



Sina: A Tragedy

An A Cappella Musical

by

C. A. P. Pulotu

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Music and Lyrics

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CHARACTERS

TANA – Mother of Sina
ANYA – Sister of Tana
MIO – New Leader of the Group
SINA
TEHO

CHORUS

REFUGESS
-THE SURVIVOR
-THE MOTHER
SOLDIERS
-THE SOLDIER

TIME

The present

PLACE

Wooded forest land. Appalachian like. Mountains in the distance.
Scenery should be movable to create different places in a forest. Trees, rocks, bushes, and other forest landmarks.

Optional:

Any landscape that can offer dimension and perspective. Places to hide and offer variety to the set (desert, city, forest, plains, etc.).

Dear Reader,

The journey of creating this play began with the song “The Cannon Fodder Curse.” That song is the heart of this play and the reason I decided to start this project. The script was written to give a voice to those who are often voiceless people who are silenced, marginalized, or even killed because of their beliefs, their place of origin, whom they love, or who they are. When a community stages this play, I hope it sparks meaningful conversations. I hope it encourages people to discuss their differences in a safe, open way, and, in doing so, discover that they have more in common than they thought. I also hope that when audiences leave the theater, they carry with them a commitment to prevent the injustices portrayed in the play in the real world. A promise to never let something like what happens to Sina happen to anyone else.

If you decide to produce this play I hope that you look to your community and the world. Look at the difficulties that are faced by the marginalized voices. This play is an opportunity to amplify those voices. This is not to make spectacle but to create empathy. Please treat your choices with respect and dignity. Where possible allow them to be the voice. Work with your cast and crew at the level of their comfort. Allow them to integrate their own experiences into the production. It is a conversation and a collaboration.

Please make sure that everyone involved in the production has a safe way of stepping away. Please be sure to check on yourself and those around you. This play deals with personal and emotional topics. The audience will sit in it for the duration of the show, but the cast and crew will be immersed in it for months. The script touches on rather dark themes and has very few moments of respite. Please make sure to take care of your mental health as you travers such psychologically volatile characters and occurrences. Take a break when you need it. Step back when the emotions feel too real. It is okay to not be okay.

My greatest wish for you and this production is that both the cast/crew and the audience will be changed by the time the curtains close. Your interpretation of the script is important to the crafting of the story. There are sections throughout the script that are little more than a setting and a direction. How you develop your Chorus will determine what occurs in those moments. Due to the ambiguity of script your interpretation will guide the tone of the production. I urge you to look at your community. What do you want to highlight? Who needs to be seen? How can you make a change? These queries coupled with your collaboration with the chorus will offer a voice to these questions. Let this guide your casting. Your cast will breathe life into these characters and inspire. Trust your cast. Work with them to build a world within the scene and then allow them to live within it.

Sincerely,
C. A. P. Pulotu

How to Start?

Sina: A Tragedy is mix of formal dialogue and practiced improvisation. This means that each performance is contingent upon the collaboration of the leads and the ensemble or the 'chorus'. Each rehearsal is a collaboration of ideas both from yourself and the cast. Due to the nature of this play improvisation plays a large role in story movement.

Before you begin have a conversation with your cast and crew. Discuss what it is that you want to create for your community. I encourage you to include crew that normally wouldn't have a say in artistic choices as they often have wonderful insight. Once everyone has a good idea of what it is they want to express, I suggest you have your table reading. Here, you will start to incorporate some of the ideas that were discussed in the previous meeting in the 'chorus collaborations'. Play around with different ways of acting out the scenes. As you do so the chorus members should start to form an idea of the character they will portray. Let them introduce themselves and become comfortable with each other. Let them form bonds with the lead characters and each other. Using a timer, let the chorus play out the scene. Start with a fraction of the time and build up in the rehearsals if need be.

The table reading is also the place where you introduce the musical aspects of the play to the cast. It is up to the music director to curate the music. Utilizing the melodies provided with the script allow the cast to collaborate on the 'accompaniment' of the melody. The leads should be familiar with their songs before the first table reading. Something of a jam session should commence. Encourage your chorus (as well as leads that are not involved with the song) to hum along with the soloist. They should become familiar with the melody and then play with harmonies. There is no wrong way to do this, it will probably not sound great to begin with. As you repeat the songs start incorporating clapping or stomping. Play around with the sound.

As you explore the scenes, it is important to know when to take up space and when to step back. Throughout the script are places to take notes. As you move through the play make notes about what your character will do and how they feel. Use these notes to inform your reactions within the scene. These interactions do not need to be perfect but should feel natural. The best thing about this format is that every performance can be different. Take advantage of this. Play with delivery and movement. Be sad one night and then angry another.

Rehearsals are extensions of the table reading. Taking the information from the table reading, refine the scenes in rehearsal. Play with different ways of portraying the scenes. This is a collaboration of ideas. Listen and react.

Feel free to disregard all of these notes. This production is ultimately what you want it to be. Everything is for you. Please create something beautiful. Make people laugh, be angry, and weep bitterly. Make them feel. I have the upmost trust in your abilities. I don't want to make it weird, but I love you. I love that you are here and that you want to create. Go be wonderful!

ACT I – SCENE 1: The Warmup

(Voices blend as they warm up. The sun is rising. Very ambient. Celestial. It is a forest setting. Appalachian setting. Pine trees. Mist. Breeze moving the trees. Mountains in the distance. Variations of melodies from throughout the play. At the discretion of the cast but should include the following lines and must end on “Sina”.)

CHORUS

(“Stars and Shadows”)

LET ME SING OF
STARS AND SHADOWS,
EMPTY DREAMS
AND
BROKEN HEARTS.
LET NO ANGRY
VOICES FOLLOW,
IN THE ACHING
EVENING AIR.
STARS AND SHADOWS
STARS AND SHADOWS
STARS AND SHADOWS
LED ME HERE.
STARS AND SHADOWS
STARS AND SHADOWS
STARS AND SHADOWS
BLESS THY WAY.

TANA AND SINA

(“Sina/Cannon Fodder Curse”)

BLOOD OF MY BLOOD...

MIO

(“Why Should I Stay?”)

WHY SHOULD I BARE THE WEIGHT OF THE WORLD...

ANYA

(“Stay with Me”)

WON'T YOU, STAY WITH ME, MY DARLING...

