



Complete Libretto by
Paul Ramey and Anna K. Meade



Veil & Subdue



The Courtship of The Black Sultan

An Endurium Nocturnum in Two Acts

Conceived and Written by
Paul Ramey and Anna K. Meade

Performers:

Paul Ramey
The Black Sultan, Cuchicheo,
Colin, Servants

Anna K. Meade
Semele, Servants

Christina Huggins
Femme de la Morte

All songs produced, arranged and composed by Paul Ramey, except: “Iris Green” and “My Piano” (written by Anna K. Meade), and “I’d Know Him So Well” and “Just Like Freedom” (composed by Paul Ramey and Anna K. Meade). All instruments performed by Paul Ramey, except: “My Piano” and “My Piano” refrain which appears in “The End of Dreams” (piano arranged and performed by Sam Clein). “I’ll Never Sleep Again” mixed by Gregory Ramey. Package concept and design by Paul Ramey.

This work has been enormously influenced and informed by specific people. First...deepest, undying gratitude to Anna K. Meade for her brilliant work on the libretto, her musical compositions, and for her moving vocals on this long, magical journey, as well as for her invaluable insights and consultations concerning her firsthand experience with night terrors. Thanks also to: Christopher Carneal, Kimberly Davis, Frances Figart, John Helgren, David King, Martin Raymer, and Brenda Short. *And especially to Tina — my own dream come true.*

In the beginning there was the name...

It really did begin like that — *Veil & Subdue*. Well, maybe not really. Anna and I had already shared many discussions concerning night terrors, of course, and at a certain point I know it must have been thought about...a *mythological* context instead of a *medical* one. What if a god fell in love with a mortal, and what if this “godly” love manifested itself on earth as night terrors?

Before we knew it we’d stumbled into the world of myth-allegory — the rich fable-mine from which so many classic tales have been written and performed through the ages. *And so it was...* in Greek myth Zeus fell in love with the mortal priestess Semele, and visited her often in the guise of an eagle. When she finally looked upon Zeus’ real image, she perished...for it is well known that mortals cannot look upon the face of a god.

This denial of godly passion proved to be a whisper of the tale forming in our minds. Worlds entwined, yet an inherently maddening weave. And always the lingering question...thousands of years ago, did humanity experience night terrors also, and were these kinds of stories of gods and mortals created to explain them away? In our times, of course, we have science, psychology and medicine. But before that was allegory and myth, through the majority of human consciousness. ...And in the end, what if they knew something we’ve long since forgotten? What if they were right after all? People still have night terrors after all, and to this day no one really knows why.

Veil & Subdue.

The work you hold in your hands is very much inspired and motivated by night terrors. On other levels, though, it is a woven texture of dreams and love in their many entwined and often contradictory forms. It is a crazy-quilt of desire and madness, forever tangled. And I bet it is familiar to you, too.

Go ahead...turn the page.



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Act One - Veil

Scene One

Night - the void. The blackness seems almost a living entity. From the darkness, robed servants of The Black Sultan enter, reverently carrying candles. They light the sconces along the wall, revealing hints of the room - the vast chamber room of the royal palace, in the realm of The Black Sultan. A nightmarishly carved throne sits at the top of a tall dais. The servants reveal the tension of the moment in the very deliberateness of their tasks. They begin to sing in Latin, an almost prescient song about a tortured young woman...

Penuriosus venustus decor

(Poor lovely beauty)

Quietus est vestri penitentia

(Sleeping is your penance)

Pro suis votum

(For his desire)

Virus in vestri animus

(Poison in your soul)

Formidonis unrequited

(Terror unrequited)

Suis tantum somnium

(His only dream)

Vindicatum vestri pectus pectoris

(Claiming your heart)

Coegi vos dementus

(Driving you mad)

The Black Sultan's Chief Advisor and Servant, CUCHICHEO, creeps down from behind the throne, center stage. Half servile Puck and half goblin, he helps The Black Sultan create the dreams and nightmares. For our purposes, he is the closest thing to a narrator of this tale. He repeats with barely suppressed glee...

CUCHICHEO

Dementus...

As the music begins, Cuchicheo becomes a dervish of action. The dream world is a whirlwind of activity, as the servants scatter, performing their appointed tasks...

Veil & Subdue

Song 1 — sung by Cuchicheo

Tear the darkened shroud

Call upon the sweetest taking

**Breathless, yet so loud
Close your eyes, the Sultan's waking
Silken visions tie
This dream you can't deny
Veil & Subdue...
Veil & Subdue...**

Out of the darkness come more dancing shapes, writhing in dream and nightmare imagery. There's love and violence in equal measures. Silhouettes are cast upon the walls - impossibly tall, ominous figures of dancing creatures.

**Cast upon the land
Sand and dust, the spell is taking
Visions come at last
Caught within, there's no mistaking
Darkened strands that bind
Step into his mind
Veil & Subdue...
Veil & Subdue...**

A blue spotlight hits Cuchicheo; he approaches a large mirror that the servants bring to him. He gazes into it with uncharacteristic longing, touching the glass.

**The vision...just a mirror...
No matter how you try to leave behind...
Shards of self dance away...
A crystal-clear voice echoes...
Far away...it gets nearer...
Just a truth, a whisper in your heart...
Held down now, he sees you there...
A screaming in the night won't let go...**

The servants cluster around Cuchicheo with a crazed chorus of bizarre, kazoo-like instruments. He turns on them and scatters them to the wind.

**Give into the night
Give into the dream
Morpheus is about to have his way
Now extinguish light
As the wicking candles dream
Morpheus is about to have his way**

With unrefined rage, Cuchicheo turns back to the mirror, and smashes through it at the shattering moment of the song. Other pieces of glass fall from the shadows as well, accentuating the destruction. Dreamers swoop down to pick up the pieces and carry them off as he continues. He runs back and forth to check on the various servants...lavishly petting some, and mercilessly beating others for their efforts.

**Every sleeping soul
The ripest fruits are for his taking
He may not eat you whole**

**But the bite is of his making
And if he's moved to love
The darkest of doves
Veil & Subdue...**

Suddenly Cuchicheo surprised to see THE BLACK SULTAN. He turns from his posturing into his more familiar, subserviant role.

CUCHICHEO
Ah! My Lord!

The servants scurry to form a line, each holding their candle high. A winding staircase is lit, seeming to emerge from nothing. Fog trails down the stairs and curls to fill the corners of the room. One by one, figures are revealed in the mist, sleeping, floating, as if they were stars appearing in the firmament. Above them all, The Black Sultan stands, master in his own realm. The Sultan's cloak unfolds to trail behind him, like the petals of a poisonous flower. His face is pale white and angelically beautiful; he looks upon his dreamers and begins to descend...

