

Juliette/ Daughter-in-law/ Mary

EXT. OUTSIDE THE CASTLE - DAY

(Mary hurries outside with her new dress when she is stopped by Juliette.)

MARY (Sotto voce)
Father will be so pleased...

JULIETTE (Suddenly)
Where will you wear that dress?

MARY
Oh. You startled me. Your name is Juliette,
yes?

JULIETTE
Yes. I am Amelia's personal
maid. Where will you wear that dress?

MARY
Well...

JULIETTE
Do you have a luxurious ball to
attend? Will you be meeting the King, performing
for royalty perhaps?

MARY
No.

JULIETTE
Then on what occasion would you wear
such a lovely garment?

MARY
I do not rightly know.

JULIETTE
Will you work in your garden in it?

MARY
Certainly not.

JULIETTE
Will you sleep in it?

MARY
Of course not.

JULIETTE
It does seem to me that Amelia has
wasted a precious gift on someone who cannot
even find occasion to wear it.

MARY
I will wear it when I see her again.

JULIETTE
Yes. When you meet in the fields. I
do not believe she will be inviting you into
her room again, however.

MARY
What? Why do you say that?

JULIETTE
Some people in the castle have
complained. Filthy people are not welcome. It
upsets the royal family.

MARY
Filthy people?

JULIETTE
Yes. It is apparent that Amelia is too
courteous to say this herself, so if you would not
mind, the next time Amelia invites you inside the
castle, do decline.

MARY
(Upset) Yes. Of
course.

JULIETTE Besides, she already has a best friend inside the castle. It is me.

MARY

Yes, of course. Good-bye then.

JULIETTE

Good-bye.

(Mary crosses to stage right house crying)

James/Farmer

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

(Mary and James are walking. Thunder is in the background.)

MARY

Father, you have not been talking much since we left the cabin yesterday.

JAMES

I am trying to conserve my energy.

James coughs as he continues walking. The rain begins.

JAMES (CONT'D) We must find shelter.

MARY

I have not seen a house for many hours.

JAMES

It does not need to be a house. We must find something to shield us from the rain.

James coughs some more.

MARY

You are sick.

JAMES

Do not mind my afflictions. Search for shelter, Mary! The rain is getting harder.

MARY

The storm is growing worse!

JAMES

Wait. I hear something. What is that?

MARY

It is a river. It appears to cross the path ahead of us.

JAMES

Then there will be a bridge. We can take shelter under it. Let us hurry! Music sting to...

INT. JAMES' HOUSE - DAY

(Mary, James, Guard)

James and Mary are contemplating what to do.

MARY

I should join the search.

JAMES

The castle has plenty of people looking already.

MARY

I must do something. To sit here and wait to hear my fate is more than I can bear.

JAMES

It is needless to worry. We are to cast our cares upon Him, for He cares for us.

A guard breaks in the door. Mary cries out.

MARY Father!

They embrace as more guards enter.

GUARD
Separate them!

GUARD #2
Bind the girl's hands and take her to prison!

GUARD
And guard the father as well.
Occupy the house and the garden-search everywhere.

MARY
No! Do not take me away from my father.

JAMES
You must go with them!

MARY I am
afraid!

JAMES
God will be with you!

GUARD Come now!

MARY
No! Father, please don't let them take me!
She is taken away. She is crying along the way.

JAMES
Please sir, do not-

The guard whips her. Mary cries out in pain and falls to the floor.

JAMES (CONT'D)

No!

Mary is in pain on the ground.

GUARD Pick her up!

JAMES
(Desperate) No!

Door slams shut. On the other side of the door, we hear the sound of the cart driver yelling "Yah!" and the cart driving away.

JAMES (CONT'D)
(Sotto voce) Dear God...

Countess/Judge

(mumming from the crowd. We hear Amelia and the Countess gasp.)

JUDGE (CONT'D) As for her sentence, our laws must be upheld... Your refusal to confess has forced me to make this decision. You will be hanged from the gallows in three days.

Stir from the crowd.

JUDGE (CONT'D)
In light of-

COUNTESS
(Standing, declaring) Your honor!

JUDGE Countess?

Murmurs.