CHORUS

(“The Blackhearts Hymn”)

MOTHER, I PROMISE TO WRITE YOU A NOTE..

ANYA AND TEHO

(“I'm so Happy”)

SOMEDAY I’LL BE FINE SOMEDAY THE STARS WILL SHINE...

MIO

(“Stars and Shadows”)

LET ME SING OF STARS AND SHADOWS...

CHORUS

(Survivors)

WHAT WORLD IS THIS...

SINA

(“Sina/Cannon Fodder Curse”)

FIGHT WITH ME BROTHER, SISTER THOUGH GONE. CURSE THOSE PEOPLE CURSE THIS SONG.

[END SCENE]

ACT I – SCENE 2: Stay with Me (Opening)

(A group of refugees set up a camp upstage (behind most of the trees). What they are doing seems to almost be the background. Assign extra parts to chorus members. Downstage a young girl wanders out and plays in the opening, Sina. While she plays bits and pieces of conversation drift from upstage.)

ENTER SINA.

***A collaboration with the Chorus. ***

[Working with TANA and MIO. The camp is being set up for the day and people are busy doing chores. Mundane conversations about daily life mixed in with fears about survival. TANA jokingly flirts with her partner and inquiries about where her daughter, SINA is. TANA remarks on how different life would have been if people were more empathetic. MIO is learning the ropes of leadership under the current leader. The leader says that as long as MIO loves the people, they will be a good leader. MIO is not confident. Collab should last 2-3 min.]

End collaboration

ENTER TEHO and ANYA.

(A couple appears from up middle stage, one is wearing a uniform. They kiss. It is clear that they are madly in love. SINA giggles and hides but watches them.)

ANYA

(Laughingly)

Teho-stop! Stop! We are supposed to be looking for firewood!

TEHO

I am looking.

(Clearly, they are not)

I am looking very hard, Anya. It's not my fault that they sent me on an errand with the most wonderful thing I have ever laid eyes on. It's hard to see anything else.

See, I can't see anything else.

(stares at ANYA intensely)

Beautiful.

ANYA

(Breaks away)

Okay, dear. You can stay entranced but I'm going to work for our meal. Some of us need to contribute to our survival.

TEHO

(Catches them again)

Come on, a couple of minutes to ourselves won't hurt.

ANYA

A couple of minutes tend to turn into hours in your presence, Teho.

TEHO

It's not my fault you have a terrible sense of time.

(Kisses their hair)

Shall we lose track of time together.

ANYA

Time, huh? How much time do you want to spend with me?

TEHO

(Immediately)

All of it.

ANYA

Shouldn't you ask me if I want to spend all that time with you?

TEHO

(pauses and looks at ANYA seriously)

Do you want to spend time with someone else?

ANYA

(Breaks away again)

Maybe I do? Maybe someone will ask me? I can't recall if anyone has specifically asked me to spend time with them. A long time together. Exclusive time spent together. Just me and another person.

Together.

TEHO

I feel like there is something you want me to ask you.

ANYA

No. I can't think of anything.

TEHO

Anya. Don't you want to be somewhere safe first? I can't exactly offer you a life in a place like this. There are no guaranties while we are out here.

ANYA

You're right, there are no guarantees. Except the choices that we make now. I chose to be here with you. I chose to stand by your side. I chose to be happy. So, ask me and let me choose.

TEHO

There are so many things that are out of my control. I'd rather stay in this moment. Besides, what if you choose an answer that I don't like?

ANYA

(Frowning)

Anything's possible.

TEHO

Hey...

("I'm so Happy")

ANYA, PLEASE, DON'T FROWN THAT WAY,
THE NIGHTS ARE COLD, BUT I STILL STAY.
MY DAYS WITH YOU ARE FAR AND FEW,
BUT I'M SO HAPPY.

(CHORUS)

SOMEDAY, I'LL BE FINE.
SOMEDAY, THE STARS WILL SHINE,
AND WHEN THEY DO
I KNOW YOU-'LL
BE HERE WITH ME.

ONE DAY THE LIGHT OF LOVE,
WILL BURN AWAY THE HATE OF THOSE,
WHO WISH TO SEE,
YOU AND ME,
ALONE AND BROKEN.

ANYA

TEHO, MY LOVE, YOU ARE MY HEART.
LIVING IS HARD.
BUT HERE WE WILL START.
THE LIFE THAT WE WISHED FOR IS JUST THERE AHEAD,
AND I'M SO HAPPY.
(chorus)
SOMEDAY, I'LL BE FINE.
SOMEDAY, THE STARS WILL SHINE,
AND WHEN THEY DO
I KNOW YOU-'LL
BE HERE WITH ME.
ONE DAY THE LIGHT OF LOVE,
WILL BURN AWAY THE HATE OF THOSE,
WHO WISH TO SEE,
YOU AND ME,
ALONE AND BROKEN.

ANYA AND TEHO

YES, I'M AFRAID.
ALL OF US ARE.
THE JOURNEYS' UNCLEAR AND THE ENDING IS FAR.
BUT WITH YOU AND ME THE BURDEN IS LIGHT.
AND WE'RE SO HAPPY.
(chorus)
SOMEDAY, I'LL BE FINE.
SOMEDAY, THE STARS WILL SHINE,
AND WHEN THEY DO
I KNOW YOU-'LL
BE HERE WITH ME.
ONE DAY THE LIGHT OF LOVE,
WILL BURN AWAY THE HATE OF THOSE,
WHO WISH TO SEE,
YOU AND ME,
ALONE AND BROKEN.

I'M SO HAPPY,
I'M SO HAPPY.
YOU'RE SO HAPPY,
YOU'RE SO HAPPY.

WE'RE SO HAPPY.

TEHO

I'm so happy. You make me happy, even here.

So,

(kneels)

("Stay with Me")

WON'T YOU STAY WITH ME MY DARLING.

WON'T YOU BE WITH ME FOREVERMORE.

FORTUNE FAVORS FOOLS IN LOVE.

LOVE CAN CONQUER ALL.

ALL WILL FALTER IN THE END.

END AWAITS US ALL.

WON'T YOU STAY WITH ME MY DARLING.

ANYA

(PLEASE STAY MY DARLING)

TEHO

WON'T YOU BE WITH ME FOREVERMORE.