THE BLACK SULTAN
I am come again, to show them sight.
To hold them here, within the delicate folds of night.

Time again for my children to dream,
time yet again for them to wake deep within.
Their hopes, their dreams, their fears and their lies.
Their visions which scare, yet tantalize.
Their secret selves which never see the day.
Mine eyes veil theirs, to show them the way.

The Black Sultan steps from the staircase, riding his trail of smoke. Soft lights in a shifting kaleidoscope of colors shine down from above, onto each of the sleeping figures. He walks among them, with the air of one wearied by repetition.

THE BLACK SULTAN
From one to the next, I cast my spell,
and hold them in my dreaming thought.
Within their own tortured dreams
they are all hidden from naught.
I scatter the sands that make the beach of this shore,
An ocean of Dreaming, yet still they want more...

More

Song 2 — sung by The Black Sultan

**Wearily weaving now, these strands drift apart
Some fill the heavens, some tear the heart
These textures of tormenting hope,
afraid at the seams
It all seems so real, doesn't it?**

**Why do they still dream...
For More? The Dreaming goes on...
Why do they want More?
When they've had it all, and lost it they still
Want More
There still must be More...**

The Black Sultan begins to move among his dreaming throng, gesturing to them one by one...

**He cries for loving, and she loves to cry
This one hears a whisper that he will never die
And this one, now an actress (right!),
and this one drowns in wealth
And this poor, feeble-bodied soul
is returned to his health...
More! The Dreaming goes on...
Why do they want More?
When they've had it all, and lost it they still
Want More
There still must be More...**

The Black Sultan pauses, looking around. Suddenly he raises his arms to the sky, bringing a crash of thunder from above, as he cries in anguish...

I'm waiting for More!!!

Cuchicheo approaches the suddenly vulnerable Sultan with trepidation, sensing a familiar despair within his master.

CUCHICHEO

So! Ahem...What will be the casting tonight, my Sultan?
Shall it be a moonlit flight, or a maze of worms, or a dance with a dog or a demented chase?
Oh, what will be the theme of the dream for them all?

THE BLACK SULTAN

Nothing so trivial, for I am in a foul mood.
A craving consumes me, so cast melancholy.
Make them have what they're lacking, then take it all back!

CUCHICHEO (to himself)

...A vengeful reflection of what he doth lack!

THE BLACK SULTAN

I cast all about me, and whispers enthrall
Dream upon dream...put an end to them all!
For cold wind doth cry for my own ache deep within
My still-absent queen echoes and...but wait!!

The Black Sultan is brought up short as his attention is suddenly captured. The other lights fade. One light remains and grows in intensity to become an almost white-hot light. The floor rises, becoming a pedestal upon

which a beautiful young woman sleeps, her gown draping down the length of it. It is SEMELE, and she is enveloped within a passionate dream. The Black Sultan watches, entranced. Semele rises and sings, languid and unaware of her godly audience...

Iris Green (I Do Know Him So Well)
Song 3 — sung by Semele

**With iris green and iris blue
I know my love, he will always be true
With iris green and iris white
Tell me you'll hold me all through the night
With iris green and iris gold
Tell me our love, it will never grow cold
With iris green and iris black
I know my love, he will never come back**

A forlorn pause, then she seems to draw courage. If not this love, she will find another. A better love, one as bright as the sun... her True Love. The vividness of this vision transforms her. She becomes a beacon, bright and shining into the darkness. Rapture gives her the bearing of a goddess, love incarnate. She is passion and cannot be contained. Veils of many colors fall from the ceiling to drift and blow about her. The Black Sultan draws closer, clearly enraptured...

**I miss the one I've never met
I've got someone to love and yet
A longing deep inside
So many nights I've cried
Where is my heart tonight?
I'd know my love so well
If he'd only come, I'd know him so well.
One aching candle light, instantly I could tell
If only he'd come, I'd know him so well
My heart's an open window, burning for his breeze
My soul's an endless canyon, thirsting for his seas
If only he'd come, He'd feel my love tonight**

Her dream subsides with the song and Semele drifts back to the pedestal. She drapes herself on it and sleeps. The Black Sultan can resist no longer. He approaches. Taking his cue, the servants surround her, and drape her with a translucent white veil, the first layer of dream. Noting his lord's interest, Cuchicheo dutifully approaches.

CUCHICHEO

Her name be Semele, my lord.

THE BLACK SULTAN

Semele...a queenly name indeed!
Behold, I will woo within her own longing heart.
Again and again, her dream will come true.
She'll think that she knows me so often, that she will.
In the end, she will bow to my will!

The Black Sultan begins his dream spell. As the servants encircle the podium upon which Semele sleeps, The Black Sultan pulls a bag of sand from his robe. He pours a small quantity onto the palm of his hand, then blows it lightly so that it flies about her. Cuchicheo performs his part in the ritual, but also noticeably keeps a keen eye on his master.

CUCHICHEO (to himself)

He spreads out his dream onto her distant lands, hoping she'll love him.
But like grains of sand, the promise of loving soon wilts like the flower.
When fed naught but dreams the most sweet will turn sour!

Lights fade.

END, Scene 1.

Scene Two

Lights rise. The other dreamers are gone; there is only Semele, as pale and lovely as a carved marble sarcophagous. The Black Sultan paces in anticipation. His servants scurry to and fro, quick to follow his will.

THE BLACK SULTAN

Soon I must prepare for my Earthly descent,
To plant this dream deeply and love till I'm spent!
I will be what she dreams; I will be who she loves.
Away with my mask, time my hands be ungloved!

The Black Sultan begins the transformation, from a god to a young, handsome mortal. He roams the stage, taking pieces of clothing from his servants, who shuffle in and out of view. Finally he ascends to the top of the stairs, dressed and transformed into what he believes Semele's vision of perfection to be.

THE BLACK SULTAN

Now, prepare! Your Lord of Visions departs, leaving his kingdom behind!
Down the dark stairs to the land of the dreamers, and there sweet Semele to find!

CUCHICHEO (to himself)

My lord is now redone, as if in her dream.
Hoped-for belonging to a mortal doth seem
madness from a god, but if he wants it, so be!
Then, this palace...mine for the rest of eternity!

THE BLACK SULTAN

Open the dream, pull back the night!
My servants, announce me with ringing and light!

The servants line the path towards the sleeping Semele. Ringing bells, they sing to announce to the Earthly plane the arrival of The Black Sultan.

Arrival

Song 4 — sung by the Servant Choir

**Here he comes...Here he comes
Here comes The Black Sultan
Glorificus - Morpheus
Heart in hand
He comes to dream his love to you
You will be his queen**

The song rises to an almost unbearable cacophony of operatic harmonies. Semele finally awakens with a scream, clutching the sheet as if she is overcome, and looks around.

