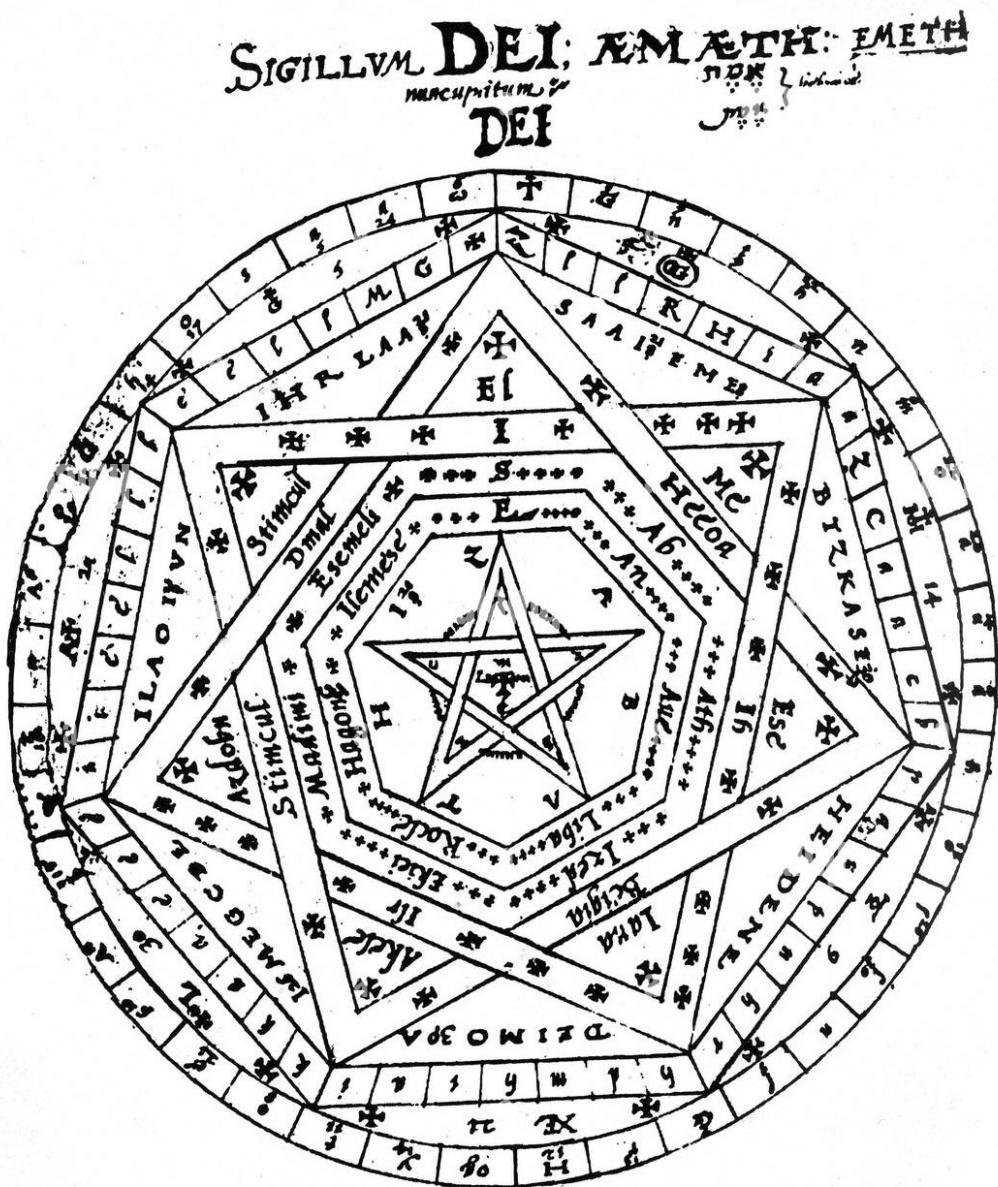


The Alchemist's Wife

by Alan Neal Levy



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Cast of Characters (in order of appearance)

12 women and 2 men with doubling

Jane Fromond Dee (she/her) - an English gentlewoman and lady-in-waiting

Peter Dee (he/him) – husband of Jane Fromond Dee, philosopher, astrologer and mathematician

Lewd Mechanicals - the all-female Techies of Cesky Krumlov Theatre, including:

Roberto Silversmith / Henry IV, King of France / Robert Devereux

Estefania Koinsmith / Stephen Báthory, King of Poland / Dr. Roderigo Lopes

Shania Locksmith / Moroccan ruler Ahmad al-Mansur / Thomas Kyd, playwright

Gertruda Arrowsmith / Holy Roman Emperor, Rudolf II / Irish rebel Hugh O'Neill

Vonda Blacksmith / Walter Raleigh, explorer

Lena Bladesmith / John White, Governor of Roanoke Colony

Dominique Gunsmith / William Shakespeare, playwright

Juanita Coppersmith / Martin Frobisher, explorer / Bess Throckmorton

Joanna Cooper Kelley (they/their) - an English philosopher, astrologer and mathematician

Edward Talbot (Kelley) [he/him] – husband of Joanna Cooper Kelley, alchemist. This role is played by the same actor who plays playwright Christopher Marlowe and Vilem Rozmberk, High Treasurer and High Burgrave of Bohemia and William Cecil

Inigo Jones, (he/him) / Maria de Medici, future Queen of France(she/her)

Queen Elizabeth (he/she/they/we) / Dido, Queen of Carthage

Act 1

Act 1, Scene 1

Late evening, August 2, 1587 Cesky Krumlov Castle, Bavaria. Jane Fromond Dee is in bed after having sexual intercourse with her husband Peter. At rise, JANE FROMOND is still in bed while DEE, in a dressing gown crosses to a writing table where he records the details of their sexual activity.

DEE: A 16.7 cm erection was maintained for an elapsed time of 4 minutes 38 seconds. The wife (pause) was aroused at the two minute mark and achieved orgasm at the three minute mark.

(DEE closes the journal and watches his wife rise from bed and dress in formal attire.)

DEE: Edward had this crazy idea. To switch sexual partners. I mean wives. He wants us to exchange wives.

JANE FROMOND: No, thanks. (pause) You used to ask about my orgasm.

DEE: It was obvious tonight, my love. So, about Edward Talbot?

JANE FROMOND: No.

DEE: Just for one night.

JANE FROMOND: No.

DEE: He is old.

JANE FROMOND: Peter. No.

DEE: He probably can't get it up. You know... a limp noodle.

JANE FROMOND: And you get to ravage his beautiful wife Joanna ... while I get stuck with a limp -

DEE: He said the angels spoke to him.

JANE FROMOND: Oh. And it was the angels who suggested we swap husbands?

DEE: It was more than a suggestion. It was a commandment... an order.

JANE FROMOND: An order? Oh..... Okay. Let me try that: I order you to NOT swap wives with Edward Talbot.

DEE: Kelley.

JANE FROMOND: What?

DEE: Kelley. He calls himself Edward Kelley now.

JANE FROMOND: Why? Never mind. Whatever!

DEE: He thinks it will heal the rift of Christendom.

JANE FROMOND: Sleeping with me? Okay fine. (She walks with her arms.) Take me to your leader.

DEE: Fine. I promise you no wife-swapping.

JANE FROMOND: But if you like Joanna Talbot? I wouldn't mind if you guys... hooked up.

DEE: Really?

JANE FROMOND: No. But maybe she and I will. And then you and little Eddie could do the nasty.

DEE: No.

JANE FROMOND: He might share his crystal ball with you and then you both can see the pretty angels.

DEE: No. No crystal ball. Just his *shew*-stone. (*Shew* is pronounced show.)

JANE FROMOND: Maybe he will lick your philosopher's stones and you two can both talk to the angels.

DEE: No.

JANE FROMOND: And suck your...

DEE: No!

JANE FROMOND: No?

DEE: He is rather old.

JANE FROMOND: And?

DEE (rising): And... no wife swapping with Edmond. Where are you off to?

JANE FROMOND: The the-ay-tre, of course, darlink.

DEE: Of course. I think I'll join you.

(DEE rises from the desk, and removes his dressing gown. Inside his undergarments is a larger than life penis.)

JANE FROMOND: Really? Let's go.

DEE looks down and removes the strap-on penis.

Blackout.

Act 1, Scene 2

Later evening, August 2, 1587. The Theatre at Cesky Krumlov Castle, Bavaria. A performance of *Dido, Queen of Carthage* by Christopher Marlowe is being performed upstage with the performers backs turned to the audience and facing their imaginary audience. At rise, JUNO and VENUS are finishing a scene while DIDO, AENEAS, IARBAS, and CUPID wait in the wings to make their entrances for the following scene. A live backstage is downstage and more prominent to the real audience. A scrim separates the live stage from the backstage.

The backstage is an exact replica of the backstage of the Cesky Krumlov Theatre, with all modern technologies, including lighting instruments, hidden from the audience's sight lines. At rise, the three-level backstage with wooden pulleys, gears and levers is operated by the LEWD MECHANICALS, or Techies, turning the wheels and cranking the weighted fly systems that operate the painted flats and create the different settings. The TECHIES should have as much control over the downstage flats as is practical. The Upstage (Live) area is operated only with modern technology.