ANYA

(PLEASE STAY FOREVERMORE)

TEHO

So, will you stay with me?

ANYA

Yes!

(jumps on Teho and they disappear off stage)

(SINA giggles as the couple makes their way off stage. She plays again moving towards center stage, this time humming a melody/singing the chorus.)

SINA

("The Cannon Fodder Curse")

(humming)

Blood of my blood, soak through the sand.

Dry up the rivers, flood all the land.

Break what's been taken.

Bruise what's been built.

Let all the heavens drown in their guilt.

(singing lyrics)

FIGHT WITH ME BROTHER, SISTER, I SAID,

CURSE THOSE PEOPLE,-

(Crying).
Please. Stay with me.

TANA
Find your daughter.
Sina! Sina! Where are you? Sina! Where is Sina?

MIO
Save as many as you can.
You need to come with me!

ANYA
Stay with TEHO
Leave me! Leave me, I will stay. I will stay.

TANA
(...)
(Wailing)
Sina! Sina! My baby. My baby.

MIO
Come, we need to go now.

End collaboration

EXIT ALL

[END SCENE]

ACT I - SCENE 4: What is Left?

(Another part of the forest. The group is significantly smaller.
Some are wounded. All are in shock. Tana has lost her husband
and child. Anya has lost Teho. Mio is now the leader of the group.)

***All characters that have died in the previous scene are now a
part of the scenery.***

ENTER TANA, ANYA, MIO, and survivors.

***A collaboration with the Chorus. ***

[The chorus will take the lead in the first section of the scene. You are in shock and have most likely lost someone you love. You are probably hurt. You have finally gotten somewhere that feels a little safe and the adrenaline is fading. What are you doing at this moment? Are you taking care of others? Are you in need of help? Are you mourning for those you have lost? Be

loud or as quite as you want. Move or be still. Take up space. Use the main characters as prompts to mark the passage of time. 4-5 min.]

MIO

Something about needing resources and trying to comfort the remaining people.

THE SURVIVOR

If we had just grabbed something before, we ran we wouldn't be in this situation. Hannah would have remembered.

End collaboration

MIO

Our leader is not here right now, is she?

Do you think I don't know that?

Do you think I'm not thinking about all things that I've done wrong.

I know I should have grabbed a bag of rations.

I know I should have taken something.

I know I should have got more people out.

I should have stayed and fought with her!

I should have made her leave. I should have done that at least. Then she would have been here, and she would have known what to do.

She should be here.

I know that.

CHORUS

("Survivors")

MOTHER SAID THERE'S NO SHAME-
MOTHER SAID THERE'S NO SHAME IN CRYING.
FATHER SAID THERE'S COURAGE IN TRYING-
BUT THEY'RE BOTH GONE SO WHAT DO THEY KNOW.

(CHORUS)

ITS KILL OR BE KILLED,
ITS FIRE BEFORE LOOKING,
ITS PAIN,
AND IT'S SORROW,
IT'S A BITTERNESS.
IT'S COLD.

WHAT WORLD IS THIS WHERE THE COLOR IS GONE?
WHERE THE PALE BIRD SINGS,
ONLY AT DAWN.
TRIALS AND BURDENS, THEY TERRORIZE ME.
THERE ARE NO GUARANTIES.

BROTHER SAID ITS OKAY-
BROTHER SAID ITS OKAY TO SMILE.
SISTER SAID WE'LL LIVE TO TOMMOROW.
BUT THEIR BOTH GONE SO WHAT DO THEY KNOW.

(CHORUS)

ITS KILL OR BE KILLED,
ITS FIRE BEFORE LOOKING,
ITS PAIN,
AND IT'S SORROW,
IT'S A BITTERNESS.
IT'S COLD.

WHAT WORLD IS THIS WHERE THE COLOR IS GONE?
WHERE THE PALE BIRD SINGS,
ONLY AT DAWN.
TRIALS AND BURDENS, THEY TERRORIZE ME.
THERE ARE NO GUARANTIES.

THE SURVIVOR

It doesn't matter who is gone. We need to prepare for the people who are left. I know it's not the best choice but what else is there? We need supplies.

EXIT MIO, THE SURVIVOR, and some CHORUS MEMBERS

[END SCENE]

ACT I - SCENE 5: Lullaby

(Nighttime. The group is huddled around a fire. They look tired and worn. The Mother is trying to comfort her child. There is a good moment of silence before dialogue starts. Let the audience

read the scene and how the characters act. Breeze in the tree branches.)

***A collaboration with the Chorus. ***

[Discuss the ones you miss. Tell small stories about them that will bring them to life. This is an opportunity to connect with the audience and make individual chorus members real. Work with one another and create a sense of community. You should be detailed in how you talk about your loved ones. It is okay to talk about them in the present and then suddenly remember that they are gone. Be sure to refer to them as “lost” (i.e. I lost Sam, Mary is lost to me). Really lean into the emotions that are generated in this scene/conversation.]

This is an example: (make sure to referred to them as lost/loss)

CHORUS MEMBER

I’m scared. I can’t sleep.

CHORUS MEMBER

Me too.

But for now, we are okay.

(silence)

THE MOTHER

Please sleep. Baby, sleep. Mana knew how to get you to sleep. Mana.

CHORUS MEMBER

(Gets up and takes the baby from THE MOTHER.)

Sit down and rest, dear. I will watch your child. Hush, baby. Hush.

THE MOTHER

(Sits)

Thank you.

(silence)

THE MOTHER

Mana knew how to put her to sleep. Mana could tame even the most terrible tantrum. Sing her to sleep. That was Mana. Mana. I lost my Mana.

CHORUS MEMBER

(Keep this dialogue)

(whispered)

I lost my mom.

My mom sang me to sleep too. She had the prettiest voice. She can sing the blue birds to silence. They listen as she sings and then they sing back to her.

CHORUS MEMBER

My Hina is lost. She is the most beautiful woman I have even met. She likes making things with her hands. I once came home, and she had taken apart the garden looking for the perfect foliage to complete her flower arrangement.

(pause)

I got so mad at her I threw the flowers and the vase out the window.
For the next month, she put vinegar in my tea and honey in my socks.

(chuckles)

I'm still not sure why she picked me, but she made my life so vibrant. What do I do now?