SEMELE

Colin! Colin, where are you?

She halts at the sight of the enchanting young man standing before her.

SEMELE

Oh! I'm sorry...sorry for screaming. Who are you? Do I...do I know you?

The Black Sultan moves close, in his most chivalric, romantic incarnation. He kneels before her, as a knight to his lady. She doesn't know how to respond to this haunting yet strangely familiar pre-Raphaelite vision. Is she dreaming? Could this be the one she's always dreamed of?

Heart In Velvet

Song 5 — sung by The Black Sultan

**Carry I a heart in velvet
See me now, your faithful soldier
Cross the deserts I will follow
Just to hear one final whisper
You are now my cry to battle
My last stand, my Holy War
There is no pain as I invade your
Sanctuary, so it will be...**

He gestures to the pale ribbon in her hair. She removes it, and ties it gently around his sleeve — a queenly favor.

**You were mine before you knew me
My sweet dream, my purest vision
Every night your window beckons
Sands and time will not deny me
Though you scream, I know you see me
Love so strong, you cannot hold it
I am here, you must not tremble
Drown within my heart in velvet...**

Servants take Semele by the hand and lead her to the top of the Black Sultan's dais. She sits on the dream throne, bewildered. The servants serenade her with the off-key violin.

The Black Sultan ascends and hands her a loving cup. She drinks.

**Come...drink of me
Taste of my sweetest flavor
Feel the hands of a god
Be with me forever**

He takes her by the hand, and they dance.

**Come, be with me
Taste of me
Feel of me
Be with me
Come drink of me
Taste of my sweetest flavor!
Taste my forbidden pleasure!
You were mine...before you knew me
My sweet dream!**

He enwraps her into his velvet cloak, then lifts her into his arms and carries her back to the pedestal with obvious intent. She cannot resist. The lights are extinguished. When they rise again, Semele stands alone, clearly enraptured.

SEMELE

I know this place, my favorite place, this home within my heart.
And he knows where to find me, knows right where to find me...

The light gradually brightens, and sheer curtains patterned in a forest motif lower to the stage. A gentle breeze begins to grow stronger, and she turns again and again in expectation. She feels him near her...

Just Like Freedom
Song 6 — sung by Semele

**I have kissed, but never been kissed before
I've been loved, but never been loved before
I've been held, but never before like this
I've never truly been, but only ever been his
With the sweetest of bonds he holds,
And with the softest of words he ties,
With velvet he pulls me ever closer,
And I don't know why,
It feels just like freedom...
Out of the dark I feel a rush of wind
A whisper there, is that his kiss again?
I feel his eyes, as they caress
This love stings deep, and oh how he fulfills me**

**Caught in his gaze I cannot turn away
Out of the dark of night he is my day
On open fields, green with spring,
He takes my hand, and oh how he takes me
Under the sky blue, against the warm grass
Under the tree green, and over the moon
He takes me there, he takes me there...**

Suddenly, she is gracefully lofted into the air, as if carried by the effervescence of her love. Sunshine illuminates her way and small, floating lights like fireflies accompany her...

**From out of armor comes a godly love
Apollo shining like the rising sun
He is my light, he is my dream
I think I've dreamed of him from the very beginning**

Images of The Black Sultan surround her, still mostly within shadow, but with arms reaching out to her, offering their hands...

(The Black Sultan)
**I want you to be mine...
Be mine...
I will be the light in the dark...
The fire in your heart...**

She floats down to her pedestal. The servants begin to bind her loosely, though she is unaware and reacts as though the encircling ribbons are his waiting arms.

(Semele)
**The tighter his hold, the higher I fly
If he loosens his grip, I know I will die
Like a kite on a string, he lifts me high
Without him to hold me I know I'll fall and die
Never let this dream die...**

Suddenly, the bindings snap tight and the dream turns to nightmare. She is thrown back against the pedestal, but is bound with strips of silken ribbon like the one she gave the Sultan. She tries to pull free, but is caught.

SEMELE
No, no...! Let me go...! I'm suffocating!

She screams, then collapses back into sleep. As the lights fade, the sound of The Black Sultan's servants' sniggers fill the darkness. The Black Sultan reveals himself and he turns to his amused servants in anger, his rage (and humiliation) terrible to behold.

THE BLACK SULTAN
Silence! I will not have my love mocked!
She is the sweetest of roses, I am but pricked by her thorn.
My heart sways with longing, this Dream feels reborn!
She longs for me, too, I know, like the night craves the morn...

Cuchicheo intensely watches the scene, looking between Semele and his master.

CUCHICHEO (to himself)

My Lord seems now pressed to let the dreamer him dream.
Letting his longing into madness him fling.
She is but mortal, but he thinks she can be his for all of eternity!

CUCHICHEO (to The Black Sultan)

The sweetest of roses, you call her, my king?
A rosy-green potion, then, to entrance her and bring
A gift we'll present her, entice her and snare!

CUCHICHEO (to himself)

...Let her sample this thorny bud, 'twill lay her fears bare!

THE BLACK SULTAN

A most beautiful charm, my lapdog,
you always do please
My bidding's done well, thus do I forgive your fleas!

Cuchicheo is noticeably wounded by yet another offhanded slight from his master. He sneers with resentment...

CUCHICHEO

Will you present her with this rose tonight, my lord, before the coming Moon?

THE BLACK SULTAN

Soon enough she'll drink in again my whispered winds, my words of love.
For anon give her pause to dream, send shadows of me instead.
Let her feel me everywhere, a veil always whispering.

The Black Sultan motions for him to proceed. Cuchicheo draws his servants to him, and they prepare the gift...

One Green Rose
Song 7 — sung by Cuchicheo

**Cast a spell with petals paling
Prick a dream with shadow thorns
Reflections of a Dream King breaking
A picture-perfect visage, torn
We'll mix a potent, blooming brew
An alluring, emerald, toxic charm
We'll watch the one she thought she knew
Now dream her, dream her into harm.
Breathe so deeply, love is steeping
He comes so surely, surly now
With darkened brow and furrow deep'ning
He will this love mistrust endow
Child don't knock it, your heart in a locket
Entwine and bind, dream on**

**And girl if you let it you will soon forget it
The deceit of love's sweet song.
One green rose, your torment
One green rose, you're torn
One green rose that takes you
And leaves you soon forlorn
One green rose to breathe you
One green rose to blind
One green rose to take you
And leave your heart far behind.**

Cuchicheo pulls a green rose, still smouldering, from the cauldron. He smiles.

Lights fade to black.

END, Scene 2.