The LEWD MECHANICALS work in groups of four on opposite wings. GERTUDA Arrowsmith – operates the SR pulley on the the 3rd Line Crew. and Shania Locksmith operates the SL pulley on the 3rd Line Crew, which also includes ROBERTO Silversmith (SR) and ESTEFANIA Koinsmith (SL) who operate the dangerous wooden pulleys in the *pit* underneath the stage floor.

VONDA Blacksmith operates the SL pulley on the 2nd Line Crew, LENA Bladesmith operates the SR pulley on the 2nd Line Crew, Shania Gunsmith operates the SR pulley on the 1st Line Crew, and JUANITA Coppersmith operates the SL pulley on the 1st Line Crew. They use hand signals to coordinate their efforts, most of the time.

Also on stage are playwright Christopher MARLOWE and Inigo JONES his 14-year old muse and prodigy *cum* stage artist, who are caught in full view of their audience. Both roles should be played by women. JONES is in his Ganymede costume from Scene 1 and is receiving *notes* from the playwright. In Scene 1, Ganymede was fondled by the Roman head deity Jupiter and MARLOWE had used a prop penis for comic intent (yes that one.)

MARLOWE: Where is the prop penis?

JONES: I looked everywhere.

MARLOWE: Come here, you have something on your nose.

JONES: Wait. We're still on stage. Over here.

(JONES pulls MARLOWE in the wings where they are still in full view of our audience. VENUS and JUNO perform the scene on the Live stage, facing up stage.)

VENUS: Love my Aeneas, and desire is thine;
The day, the night, my swans, my sweets, are thine.

JUNO: More than melodious are these words to me,
That overcloy my soul with their content:
Venus, sweet Venus! how may I deserve
Such amorous favours at thy beauteous hand?

(JONES and MARLOWE kiss in the wings where they are still in full view of our audience.)

GERTUDA: One minute!

ROBERTO: *Merde!* I dropped my script.

ESTEFANIA: *Lo encontré!*

SHANIA: Steve-Bob to the rescue. You da man.

(SHANIA takes ROBERTO's script and hits ESTEFANIA over the head with it. The amplified sound is heard by all.)

ESTEFANIA: *¡Maldita rata sucia!*

ROBERTO: Oh no.

(ESTEFANIA takes ROBERTO's script and hits ROBERTO over the head with it. The amplified sound is heard by all.)

ESTEFANIA: *Lo encontré!*

(She winds up to repeat the stage slap, but SHANIA interrupts her.)

SHANIA: *Espèce de, tu as quelque chose sur ta robe.*

ESTEFANIA: *Dónde?*

(ESTEFANIA looks down and SHANIA flicks her nose. The action on the live stage and backstage resumes.)

JUNO: Thy son, thou know'st, with Dido now remains,
And feeds his eyes with favours of her court;
She, likewise, in admiring spends her time,
And cannot talk, nor think, of aught but him:
Why should not they then join in marriage
And bring forth mighty kings to Carthage town,

(JONES and MARLOWE embrace in the wings where they are still in full view of our audience. VENUS continues the scene on the Live stage.)

VENUS: Well could I like this reconcilement's means;
But, much I fear, my son will ne'er consent,
Whose armèd soul, already on the sea,
Darts forth her light to Lavinia's shore.

JUNO: This day they both a-hunting forth will ride
Into these woods adjoining to these walls;
When, in the midst of all their gamesome sports,
I'll make the clouds dissolve their watery works,
And drench Silvanus' dwellings with their showers;
Then, in one cave, the queen and he shall meet,
And interchangeably discourse their thoughts,

VENUS: Sister, I see you savour of my wiles:
Be it as you will have [it] for this once. [Exeunt.]

(Lights out on the live upstage. The LEWD MECHANICALS and the real crew change the scenery to an exterior setting. This is an anachronism. Modern technology is used while the LEWD MECHANICALS mime the seven second scene change.)

[Enter Dido, Aeneas, Iarbas, and Cupid disguised as Ascanius]

DIDO (loudly over the sex): Aeneas, think not but I honour thee,
That thus in person go with thee to hunt:
My princely robes, thou see'st, are laid aside,
Whose glittering pomp Diana's shroud supplies.
All fellows now, disposed alike to sport;
The woods are wide, and we have store of game.
Fair Trojan, hold my golden bow a while,
Until I gird my quiver to my side. –
Lords, go before; we two must talk alone.

(JONES and MARLOWE lay on the floor in the wings in front of Tree 1, where they are still in full view of our audience. IARBAS continues the scene on the Live stage.)

IARBAS: [Aside] Ungentle! can she wrong Iarbas so?
I'll die before a stranger have that grace.
"We two will talk alone": – what words be these?

DIDO: What makes Iarbas here of all the rest?
We could have gone without your company.

AENEAS: But love and duty led him on perhaps,
To press beyond acceptance to your sight.

IARBAS: Why, man of Troy, do I offend thine eyes?
Or art thou grieved thy betters press so nigh?

DIDO: How now, Gaetulian! are ye grown so brave,
To challenge us with your comparisons?
Peasant! go seek companions like thyself,
And meddle not with any that I love: –
Aeneas, be not moved at what he says;
For, otherwhile, he will be out of joint.

GERTUDA: *Mierda!* Tree1 is going down.

LEWD MECHANICALS: Ahhh!

(Tree 1 is in full control of the real tech crew. When it starts to “fall,” JONES and MARLOWE are revealed to the pretend audience, the Live Actors and the LEWD MECHANICALS.)

AUDIENCE 1: Look. Who’s that?

DIDO: It’s the playwright.

MARLOWE (slowly): Fuck.

AUDIENCE 1: Marlowe. Christopher Marlowe

(ROBERTO has the only remaining rope attached to the sixteen foot flat from falling. She needs to secure her understage line which is now unsecured in her left hand. She takes a breath and pretends it is an effort to muscles the flat into a more upright position. She lets go of the rope, pulls the brake on the underground pulley system. Tree 1 scenic flat starts to tip over with its free rope end.)

LEWD MECHANICALS: Nooo! (JONES exits.)

JONES: Later dude!

MARLOWE: Look out!

LENA: Busted.

ESTEFANIA: *Dios mio.*

IARBAS: Women may wrong by privilege of love;
But, should that man of men, Dido except,
Have taunted me in these opprobrious terms,
I would have either drunk his dying blood,
Or else I would have given my life in gage.

LEWD MECHANICALS: Grab the rope!

(MARLOWE runs around the stage trying to grab the rope. If the actor is successful, she holds the rope and pretends to be unable to pull up the flat until ROBERTA climbs onstage, grabs the free rope line, mimes the heavy weight of the flat until the real Tech crew stop the descent of Tree1. ROBERTA hands off the prop rope to GERTUDA.)

ESTEFANIA: *Dios mio.*

DIDO: Huntsmen, why pitch you not your toils apace,
And rouse the light-foot deer from forth their lair?

(GERTUDA appears to push the flat into its preferred position.)

CUPID Ay, mother; I shall one day be a man,
And better able unto other arms;
Mean time, these wanton weapons serve my war,
Which I will break betwixt a lion's jaws.

DIDO: Aeneas, leave these dumps and let's away,
Some to the mountains, some unto the soil,
You to the valleys, – thou [to Iarbus] unto the house. [Exeunt]

LENA (as the other LEWD MECHANICALS celebrate loudly): Roberto-Bob to the rescue.
You da man.

ROBERTO: Okay, I'm da man, Lena. Your female crew is the best damn tech crew in Bavaria!. Best damn tech crew in Europe!

Blackout.

Act 1 Scene 3

Later the same evening, August 2, 1587. Třeboň Castle, Třeboň Bavaria. Edward Talbot, aka. Edward KELLEY is conducting a scrying session in his chamber which is a laboratory for making tinctures from both metallic – and herbal compounds. The chamber fills the entire stage with an arched castle window upstage framing the evening sky. At rise he holds an enormous brick of hashish. His wife, Joanna Cooper Kelley (they/their) is spying on him throughout, at rise downstage of the desk KELLEY is seated at.

KELLEY: Eureka! Yo dude, you are so wasted. Now what?

JOANNA COOPER (in their deepest voice): Divide the stone into forty equal parts, whose greatest numbers are four.

KELLEY: What? Who's there?

(Laughing, KELLEY divides a large brick of hashish in four quarters, then divides each quarter into ten pieces.)

KELLEY: Divide an outward circle into forty equal parts.

(KELLEY places a party size piece of hash on the perimeter of the circle which is drawn in chalk on the wood floor and divided into forty equal segments. This is KELLEY's famous *table* which he believes can communicate with the angels. KELLEY is unaware of his wife's assistance.)

KELLEY: Note: the number. Forty. Here is a mystery. I need forty-nine segments. My table is 49 by 49.

(KELLEY takes a piece of the hashish in his hands and breaks off a generous chunk into the brass bowl of an ornate hookah. He crushes the chunk into a fine powder.)

KELLEY: Angel Dust. No, Red Angel Dust.