CHORUS MEMBER

I lost my family long before today and I still cannot answer that question. Wait. Pray. Life has the audacity to continue even when you wish it wouldn't.

(The baby is sleeping, hands her to THE MOTHER)

End collaboration

TANA

I wish it would stop.

(silence)

My Sina died today. My love lay beside her. I should have knelt beside him and left with them. I should not be here. I should not be without my child. My Sina.

THE MOTHER

(Rocking their child)

I am sorry for your loss, Tana. We feel your loss.

TANA

Loss?

You all speak of loss, but they are not lost, they are dead.

Do not speak to me of loss when you hold your child safely in your arms. What right do you have to talk to me?

Loss.

Where did they go? Where are they hiding?

I will not be able to find them if I look because they are not missing.
Sina! Where are you?
See, they are not hiding from me.
Sina will not come out from behind that tree laughing, "Here I am, mama! Did you miss me?"
I will never hear her voice or touch her hair again. I will never hold her in my arms and rock her
to sleep. Never again.
Lost (*Scoffed*)
They are not lost.
They are stolen!
Taken! Far away. So far away.
Don't you dare talk to me about loss.
I did not lose anything.
I was raped, robbed of my loved ones.
They were stolen to a place I cannot go and all I know is the sharp bitterness of loneliness.
Hold your child. Do not lose her.

THE MOTHER

Tana

(*silence*)

SINA

(Sina theme)

TANA

I'm sorry.

I don't mean that. I would never wish that upon anyone.

I'm tired and I feel broken.

I don't know what to do or how to keep going

And breathing!

Every breath feels like a betrayal.

Why do I get to live even though they are dead?

I am too much of a coward to follow.

I'm sorry.

THE MOTHER

(*Starts to say something – The baby starts to whine again.*)

No, no. Please go to sleep.

(*crying*)

Please sleep.

(*pause*)

I'm a coward too

and I'm much too scared to leave.

I can't do this on my own, I could barely do this with Mana.

This baby is all I have left

It is the only thing holding me together and the thing that is threatening to break me apart.

Betrayal, guilt.
I miss him.
You are right. They are not lost they are gone.
(*rocking the child*)
Hush. Hush my baby.

(Lye Dye intro – “Song of the Fallen”)

TANA

DOWN THE RIVER, QUIET THOUGH.
IN THE SHADOWS WISE MEN FALL.
PEACE BE YOURS, SO PEACE TO THEE.
REST DEAR WARRIOR SLEEP FOR ME.

THE MOTHER

TINY ECHOES WHISPER THERE.
VOICES SPEAKING OF DESPAIR.
WORRY NOT FOR YOU ARE FREE,
TO REPOSE MOST COMFORTABLY.

TANA

GRIEF IS STRONG BUT LOVE IS TRUE.
I STILL TRY BUT LIFE IS CRUEL.
TIME WILL HEAL BUT UNTIL THEN,
CLOSE YOUR EYES MY DEAREST FRIEND.

THE MOTHER

WHEN WE MEET BEYOND THE VEIL,
FOR THE HUMAN LIFE IS FRAGILE,
WILL, YOU STILL MY CAPTAIN BE,
FOR THE LONG ETERNITY.

THE MOTHER

Now, go to sleep my baby. Sleep.

CHORUS MEMBER

I don't want to sleep. I can't sleep. I'm scared to close my eyes.

TANA

Did you know that there is a secret ending to that lullaby?

(*pause*)

My mother used to sing it to me when I was scared of the dark and I didn't want her to leave me.

I sing it to Sina before-.

I-.

Let me teach it to you.

I'LL SEE YOU ALL AGAIN

IN THE MORNING.

SINA

I'LL SEE YOU ALL AGAIN
IN THE MORNING.

TANA
(*pause*)
Now you.

CHORUS MEMBER

I'LL SEE YOU ALL AGAIN
IN THE MORNING.

TANA AND CHORUS MEMBER

I'LL SEE YOU ALL AGAIN
IN THE MORNING.

TANA
Go to sleep.
(*pause*)
I'll see you in the morning.

[END SCENE]

ACT II - SCENE 1: A Leader Alone

(In another part of the forest. Mio and the Survivor have just escaped a band of soldiers. They have supplies. The others have been killed and THE SURVIVOR is dying from his wounds.)

MIO
Come on. I need you to keep moving. Let's go.

SURVIVOR
Stop, stop. Let me rest for a moment.
(*Blood is bleeding through their clothes*)
Please. I can't.

MIO
(*Looking around worriedly*)
Okay. We can rest for a moment but then we have to go.
(*MIO helps them lean against a tree as they stop to rest.*)

SURVIVOR

They got Poe. They came so fast.
(Labored breathing)
They came so fast.
What do we do Mio? What can we do?
It hurts.

MIO
I don't know. I don't know.
I couldn't do anything.
He fell so fast, and they came out of nowhere. They were waiting.
I knew it.
I knew that would happen we should have just stayed with the group.
Why didn't you listen?
Why couldn't I make you both stay put.

SURVIVOR
I should have listened.
I would have had I known.
Anyone would have.
It hurts.
(Gasping for breath)
Lord!

MIO
Hush.
(MIO hears something from down stage)
Shut up!
(hides beside THE SURVIVOR, listening for noise)

(The silhouette of two soldiers is seen upstage patrolling)

SURVIVOR
(whispered)
I'm so tired.
I'm tired of running and I'm scared.
Oh, I'm scared. I'm terrified.
I don't want to die.
I'm dying, aren't I?

MIO
(urgently)
Get up, we need to go.

SURVIVOR
I can't.

MIO
Stop being stupid, get up.

SURVIVOR
(whispered)
Mio, I can't.

Mio
(leans down to THE SURVIVOR)
Hey?

SURVIVOR
(panicked)
I don't want to die but I can feel it.
I can feel it.
It's like when I was a kid, and I didn't want to sleep.
But I feel it.
It's pulling me, Mio.
I'm dying.

MIO
Come on.
You are going to be okay.
(They put out a hand to comfort THE SURVIVOR but the sound of soldiers from off stage stops them.)

(Both MIO and THE SURVIVOR freeze as they wait for more sound. MIO moves to help them up, but they can't stand.)

MIO
Get up!