Scene Three

Lights rise on Semele's apartment, a small studio that exists in the real "waking" world. There is a futon low to the ground, an Asian-styled lamp, a dresser. A piano sits in the corner of the room.

Semele is preparing for bed. A young man enters from a doorway, presumably the bathroom. This is COLIN, Semele's boyfriend. He is an earnest-looking fellow, with goatee and longish hair, dressed in a t-shirt and boxers. He dries his face on a towel, crosses to Semele and kisses her. There is a sense of uneasy truce in the air...

COLIN

So...what's my songbird singing lately?

SEMELE (*combing out her hair*)

I haven't written anything for a couple days. I'm so sleepy...my dreams have been so real lately.

He rubs her shoulders lightly, then stoops down to meet her eyes. He notices her obvious distraction.

COLIN

We'll get some good rest tonight. No nightmares...I promise.

She averts her eyes, and crawls into bed. He shrugs, takes the opposite side. There is noticeable space between them. Soon they are asleep.

After a moment of quiet The Black Sultan's servants suddenly appear in the darkness around the bed. Semele has begun to dream. The servants begin to drape veils of black around the room, constructing her dream, as a veil (Dream Scrim) lowers to the stage. All the while, Cuchicheo can be seen, orchestrating the event. They begin to make a low sound, like a susurrant hum. Soon, an image of The Black Sultan appears before her. She rises out of bed, and he takes her and holds her tightly to him. The image of The Black Sultan gives her a RED rose. She takes in the aroma of the flower, and smiles at him.

Here In His Arms
Song 8 — sung by Semele

Here in his arms, I am free
Here in his heart, I can be
I ache to feel his loving touch
I burn for he loves me so much
And I walk beneath his sun it lights my way
And I stand upon the ocean shore
craving all of him and more...
And he speaks within my ear,
I can hear his sweetness singing
Saying, “Come to me, child, I’ll show you what the truth is.”
A dark voice in my ear... a tolling, no, a ringing
Imploring, “Fly to me, child, I’ll make real what your dream is.”
I ache to feel his loving touch
I burn for he loves me so much
And I walk beneath his sun it lights my footsteps in the dark
And I stand upon the ocean edge
Just waiting for the treasure he will dredge
Bring my heart to the surface

The image of The Black Sultan suddenly fades into the dark, leaving Semele alone.

Ahhh, ahhhh, ahhhh...

Cuchicheo and servants begin to whisper loudly...

**I think I hear his voice, but something seems so wrong
His light is naught but shadow, darkness that grows long
I hear a sudden silence, but still listen for his song...**

Semele looks down at the rose. It has turned GREEN. The spell is cast. Cuchicheo has stolen her from her dream into a phantasmagoric nightmare. In her heart, The Black Sultan has suddenly forsaken her...

It's Right Tonight
Song 9 — sung by Semele and Cuchicheo

**Darkness descending
These whispers, neverending
Now alone, churned and tossed
Without him I am lost
I am on a dizzy edge, thrust to the sky
Cast me up and throw me down, fly and die
Let the sea swallow me, underneath the stars it might...tonight...**

A figure appears, dressed in a long, dark cloak. She moves in mirrored response to Semele’s gestures, then pulls back her hood to reveal DREAM SEMELE. Semele moves away and Dream Semele retreats back into the

shadows.

**Pale light, reflecting
Your face, so compelling
And I ask, "Who are you?"
And you smile, "I am you."**

She is suddenly lifted and spun mercilessly by an unseen force, floating through the yawning infiniteness of space. Cuchicheo sends in a number of BLACK SULTAN DOPPELGANGERS, each threatening Semele in some way, sending her reeling off in another direction. She looks around with dread, still suffocating, but reaching out to touch the creatures that scuttle across her floor and up her walls like cockroaches. The darkness engulfs her; almost a breathing thing - it pulses with half-glimpsed shapes, with shades and shadows. Semele is a spot of white in the moving darkness.

**Falling from the dizzy edge, crushed from the sky
Cast me up and throw me down, fly and die
Let the sea swallow me, underneath the stars it might...tonight...**

The music slows. The Black Sultan Doppelgangers begin to draw closer, holding her. Cuchicheo's silhouette can be seen, his hands in a choke-like posture, as if he was the one holding her down.

**Torment her with whispers!
Entangle her with ashes!
Embitter her with longing!
Stab her with desire!
Now we'll see her madness bring
The downfall of our sire!
Now we'll see her madness bring
The downfall...**

Semele awakens with a scream. Colin sits up abruptly. He touches her hesitantly.

COLIN
Babe...are you okay?

SEMELE
I don't...it was another dream. Why does this keep happening to me?

COLIN
Hey, it's alright. It's probably just too much coffee or something.

SEMELE
No...I hate this! I'm just so tired lately. Why can't I sleep? And I hate that I keep waking you up like this! Oh Colin...I'm starting to think there's something really wrong with me!

Colin finally reaches for her, touching her shoulder. She stiffens, then accepts the conciliatory gesture and leans against him.

COLIN
It'll be okay. There's nothing wrong with...

SEMELE

How do you know? You're not going to...you won't leave me again, will you? Please say you won't!

Taken aback, he turns away.

COLIN

...Leave you?

SEMELE

I'm hard to live with sometimes...

Colin turns and embraces her, cradles her. Semele breaks down and cries. He wipes her eyes with his shirt, tries to distract her.

COLIN

Shhh. Hey, why don't you play me something? What about that new song you were working on? I heard you playing it the other day...it sounded really good!

She smiles, and drifts over to the piano, an old battered upright. She pushes the hair out of her eyes and begins to sing wistfully.

My Piano
Song 10 — Sung by Semele

**Some days I play the piano
Some days I look for you
Those days are now gone
You've left and moved on
But some days I still think of you
Will you stay? Will you stay?
Do you have to go away?
Will you stay? Will you stay?
Don't leave me here alone with my piano
Some days I walk in the sunlight
Today I walk in the rain
I know there's no choice
Though I wish for your voice
Singing with my voice again
Will you stay? Will you stay?
Do you have to go away?
Will you stay? Will you stay?
Don't leave me here alone with my piano**

She closes the lid of the piano quietly. He comes and sits beside her on the bench, takes her hand, and sings to her.

I Will

Song 11 — sung by Colin and Semele

(Colin)

When the wind comes, I hope you will still

Hold on as closely as I will

I Will

When the night falls I hope you will still

Believe as strongly as I will

I Will

(Colin and Semele)

We'll weather the storms as the rain falls

And we'll still be there when the dust clears

And together, the world will sing again

Hand in hand, I promise we will

When the waves take back the land

And the trees no longer stand

And if this day becomes the end of all seasons

And the world crumbles to sand

I will still be standing with you

Will still be holding your hand

I Will / You Will

The lights go down as Semele and Colin kiss. The curtain falls.