(KELLEY takes a long slow draw on the hookah hose. He exhales, sighs and spaces out. JOANNA COOPER coughs loudly to rouse him.)

KELLEY: Angel Dust.

(KELLEY places his table downstage. He moves his shew-stone onto the table. This is not in any way, a crystal sphere. It is simply a large, hexagonal quartz prism that he gazes into, for *shewing* the angels. He exhales, sighs and spaces out.)

KELLEY: Come on. (He sees nothing, but is entertained by the crystal.) Nothing.

(JOANNA COOPER crosses to the window seat beneath the castle window outlined by the evening sky. They wear men's clothing throughout. Tonight they appear as the Angel Michael who wears contemporary men's trousers and a stylish shirt and a bright gold necktie. JOANNA stands upon the window seat and speaks directly to KELLEY in their voice.)

JOANNA /MICHAEL: One of the forty stepped forward and their breast was covered with silk.

(KELLEY crosses to JOANNA/MICHAEL and speaks directly to them. He feels the silk fabric of their blouse. He sincerely believes he is touching an angel.)

JOANNA /MICHAEL: One of the forty stepped forward and on their breast was a great Tie all of gold.

KELLEY: You're real.

JOANNA /MICHAEL: Note the tie of gold.

(KELLEY feels the fabric of their necktie.)

KELLEY: Gold? You're saying I really can make gold out of lead?

JOANNA /MICHAEL: No, Eddie the tie. Note. The. Letters. Of the T. I. E. Not the fucking color.

KELLEY: The tie. What letters? I don't see any letters?

JOANNA /MICHAEL (in their deepest voice): Spell the word tie.

KELLEY: Ohhh, T for tie. I get it.

(KELLEY records the letter T on the names he has recorded on the table.)

JOANNA /MICHAEL (in their deepest voice): Place that in the first place. It is the name of the lord. It lives and multiplies for ever, blessed be their name.

(JOANNA COOPER rises and removes the biggest chunk of hashish, wraps it in foil and then places it in their pocket. KELLEY continues recording names of other Angels on his historically accurate Table.)

JOANNA COOPER: Queen Elizabeth. She needs this more than you. Well, maybe just one more.

(JOANNA COOPER, still dressed as Angel Michael, removes one, and then a second chunk of hash, wraps them both in tin foil and then places them in their pocket. KELLEY has finished seven names and passed out yet again.)

JOANNA COOPER: Let's see what we have here. Let me read the names you have written. Thaoth, Gala- Whatever. You're an interesting one, Edward Kelley. My stoned philosopher.

(JOANNA COOPER looks at the chunk of hash.)

JOANNA COOPER: I think I'll visit Jane Fromond.

Blackout.

Act 1 Scene 4

Even later the same evening August 2, 1587 at an Italian-style masque in a salon in Cesky Krumlov Castle. Jane Fromond Dee and her husband Peter Dee enter a Baroque salon with an overflowing banquet table, and many dancers and musicians who are completely masked. The women GUESTS appear in colorful stick masks, while the men are in full-head, Venetian character masks in solid white or solid black.

The other guests in the room include Vilem Rozmberk (the host of the Masque,) Martin Frobisher, Inigo Jones, Thomas Kyd, Walter Raleigh, William Shakespeare, John White, Governor of Roanoke Colony, Maria de Medici, future queen of France, Henry IV, King of France, Stephen Báthory, King of Poland, Holy Roman Emperor, Rudolf II, Queen Elizabeth and JOANNA COOPER. At the conclusion of the masquerade they remove their masks.

ROZMBERK (with his arm around JOANNA COOPER): 'Willkommen, bienvenue, welcome.' Tonight we celebrate the world premiere of *Dido, Queen of Carthage* by your fellow countryman Christopher Marlowe. The themes for tonight's masquerade are Theatre...

GUESTS: Yay!

ROZMBERK: Religion...

GUESTS: Boo!

ROZMBERK: and Empires!

GUESTS: Empires? What's an Empire? How 'bout Finance?, etc.

ROZMBERK: Four or five Heads of State are here as my guests. Please seek them out and convince them, what they need most to build an empire are better plays... and better theatres, like my state of the art venue here in Cesky Krumholz.

Most of the GUESTS start circling the fully loaded banquet table which is filled with black and white masks. ROZMBERK greets JANE FROMOND and DEE.

ROZMBERK: Always a pleasure Mrs. Dee. Peter, let's circulate. Have you met Martin Frobisher yet?

DEE: No. But I think Kelley had a breakthrough on the scrying.

ROZMBERK: Really? Good. Now, come with me.

(ROZMBERK and DEE exit and reenter as GUESTS. JOANNA COOPER lowers her mask to JANE FROMOND who also lowers her stick mask. The women are all free to choose who sees their features. The MEN are stuck in full head character masks.)

JOANNA COOPER: Jane, dear, you look exceptionally well this evening. Did you and the hubby have a little exercise before the show?

JANE FROMOND: As a matter of fact, Edward and I had a personal best. But he also mentioned that your husband wanted to swap wives.

JOANNA COOPER: Fat chance.

JANE FROMOND: Yeah, but I was a little imp and suggested that he and The Great Alchemist might want to be sexual partners.

JOANNA COOPER: You devil...

JANE FROMOND: I also suggested that you and I might enjoy a hook-up or three.

(Pause.)

JOANNA COOPER: You like women?

JANE FROMOND: Switch hitter? I really enjoy women and a few men. (Looking at the KINGS and QUEENS upstage.) Is Peter here?

JOANNA COOPER: No, I came stag. Peter's still in Třeboň, shew-ing how many angels fit on the head of a pin.

JANE FROMOND: So, how'd you get here?

JOANNA COOPER: Astral projection.

JANE FROMOND: Teach me how?

JOANNA COOPER: Maybe later. There's someone you need to meet.

JANE FROMOND: Royalty?

JOANNA COOPER: Her Royal Highness.

JANE FROMOND: Elizabeth is here?

JOANNA COOPER: Come with me.

JANE FROMOND: You know Queen Elizabeth?

JOANNA COOPER: Never met her. But I know which mask is hers. And you're just her type.

JANE FROMOND: Her type?

JOANNA COOPER: She is bisexual like you.

JANE FROMOND: And you?

JOANNA COOPER: You must introduce your best friend to her. After you dance.

JANE FROMOND: Dance?

JOANNA COOPER: Don't worry. I hear she leads.

(GUESTS circulate among the three male Heads of State attending the Masquerade. The King of FRANCE, King of POLAND, and the Holy Roman Emperor, aka ROME 2 all wear full head black or white Venetian masks like the other men. The two Queens are in colorful Venetian stick masks. The very tall QUEEN ELIZABETH is the British monarch and future Queen MARIA de' Mici of France are crossing downstage.)

QUEEN ELIZABETH: We promise we will be there.

MARIA: Ciao.

(FRANCE dances with MARIA. QUEEN ELIZABETH bows to JANE FROMOND, who bows in return and then curtsies.)

JANE FROMOND: Your Highness.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: No need for that. Thou must be Lady Jane.

JANE FROMOND: No Lady. I'm just plain Jane from [Surrey](#). I am married to -

QUEEN ELIZABETH (rapping): Peter Dee... astrologer,
who is scrying with Edward Talbot Kelley.
Plain, dear? How so much further from the truth.
Thou art my long sought for Northwest Passage
On the morrow, Elizabeth shall name
thy husband to be Court Astrologer.
Wouldst he be interested?

JANE FROMOND: I... He... We.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: And thou Lady Jane? Wilst thou *come* to court?

JANE FROMOND: Yes. Of course, I wilst. Do I need to speak like that?

(JANE FROMOND who also lowers her stick mask.)

JOANNA COOPER: So what do you think of our Royal Highness?

JANE FROMOND: She was very... She wants Peter to be her Court Astrologer.

JOANNA COOPER: *Merde*, there goes my husband's career. Oh well. So, what about our Queerness Liz?

JANE FROMOND: She's rather striking.

JOANNA COOPER: That she is. So, look what I have.

JANE FROMOND: Hashish? Let's blow this taco stand -

JOANNA COOPER: First, let's discuss your new position.

JANE FROMOND: What are you up to? You want me to dose Elizabeth? That wouldn't... She has food tasters and Cecil everywhere. Besides I kind of like her.

JOANNA COOPER: As I said you would. You two will do great things together. Qwarhooo Achat.

(JOANNA COOPER starts to exit.)

JANE FROMOND: Qwarhooo Achat? What does that mean?

JOANNA COOPER: That is how I honor the Old Priestess who taught me so long ago. Qwarhooo Achat.

JANE FROMOND: You know the olde ways. Please teach me. Don't leave me here alone.

JOANNA COOPER: Alone? From what I've heard, the Royal Harlot has an insatiable appetite. With her and your husband, you should be quite a happy camper.

JANE FROMOND: I want you Joanna Cooper. All of you. Everything you know.

JOANNA COOPER: I don't...

JANE FROMOND: Everything you know how to do.

JOANNA COOPER: I might know a few spells...

JANE FROMOND: Every centimeter of your neck...

JOANNA COOPER: And I really don't like sex.