SURVIVOR
I'm done, Mio.
I'm done.
I don't want to die but what else is there?
We are alone and forgotten, no worse than that, we are hated.
Remembered only for the animosity others have.
What did we do?
(pause)
I don't want to die.

MIO
(tries to lift them)
Please get up. We need to go.

SURVIVOR

(pushes Mio away)

I don't want to die. I don't want to die.

(slowly getting louder and desperate sounding)

I don't want to die. I don't want to die. I don't want to die.

MIO

Please, hush! They will hear us.

SURVIVOR

I don't want to die. I don't want to die. I don't want to die.

(Guard off stage shouts)

MIO

(Stands and moves back from THE SURVIVOR)

SURVIVOR

(pauses - they look solemnly at one another)

MIO

(turns away from them)

SURVIVOR

Wait.

Stay, please stay.

Please don't leave me.

Mio!

MIO

(whispered under breath)

I'm sorry.

(runs away disappearing into the foliage of the forest and off stage.)

SURVIVOR

Mio! Please! Help! Help me!

(Lights out)

SURVIVOR

Please. No, no, no!

Please.

(long anguished cry)

(gunshot)

(lights on)

MIO

(standing in front of *THE SURVIVOR*, who is dead)

I'm sorry, I'm a coward.

I was so afraid.

Hannah would have stayed.

I should have stayed.

("Why should I stay?")

SO LITTLE LEFT,
SO, FEW VOICES.
COUNTING THE DEAD,
COUNTING OUR CHOICES.
WHY SHOULD I BE THE ONE THAT WILL LEAD,
WHEN THE ONES THAT I LOVE DIE AND LEAVE.
I'M AFRAID, I'M AFRAID.
WHY SHOULD I STAY?

NOW, I AM HERE.
NOW I AM LEADING.
LEADING THEM WHERE?
TO THERE SURE ENDING?
WHY SHOULD I BEAR ACCOUNTABILITY?
WHEN THEIR HATE MEANS TOO LITTLE TO ME.
I'M AFRAID, I'M AFRAID.
WHY SHOULD I STAY?

WHY SHOULD I STAY WHEN THE END IS DECIDED,
WHEN WE'RE HUNTED AND GUTTED LIKE BEASTS?
THEY'LL BE FINE ON THEIR OWN.
WE'LL SURVIVE ALL ALONE.
I AM TIRED. I AM BROKEN. I COULD LEAVE.

SINA
(SINA THEME)

MIO

WHY SHOULD I RUN WHEN THERE'S STILL A CHANCE,
TO FIGHT FOR LOVE AND THE SONG OF ADVANCE?
I'M AFRAID, I'M AFRAID,
BUT I WILL STAY.

EXIT MIO
[END SCENE]

ACT II - SCENE 2: Hope For Better

(The group are begrudgingly setting up a camp. Time has passed.)

CHORUS MEMBER

I can't remember the name of the knight in the story my mom told me.

TANA

Really? It's in the song.

CHORUS MEMBER

There's a song?

Can I hear it?

TANA

There is a song. It's kind of difficult to sing on my own though so maybe you can get Auntie Anya to help me.

ANYA

Don't lie to the kid, Tana. It's not in the song.

CHORUS MEMBER

Come on Anya! Sing for me. I wanna hear the song.

ANYA

(smiling)

I would love to but some of us need to contribute to our survival.

(pause)

Besides Auntie Tana is a liar, the knight's name is not in the song.

TANA

I am not a liar, well about this. It's in the chorus.

ANYA

It's not in the chorus. I have sung that song hundreds of times and I think I would have noticed if it was in the chorus.

TANA

How much do you want to bet that it is in the song?

ANYA

What exactly do I have to bet on at the moment?

TANA

I wouldn't say no to you taking fire duty tonight.

ANYA

Okay, but what makes you think you have something I want?

TANA

Latrine duty.

ANYA

You're on.

(The group wanders around taking a seat as the two sing.)

("The Knight")

ANYA

FEAR NOT DEAR CHILD FOR THE KNIGHT IS COMING.
DREAM OF BLUE SKIES AND KNOW YOU ARE SAFE.
DAWN WILL COME SWIFTLY, AND YOU WILL KNOW THE DAY.
REST NOW MY CHILD FOR CHANGE COMES OUR WAY.

TANA

BRIGHT SUN WATCH OVER AND BLESS THE DARK KNIGHT.
BUILD UP OUR COURAGE AND SILENCE OUR FRIGHT.
WE WILL KNOW FREEDOM AS OUR LOVED ONES ONCE DID.
YOUR NAMES WE'LL HONOR FOR THEE WE NOW LIVE.

ANYA & TANA

KILL THOUGHTS OF DOUBT,
LIE DOWN AND REST,
RELY ON COURAGE.
THE KNIGHT WILL COME TO SET YOU FREE.
SHE WILL FIGHT FOR ETERNITY.

ANYA

FEAR NOT DEAR CHILD FOR THE KNIGHT IS COMING.
DREAM OF BLUE SKIES AND KNOW YOU ARE SAFE.
DAWN WILL COME SWIFTLY, AND YOU WILL KNOW THE DAY.
REST NOW MY CHILD FOR CHANGE COMES OUR WAY.

TANA

KILL THOUGHTS OF DOUBT,
LIE DOWN AND REST,

RELY ON COURAGE.
THE KNIGHT WILL COME TO SET YOU FREE.
SHE WILL FIGHT FOR ETERNITY.

ANYA

Well, as we have just demonstrated, you are now the proud facilitator of latrine duty this evening.

TANA

Hold your horses.
The knight's name was in the song.

ANYA

Alright, enlighten us.

TANA

Kill thoughts of doubt,
Lie down and rest,
Rely on courage.

ANYA

You're joking.

CHORUS MEMBER

Wait, what?
Where's the name?

TANA

Kill thoughts of doubt,
Lie down and rest,
Rely on courage.

CHORUS MEMBER

I don't get it.

ANYA

The knight's name is Kylire.

Kill
thoughts of doubt,
Lie
down and rest,
Re
-ly on courage.

CHORUS MEMBER

Oh! That's wonderful!

TANA
Indeed, it is wonderful.

ANYA
(makes a face at TANA)
You ugly cow.

TANA
How did you not know that the knight's name was added to the song when you've sung it
hundreds of times?

ANYA
(chucking an object at TANA)
Shut up.