END, Scene 3.

END, ACT 1.

Act Two - Subdue

Scene One

The light rises. Semele is in the Dream World again, behind the Veil (a scrim separating her from her waking reality). She is walking around the forest of her dreamscape, barefoot. The sun dapples her world again. She is smiling, relaxed, enjoying the respite from the ever-increasing nightmares. The Black Sultan enters, feigns surprise that she should be in his realm, and kneels.

THE BLACK SULTAN

My lady...my Queen.

SEMELE

Why do you call me that?

He rises gracefully, takes her hand to kiss.

THE BLACK SULTAN

For that is what you are.

SEMELE

Your voice...I feel it in my soul. Who are you?

THE BLACK SULTAN

I am called many names, some in languages long dead. All that you need call me is 'love'. I have come for you, Semele. Of all the billions of sleeping souls, you alone I must love.

He waves his hand and the forest goes dark. They have been transported to the throne room of The Black Sultan; the throne rises forbiddingly on the dais.

THE BLACK SULTAN

All that I have is yours. You want a forest? A palace of pearls and light?

Semele looks around, baffled at the abrupt change.

THE BLACK SULTAN

Ask, sweet Semele, and it shall be yours. All I wish of you is that you stay with me here awhile.

She moves away, uneasy. She deeply loves him, but is still wounded by recent dreams of him that have turned into night terrors.

SEMELE

...And when I am ready to go?

THE BLACK SULTAN

You have drunk of the Cup. Your dreams belong to me.

SEMELE

My dreams are my own. I dreamed before I met you.

His brow darkens. With visible effort, he controls himself.

THE BLACK SULTAN

Perhaps you have not yet realized who I am. This world is mine. I rule absolutely here. Every dream you ever had was placed there by me.

He then soothes her, anxious to be pleasing. He waves his hand again and they are back in the forest.

THE BLACK SULTAN

But surely this place pleases you? I crafted it for you.

He sings to her softly.

“Where is my heart tonight? I know my love so well.
If he’d only come, I’d know him so well...”
Do you not know me, Semele?

She reacts to the familiar refrain she was recently singing in a dream. The Black Sultan hears a distant noise.

THE BLACK SULTAN

I must leave you. Farewell, sweet Semele.

He draws her into his arms, seizes her face between his hands and takes the kiss he wants. She submits but then turns away. He looks to her with swift anxiety, but recovers quickly and moves offstage in a graceful, heroic exit.

After The Black Sultan has left, Semele moves downstage and touches the Veil, peering fiercely through it as though she could will herself awake. Suddenly she sinks to her knees, all alone in a wood that is no longer her dream.

SEMELE

Oh, Colin...

The lights dim on Semele, as a single shaft of light reveals the throne of The Black Sultan. He sits there, brooding, as Semele’s remark echoes through the throne room. Cuchicheo crouches at his feet.

SEMELE’S VOICE

Oh, Colin...

THE BLACK SULTAN

Who is this mortal, that she dares speak of him in my realm?

CUCHICHEO

Ah, Sultan Invidiosa...be not jealous, my lord.
The one she mentions is mortal and, as all mortals be,
Easily dealt with and forgotten by she...
She who loves you, how could she not?
Leave his guilt to me; he’ll be forgot.

The Black Sultan considers this, steepling his fingers underneath his chin.

THE BLACK SULTAN

What you say makes sense, let it be so.
Let her fear him; only I must she know.
Veil her, subdue her, let her feel my power.
In the darkest of night this orchid will yet flower.

Cuchicheo bows and moves away.

CUCHICHEO (to himself)

Blinded he is, and foolish, not to see.
She will not love him; no, no, not she.
Love turns to hate in the palm of his hand,
He'd have more luck holding onto his sand.

He mockingly feigns blowing a handful of sand, as he has often watched his master do.

Lights out.

End, Scene 1.

Scene Two

Lights up on Semele, still alone in the forest. She moves from tree to tree, trying to find a way out. The Sultan's servants work within the Dream, casting spell upon spell onto Semele. Veils swirl in the darkness – the servants gently coil them around Semele, binding her. They sing in hypnotic harmonies; her movements gradually slow and stop and she allows herself to be wrapped, mesmerized. The Black Sultan oversees all from high above.

Veils

Song 12 — sung by The Black Sultan and the Servant Choir

**Veils for loving
The hour la-late – ohhh...
Loving, nothing,
Forgetting, ohhh...
Veils for loving
Names so long
Love me, love
Love only me
Oh, say no more
Unchain, veil your soul
It awashes, leaving shore
Love, love only me...
It's for loving, leave all behind
Any sound...ohh...
Love only me
Oh, say so long...
It sounds like a story...**

In the earthly realm, the spells cast on Semele reach their culmination as more night terrors, amplified by both the Sultan's jealousy and Cuchicheo's careful manipulations.

You Don't See It?
Song 13 — spoken words by Semele

Semele is in a maze of nightmare images, and is quickly overwhelmed. The most horrific of these images is that of Colin, who is enraged and abusing her. Semele finally awakens in a blind panic, yelling at the door, and at whatever lurks behind.

SEMELE
No no no no!

Terrified, she stares at the door. Awakened by the outburst, Colin gets up and stumbles in that direction.

SEMELE
Don't! There's somebody outside of this room.

COLIN
Semele....I check every night. There's nobody there.

He comes back to bed and moves to take her in his arms. She breaks away.

SEMELE
Don't touch me! I mean...

Half-asleep still, Colin is increasingly irritated.

COLIN
What's the matter? It's safe!

SEMELE
You don't believe me!

COLIN
Babe, believe fucking what? You just had a night terror, that's all!

SEMELE
But they're there...and you were being so...

COLIN
Semele...what? I'm here for you! I told you...it's safe!

Semele stands abruptly, and walks away from the bed. Her mistrust of Colin, inspired by the most recent visions, is rising.



Song 14 — sung by Semele and Colin

(Semele)

**I'm going to die
This time for sure
Why don't you believe me baby?
Don't you see the daggers?
They float in the air
Do you think I am mad?
Why do you say I am still dreaming?
I know, you've heard this before...**

Her dreaminess turns into a snarl. She advances on him as he retreats.

And I'm tired of you saying that it's safe when you're near, cause it's not!

She rips the sheet off the bed savagely and wraps herself in it. She resembles a high priestess, almost in a trance.

**My knife is my cry
I tear through the night
I throw back the sheets and I'm running
But still drowning inside
You know this ain't me
Or maybe it is
A minute of sleep and I'm dying
Oh, did I wake you again?
Well I'm tired of you saying that it's safe when you're near
Cause it's not!**

Colin, sleepy and aggravated by her outburst, comes back at her with his own admonitions. Extra voices in the shadows accompany him.