COUNTESS I apologize, your honor. I understand that I should not be interrupting in this way, but I believe this matter is of great importance.

JUDGE Say what you will.

COUNTESS I do not believe this is justice. This girl is innocent.

JUDGE Are you saying that despite the evidence against her, you are still convinced that she did not steal the ring?

COUNTESS Yes, your honor.

AMELIA
(Standing up) I believe she is innocent as well, sire.

JUDGE

On what do you base this opinion?

AMELIA I have no evidence to the contrary. (Beat) I simply know Mary.

JUDGE Countess?

COUNTESS I would say the same.

JUDGE I am afraid that does not sound like justice either. You plead for her because she is your friend.

COUNTESS She has no other offenses to her name. Her character is unblemished.

AMELIA
You know her, Sire. You know her father.

COUNTESS
With all respect, your honor... (Beat)
Do you not believe, in your heart, that she is innocent as well?

Pause.

JUDGE
I must admit... it is hard to imagine this girl that I have known for so long... doing something this dreadful. Yes. In my heart, I believe she is innocent.

COUNTESS Then do you not think that it would be best for all of us that we err on the side of mercy, rather than death?

JUDGE
If there ever was a time that justice could be bent by mercy, it would appear that this is the time. However, justice must be blind.

COUNTESS If justice could open her eyes for just a moment, what would she see?

Amelia/ Mary

INT. AMELIA'S ROOM – DAY

(Cross stage, exit and reenter upstage in castle.)

MARY (Gasp) This is your room?

AMELIA
One of them. Do you like it?

MARY
It is bigger than my house.

(They walk into the next room)

AMELIA
I spend very little time in here. It gets so hot
in the afternoons when the sun beats down. Would
you open that window please?

(Enter Juliette into first room. Mary goes to do it. We hear the magpies
outside chirping.)

MARY
Of course.

AMELIA
Stay here. I have a present for you
(exclaims).

MARY
A present? I do not deserve anything.

AMELIA
You are my best friend.

(Juliette starts)

You do not have to deserve it. I will return
in a moment. Juliette! (calls as she walks into first
room)

New Scene:

(Knock at the door. Mary answers)

MARY Amelia?

AMELIA Mary, something awful has happened. My mother's diamond ring is lost, and no one was in the chamber but you. They accuse you of taking it. Do you know where the ring could be?

MARY What! No.

AMELIA

If it is possible that you have the ring for even the best of reasons, please return it to me quickly and nothing further will be said. No one shall know anything of it. The castle guards will be here soon. Please Mary.

MARY

Amelia, how could you think such a thing? I did not touch the ring. I never even saw it.

AMELIA

What were you doing as I left the room earlier?

MARY

I did not move a muscle. I did not even leave the seat where you left me.

AMELIA I implore you to tell me the truth. The ring is of great worth. If you have

touched it, please confess and it will be forgiven
as an act of childish thoughtlessness.

MARY (Desperate)

Truly, I know nothing of your ring. You
must believe me.

(James comes up behind them.)

Mary/James

JAMES

We were banished from our homeland, and yet I can see God's purposes of mercy there as well. The Countess' daughter had distinguished you by her favor, and even excited and fostered vanity in you with her gifts. Had this friendship continued, you would have been exposed to many temptations. You might have been led astray from that which was right.

MARY

I believe you are right. I can see God's hand of providence there as well.

JAMES

But there will be a day when God will remove all affliction from you. He is ready to embark on that journey with me.

MARY

I know that to depart and be with the Lord is far better, where there will be no suffering nor sorrow, but the loss of your friendship and guidance is a crushing anguish of heart.

(Pause. James feels a tinge of pain.)

JAMES

It is time for me to go.

MARY

I will miss you so much, Father.

JAMES

And I you. But God has prepared me for this as he has prepared me for everything else through my lifetime. Remember... He will never leave you, nor forsake you.

MARY I know.

JAMES

Mary, would you do something for me?

MARY Of course.

JAMES

The last sound I would like to hear is your voice, reading the words of God. Would you read to me?

MARY Yes. I will.

JAMES

Thank you. Mary... You are my most precious flower.

MARY (Reading, in tears)

Let not your heart be troubled.
Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.