TANA
(Placing an arm around the CHORUS MEMBER)
Come on kid.
It's too dangerous for us to hang around sore losers.
Let's go help with the washing and let Auntie Anya tend to her wounded ego.

CHORUS MEMBER
Someone is coming!

[END SCENE]

ACT II - SCENE 3: The Worth of a Life
(Continuation of the previous scene.)

ENTER MIO

MIO
Here, take this.
(hands out some supplies)
It's not much but it's more than we had before.
When I got there they had set most of the camp on fire so there wasn't much left.
This was from Ellie's trailer.
It was mostly untouched.
Omar and she would have wanted us...we'll put it to good use.
(handing TANA a blanket)
Here, you may have to wash it first.
It was hanging on the line near your tent, but it stinks like smoke.
There are men all over the place.
I had to hunker down a couple of times while they patrolled.

TANA
(Taking the blanket)
And the others?

MIO
(pauses before shaking their head)
I-.
(excitedly, they rummage through their backpack, pulling out a stack of baby clothes)
I found a box, most of them were burned but I figure that some are better than none.
(he holds out the stack to THE MOTHER)

THE MOTHER
Thank you, Mio. That's very kind.

MIO
I ran out further than camp before circling back here so there shouldn't have been anyone that followed me.
Um, we should still move though.
I think we have to leave no later than tomorrow if we want to stay somewhere safe.

ANYA
Did you see any other survivors?

MIO
No.
Everyone-everything is- this is what I could salvage.
(pause)
There wasn't much, a lot is gone.
Most of it.
Burned.
They burned most of it, them.
I suppose that's good. More respectful than just leaving them there.
I would have thanked them if it was merciful.
It didn't look merciful.

TANA
Mio.

MIO
Right.
We should settle in for the night and be prepared to leave before sunrise.

TANA
(nodding)
That sounds like a plan.

(the group disperses leaving MIO and TANA)

What happened?

MIO

You should prepare for tomorrow.
Get some rest.

TANA

Mio, what happened?
You look half dead, and you may have washed off most of it but there is blood on your neck.
What happened?

MIO

It's dirt.

TANA

It's not.

MIO

Tana, I'm tired, I don't have it in me to talk about things.
We have things to do, and I should do things.
I have to talk to people and make sure they're okay.
(pause – doesn't move)
I have to do things.
I decided to stay, and I can't dwell on the things that have happened.
And talking about it won't change anything.
If anything, it will only make it worse.
And I'm terrible, Tana.
I did something terrible
I should have stayed.
I don't want to talk.
(pause)
How are you?
How are you holding up?
How are you feeling?

TANA

(pause)

Broken.

I feel broken like something's missing, and I will never be able to replace it.

MIO

Broken, huh.

TANA
Yup.
("I am Broken")

I AM BROKEN,
YES, INSIDE OF MY HEAD I AM BROKEN.
YES, THE THOUGHTS AND THE WORDS CAN'T BE SPOKEN.
SO, I'LL GRIN AND PRETEND I'M NOT BROKEN,
BUT I'M BROKEN.

I AM TRYING,
YES, I TRY TO PRETEND I'M NOT DYING,
AND THE END SOUNDS SO SWEET OVER CRYING.
SO, I'LL GRIN AND PRETEND I'M NOT DYING.
YES, I'M TRYING.

BUT THE FEELINGS,
YES, THE GOOD AND THE BAD WHITE-HOT FEELINGS.
ROLL AND RAGE THROUGH MY MIND BREAKING SOMETHING.
SNAPPING SOMETHING. STEALING SOMETHING.
I AM BROKEN, I AM BROKEN.
I AM FINE.

I AM LIVING,
YET THE ONES THAT I LOVE,
ARE NOT WITH ME.
I AM TIRED OF ACTING THE MOTIONS,
AND THE MOTIONS CUT DEEP LIKE A DAGGER.
BUT I'M LIVING.

AM I LIVING?
IN THIS LIFE THAT WORSE THAN A TORMENT.
I AM BROKEN AND BARREN AND BLEEDING
IS THIS NOT THE DESIRES OF OTHERS?
IS THIS LIVING?

AND THE FEELINGS,
YES, THE GOOD AND THE BAD WHITE-HOT FEELINGS.
ROLL AND RAGE THROUGH MY MIND BREAKING SOMETHING.
SNAPPING SOMETHING. STEALING SOMETHING.
I AM BROKEN, I AM BROKEN.

I AM..

SINA
(Sina's theme)

TANA
...fine. I'm fine.
(*pause*)
I have to be.
There is no other choice.

MIO
I feel like that too.
Broken.
I mean, I'm here but I shouldn't be.
I should have stayed.
(*pause*)
I held him, Tana.
Held him as he was dying.
He was so scared.
He begged me to stay with him
But I was scared.
They were coming
And I ran.
I left him there.
He was scared and I left him.
He dead knowing that I had abandoned him.
(*scoffed*)
His leader.

TANA
You survived.

MIO
At what cost?
I survived because I was a coward.
I ran and left one of mine alone to die.
He was alone because of me.

TANA
(*whispered*)
And you regret it?

MIO
Yes!...no.
I don't know.
I am the leader; I should have listened to him.
I should have stayed.
I could have protected him and brought him with me.
He is dead because I wanted to live.
He is dead because of me.

(pause)

If I was better or braver he would still be with us.

(shaking head)

But do you know what's worse?

I am sad that he died, and I am angry that I left him, but I am even more ashamed that I am grateful to be alive.

Funny isn't it?

Such contradicting feelings.

Wanting to die but being happy to be alive.

Being guilty of being alive.

TANA

You are regretful that you are alive?

MIO

Yes.

TANA

I understand.

(grips Mio's shoulder)

But do not take for granted that you live.

(choking on the words)

Many wish for the opportunity and few have the fortune to choose it.

If I had the choice-if anyone had the choice they would have run.

Bravery is either a luxury or a last stand.

You chose to survive.

None of us choose to die and of those we have lost, I don't believe that they will be angry with your decision to live.

Mio, why did you come back?

Why did you carry those supplies?

Why are you here, now?

(pause)

You did not kill him, they did.

You do not bear the guilt, they do.