(Colin)

**Well I feel so helpless just lying here
I feel so far away, although you are so near
I'm scared of the moment that always comes
Just close my eyes for a moment, then you come undone
They say that all the monsters live beneath the bed
But yours are tearing up the night inside your head
And I wake up to the same scream every night
It's always something different but the same damned fight
And I don't know what to do...
I don't know what to do...**

Cuchicheo and the servants now appear in the shadows, goading Colin onward. They sing with him louder now, every other verse.

**I'm caught within these shadows waiting for the scream
My nights are gone and I am robbed of every dream
And I find myself wondering why peace forsakes me
When it's all I can do sometimes to let sleep take me
Cause I'm tired of you saying that it's safe when you're near, cause it's not!**

Colin turns away. They both sing, facing away from each other...

(Colin and Semele)
And I hate that there's no light in the dark...

Colin storms off to sleep in another room, slamming the door as he departs. Semele collapses, weeping on the bed.

Cuchicheo approaches triumphantly, reveling in the conflict. He menaces Semele, though she doesn't see or hear him. As she drifts into a troubled sleep, he perches on the chest at the foot of the bed.

CUCHICHEO

Frail little bird, how sweetly it sings
Flies 'gainst its cage and batters its wings
Fear not, Persephone, I will draw you near
Far from all the things you hold so dear.

He leans forward and whispers...
Hades is waiting...!

Cuchicheo begins crawling up the bed towards her, half a seduction and half a desecration, and sings.

Bed of Ashes
Song 15 — sung by Cuchicheo

**Somnambulistic
You got the dreamer's disease
Those countless terrors
They crush you in your bed of ashes
This sickly veil
Won't hold back the night
No dark kisses
Just screams in shadows
Through a glass darkly
Caught in amber like flies
Your death in slow motion
Here comes The Black Sultan
Held down in your dreams
Awaken now for the kill
Morpheus has gone mad tonight
Mistaking cruelty for love...
Will you ever wake
From this Bed of Ashes...**

Semele cries out, clutching the sheets to her chest in bolt-upright terror. She has had yet another night terror. She looks around frantically, disoriented, as the terror slowly subsides. During the dream, Colin has re-entered the room, and is curled up on the far end of the bed, asleep and shielded from her by the pillows and blankets. Semele looks very small, very young and very alone in her sea of bone-white sheets.

SEMELE

...Colin? Colin?

COLIN

Mm?

SEMELE

I'm afraid.

COLIN (mumbles in his sleep)

I'll do it in the morning.

He rolls over and continues to sleep. She rubs her eyes fiercely, as though to banish the visions, and begins to sing to herself...as well as to The Black Sultan. His visions and sweet promises, she has begun to realize, are destroying her waking life.

I'll Never Sleep Again
Song 16 — sung by Semele

**I'll never sleep again, I'll stay awake
Until the morning light
There's only so much of you I can take
Before my heart takes flight
A scream in the night, a curse in my dreams
A haunted bed that isn't what it seems
I'll never dream again, I'll stay awake
Before I feel that fright again**

She slips out of bed to stand by the bedpost; its solidity reassuring.

**You have haunted me
For what seems an eternity
Can't you see I'm but a shell
Your dream of heaven is my hell**

She approaches a coat hanging on her closet door with trepidation. In the half light, it almost looks like The Sultan. She pulls it down with sudden force.

**In the dark I know you're there
To close my eyes I cannot bear
What more must I give besides my screams
To be without you?**

Semele sits on the hope chest at the foot of the bed, tucks her knees under her nightgown and huddles there, eyes

wide open.

Lights fade to black.

END, Scene 2.

Scene Three

Lights rise. The Black Sultan is seen, pacing back and forth in one of the familiar pastoral backdrops of Semele's dream state. He postures a bit, arranges his clothing, clearly waiting on his love, who is nowhere to be found. Cuchicheo enters.

CUCHICHEO

My lord, her torment proceeds apace.
Not long now till she can't bear his face.

Cuchicheo hesitates, carefully choosing his phrasing in this next part of the game.

CUCHICHEO

Far be it from me, my lord, to question your mind,
But love is a bondage that works quick to bind.
A deceit that entangles...and yet's but a dream.
In the end is she truly the queen that she seems?

The Black Sultan turns on him in a rage, and Cuchicheo quickly backtracks on his glaring accusation.

It's just that ...heh-heh!...even my Sultan has tasks that still call.
Our dream realm, for instance, begins a quick thaw.

He gestures around him at the kingdom of dreams, which has started to lose its shape and lustre. The refocusing of the Sultan's energies on holding Semele in his realm has indeed already had its cost.

THE BLACK SULTAN

Our realm...? *Our* realm...?
Silence! What do you know?
She will come and gladly so.
Your presence tires me, begone!
The only realm that is "ours" will be hers!

Cuchicheo bows and leaves, a smirk clear on his face. His careful manipulations have had the desired effect – of impassioning his master further. The Black Sultan is too proud to believe he could not be loved by Semele, or have been mistaken about her.

Left alone at the regular meeting place, The Black Sultan continues to wait. At first pompous, his insecurities that she might not love him start to show as he sings.

Waiting

Song 17 – sung by The Black Sultan

**You are an ember burning
Your heart, my only flame
I need your love to warm me
Why do you play this game?
Tonight I'm waiting for you
This shadow veil conceals
Without you, I am nothing
Even a Sultan feels**

He looks around, increasingly unnerved that Semele has not arrived. He begins to grow angry, his pride wounded more and more. He refuses to accept the possibility that she might be rejecting his affections.

**By now you should be dreaming
Calling me by your side
Surely you don't forsake me
Your leave I'll not abide
I call you like a tempest
A whisper in your soul
Sleepless you will be empty
My dreams will make you whole**

He raises his arms in one mighty, final gesture, calling forth Semele if she be anywhere within his kingdom.

**Aaahhh...!
I'm waiting here...!**

When finally he realizes his love is nowhere to be found, he sits, dejected and alone. The lights fade as he repeats the final phrase over and over...

**I'm waiting...
I'm waiting here...**

Lights fade to black.

END, Scene 3.

Scene Four

Lights rise on Semele's apartment. She sits tensely at the foot of the bed. A book lies discarded near her, surrounded by used coffee cups. She obviously has not slept in a few days; her hair is wild, her nightgown ruffled. She rises and paces around restlessly as Colin enters, holding a paper bag and a cup. He looks at her, obviously concerned.

COLIN

...Did you go to work today, babe?

SEMELE

No, I called in.

She holds her hand out and he gives her the coffee reluctantly.