JANE FROMOND: Okay. Is this like some kind of celibacy pledge?

JOANNA COOPER: No, I just really don't like sex.

JANE FROMOND: Cool.

JOANNA COOPER: I like power.

JANE FROMOND: Yes. I see you now.

JOANNA COOPER: I will go to the palace with you, Joanna Cooper Kelley. On one condition.

JANE FROMOND: Anything.

JOANNA COOPER: I must wear a disguise. And assume a different name, so I can keep my husband working in his lab....

JANE FROMOND: Producing more of this most excellent hashish. Perfect.

JOANNA COOPER: Now, you must dance. Qwarhooo Achat.

JANE FROMOND: Yes. I must dance now.

JANE FROMOND crosses upstage and dances with QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Blackout.

Act 1 Scene 5

Later the same evening, August 2, 1587. Třeboň Castle, Třeboň Bavaria. Edward Talbot, aka Edward KELLEY is still passed out. JOANNA COOPER enters wearing the same costume, without the mask.

JOANNA COOPER: Oh Edward.

KELLEY: Who's there? Michael, is that you?

JOANNA COOPER: Yes, dear. I mean no. It's your wife. Joanna.

KELLEY: Oh, hello there. Were you out?

JOANNA COOPER: Yes, dear. I went to the theatre.

KELLEY: There is a theatre here? In Třeboň?

JOANNA COOPER: In Cesky. I went to Cesky Krumholz. It was Marlowe's play.

KELLEY: *Doctor Faustus*?

JOANNA COOPER: No, the other one. *Dido*.

KELLEY: The one with Zeus fucking the boy? I wanted to see that one.

JOANNA COOPER: Yes, dear. Elizabeth was there.

KELLEY: Thank God I didn't go. She...

JOANNA COOPER: The Dees were there.

KELLEY: Good. Now, let me get back to work, dear.

JOANNA COOPER: Queen Elizabeth named Peter Dee as her Court Astrologer.

KELLEY: Say what?

JOANNA COOPER: Queen Elizabeth named -

KELLEY: Peter. She promised me that title -

JOANNA COOPER: It's not a title, Edward.

KELLEY: No this is even bigger than a title. It mean she favors Dee and Joanna, his wife. We will never...

JOANNA COOPER: Jane.

KELLEY: What?

JOANNA COOPER: Jane Dee.

KELLEY: Who?

JOANNA COOPER: I'm Joanna.

KELLEY: I know. Tell me what to do Jane. I'll never see England again. We're gonna be stuck in Bohemia forever.

JOANNA COOPER (in their deepest voice): Qwarhooo Achat. My name is Na' Amah and I serve the Great Mother.

KELLEY: Michael.

JOANNA / NA' AMAH: Qwarhooo Achat. My name is Na' Amah and I serve the Great Mother.

KELLEY: Michael, thank you for coming.

JOANNA / NA' AMAH: Not Michael. I am Na' Amah and I learned from the Old One, Nipishtim in Mesopotamia.

KELLEY: Na' Amah. Are you one who serves His Lord?

JOANNA / NA' AMAH: I serve no Lord or master. I am Qwarhooo. All is Qwarhooo.

KELLEY: Qwarhooo. Serve me now.

JOANNA / NA' AMAH: Never. Qwarhooo Achat. My name is Na' Amah and I serve the Great Mother. Peter Talbot Kelley will stop trying to create his Enochian language and focus on making more of the tincture.

KELLEY: Yo. It's good isn't it? Have you tried it in this yet?

Blackout.

Act 1, Scene 6

Even later that evening, August 2, 1587. The Know Name Tavern in Cesky Krumlov, Bavaria. After the performance of *Dido*, the cast and crew are celebrating. JONES and MARLOWE sit at one of the tables.

SHANIA / INNKEEPEER: *Última copa!*

ROBERTO: Shit! I dropped my Quaalude.

ESTEFANIA: *Lo encontré! Un Rorer 714 per a la dona de l' hora.*

GERTUDA: Estefania-Bob to the rescue. You...

ESTEFANIA: *No señorita. No eres hombre. Aquí tienes un Quaalude para ti.*

(QUEEN ELIZABETH and JANE FROMOND enter the tavern in their masquerade costumes and masks. JANE signals the INNKEEPER for two drinks.)

JANE FROMOND: Here we are.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: *Nous sont ici.*

JANE FROMOND: My husband will be a fine astrologer.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: *Nous t'aime.* Peter is of no use to me. Thou hast power. Art thou a witch, our dear?

JANE FROMOND: No.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: *Pas mal.* Our mother was, but she perished when we were so young...

JANE FROMOND (seeing this): You will become Britain's longest reigning monarch.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: There we are. *Dites-nous, Dites-nous.*

JANE FROMOND (looking deeper): The Elizabethan Era will will be recognized for its arts and letters.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: Really? Our beat poetry will live on?

JANE FROMOND: No. I'm sorry. Not your poetry.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: Who will they admire, Thomas Kyd?

JANE FROMOND: Barely remembered.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: John Lyly?

JANE FROMOND: Even less so.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: Ben Johnson – no way. No, not Christopher Fucking Manhole? I'll just get rid of him now. Shania! *Donde esta?*

SHANIA / INNKEEPEER: *Estoy aquí, (pause) Su Majestad.*

QUEEN ELIZABETH: *Por favor, haga matar al Sr. Marlowe.*

SHANIA / INNKEEPEER: *Si, su Majestad.*

QUEEN ELIZABETH: Who will they remember, our dear Lady Jane?

JANE FROMOND: It's not the literati you must show favor, Your Majesty. It's the entertainments they will remember.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: The theatre?

JANE FROMOND: Yes. The theatre of the Elizabethan Age will be enjoyed in the next millennium.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: The theatre? The burlesque shows for the pissing groundlings? In those rat-infested playhouses across the river? They should be burned.

JANE FROMOND: You must build new ones. Better ones with indoor stages and larger wings for moving scenery. The groundlings deserve the best entertainment.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: Which theatre house? Whose plays will be remembered?

JANE FROMOND: *The Globe*.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: *The Globe*? Never heard of it.

JANE FROMOND: You must build it. You must tear down *The Theatre* and build *The Globe* with its timber.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: *The Theatre* is in Shoreditch. The Lord Chamberlain's Men perform there. Whose plays are they? James Burbage's?

JANE FROMOND: No, one of his actors.

QUEEN ELIZABETH (rapping): The plays, dear Lady Jane. The plays?
Who shall write these 'ternal couplets?

JANE FROMOND: William Shakespeare.

QUEEN ELIZABETH (still rapping): *The Globe*. William Shakespeare at *The Globe*.
(spoken) Methinks I have a plan.

(JONES rises.)

JONES: Later dude!

MARLOWE: Farewell, my muse. Don't forget to sketch the pulley system of the theatre.

JONES: I must find a way to operate the scenery by remote control.

MARLOWE: Remote. Control.

JONES: Like a clock. Like a...

JANE FROMOND: He will help you.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: Don't make us sleep with Christopher Manhole.

JANE FROMOND: No. The other one.

JONES: Like a clicker.

(JONES exits.)

MARLOWE: Later... dude!

QUEEN ELIZABETH: The boy?

JANE FROMOND: Yes, Inigo Jones, commissioned at 14 by Herr Rozmberg to paint the stage flats at his new theatre. This work was completed on time and under budget. Inigo Jones also made the masks for the masquerade.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: You know, we've been thinking about masques. He must join us in London. Inigo, I mean. Not Manhole.

SHANIA / INNKEEPER: *Última copa!*

QUEEN ELIZABETH: Christopher shall return to the London theatre world in a new play. Something dark. A play about Peter Kelley. The boy we will keep busy at the Old Palace. We shall live at Hatfield House and hold masquerades. In London, we shall build a new state of the art playhouse for our bloody Elizabethan Drama. (To Shania) He may live.

SHANIA / INNKEEPER: Si, senora.

Blackout.

Act 1 Scene 7

Early morning August 3, 1587 Cesky Krumlov Castle, Bavaria. Jane Fromond Dee is in bed after having sexual intercourse with her husband Peter. At rise, DEE is in bed while JANE FROMOND is removing her costume from the last scene.

JANE FROMOND: Sorry, I am so late.

DEE: Are we...

JANE FROMOND: Not tonight dear. I must tell you the news, first.

DEE: You so rarely spread gossip, my dear.

JANE FROMOND: No. And this is not gossip. It's straight from Her Royal Majesty. Tomorrow... today... Elizabeth is going to announce you as her Royal Astrologer.

DEE: Astronomer, perhaps. Kelley is her astrologer.

JANE FROMOND: No longer. Kelley has been relieved of his position. He is banished from Court and must remain in Třeboň Castle.

DEE: What? Banished! I won't accept it then. He is my dearest friend. I won't advance my position upon his downfall and ruin. I can't live at Court while he is banished in Bavaria and living in a state-of-the-Alchemical-Arts Laboratory. He...

JANE FROMOND: He never liked being at Court...

DEE: True, that.

JANE FROMOND: He will stay in Třeboň and keep his alchemical hearths burning all night.