(TANA puts an arm around MIO – They stand together quietly)

CHORUS and CAST

(humming a variation of "Song of the Fallen")

[END SCENE]

ACT II - SCENE 4: Take a Life

(Another part of the forest. Time has passed. They look worn out. Another evening. The group is sitting about the fire. The Mother sits alone, the baby has died and is now in the arms of one of the deceased.)

A collaboration with the Chorus.

[The beginning of this scene is done in “silence” (no dialogue). Let the audience come to terms with where the group are at, right now. You have been on the run for more than you were prepared for. Clothing is dirty, people look gaunt and there are less of you. The Mother is noticeably without her child. You may do little movements like tending to the fire or making things. Practice your part and figure out what they would be doing after a long day sitting around a fire. The Mother stands and exits the stage.]

EXIT THE MOTHER

End Collaboration

MIO

It's time. Put out the fire.

ANYA

A moment more. We're freezing. Please.

MIO

I'm sorry. We can't risk it.

ANYA

(nodding)

(Mio moves to extinguish the fire)

ENTER THE SOLIDER

THE SOLIDER

Nobody move!

(they point the gun at the group)

Why are there so many of you?

MIO
Please-

THE SOLIDER
Silence!
(waving the gun)
Sit down. Sit together.
Don't you try anything.
Don't you-
Anya?
What are you doing here?

ANYA
(pause)
You're Teyo's friend.
I-I met you at the town meeting.

THE SOLIDER
(lowering the gun)
You're Teyo's girl.

ANYA
(slowly stands hands raised)
Yes.
(pause)
His fiancée.

THE SOLIDER
What are you doing out here?
Who are these people?

ANYA
They're my family.
My sister.
We're not hurting anyone.
We were just leaving.

THE SOLIDER
(raises his gun)
Why are you out here?

ANYA
We're not hurting anyone.
We just want to live.

THE SOLIDER

Two choices: this monologue can be changed to whatever the director and the character want to say

Version One: If you wanted to live you should have listened.

We didn't take anything that wasn't ours.

You are the ones that are trying to kill us!

Corrupt us!

You should have just listened and if you couldn't, you should have just pretended.

Teyo loved you.

You betrayed him.

You filthy disgusting whore.

I wonder if he knows what you are and who you associate with.

(MIO moves to stand)

Don't move!

Don't move.

(breathing and thinking)

Get up.

Hands where I can see them!

We're going on a walk, stay in front of me.

You try anything and I'll shoot the kid first.

Version Two: I know. I'm sorry but I can't let you go.

I have my orders.

If I had my way I would just walk away.

I would pretend that I never saw you all and go on with my patrol.

(pause)

It's either you or me.

I'm so sorry.

(MIO moves)

Don't move!

Don't move.

(breathing and thinking)

Get up.

Hands where I can see them!

We're going on a walk, stay in front of me.

You try anything and I'll shoot the kid first.

ENTER THE MOTHER

THE MOTHER

(leaping at the Solider she welds a knife while screaming)

My baby! You killed my baby!

(They wrestle on the ground MIO and the others try to help)

(Lights go out and a gunshot goes off)
(Lights come back on)

THE MOTHER AND THE SOLIDER DIE.

***A collaboration with the Chorus. ***

[You all may choose how you end the scene. You may care for the bodies or leave. Once again it must be completed in silence.]

End collaboration

[END SCENE]

ACT III - SCENE 1: Calm Before/The Enemy

(Another part of the forest. Time has passed. Day time. The group (MIO, ANYA, TANA, and at least one other) are quietly journeying).

MIO

Stop it! Don't you dare say it!

ANYA

Say what? I can't imagine what it is you are talking about.

TANA

Mio, lighten up.

MIO

Lighten up? This exact moment isn't exactly conducive to lightening up.

TANA

Well, I can't exactly wallow in a vat of self-pity. The environment isn't exactly conducive to that either.

ANYA

Mio, you may have noticed that things have been relatively....I mean half of our group made it past the check point. The likelihood that we make it.

MIO

Nope! Stop, stop, stop! You'll jinks it.

TANA

There we go.

ANYA

Have you been raining on our parade for the last few days because you think karma is going to shoot us in the kneecap?

MIO

I'm trying to manage my expectations.

TANA

That's pretty understandable.

ANYA

Is it?

TANA

Disappointment hurts less when you don't care as much.

ANYA

Cynics.

The lot of you.

How do you do it? How do you live with such depressing outlooks.

MIO

Quite easily.

TANA

Hey! Don't lump me with him.

ANYA

Face it.

Little Mio is your pessimistic twin.

You bare more resemblance to them than your own sister.

MIO

Hush!

ANYA

Trying to silence me.

TANA

Quiet, Anya.

(they hide behind an object while they watch a group of soldiers sitting in a camp.)

A collaboration with the Chorus.

[The soldiers talk about why they are there. This is an opportunity to explore the other side of the story. Based off of the SOLDIER's response, craft a conversation around what the soldiers think. 2-3 mins. One mentions that they miss their mother.]

CHORUS MEMBER

My mom sang me to sleep. She has the prettiest voice. She could sing the blue birds to silence.
They listened as she sang and then they sang back to her.

("The Blackhearts Hymn").

MOTHER, I PROMISE TO WRITE YOU A NOTE,
AND FILL IT WITH TALES FULL OF SPLENDOR.
MOTHER, I WISH I HAD TAKEN THE TIME,
TO TELL YOU I LOVE YOU MOST TENDER.
MOTHER, THE NIGHT SEEMS TO SWALLOW ME WHOLE
AND THE WORK LEAVES A SOUR TONGUE IN TASTE.
MOTHER, THE DARKNESS IS HAUNTING MY DREAMS,
AND I FEAR THAT THE WORK'S NOW IN HASTE.

MOTHER, I'M SCARED BUT I'LL NEVER SHOW IT,
MY COMRADES ARE KEEPING ME SANE.
MOTHER, I MISS YOU, BUT I WILL SURVIVE IT,
I'M STRONGER AND DON'T FEEL THE PAIN.
MOTHER, I FIGHT BUT IT'S NEVER ENOUGH,
AND I LOST MY BEST FRIEND IN THE FIELD.
MOTHER, I'M TIRED YET CAN'T CLOSE MY EYES,
FOR HIS FACE IS NOW ALWAYS REVEALED.

