the whole kingdom see how much of a bully you truly are! Show them how you can't stand to be contradicted, either of you! Mother and Father would be ashamed.

Henrik opens his mouth, but nothing comes out. Ruben glances at him, then attempts to regain control of the scene himself, but Viola cuts him off, drawing herself taller, getting louder.

RUBEN

I am the // future king, your-

VIOLA

The future king! What does that matter? I am their princess! I have as much a right to be heard as you, and I say this is not right! I say the people made a rash judgment out of fear, and instead of guiding or comforting them, you played along without a second thought! I say you condemn this girl--

She points at Elisavet, and the crowd's gaze follows her finger.

VIOLA

--our guest and friend, without fair judgment! I say Elisavet is innocent!

Elisavet chokes out a sob, blinking away tears as she struggles with the yarn. The crowd murmurs uncomfortably, everyone looking to each other, to Viola, to Ruben.

Ruben seems very small. He looks at the ground. At the crowd. At Elisavet. Scrounges up what's left of his pride. Looks at Viola.

RUBEN

Let the witch burn.

VIOLA

No!

The guard with the torch steps up to the cart.

A SWAN CALL. Five swans fly down into the square, forming a circle around Elisavet's cart, driving the exclaiming crowd away with their flapping wings. One of Ilkin's wings smacks the torch out of the guard's hand, and it rolls away in the square, people clamoring to get out of its way until it sputters out.

The swans close in around Elisavet, extending their necks towards her. She takes up the shirts and throws them, one by one, over the swans' heads. She takes the needles out of the smallest shirt--still missing a sleeve--and throws it over the smallest swan's head as well, letting the needles fall to the ground. As the shirts slide over the birds' necks, the fabric glows, and where wings tuck under the shirt, human arms come out of the sleeves, and human heads out of the necks--

--and then her brothers stand around her, all wearing the shirts she's made: Alim on one of the rear wheels of the cart, Eser and Ugur on the sides, Ilkin standing between the cart and the platform, and Yanni in the cart next to her, looking down at his left arm--not an arm, but a swan's wing. Elisavet's hands are on the edge of the cart, her gaze firmly, defiantly, on Ruben.

The princes' voices carry across the square.

ILKIN

Your princess speaks the truth! Our sister is innocent!

ALIM

This is Princess Elisavet of Merichev!

ESER

And we are her brothers, cursed to fly as swans all day--

UGUR

--and she has slaved away these past months to break the spell!

ILKIN

Now we are free, and anyone who wishes her harm will have to go through us!

Elisavet smirks. Ruben and Henrik stare in shock, Viola in amazement. The crowd murmurs, and soon excited voices rise up:

WOMAN

She is a princess!

MAN

She has saved her brothers!

GRAVEKEEPER

She broke their curse! She's no witch; her magic is good!

The whole crowd begins to clamor for Elisavet to be set free. Henrik and Ruben say nothing. Viola hurries off the platform.

On the cart, Elisavet turns to Yanni, grinning with relief. Then her expression freezes; she stares at the wing. Reaches out with a hand to touch the spot on his shoulder where skin smoothly transitions into feathers.

YANNI

I guess you were a little short on nettles.

It's an attempt at a joke. Elisavet shakes her head, wincing, upset with herself.

YANNI

It's okay, Ely. Really. I kinda like it.

He flexes the wing, looking at it from different angles. The other brothers watch him.

YANNI

I'll have to learn how to do things one-handed now, but... Like I said, we're all broken somehow. And I can learn to work through it. Just like my sister.

Elisavet smiles at him gratefully. Yanni holds out his wing. Elisavet puts her right hand to his feathers.

VIOLA (O.S.)

Let me through, please!

The crowd parts, allowing Viola to approach the cart. Seeing her coming, Elisavet attempts to climb out of the cart. Ilkin helps her out, and once her feet are on the ground she quickly closes the distance between her and Viola. They embrace.

VIOLA

Elisavet! My Elisavet.

Elisavet relaxes in Viola's arms. Then her legs buckle. Viola supports her weight, gently keeping her on her feet, and the brothers all hurry forward to help support her as well.

VIOLA

Whoa, careful now... Oh, you must be exhausted...!

We PULL BACK, up and away from the town square, until we reach Kismet, sitting on a rooftop, watching from afar. The grouse is sitting in her lap; she is petting it.

KISMET

Well, then. So the brave little princess succeeds.

She looks down at the grouse.

KISMET

But will any of this make a difference?

The grouse croaks softly, lazily. Kismet nods.

KISMET

Indeed. We shall see. We shall see.