

ACT 2 - SCENE 2a

DAYS AFTER. SUNSET. BALCONY

Psalmists - David's musicians and scribes - are working on a new song. Behind them, on display, is David's original lyre.

Song: 42. Psalm

PSALMISTS

WHO MAY ASCEND THE MOST HOLY HILL?
 WHO MAY STAND IN THE LORD'S HOLY PLACE?
 HE WHO HAS CLEAN HANDS AND A HEART SO PURE;
 WHO DOES NOT LIFT HIS SOUL UP TO A GRAVEN IMAGE.

DAVID enters, a goblet of wine in his hand. He is inebriated. He looks very old. His hand tremor and a slight drag on his feet is noticeable. The Physician follows behind. The Physician attends to David's tremulous hand with ointment. David is testy.

DAVID

Can you stop fussing about, Physician! (*Psalmists stop playing*) Just go and make me an elixir and make this damn shaking stop!

PHYSICIAN

Forgive me, your majesty, but no other medicine man around the kingdom, neither witch nor soothsayer can explain this shaking. Could I check your head, my king.

DAVID

No, you cannot check my head. My problem is in this damn hand that keeps shaking! Argh! Leave me alone!

David signals for the Psalmists to resume playing. Very soon, David relaxes, starts to hum with the music.

Now write this...

OR SWEAR BY WHAT IS FALSE.
 HE WILL RECEIVE BLESSING FROM THE LORD
 AND VINDICATION FROM GOD HIS SAVIOUR.
 HE WILL BLESS THOSE WHO SEEK HIM,
 WHO SEEK YOUR FACE, O GOD OF THE CHOSEN PEOPLE.

PSALMIST

WHO SEEK YOUR FACE, O GOD OF ALL.

DAVID

Thank you. That will be all for tonight.

DAVID dismisses the Psalmists. As he lifts the goblet to his lips, he notices his hand tremor. He tries to steady it with his other hand.

DAVID

The God of everything and all chooses me to build an eternal dynasty, yet He inflicts upon me the debilitating illness of old men.

From the rooftop of another house, the flickering flame of a lamp carried by a Maidservant illuminate the surroundings. Following her is Bat Sheva, a goblet in her hand, cuddling a soft, billowy robe around her naked body.

Bat Sheva's robe falls from her shoulders, revealing more of her supple body. David sees this.

**Song: 43. Damn this Base Desire with
Recitatives**

MAIDSERVANT

MISTRESS, BEWARE, THE WINE RUNS IN YOUR HEAD,

BAT SHEVA

HUSH NOW, THIS WINE, WITHIN ME HAS REKINDLED
A FIRE IN MY LOINS, WHAT ONCE I THOUGHT WAS DEAD

MAIDSERVANT

A FIRE TO BE QUENCHED IN YOUR OWN HUSBAND'S BED.

BAT SHEVA

FOR 8 LONG MOONS THAT HUSBAND, HAS NEVER BEEN HOME,

MAIDSERVANT

FOR 8 LONG MOONS, YOUR MAN, HAS FOUGHT WARS FOR DAVID'S KINGDOM

BAT SHEVA

POUR ME MORE WINE, IT'S MY RIGHT TO BE FREE

MAIDSERVANT

YOU'VE PLAYED THE ROLE OF GOOD WIFE,

BAT SHEVA

NOW IT'S TIME TO BE ME.

Bat Sheva uncovers more of her body.

MAIDSERVANT

MISTRESS, TAKE CARE, YOU UNDESS IN NIGHT'S PLAIN SIGHT,

BAT SHEVA

MAIDSERVANT, HERE, (*pulling the Maidservants hand closer to her, the hand that holds the torch.*) LET MY BODY GET MORE LIGHT.

Glances furtively at the direction of David.

MAIDSERVANT

HE SEES YOU,

BAT SHEVA

I KNOW. IT'S ENTICING. HOW FAR SHOULD I GO?

MAIDSERVANT

WHY TEASE HIM?

BAT SHEVA

PLEASE HIM. NOTHING HE CAN DO.

MAIDSERVANT

MISTRESS, THE KING IS PERIVING AT YOU.

BAT SHEVA

Let the old man be pleased by what he sees. Anyway, what could possibly come of it?

Lights Cross fade to David

DAVID

WHAT AN ALLURING SIGHT THIS IS;
HER SKIN AS WHITE AS FLOWING MILK
WARM AS IT COMES FROM ROUNDED BREASTS;
SUCKLED ON BY FEEDING BABES.
I NIBBLE ON MY LOWER LIP;
I BRING TO MIND, TO STAY MY PLACE

THAT SHAPELY BLOOM PERFUMES A GARDEN,
NOT MY OWN, NOT MY OWN.
BUT WHY A KING, IF I CAN'T HAVE
THAT WHICH TEMPTS ME TO BEHOLD

I HAVE THE POWER TO LURE HER HERE.
MY GARDEN CRAVES THIS FLOWER FAIR.

Ref:

OH, DAMN THIS FLESHLY, BASE DESIRE
IT TAUNTS MY CARNAL GREED AND POW'R
I AM THE KING AND THUS I NEED
A TENDER TOUCH TO SOOTHE MY BED.

COME TO ME, MY FASCINATION
COAXING ME IN NIGHT'S HALF LIGHT
YOU LURED MY EYES TO WANDER THERE
WHERE IT SHOULD NOT, AND YET I DARE.

I WANT TO HAVE YOU NOW, MY FAWN,
BEFORE THE LIGHT OF YOUTHFUL DAWN
AWAKES, THE MIND OF RIGHTEOUSNESS
OBLIGE ME MY COVETOUSNESS.

*DAVID walks closer to the edge of the balcony, discreetly
peering into the night.*

Lights cross fade to David's rooftop

DAVID

Servant! Servant make haste! *(Servant hurriedly enters)* Who is that woman?

*The SERVANT looks but seeing that Bat Sheva's privacy is
compromised, he turns his face away.*

SERVANT

That is the Lady Bat Sheva, your Majesty. Wife of one of your best army
officers - wife of Captain Uriah.

DAVID

Go and tell her, the king commands her presence. Now.

SERVANT

(Unsure) By your command, my lord. *(David continues to enjoy the view.)*

DAVID

JUST FOR THIS MOMENT LET ME BE,
THE MAN OF YOUNG VIRILITY.
JUST FOR TONIGHT LET TRUMPETS ROAR,
AND HAIL THE ONCE WAS, WARRIOR.

Lights