MOTHER, THESE LAST WORDS I LEAVE YOU IN LOVE,
FOR I GO NOW TO PEACEFUL PASTURES.
MOTHER, I'LL REST NOW, YOU'LL WORRY NO MORE.
I NOW LAY IN THE STARS IN A RAPTURE.
MOTHER DON'T WEEP FOR I CHOSE THIS LIFE,
TO DEFEND AGAINST DARKNESS INDEED.
MOTHER, PROTECT THEM WHEN THEY PASS YOUR WAY,
FOR LIFE'S LONELY WHEN LIVING THIS CREED.

(One of the Chorus members spots the group. The soldiers tell the group to freeze but they run.

The soldiers chase them.)

End collaboration

EXIT ALL.

[END SCENE]

ACT III - SCENE 2: We Stand Together/Stay with Me

(Another part of the forest. Open area with trees to hide behind in
the background.)

ENTER MIO

MIO

(Runs onto stage, taking cover behind an object)

ENTER SOLDIERS and Chorus Member

***A collaboration with the Chorus. ***

[The soldiers are lining up the Chorus Member to be executed. It is up to your discretion how long this scene takes and what is discussed. Allow moments of silence. This has happened before. This will happen again. More than anything it is a formality to make the execution feel justified. Create nuance in the way each soldier acts differently.]

MIO
("Why Should I Stay?" – Refrain)
WHY SHOULD I STAY WHEN THE END IS DECIDED,
WHEN WE'RE HUNTED AND GUTTED LIKE BEASTS?
THEY'LL BE FINE ON THEIR OWN.
WE'LL SURVIVE ALL ALONE.
I AM TIRED. I AM BROKEN. I COULD LEAVE.

SINA
(Sina theme)

WHY SHOULD I BEAR ACCOUNTABILITY?
WHEN THEIR HATE MEANS TOO LITTLE TO ME.
I'M AFRAID, I'M AFRAID.
WHY SHOULD I-

(stopping, MIO steps out from behind the object and stands next to the Chorus Member taking their hand)

(The lights go out - gunshot)
End collaboration

EXIT ALL

ENTER ANYA

(When the lights come back on it is ANYA lying on the ground bleeding.)
(The dead chorus hum "I'm so Happy")

ANYA
("I'm so Happy – Refrain")
TEHO, MY LOVE, YOU ARE MY HEART.
LIVING IS HARD.
BUT HERE WE WILL START.
THE LIFE THAT WE WISHED FOR IS JUST THERE AHEAD,
AND I'M SO HAPPY.

SINA
(Sina theme)

ENTER TANA

TANA
Anya! No.
(rushes to embrace them and stop the bleeding)
No, no, no.
Hey, hey.

Anya.
Hey, look at me.

ENTER TEHO (from scenery)

ANYA
Tana, Tana I see him.
My Teho.
Teho is waiting for me.
(*singing breathlessly*)

SOMEDAY, I'LL BE FINE.
SOMEDAY, THE STARS WILL SHINE,
AND WHEN THEY DO
I KNOW YOU-'LL
BE HERE WITH ME.

TANA
Hey! Look at me!
Don't close your eyes.
Please.
Stay with me.

TEHO
(*"Stay with Me" – Refrain*)
WON'T YOU STAY WITH ME MY DARLING.
WON'T YOU BE WITH ME FOREVERMORE.

TANA
Anya.
Please look at me.

THE CHORUS
FORTUNE FAVORS FOOLS IN LOVE.
LOVE CAN CONQUER ALL.
ALL WILL FALTER IN THE END.

TEHO
END AWAITS US ALL.

ANYA
WON'T YOU STAY WITH ME MY DARLING.

TANA
(PLEASE STAY MY DARLING)

ANYA
WON'T YOU BE WITH ME FOREVERMORE.

TANA
(PLEASE STAY FOREVERMORE)

(ANYA takes TEHO's hand and fades into the scenery.)

[END SCENE]

ACT III - SCENE 3: The End

(Continuation of the previous scene. End).

TANA
Alone.
Again.
Alone. Alone. Alone. Alone.
Somebody!
Anyone.
Any, answer me.
Sina!
I held you a moment ago, my baby, then taken.
And Anya!
Taken. Taken. Taken.
(pause)
Why?!?
Why did they have to be taken?
Why the child?
Why the sister?
Why the brother?
Why the father?
Why does our death make them feel better?
What did we do?
Are their deaths not enough?
Why is it not enough?
When will it be enough?
(pause)
I'm so tired.
I'm broken.

SINA
(Sina theme)

TANA
Curse those people.

Curse the dead...
(“The Cannon Fodder Curse” to the tune of “Sina”)

BLOOD OF MY BLOOD, SOAK THROUGH THE SAND.
DRY UP THE RIVERS, FLOOD ALL THE LAND.
BREAK WHAT’S BEEN TAKEN
BRUISE WHAT’S BEEN BUILT
LET ALL THE HEAVENS DROWN IN THEIR GUILT.
FIGHT WITH ME BROTHER, SISTER, WE STAND.
CURSE THOSE PEOPLE, CURSE THIS LAND.

FEED ON THE FALLEN, FEAST ON THEIR FLESH
CALL OUT THE SULLEN, CUT DOWN THE REST
REST ON THY LAURELS
THEY’LL KINDLE A PYRE.
BLOOD IN THE CRADLE, BLOOD IN THE FIRE.
FIGHT WITH ME BROTHER, SISTER, THOUGH GONE.
CURSE THOSE PEOPLE, CURSE THIS SONG.

CHOKES ON INJUSTICE, FAIL TO FORGIVE.
BURN WITH THE BURDEN, FIGHT JUST TO LIVE.
SILENCE THE SOUNDS OF THE VOICES WHO CRY,
OUT IN DERISION, THEY WHIMPER AND DIE.
FIGHT WITH ME BROTHER, SISTER, I SAID,
CURSE THOSE PEOPLE, CURSE THE DEAD.

(Lights out.)

(pause)

*(Lights on, including the house lights. Tana looks out at the audience. Pausing to study individual faces. Stepping forward she moves, taking deliberate strides till she reaches the edge of the stage. Bending forward, she steps down from the stage. **Shatter the fourth wall!** Looking at the people she takes in the faces. There is no judgment on her face. Slowly, she strides through the audience until she exits the room.)*

EXIT TANA

[END SCENE].

[END]

NOTES

[illegible]