DEE: If Kelley continue his work, then I shall be Elizabeth's Astrologer. Lady Jane.

JANE FROMOND: There's just one more bit of news. Joanna Cooper divorced Peter and they will be my Lady in waiting -

DEE: They?

JANE FROMOND: Joanna. They will be in disguise. They and their are Na'amah's pronouns.

DEE: I understand.

JANE FROMOND: They will stay in a flat in Cheapside and attend Court using their Olde Name.

DEE: Yes. New name., Lady Naiyeemah. Cheapside. Any more news?

JANE FROMOND: No. You might want to put some clothes on. (A knock.) Or not?

QUEEN ELIZABETH enters followed by JOANNA / NA'AMAH dressed as before. DEE falls to the ground and kneels to QUEEN ELIZABETH.

DEE: Your Majesty.

QUEEN ELIZABETH (rapping): *Monsieur Dee, I pray thee, attend my Court. And be my Royal Astro-logger.*

(JOANNA / NAAMAH crosses to DEE and examines him as he curtsies to QUEEN ELIZABETH in his contemporary boxers.)

DEE: Lady Naiyeemah, it is a pleasure.

JOANNA / NAIMA: A new name. Naima. I love it. Thank you Peter.

QUEEN ELIZABETH (spoken): Why, hello Peter. There are two conditions for thy appointment as Court Astrologer. One is that thou must recreate Dee's laboratory in the Tower of London. (He nods.) We are also interested in thy research.

QUEEN ELIZABETH backs DEE to the bed and pushes him flat.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: How about we try to break our record?

Blackout.

The Alchemist's Wife

by Alan Neal Levy

Act 2

Act 2 Scene 1

Noon, December 21, 1592 Hatfield House, England. Jane Fromond Dee is in bed after having sexual intercourse with her husband Peter. At rise, DEE is still in bed while JANE FROMOND, in a dressing gown crosses to a writing table where she records the details of their sexual activity.

JANE FROMOND:

A 15.2 cm erection was maintained for an elapsed time of 5 minutes 16 seconds. The wife was aroused at the 1:34 mark and achieved orgasm at the six minute mark. Elizabeth has this crazy idea. She wants to have sex with both of us.

DEE: Right now?

JANE FROMOND: No. Not a *ménage à trois*. Silly man.

DEE: A *ménage à deux... et deux*.

JANE FROMOND: *Oui*, my love. She wants to be my lover as well as yours.

DEE: As well as Roderigo Lopes. And Raleigh. So, is this just for one night?

JANE FROMOND: No.

DEE: She is rather old.

JANE FROMOND: Peter. It is my desire as well. I really want this.

DEE: Oh. In that case. Yes. I mean, as you wish. Does she no longer want to have sex with me?

JANE FROMOND: No. I mean yes. Elizabeth is still... So, would you be into a Triad?

DEE: Hell yeah. Not sure how that works. To be honest.

JANE FROMOND: Nor I.

DEE: I believe it would take me a minute to reload.

JANE FROMOND: Only a minute?

DEE: Maybe two.

JANE FROMOND: Hmmm.

DEE: So, I think I would have sex with both of you while the other triad member would caress and hug the other two.

JANE FROMOND: Only two minutes?

DEE: Yes.

JANE FROMOND: Well, call me mildly bi-curious.

Blackout.

Act 2 Scene 2

Later that afternoon, December 21, 1592. The Theatre in Shoreditch, just outside the City of London, England. A performance of *Henry V, Part 1* by William SHAKESPEARE is being performed upstage with the performers backs turned to our audience. At rise MARGARET and SUFFOLK are finishing a scene while YORK, WARWICK, SHEPHERD and NAIMA wait in the wings to make their entrances for the following scene. A live backstage is downstage and more prominent to our audience. A scrim separates the live stage from the backstage.

The backstage appears to be an exact replica of the backstage of The Theatre, with all modern technologies including lighting instruments hidden from the audience. At rise, the three-level backstage with wooden pulleys, gears and levers is operated by the LEWD MECHANICALS turning wheels and cranking the weighted fly systems that operate the painted flats and create the different settings.

The LEWD MECHANICALS work in groups of four on opposite wings. GERTUDA Arrowsmith – operates the SR pulley on the 3rd Line Crew and Shania Locksmith operates the SL pulley on the 3rd Line Crew, which also includes ROBERTO Silversmith (SR) and ESTEFANIA Koinsmith (SL) who operate the wooden pulleys that run underneath the stage floor.

VONDA Blacksmith operates the SL pulley on the 2nd Line Crew, LENA Bladesmith operates the SR pulley on the 2nd Line Crew, Shania Gunsmith operates the SR pulley on the 1st Line Crew., and JUANITA Coppersmith operates the SL pulley on the 3rd Line Crew. They use hand signals to coordinate their efforts, most of the time.

SUFFOLK

Farewell, sweet madam. But, hark you, Margaret,
No princely commendations to my king?

MARGARET

Such commendations as becomes a maid,
A virgin, and his servant, say to him.

SUFFOLK

Words sweetly placed and modestly directed.
But, madam, I must trouble you again:
No loving token to his Majesty?

MARGARET

Yes, my good lord: a pure unspotted heart,
Never yet taint with love, I send the King.

SUFFOLK: And this withal

[He kisses her.]

MARGARET

That for thyself. I will not so presume
To send such peevish tokens to a king [She exits.]

GERTUDA: One minute!

ROBERTO: *Merde!* I dropped my script.

ESTEFANIA: *Lo encontré!*

SHANIA: Steve-Bob to the rescue. You da man.

SUFFOLK

O, wert thou for myself! But, Suffolk, stay.
Solicit Henry with her wondrous praise...
That, when thou com'st to kneel at Henry's feet,
Thou mayst bereave him of his wits with wonder. [He exits.]

(The set change is completed without any LEWD MECHANICALS beneath the stage floor. Instead all they operate weighted pulleys that appear to control the painted flats.)

Act 5 Scene 4 Enter York, Warwick, Shepherd, and Pucelle, guarded.

YORK

Bring forth that sorceress condemned to burn.

SHEPHERD

Ah, Joan, this kills thy father's heart outright.
Must I behold thy timeless cruel death?
Ah, Joan, sweet daughter Joan, I'll die with thee.

PUCELLE (JOAN OF ARC) / NAIMA

Decrepit miser, base ignoble wretch!
I am descended of a gentler blood.
Thou art no father nor no friend of mine.

SHEPHERD

Out, out!—My lords, an please you, 'tis not so!
I did beget her, all the parish knows;
Her mother liveth yet, can testify
She was the first fruit of my bach'lorship.

WARWICK

Graceless, wilt thou deny thy parentage?

YORK

This argues what her kind of life hath been,
Wicked and vile; and so her death concludes.

SHEPHERD

Fie, Joan, that thou wilt be so obstacle!
God knows thou art a collop of my flesh,
And for thy sake have I shed many a tear.
Deny me not, I prithee, gentle Joan.

PUCELLE (JOAN OF ARC) / NAIMA

Peasant, avaunt!—You have suborned this man
Of purpose to obscure my noble birth.

SHEPHERD

'Tis true, I gave a noble to the priest
The morn that I was wedded to her mother.—
Kneel down and take my blessing, good my girl.
Wilt thou not stoop? Now cursèd be the time
Of thy nativity! I would the milk
Thy mother gave thee when thou suck'dst her breast
Had been a little ratsbane for thy sake!
O burn her, burn her! Hanging is too good.

YORK

Take her away, for she hath lived too long
To fill the world with vicious qualities.

Blackout.

Act 2 Scene 3

Later that afternoon, December 21, 1592. Queen Elizabeth's private quarters in The Old Palace, aka. Hatfield House, England. Jane Fromond Dee is in bed after having sexual intercourse with Her Royal Majesty.

JANE FROMOND: Sorry about that.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: My bad. We are expecting Bill Shakespeare and one of the boy actors from the Lord Chancellor's Men. They are waiting outside. We were distracted. We will continue this later?

JANE FROMOND: Promise?

(QUEEN ELIZABETH opens the door and William SHAKESPEARE and NAIMA enter the chamber. SHAKESPEARE bows deeply as the two women embrace warmly. JANE FROMOND recognizes NAIMA's in the young boy's street clothes they wear.)

SHAKESPEARE: Royal Majesty. I am thy humble servant.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: Pray tell us what thou thinkest of our verse.

SHAKESPEARE: Thy verse?

QUEEN ELIZABETH: My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;

SHAKESPEARE: May I?

QUEEN ELIZABETH: Lady Naima.

SHAKESPEARE (spoken): My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;
Coral is far more red than her lips' red;
If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;
If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.

Devilish verse. Is there more?

QUEEN ELIZABETH (pointing to more pages): Yes. (rapping to JANE FROMOND)

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds
Or bends with the remover to remove.
O, no, it is an ever-fixèd mark
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wand'ring bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.

QUEEN ELIZABETH (rapping to NAIMA):

Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come;
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
If this be error, and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: Lady Naima.

NAIMA: Just Naima. Naima Indica is my stage name.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: We see, Naima. Thou performest with Mr. Shakespeare at *The Theatre*?

