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AMNERIS

Then again, I'm pretty busy.

(The dance dissolves into the Banquet scene, as the EXOTIC DANCERS show themselves off to the rich and powerful men of Egypt. AIDA is pouring wine. A NUBIAN SERVANT passes her.)

NUBIAN SERVANT

Princess, the word of your arrival has spread through the Nubian camps.

DANCER

Your people cannot wait to see you. Welcome, welcome.

(NUBIAN SERVANT moves away quickly. AIDA turns on MEREB who is trying to look innocent.)

AIDA

Mereb!

MEREB

Okay, so I told one person. Princess, your people need to know.

PHARAOH

Start:

Captain. To a successful expedition. Thanks to the routes you have discovered, our troops will now be able to attack Nubia with overwhelming force. The gods willing, this long war shall soon end, with Egypt's complete and final victory.

(Ad-libs "well done".)

Amneris, shall I continue?

AMNERIS

Whatever you think is best, Father.

PHARAOH

Radames. You came to me this morning with a request to set out on another journey. But I have a more important mission for you. Although it means you can never leave Egyptian soil again, I believe this will be a joyous assignment. One I would only trust to a man I have long regarded as a member of my own family.

RADAMES

It has been my privilege to serve you, Your Majesty.

PHARAOH

As you all know, Captain Radames and my daughter have been betrothed for nine years now. Long enough, I say.

(Banquet guests laugh. PHARAOH is struck with a sudden pain and pauses to compose himself.)

I want to see her and our nation happily settled before I leave this world. Therefore, in seven days, Radames, son of Zoser, will wed the Princess Amneris. The son of Isis has spoken.

END.

(There is much applause and cheering. COURTIERS rush forward to congratulate AMNERIS and RADAMES. RADAMES is in shock; AMNERIS is delighted. Suddenly PHARAOH starts to cough up blood. As he is hurried off accompanied by AMNERIS, MEREB, COURTIERS and NUBIAN SERVANTS, AIDA and one or two NUBIAN SERVANTS remain. ZOSER turns to RADAMES.)

ZOSER

A toast to the bridegroom. If I'd known such an awkward girl could turn into such a stunning young woman, I would have offered for her myself.

RADAMES

It's not too late.

ZOSER

I thought you loved Amneris?

RADAMES

Of course I do. We grew up together.

ZOSER

Then what is it?

(RADAMES cannot answer.)

Radames, I've spent years working towards this day. And you are not going to ruin it—for yourself, or me!

(Pause.)

Welcome to your new life, son.

(ZOSER exits.)

FORTUNE FAVORS THE BRAVE (REPRISE)

RADAMES

(Clearly upset.)

NOTHING IS AN ACCIDENT
WE ARE FREE TO HAVE IT ALL
WE ARE WHAT WE WANT TO BE
IT'S IN OURSELVES TO RISE OR FALL

THIS IS EASY TO BELIEVE

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(The GUARD backs away, leaving AIDA standing.)

AIDA

Amneris, there were so many times I wanted to tell you everything, but I couldn't.

AMNERIS

No wonder you understood me so well.

AIDA

Amneris, you must believe me. I am to blame for what has happened. Not Radames. Please, let him live. Amneris let him live.

AMNERIS

I can't.

AIDA

Yes, you can. You love him! Don't you love him?

START

PHARAOH

Amneris let us begin.

(AMNERIS takes her place next to her father.)

Bring forth the prisoners.

(AIDA and RADAMES are pushed forward. To AMNERIS.)

Zoser has been apprehended, and we have uncovered his plot. Radames, I chose you. I trusted your father. Now I will make things right while I still can.

(PHARAOH turns to the assembly.)

The criminals will receive their sentences!

AMNERIS

Father, I have a request.

PHARAOH

A request?

AMNERIS

I know the traitors must die for crimes against Egypt. This is the law. But I would ask... that the prisoners be allowed to die together.

PHARAOH

But that would be mercy – after they disgraced you before the entire nation.

AMNERIS

I was wronged. It should be my decision.

PHARAOH

You don't know your own mind.
(A pronouncement.)
For their crimes, the traitors—

AMNERIS

Your Majesty, you have poison in your blood. We both know this. Soon I will be completely alone, because everyone I love will be gone. So you must allow me to exercise my will over Egypt. Because I am to be your successor. And because I demand it.

(PHARAOH studies AMNERIS a long moment, then nods and waves her forward. To the PEOPLE.)

For their crimes, the traitors will be buried beneath the sands of Egypt, in one tomb... together. The Daughter of Isis has spoken.

(AMNERIS turns and runs off, unable to watch. The music begins and AIDA and RADAMES are isolated in specials. Behind them, the Judgement Hall disappears as PHARAOH, MINISTERS, COURTIERS and GUARDS exit. In the darkness of a cell, AIDA and RADAMES are alone, together.)

END.

ELABORATE LIVES (REPRISE)

AIDA

WE ALL LEAD SUCH ELABORATE LIVES
WILD AMBITIONS IN OUR SIGHTS
HOW AN AFFAIR OF THE HEART SURVIVES
DAYS APART AND HURRIED NIGHTS
SEEMS QUITE UNBELIEVABLE TO ME
I DON'T WANT TO LIVE LIKE THAT
SEEMS QUITE UNBELIEVABLE TO ME
I DON'T WANT TO LOVE LIKE THAT
I JUST WANT OUR TIME TO BE
SLOWER AND GENTLER, WISER, FREE

WE ALL LIVE IN EXTRAVAGANT TIMES
PLAYING GAMES WE CAN'T ALL WIN
UNINTENDED EMOTIONAL CRIMES
TAKE SOME OUT TAKE OTHERS IN

TOO MANY CHOICES TEAR US APART
I DON'T WANT TO LIVE LIKE THAT

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ask...