

AT THE JUDGEMENT COURT OF DAVID ...

King David dismisses everyone in his court, distressed at Bat Sheva's disclosure of her pregnancy. Gen. Yoab, spies on the distraught king.

DAVID

(Startled at GEN. YOAB's presence.) You encroached on my privacy, General?

GEN. YOAB

I am your confidante as well as your army chief, David.

DAVID glares at GEN. YOAB's insolence. GEN. YOAB smirks a smile. David stands abruptly. GEN. YOAB deflects.

Your majesty. Shall I have the Prophet Nathan come and give you counsel?

DAVID

(David is quick and desperate.) No!

GEN. YOAB

Some wine then, to rest your nerves.

DAVID

(Annoyed. Losing his patience.) I said no wine!

David speaks fast, his composure lost.

I have been ambushed by my own family! My family has become my enemy! Amnon is overly arrogant. My Tamar, my little flower... Absalom was rude and scathing. Now... Bat Sheva...

GEN. YOAB

Wife of Captain Uriah, my King.

(David is unable to contain his distress,)

DAVID

I knew she was married, General!

GEN. YOAB

And yet...

DAVID

One night of love and she is pregnant with my child! *(Grabbing GEN. YOAB desperately.)* I need you to help me fix this! My mind is a blur. Tell me what to do. *(GEN. YOAB is quiet.)* I'm in love with Bat Sheva.

GEN. YOAB

My King, adultery is punishable by stoning until she is ...

DAVID

I know the law, General! *(giving Yoab dagger looks)* Had I been fighting in the battlefront, as I have always done, instead of wallowing in self-pity like a useless old man, this wouldn't have happened.

GEN. YOAB

Uriah is captain of your elite forces, your Majesty.

DAVID

So?

GEN. YOAB

Members of your elite force have pledged utmost loyalty to you and your throne.

DAVID

I know...

GEN. YOAB

He would have done the right thing.

DAVID

What do you mean?

GEN. YOAB

The standard practice of soldiers, my Lord. Approved by the Council of Elders and signed into law by you. Before soldiers are deployed to high-risk battles, army personnel serve their wives a bill of divorce to...

DAVID

To render the women free to re-marry..

GEN. YOAB

Should the soldier die in battle.

DAVID

(Prematurely excited.) It is sorted then! Thank you General!

Song: 46. Make a Wrong Seem Right

GEN. YOAB

IF YOU WERE JUST A NORMAL MAN,
IT WOULDN'T BE SO HARD;
TO CIRCUMVENT THIS AWKWARD STATE
AND COVER UP THE PART.
BUT YOU ARE KING, I DARE SAY NOW,
YOU ARE EXPECTED TO BE
A MAN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS AND HIGH MORALITY.

DAVID

I LET MY HEART LEAD ME ASTRAY,
IT'S TOO LATE FOR REGRET
I DID NOT THINK TO FALL IN LOVE,
TO PINE FOR HER, AND YET,
AS A KING, I FEEL SO LOST;
HOW CAN I, HOW CAN I REDEEM THE COST?

GEN. YOAB

URIAH IS THE KEY, MY FRIEND,
TO MAKE A WRONG SEEM RIGHT.
Listen, IF HE CAN DISAPPEAR,
MY FRIEND, REDEMPTION IS IN SIGHT.

DAVID

NO YOAB, I CANNOT AGREE TO
YOUR INSIDIOUS THOUGHT
WE'VE GOT TO FIND ANOTHER WAY
TO MAKE MY WRONG SEEM NOUGHT.

GEN. YOAB

THEN TELL ME HOW TO JUSTIFY
A WOMAN WHO'S CONCEIVED
WITHOUT THE WILLING PARTNERSHIP OF HUSBAND,

DAVID

I CONCEDE! I give in! I Give up! I CONCEDE!
I WISH I WAS A NOBODY,
RUNNING WILD AND FREE, WITH NO RESPONSIBILITY.
I WISHED TO BE SOMEBODY,
NOW WITH EVERY MOVE THE WORLD SEES ME.

MY PAIN IS PUBLIC DOMAIN,
EVERY WRONG I DO DRAWS PUBLIC DISDAIN.
I'M SOUGHT TO PASS JUDGEMENT
WHILE THE WORLD GIVES ME THEIRS.
WHAT LEGACY DO I LEAVE
TO MY DAUGHTER AND HEIRS?

Heirs. Hah! Amnon. Absalom.

WHAT HAS THIS DAY BECOME?
WHY HAVE TROUBLE AND STRIFE,
MY LIFE, OVERCOME? WOOH OH OH OH
AS A KING, I HAVE DONE WRONG.
HOW CAN I REDEEM MY THRONE?

GEN. YOAB

There is no other recourse, my king. Agree with me. To his king is a soldier's prime loyalty.

(They look at each other as if a solution had been found.)

I will command the troops to engage the tribe of Rabbah in a skirmish.

(David picks up where GEN. YOAB is going with this.)

We...

DAVID

... will send Uriah...

GEN. YOAB

...to the front lines, my King. Where the battle is at its fiercest!

DAVID

But... how can I ...

GEN. YOAB

You will sign your name on the order,

DAVID

I will write an order...

GEN. YOAB

Affix your seal on it...

DAVID

I will sign my name on the order...

GEN. YOAB

and you can instruct Uriah himself to hand me the scroll with your order. (*David does not understand*) We should keep everyone in the dark.

(GEN. YOAB bows then before he leaves, does a double take.)

Be prepared to marry a widow, your majesty.

DAVID

I am the king!

David exits full of distress. Nathan enters and heads for the throne. Sees the crown, picks it up. Speaks to audience.

Song: "WRETCHED MORTALS CHANT"

NATHAN

WE ARE WRETCHED AS MORTALS
STUMBLING OVER EVERY BLOCK
WHAT WE HIDE FROM HUMAN KNOWLEDGE
Will be brought to light BY YHWH GOD.

Nathan walks to the direction of David's exit, carrying the crown.

Lights