NAIMA: Yes. And you are a poet.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: If Willy doth favour my sonnets...

JANE FROMOND: Sonnets. Is that what you call your performances?

QUEEN ELIZABETH: No. We call them riffs. Riffing with... *con pasión*.

NAIMA: Yes, very dramatic. May I try riffing one of your sonnets?

QUEEN ELIZABETH: *Por supuesto*. Naima.

(QUEEN ELIZABETH crosses to the desk where SHAKESPEARE is reading voraciously. She picks a sonnet for NAIMA to perform.)

QUEEN ELIZABETH: Pray tell us what thou thinkest of our verse.

SHAKESPEARE: Thy verse far outshines Spenser. My lady. My dear lady, I am speechless.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: We have need for thy services Willy.

SHAKESPEARE: Anything, my sovereign.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: Thou must have my sonnets.

SHAKESPEARE: Have them?

QUEEN ELIZABETH: To publish them in the name of Will Shakespeare.

SHAKESPEARE: Me? Why me?

QUEEN ELIZABETH: We respect thee. Thy entertainments are amusing. Thy dramas really pack the theatres. Thou must start publishing thy plays, Bill Shakespeare. And our sonnets. We can help.

SHAKESPEARE: I am most gracious, my Queen.

SHAKESPEARE reads more voraciously.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: Naima. Here is a sonnet.

NAIMA: Thank you.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: So I see, Naima. You are performing with Mr. Shakespeare at The Theatre?

(NAIMA crosses upstage to rehearse.)

QUEEN ELIZABETH: Just give it... *pasión*.

JANE FROMOND (looking at SHAKESPEARE): You have found an admirer.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: Really? Do you think he really likes me? Naima Indica.

JANE FROMOND: Na' Amah.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: Na' Amah. Who is he?

JANE FROMOND: Na' Amah is their name. They are asexual. I believe.

NA'AMAH: Qwarhooo Achat. My name is Na' Amah and I serve the Great Mother.

(Rapping) My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;
Coral is far more red than her lips' red;
If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;
If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.
I have seen roses damasked, red and white,
But no such roses see I in her cheeks;
And in some perfumes is there more delight
Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.
I love to hear her speak, yet well I know
That music hath a far more pleasing sound.
I grant I never saw a goddess go;
My mistress, when she walks, treads on the ground.
And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare
As any she belied with false compare.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: Qwarhooo Achat. Na' Amah. That was incredible. Thou gave new meaning to our verse. Thou were acting. And riffing.

JANE FROMOND: Qwarhooo Achat, Na' Amah.

NA'AMAH: Yes, I was in character. But it is your verse that is sublime. Let me...

(QUEEN ELIZABETH kisses NA'AMAH who kisses her back. SHAKESPEARE rises.)

SHAKESPEARE: Mr. Indica. Indeed, thou art an attractive young man. I understand how thou attracted the Queen's affections and inspired her sonnets.

JANE FROMOND: Bravo Na' Amah. I thought you...

NA'AMAH: I like kissing.

NA'AMAH kisses JANE FROMOND who kisses them back. SHAKESPEARE returns to the desk to read more sonnets.

NA'AMAH: And hugging.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: James Burbage thinks you're a boy?

NA'AMAH: Yes.

JANE FROMOND: I don't get it.

NA'AMAH (in their deepest voice): Mr. Burbage. How are you this fine evening?

QUEEN ELIZABETH: So, what is it like? On stage.

NA'AMAH: One is consumed in the present moment of another human being as they live and breathe and give birth and die in naked power.

JANE FROMOND: I want some of that.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: We too.

JANE FROMOND: Show me the walk again.

NA'AMAH: The walk? Oh, my Naima Indica walk.

JANE FROMOND: Yeah. Let me try.

(NAAMAH demonstrates their man-walk and QUEEN ELIZABETH and NA' AMAH imitate them.)

JANE FROMOND: Slower.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: We can do that.

JANE FROMOND: Again.

NA'AMAH: It's more of an attitude.

JANE FROMOND: Yeah. Cocky.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: *Es muy fácil.*

JANE FROMOND: You are a very striking man. Your Majesty.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: And thou art the very crux of manhood.

NA'AMAH: You are born actresses. Both of you.

JANE FROMOND: You should take your shoes off.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: Our shoes?

JANE FROMOND: Get comfortable. Relax. Don't worry about a thing.

NA'AMAH: Have you ever heard of hashish?

QUEEN ELIZABETH: Hashish? No. What is it?

NA'AMAH: It is the spirit of the Great Mother.

JANE FROMOND: It is a distillation of the cannabis plant in a combustible form.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: Intoxicating?

JANE FROMOND: More like illuminating.

NA'AMAH: Qwarhooo Achat.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: Sounds divine?

JANE FROMOND: As above... so below.

NA'AMAH: Qwarhooo Achat.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: And what is distillation?

JANE FROMOND: The sixth of seven stages of alchemical practice. In the laboratory the alchemist boils away impurities and ferments a purer substance.

NA'AMAH: My spirit rises and I hear the voices of the entire planet.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: Like brandy.

JANE FROMOND: Yes. Exactly. We believe that all matter has a pure state. We try to achieve a distillation of our own essential being.

NA'AMAH: A higher stage of consciousness.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: This hashish was distilled in thy husband's laboratory?

NA'AMAH: Yes, it was.

JANE FROMOND: Mr. Kelly provides us with his Philosopher's Stone and a few other tinctures we use for healing practices.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: His stone is dark. How fitting. He promised me it would be gold.

NA'AMAH: Beware the chase for gold...

QUEEN ELIZABETH: What?

NA'AMAH: and the Northern Passage.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: We thought gold was the purest element?

JANE FROMOND: No. It is I. Distilled in the Aether.

NA'AMAH: Qwarhooo Achat.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: And smoking hashish will assist us?

JANE FROMOND: Just a few puffs on your pipe.

(QUEEN ELIZABETH inhales once on the historically accurate British pipe.)

NA'AMAH: Come, sit with us.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: Wow, very pungent.

(QUEEN ELIZABETH inhales a second time on the pipe.)

JANE FROMOND: A liitle deeper.

NA'AMAH: Qwarhooo Achat.

(QUEEN ELIZABETH inhales deeply on the pipe and sits in a large, comfortable chair. She hands the pipe to NA'AMAH, who also inhales deeply on the pipe and passes it to JANE FROMOND.)

JANE FROMOND: Recognize the secrets of fire in the tinctures of our Medicine, which lead to the achievement of Magistry.

JANE FROMOND inhales deeply on the pipe and holds the fumes in longer than her friends.

JANE FROMOND: Leave your selfish ego behind. Free yourself from all the trials and tribulations of everyday life.

NA'AMAH: Step out of the role you inhabit here at Court. Disrobe all sense of self and remove all your urges and desires.

(QUEEN ELIZABETH closes her eyes and breathes deeply.)

QUEEN ELIZABETH: Wow. we feel so connected.

JANE FROMOND: Surrender all hubris. Calcify those petty needs and leave them behind like ash in the forge of the cosmos. Ignite the fire of introspection. Stoke the flame of self-awareness. As above, so below.

NA'AMAH: Qwarhooo Achat. The Great Mother is alive.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: Qwarhooo Achat.

JANE FROMOND: Just breathe.

(QUEEN ELIZABETH inhales deeply. She exhales and modifies her spine into a more aligned position in the chair.)

JANE FROMOND: And think of nothing. Be in the present moment.

(QUEEN ELIZABETH inhales deeply six times.)

NA'AMAH: Six. You must do better than that.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: *Es muy difícil.* (Rapping) Our thoughts keep churning like an engine. We cogitate in reckless abandon.

NA'AMAH: Cogitate - *pensar* - with no words.

JANE FROMOND: Just focus on the breathe.

NA'AMAH: And breath from your diaphragm.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: *La destrucción del ego...*

NA'AMAH: No words.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: *¿Podríamos tomar un poco más de hachís?* We promise not to start riffing again.

NA'AMAH and JANE FROMOND laugh as they prepare another bowl of hash. QUEEN ELIZABETH inhales deeply on the pipe and holds it in for a beat before exhaling and passing the pipe to NA'AMAH who also consumes another generous toke before passing the pipe to JANE FROMOND who also imbibes before returning the pipe to Her Royal Majesty.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: *¿Dónde está el diafragma?* (holding her stomach) Where is the diaphragm?

JANE FROMOND: Lower. *No tu coño.* Here.

NA'AMAH: *No tu coño.* Here.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: This is divine. We three shall be a trinity. An unholy trinity. (She takes another toke.) We know, we know we promised not to riff, but this herb is so enchanting. We see and hear so clearly, like a dreamer's veil has been lifted. We... I... I want to know more about my new friends. *¿Hablas español?*

NA'AMAH: *Si.*

QUEEN ELIZABETH: *¿Cuántos idiomas hablas?*

JANE FROMOND: They are very old.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: They?

JANE FROMOND: They. (pointing at NA'AMAH) Na'Amah.

NAIMA: They prefer their new name. Naima. Much easier to pronounce.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: So how old art thou, Naima?