COLIN

Again? ...I brought you a bagel. When's the last time you ate?

She shrugs and downs the coffee in a series of quick gulps. Tearing off a piece of the bagel, she puts it in her mouth and chews. She grimaces.

SEMELE

This tastes like cardboard.

She scrubs at her eyes in frustration.

COLIN

Semele, you've got to go to the doctor. You can't go on like this. It's been...how many days since you've slept? Eventually you're going to have to sleep, baby.

SEMELE

No. Never again.

He kneels down beside her.

COLIN

Semele, talk to me. What's going on?

She looks at him helplessly, and with some paranoid suspicion as well.

SEMELE

If I sleep, they'll come for me.

He sighs and goes to smooth the sheets on the bed and plump the pillows.

COLIN

Look how comfortable this bed is...

Suddenly, Colin finds a knife under the pillow. Stricken with surprise, he pulls it out and turns to her. She avoids his eyes.

COLIN

What the hell is this?

SEMELE

...Just in case. I'm gonna go wash my face.

She stands and goes to the bathroom door. Colin watches her go, and begins to pace as he sings.

Pieces On Me
Song 18 — sung by Colin

**I hear you crumble
As you run down the hall
Another terror
Another broken china doll
A distant tremor
As your world continues to crack
I try to reach you
But you pull further back...
No, don't go to pieces on me
No, don't go to pieces on me
I feel you slipping through my hands
I drown within your shifting sands
I think I hear you deep within
And then you're gone again
To have and hold you
To see the smile on your face
Now just an echo
A love you're trying to erase
And time so forward
Running with its captives
You said forever
But tomorrow won't forgive...**

As Colin finishes singing, he goes offstage, into the kitchen. In the bathroom, Semele is sitting on the floor. She begins to nod off, then jerks up, frightened of falling asleep. She stumbles back into the bedroom, leans up against the bedpost and quickly drifts, as the lights slowly fade to black. On cue, Cuchicheo and servants take their positions around the bed, dim figures moving in the dark. Above it all, The Black Sultan spies the finally sleeping figure (Dream Semele). His godly ego bruised, he is ready to take revenge.

THE BLACK SULTAN
There you are...!

(SEMELE) (in her sleep she almost hears him, and in response whisper-sings in her sleep)

What more must I give besides my screams...?

He motions to Cuchicheo, who leaps eagerly onto the bed, caging his arms around Semele. Dream Semele awakens in terror.

Innocence
Song 19 — sung by Cuchicheo

Let me tell you how it will happen

**You'll awake to a blood-red dawn
Flesh of a sinner, you know you want to be
You'll be crying, "Come, come on! Come on!"**

Dream Semele breaks away, backs up into the First Servant, dressed like The Sultan. The First Servant pushes her back into the bed.

**Innocence, tearin' like paper
Your heart is breakin' like the crashing sea
The Sultan's here and he won't be foresaken
Surrender now your most lovely scream**

Cuchicheo hisses in her ear, swings around the bedpost and crawls up next to Dream Semele. His sadistic pleasure is evident. She struggles and falls from the bed, only to be scooped up by Second Servant, also dressed like The Sultan, who carries her to the bed in a hideous parody of The Sultan's seduction.

**(Say goodbye to) Innocence
Feel his passion pressing upon you
Holding you down - you are his now
He's got you dreamin', he is your dream
You got, you got to feel how much he wants ya**

A Third Servant approaches, this one dressed to loosely resemble Colin, except with his face made up to look like a skull. He lies down in bed next to Semele and rolls over on top of her. He puts his hand over her mouth.

**Carousels carry the horsemen
Apocalyptic terror pounding deep
Don't think that you can wake up from this, babe
Don't pray the lord your soul to keep!**

Dream Semele struggles and slides away, only to find the remainder of the servants — robed and carrying lanterns — forming a circle around the bed, blockading her. They sing.

**Penuriosus venustus decor
(Poor lovely beauty)
Quietus est vestri penitentia
(Sleeping is your penance)
Pro suis votum
(For his desire)
Virus in vestri animus
(Poison in your soul)**

She runs from end to end of the circle, hair streaming behind her, turning to one and then another with a supplicating gesture. No response.

**Formidonis unrequited
(Terror unrequited)
Suis tantum somnium
(His only dream)
Vindicatum vestri pectus pectoris**

(Claiming your heart)
Coegi vos dementus
(Driving you mad)
Somnium Dementus
(mad dreams)

Semele appears high above the tableau, watching sadly as Dream Semele dissolves into a terrified heap. She begins to sing above it all. Dream Semele below hears her, and keeps fierce eye contact with Semele the entire time she's singing. It is her only link to sanity.

(Semele)
Are you going to Scarborough Fair...
Parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme...
Remember me to the one who lives there...
He once was a true love of mine...

The Black Sultan notices Semele singing near him as she watches her dream self crumble. His outrage increases as he realizes that she is strangely separate from the violent events happening to "her" below. He wonders how she seems to be immune to his wrath. He feels her distance deep within, and his anger reaches new heights.

As the song reaches its climax, The Black Sultan (still looking at the "real" Semele near him) clinches his fist in the air, and a massive black cloth drops from the ceiling to completely engulf Dream Semele below, and the bed. Her scream cuts off like a switch. In sympathy, the Semele near him also collapses. The Black Sultan relishes her fall. But then – slowly – he begins to realize the damage that's been done, and how he has hurt the object of his affections. He is suddenly horrified at himself, and his hand goes to his face as he begins to weep. Below, Cuchicheo looks up expectantly.

CUCHICHEO
What next, my Master?

THE BLACK SULTAN
Forgive me...

The Sultan is lost in his torment. Cuchicheo motions to his minions to leave, and they all scurry away.

CUCHICHEO (to himself)
My Lord, almost done...quite undone, as it were!
He destroys his own dream as his love condemns hers.
Even now, he grows frail, and withered from want.
Is love hung on stars truly better than naught?

Cuchicheo smiles, and begins to laugh as the lights dim.

Meanwhile, Semele awakens in terror, and immediately begins to cry. She realizes that she will never be free, that sleep will always eventually take her, and that The Sultan will always be there waiting for her when it does. She rises from the bed, walks to the bathroom, and comes back out with a bottle of sleeping pills.

Lights fade.

END, Scene 4.

Scene Five

Lights up.

The Black Sultan is standing on the stairs in his castle. Weakened and remorseful, he begins to sing...

The End of Dreams

Song 20 — Sung by The Black Sultan, Semele, Cuchicheo, Femme de la Morte, Colin

(The Black Sultan)

I built a kingdom just for you

All that you need to do

Is take my hand and step through

You are the queen of my dreams

I weaved you a world

Why does it fray at the seams?