NAIMA: They have enjoyed a long and abundant life. They honor the Great Mother.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: Thou must teach me how to do that. Answer in riddles.

NAIMA: *Moi?*

JANE FROMOND: They never reveal anything. So, what do they desire?

QUEEN ELIZABETH: What turns you on, Naima?

NAIMA: This. Our unholy trinity.

JANE FROMOND: And what is your secret to a long life?

QUEEN ELIZABETH: Are there elixirs? *¿Como la Fuente de la Juventud?*

NAIMA: Many will approach you with these foolish fantasies. Don't follow them down the path to empire building. The best path to longevity is getting a good night's sleep... and eating bountiful vegetables.

JANE FROMOND: How long does Naima sleep?

NAIMA: Nine and a half hours.

JANE FROMOND: I get seven hours. And her majesty, the Queen?

QUEEN ELIZABETH: We... I can get by on as little as two hours.

NAIMA: That is not a deep sleep. That is a nap. You must be selfish and schedule at least eight hours of sleep each night. They do not reach the dream-state in a nap.

JANE FROMOND: Occasionally, I sleep for eight hours.

NAIMA: Every night, you must retire at the same time, and rise in the morning with no interruptions.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: Sometimes I have a hard time falling asleep. Even when I've been up all night.

NAIMA: Yes, the plans we have for tomorrow often invade our sleep sanctuary. Your breath-work shall help with that. Is anyone else hungry?

JANE FROMOND: Famished.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: *Podríamos comernos un elefante.* Where is Inigo? Let us be masqued.

(QUEEN ELIZABETH starts to exit the chamber and sees SHAKESPEARE still reading his new sonnets. JANE FROMOND and NAIMA exit.)

SHAKESPEARE: Methinks I might pen a sonnet of my own device? For my latest production?

QUEEN ELIZABETH: An absolutely stellar idea, Willy. It is a simple format: three rhymed quatrains anchored by a rhymed couplet. How does the play transpire?

SHAKESPEARE: 'Tis is a love story. The lovers are from families who are feuding.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: A tragic love story? Interesting. Which one dies?

SHAKESPEARE: They both die.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: What is the title?

SHAKESPEARE: *The Most Excellent Adventures of Romeo and Juliet.*

QUEEN ELIZABETH: Needs work. Who gets the sonnet?

SHAKESPEARE: I thought Juliet's father would discover the two lovers entwined in each other's arms and memorialize them with a sonnet.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: Let me hear it.

SHAKESPEARE:

From forth the deadly loins of these two foes
A pair of eager lovers take their life;
Whose misadventured piteous overthrows
Do with their death bury their parents' strife.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: Not bad. Try 'fatal' instead of deadly. And lose 'eager.'

SHAKESPEARE: Yes. (He edits his manuscript and points to the bowl of hashish.) May I?

QUEEN ELIZABETH: Certainly, Bill.

Blackout.

Act 2 Scene 4

Later the same afternoon December 21, 1592 at an Italian-style masque in the Great Room in the Old Palace at Hatfield House. QUEEN ELIZABETH, JANE FROMOND and NAIMA enter a room with an overflowing banquet table, and many dancers and musicians who are masked. The women GUESTS appear in lavish stick masks, while the men are in full-head, Venetian-style character masks in solid white or solid black.

The other guests in the room include Moroccan ruler Ahmad AL-MANSUR, Chinese Emperor ZHU Yijun, Robert CECIL, Robert DEVEREUX, Martin FROBISHER, Hugh O'NEILL, Walter RALEIGH, Dr. Roderigo LOPES, John WHITE, Governor of Roanoke Colony, and Inigo JONES, who holds the QUEEN's mask, which he designed. At the conclusion of the masquerade the performers remove their masks.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: Welcome to The Masque of Witches. Tonight's theme is a Celebration of faithful tradition and true Witch Craft, and all the guests are disguised as Druid and Draoi witches. We must locate our mask.

NAIMA: The food is this way.

JANE FROMOND: Famished.

NAIMA: A masque of witches?

JANE FROMOND: I think her mother was *draoi*.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: (waving to JONES) Inigo.

QUEEN ELIZABETH and JONES exit.

AIRMID: Last night I gathered herbs and plants:
Nightshade, Honeysuckle and the rare Ghost-dance
Mugwort, Chamomile, Lavendar and Rue.
Cypress boughs, Henbane and Poppies Red and Blue.

DANU: I captured animalia or found within
Lizard tongues, rodent tails, and discarded snake skin.
Five bats I lured to my net and one old newt.
I also heard the groan of the mandrake root.

MORRIGAN: The birds of heaven greet me when I rise
Hecate's raven with her feathers so black.
The scrich-owl and the lark with its golden hair.
I reap the feathers that danced in the air.

ALICE KYTELER: The magick of my sisters is quite strong
We sing and dance all night long
In the forest we commune with Her nature
And raise chthonic spirits both strong and pure.

CAILLEACH: We celebrate Yule in deepest December
With charms, spells and potions to help us remember.
Those who are no longer with us tonight
and to visit the Dead in the diminished light.

BRIGHID: I welcome the winter moon with mystic rite
Come forth thou veiled Goddess of the night
Gealach is both Shadow maker and Dream-taker
Shine brightly on our assembled sisterhood.

RHIANNON: We light this fire in your honor, Lord Gréine
Shine brightly once more on this wide plain.
Warm the scattered seeds that will soon give birth.
You create new life from old on this fair Earth.

CERNUNNOS (KELLY in Stag Horns): Horned one of the forest deep
I call on you to rise and leap.
Protect our goats and crops from blight
We call on Persephone this long night.

QUEEN ELIZABETH enters masked as BOUDICCA.

BOUDICCA / QUEEN ELIZABETH 1: Ancient Goddess of the Forest Deep
Here where the Earth is silent and deep.
We summon thee in the ancient way
Qwarhoo Achat. Qwarhooo Achat.

NAIMA: Where did you learn that?

BOUDICCA / QUEEN ELIZABETH 1: We know not. Play on.

NAIMA: Who dost thou summon, my child?

BOUDICCA / QUEEN ELIZABETH 1: Our mother who was beheaded.

(Masque music is heard. The GUESTS include a few musicians who begin to play their instruments including a Lute, Recorder, Krumhorn, Viola, and Cello. QUEEN ELIZABETH dances with NAIMA as the music plays. The two women dance without speaking as the WITCHES and GUESTS perform a pantomime. In character, the dancers create a Chthonic Ritual to celebrate Yule. At the climax, QUEEN ELIZABETH takes the lute and plays the final movement, which concludes with the ringing of twelve bells or symbols.)

CAILLEACH: We celebrate Yule in deepest December, (The first bell is rung.)
With charms, spells and potions to help us remember. (The second bell is rung.)
Those who are no longer with us tonight, (The third bell is rung.)
and to visit the Dead in the diminished light.

(The bell is rung nine more times. It is midnight. QUEEN ELIZABETH returns the lute to its owner and stands apart. She removes her mask.)

BOUDICCA / QUEEN ELIZABETH 1: Ancient Goddess of the Forest Deep
Here where the Earth is silent and deep.

(JANE FROMOND, in her Venetian-style mask and the still unmasked NAIMA join the QUEEN.)

QUEEN ELIZABETH, JANE FROMOND and NAIMA: We summon thee in the ancient way
Qwarhoo Achat. Qwarhooo Achat. Qwarhooo Achat.

(Lightning flashes and is followed by the crash of thunder. JANE FROMOND removes her mask. Instead of her normal visage, she is wearing a realistic mask of ANNE BOLEYN.)

QUEEN ELIZABETH: Mother!

JANE FROMOND / ANNE BOLEYN: Elizabeth, dear child. Thou must reverse the curse.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: Curse? What curse?

JANE FROMOND / ANNE BOLEYN: Thy father. I cursed him on the scaffold.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: My father?

JANE FROMOND / ANNE BOLEYN: I cursed Henry and his kin. To be childless. Thou must reverse the curse.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: Why? I don't understand.

JANE FROMOND / ANNE BOLEYN: You are his child. By cursing Henry, I damned you to a barren eternity.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: Henry. Cursed.

JANE FROMOND / ANNE BOLEYN: Thou must reverse the curse.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: Indeed. How?

Blackout.

Act 2 Scene 5

The next afternoon, December 22, 1592. The Theatre in Shoreditch, just outside the City of London, England. A performance of *Henry V, Part 1* by William SHAKESPEARE is being performed upstage with the performers backs turned to our audience. At rise YORK, WARWICK, SHEPHERD and NAIMA are on stage. A live backstage is downstage and more prominent to our audience. A scrim separates the live stage from the backstage.

The backstage appears to be an exact replica of the backstage of The Theatre, with all modern technologies including lighting instruments not in the audience's sight lines. At rise, the three-level backstage with wooden pulleys, gears and levers seems to be operated by the LEWD MECHANICALS turning wheels and cranking the weighted fly system that operate the painted flats and create the different settings.

The LEWD MECHANICALS work in groups of four on opposite wings. GERTUDA Arrowsmith – operates the SR pulley on the 3rd Line Crew, and Shania Locksmith operates the SL pulley on the 3rd Line Crew, which also includes ROBERTO Silversmith (SR) and

ESTEFANIA Koinsmith (SL) who operate the wooden pulleys that run underneath the stage floor.

VONDA Blacksmith operates the SL pulley on the 2nd Line Crew, LENA Bladesmith operates the SR pulley on the 2nd Line Crew, Shania Gunsmith operates the SR pulley on the 1st Line Crew, and JUANITA Coppersmith operates the SL pulley on the 1st Line Crew. They use hand signals to coordinate their efforts, most of the time.

YORK

Take her away. Ay, ay. Away with her to execution.

WARWICK / QUEEN ELIZABETH

And hark you, sirs: because she is a maid,
Spare for no faggots; let there be enow.
Place barrels of pitch upon the fatal stake
That so her torture may be shortenèd.

PUCELLE (JOAN OF ARC) / NAIMA

Will nothing turn your unrelenting hearts?
I am with child, you bloody homicides.
Murder not then the fruit within my womb,
Although you hale me to a violent death.

YORK

Now heaven forfend, the holy maid with child?

WARWICK [to Pucelle]

The greatest miracle that e'er you wrought!

YORK

She and the Dauphin have been juggling.

WARWICK / QUEEN ELIZABETH

Well, go to, we'll have no bastards live,

Especially since Charles must father it.

PUCELLE (JOAN OF ARC) / NAIMA

You are deceived; my child is none of his.

It was Alanson that enjoyed my love.

YORK

Alanson, that notorious Machiavel?

PUCELLE (JOAN OF ARC) / NAIMA

O, give me leave! I have deluded you.

'Twas neither Charles nor yet the Duke I named,

But Reignier, King of Naples, that prevailed.

WARWICK / QUEEN ELIZABETH

A married man? That's most intolerable.

YORK

Why, here's a girl! I think she knows not well—

There were so many—whom she may accuse.

WARWICK / QUEEN ELIZABETH

It's sign she hath been liberal and free.

YORK

And yet, forsooth, she is a virgin pure!—
Strumpet, thy words condemn thy brat and thee.
Use no entreaty, for it is in vain.

PUCELLE (JOAN OF ARC) / NAIMA

Then lead me hence, with whom I leave my curse:
May never glorious sun reflex his beams
Upon the country where you make abode,
But darkness and the gloomy shade of death
Environ you, till mischief and despair
Drive you to break your necks or hang yourselves. [She and Warwick exit.]

YORK

Break thou in pieces, and consume to ashes,
Thou foul accursèd minister of hell! [Exeunt.]

(NAIMA / PUCELLE and WARWICK / QUEEN ELIZABETH cross downstage to the live backstage. The lights go off on the now empty live stage.)

GERTUDA: One minute!

ROBERTO: *Merde!* I dropped my script.

WARWICK / QUEEN ELIZABETH: *Lo encontré!*

SHANIA: Elizabeth-Bob to the rescue. You da... man?

ESTEFANIA: Why you knucklehead. That's my line.

SHANIA: Your Majesty.

ROBERTO: My Queen.

ESTEFANIA: *Dios mío.*

WARWICK / QUEEN ELIZABETH: The pages are empty. Your script is merely a binder of blank pages.

(ESTEFANIA intercepts the blank script, rolls the pages into a cylinder and smacks ROBERTO playfully on the head.)

ESTEFANIA: Why thou tedious block-head. How many times have I told thee to attend to the details.

NAIMA: *La señorita Silversmith es muy atenta cuando trabaja entre bastidores en el teatro.*

ROBERTO: *Gracias, señor Indica.*

QUEEN ELIZABETH: Such a wise woman with the script mem'rized.

ESTEFANIA: *¿Memorizado? ¿Cómo puedes memorizar algo si ni siquiera puedes leer las cartas?*

ROBERTO: *No sé. Las palabras son más fáciles de recordar cuando las escucho.*

SHANIA: It is the truth, Thou never misses a cue, Roberto-Bob.

ROBERTO: *Me gusta, Bob.*

SHANIA: Bob.

ESTEFANIA: *Dios mío.*

QUEEN ELIZABETH: *Muchas gracias, Bob. ¿A dónde sueles ir después de la obra?*

ROBERTO: El Pene del Gallo.

Blackout.

Act 2, Scene 6

Later that evening, December 22, 1592. The Rooster's Cock Tavern in London. After the performance of *Henry V, Part 1* by William SHAKESPEARE. The cast and crew are celebrating the afternoon performance which just completed. JANE FROMOND and NAIMA sit at one of the tables. The 'LUDE MECHANICALS sit at others.

SHANIA / INNKEEPER: *Dernier appel. Dernier appel pour l'alcool.* Have you tried any of this hash? *C'est primo. C'est l'appel numéro un.*

ROBERTO: Number One. I've heard about this. Everyone says it comes from the palace, but I think it is the tincture of Peter Kelley. (Taking a long toke on the pipe.)

ESTEFANIA: *El astrólogo en Bohemia. Número uno.*

SHANIA / INNKEEPER: *Numéro un.*

ROBERTO: Number One. (She passes the pipe to ESTEFANIA, who also takes a long toke on the pipe.) Yes, this reeks of Kelley.

ESTEFANIA: *Sí. Eso fue un kief excelente. Número uno.*

SHANIA / INNKEEPER: *Numéro un.*

ROBERTO: *Merde!* I dropped my Number One.

ESTEFANIA: *Lo encontré! Número uno per a la dona de l' hora.*

ROBERTO: Gracias, my friend.

Blackout.

Act 2 Scene 7

The next afternoon December 22, 1592 in a small flat in Cheapside, downtown London, England. QUEEN ELIZABETH, JANE FROMOND and NAIMA sit at a small dining room table. The GUESTS include, Robert CECIL, Robert DEVEREUX, BESS THROCKMORTON Raleigh, Walter RALEIGH, Inigo JONES, Hugh O'NEILL, Dr. Roderigo LOPES, and John WHITE, Governor of Roanoke Colony. At rise, the QUEEN is taking back a freshly smoked pipe of hashish from RALEIGH. She takes a deep inhale and looks RALEIGH directly in the eyes. She passes it back to RALEIGH. She nods to JANE FROMOND, who keeps the man smoking the pipe.)

BESS THROCKMORTON: Very tasty.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: Thou wast our Lady-in Waiting. Thou married Raleigh in secret and have a young boy. (To RALEIGH) Thou tookest advantage of my favours. Thou shalt not return to America.

RALEIGH: Please, Thy -

QUEEN ELIZABETH: We will deal with you later, Lord Warden. Bess, thou may return to Dorset.

BESS THROCKMORTON: Yes! I mean, yes, Your Royal Majesty. I meant no disrespect.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: None was taken, Lady Bess. And dost thou likest Sherborne Lodge?

BESS THROCKMORTON: I love it! Sorry, I'm more than a trifle stoned. That is truly excellent *kief*. May I?

QUEEN ELIZABETH: Of course. (She nods to NAIMA who arrives with another pipe filled with hashish.) Kief? We do not know this name.

BESS THROCKMORTON: In the Kingdom of Morocco, I believe, *kief* is smoked in hookahs. *Kief* is a lighter color than this, but it has the same taste.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: Lady Indica. Is this another one of your tinctures. Kief?

NAIMA: *Kief* is my sister Na'ah'mah Sativa.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: And thou art Mister Na'ah'mah Indica. (To BESS) If Wally stayed here with us, wouldst thou be content with Sherborne Castle?

BESS THROCKMORTON: Alone.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: If thy husband stayed here, wouldst thou be content with Sherborne Castle?

BESS THROCKMORTON: Alone in Dorset...

QUEEN ELIZABETH: If Wally stayed here with me.

BESS THROCKMORTON: Wally stays here? With you? Walter?

NAIMA: Here in my house.

RALEIGH: Yes, I will stay here at court and live in Master Sativa's humble abode.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: Sherborne Castle?

BESS THROCKMORTON: Alone in Dorset with no husband and a large staff to manage.

RALEIGH: Or?

BESS THROCKMORTON: There's an 'or?' Or what?

QUEEN ELIZABETH: Or stay at court with their Queen who loves thee like a sister?

NAIMA: And allow me to reside in Dorset England.

BESS THROCKMORTON: Feeling a little on the spot... here!

JANE FROMOND: There's more, my dear Lady Bess. Lord Walter Raleigh will never set a foot in Sherborne Castle. He stays here, in this hut for the rest of his life. You may continue whatever relationship with him that you choose. If he is not worthy of this honor, you must inform the Queen.

BESS THROCKMORTON: The generous Queen offers me the opportunity to annul my marriage and live in Dorset like a Princess.

JANE FROMOND: Lady Bess Throckmorton.

BESS THROCKMORTON: I say yes, My Queen, to everything but the name.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: Thy name? What dost thou want? I will do anything to have a child.

BESS THROCKMORTON: You may have Walter. Wherever and whenever you desire. He seems to be very much in love with you. He still desires you. I still desire him, but I will give him to you, My Queen, even though I know you love another.

QUEEN ELIZABETH: To Lady Bess Raleigh of Dorset.

Finis.