My hand is open just for you

(as he sings this, it is noticeable that his hand is raised in a fist)

And I will be always yours

And you will be mine, too!

My Will will be done!

You will not leave me undone!

He pauses. It is beginning to sink in that he may have lost her.

I don't know how to go on

Without you, without you in my song

And I don't know, how this dream will end

Cuchicheo, who has been watching his master's breakdown, feels utter contempt and revels completely in the moment.

(Cuchicheo)

He ain't got the jewels to be The Dream King

He don't even know what he is thinking

In his own dream sand is he sinking

His realm of dreams is he now abdicating

A fall intoxicating!

(Chorus)

Closed now the book of endless dreams

into the blackest of night an icy stream

is drowned a fragment of hope, a lover's gleam,

clinging to one whispered word still fracturing...

Meanwhile, in her apartment, Semele sings...

(Semele)

**I'm just a shadow of me
I'm just a whisper of hope
An echo in his eternity
I'm just a thread in his dream
A dream twisted like rope
And I refuse to be bound by him
No longer love, this curse
He was the song in my heart
And now it breaks with his final verse
There's no way to be free...**

She pauses with a final realization.

No! Maybe I can still be...

Taking a quick look around and finding herself alone, she takes the sleeping pills. To one side of the stage, a new figure - FEMME DE LA MORTE - appears out of a column of steam and radiant light. She is a beautiful woman, a radiant angel of death, draped in silken, flowing veils. She reaches out to Semele.

On the other side of the stage, The Black Sultan is surprised to find Semele again in his dream realm, and believes she has finally decided to be with him.

(Semele)

No dreams for the dead

(The Black Sultan)

Hold, for now here she comes!

(Semele)

No visions to haunt, no madness in their heads

(The Black Sultan)

Finally, my queen is arrived!

(Semele)

On the other side of him

(The Black Sultan)

Why does she smile with such grace?

(Semele)

She calls on my want as this light it grows dim

(The Black Sultan)

Why do tears of joy seem to stream from her face?

(Femme de la Morte)

Come to me...come to me...

The Sultan watches Semele moving past him, on to the waiting angel of eternal sleep.

(Semele)

With one last, final sigh

(The Black Sultan)

Lo, but why does she now go by?

(Femme de la Morte)

Find your peace now, child, come and rest awhile...

(Semele)

Past dreaming I'll go, to sleep and then forever fly

(The Black Sultan)

Like hope on the wind, her spirit doth fly!

The Black Sultan watches in disbelief as Semele follows Death into the unknown.

(Semele)

Fly!

(The Black Sultan)

You've left me alone

You've left me alone!!!!

(Femme de la Morte)

Fly! Forever fly!

The Black Sultan begins to shake and disintegrate. Veils begin to flow out from him, escaping in every direction. Without her to dream of him, he is nothing. The Black Sultan is dying. Cuchicheo, who has anxiously watched the events unfolding - the final outcome of his countless hours of scheming - rises.

THE BLACK SULTAN

What have you done? You've torn me asunder!

Cuchicheo, do you see what this mortal hath done to me? Cuchicheo, where are you??

My servants, to me!

No one comes. He looks around greedily, now in panic. Veils continue to flow out of him, and smoke begins to emanate from within his robes. As his power fades, he staggers up the stairs to his throne. Soon his power is gone, and (after one final scream) he and the throne become one dark silhouette on the landscape. He is dead.

Meanwhile, Colin comes in from the kitchen to find Semele crumpled on the floor. He knows in his heart that she's dead, and softly sings, a reprieve of the song she sang to him earlier, My Piano...

(Colin)

Will you stay? Will you stay?

Do you have to go away?

Will you stay? Will you stay?

Don't leave me...

Colin falls next to Semele, holding her as he cries. The spotlight that is on him fades to black.

Meanwhile, Cuchicheo walks to where his master stood.

CUCHICHEO

It's mine...it's finally mine...!

I AM THE KING!!!

He raises his arms, expecting to hear the familiar lightning that his master could always invoke. Instead, there is nothing. He casts his arms around, and spotlights flicker and quickly fade. He dons a cloak, similar to his master's, and preens. Finally, he runs up the stairs to the throne to sit, but stops short when he sees the crumpled remains of his master. He reaches out tentatively, suddenly in shock at the events, and his role in them. He brings his hand back to his own face. Finally he makes his way back down the stairs. The wind begins to howl as he sings...

Burning Embers
Song 21 — Sung by Cuchicheo

**Down in the moor, near the ruins of the castle
Rests the battered and beaten, haunted shell of a Dream.
Cold and alone, a carcass frozen in longing
The last ache of cry distantly echoing.
This god consumed a mortal
And she consumed him then
And then she slipped right past him
Into shadow, everlasting
Now this, my kingdom
This, my treason
Cannot be forgave
This, my throne room
This, my own tomb
Inheritance, my grave
No more dreaming
No more scheming
This, my empty realm
The King has fallen...
My King has fallen...**

Cuchicheo stumbles, increasingly horrified by the magnitude of what he has done.

**Now just a darkened sun
An eclipse over my heart
Cold dreams in the wind
And bleached skeletal trees in the sky
And still I wonder why
Every dream must die
Must die...**

His remorse is total. Of all the players in this tale, he is the only one who has had his dream fulfilled. Yet it is barren and empty.

**Though I lived to see your fall
I cannot be without you now
I cannot breathe without your breath
I beg upon your ashes...
Let me dream you back to life
I once was your shadow
Your beautiful shadow
You can drain me of life
See how I am your tallow
You can drain my very marrow
I would still be less hollow...
You, my beautiful plague of hearts
You, who filled with the darkest of needs
You, who placed burning embers inside
You, who were a light in the dark
And now I tremble inside
For every dream has died
My dream has died...
Though I lived to see your fall
I cannot be without you now
I cannot breathe without your breath
I beg upon your ashes...
Let me dream you back to life
I could again be your shadow
Your most loyal and crafty shadow
Drain me of life
I would melt to be your tallow
Suck me to the marrow
Where you'd go, I'd always follow...**

Cuchicheo kneels, takes a handful of sand, and holds it close to him. The gentle but unruly winds quickly steal the sand from his hand. Finally, he slowly climbs back up the stairs, sinks in sadness at the foot of the throne, and rests his head on the dead Sultan's boot. Lights dim to black, with one white spotlight remaining on the throne and Cuchicheo.

Spotlight fades to black, as the winds continue to howl....

END, Scene 5.

END, ACT 2.

Epilogue

Turn the Page Song 22

**We're all turning pages,
Different lives, different faces
Ah, a thread that ties the time it takes to scream
Ah, a whisper of a cry inside a dream
Turn the page...**

The End

