

FADE IN:

INT. BALLROOM - NIGHT - 2655

The grand hall of a royal palace, gilded in gold chandeliers and vaulted ceilings, glows with the vibrant pulse of a ball in full swing.

SUPER: "MALAIS, 2655"

Dozens of COURTIERS dance in avant-garde ball gowns and military uniforms to music both foreign and familiar. Not quite modern, not quite classic.

At one end of the room, a dais rises above the rest of the floor, lined with three thrones. In the middle sits a man (King MAGNUS, late 40s) in full military dress, pristine white only offset by the full array of medals on his chest.

In the throne to his right sits a woman (ADELAIDE Reden) in her mid-30s, positively radiant in her ball gown of sparkling crystals, which glint in the glow of the room to resemble stars against the night sky darkness of her skin.

To the King's left sits ROYCE Reden (early 40s), a handsome, kind-looking man in a uniform similar to the King's in many regards, but for the smaller amount of medals on his chest. The three observe the dancers on the floor, occasionally gossiping to each other and laughing.

CUT TO:

INT. BALLROOM / DOORWAY - CONTINUOUS

Three small children crowd in a hidden doorway behind the thrones. One, LILAC (6), a gangly child dressed in jeans and a well-fit tunic, with her hair pulled clumsily into a tie, shushes the two boys with her.

LILAC

Stop shoving. I can't see anything.

One of the boys with her, HENRI (7), pushes Lilac back from the door and takes her place.

HENRI

That's because you're too stupid to see it.

LILAC

Henri!

HENRI
 (taunting)
 Lily!

Lilac jumps back to her feet and rushes toward Henri, but the last boy, taller and lankier than the others, holds out an arm to stop her. This is CAULDEN (10).

CAULDEN
 Stop it. Both of you. You're going
 to get us caught.

LILAC
 Are not!

HENRI
 Hush!

CLEMENT (O.S.)
 Children?

The three of them spin in time to notice the man in the hallway behind them. Dressed in a simpler suit than the King or Royce, CLEMENT St. Germain (mid 30s) smiles, if sternly, down at the three rule-breakers before him.

CLEMENT (CONT'D)
 Aren't you supposed to be in bed at
 this hour?

Caulden drops his head to the man in a show of respect. Henri follows suit, dropping his head and muttering his answer.

CAULDEN
 Yes, father.

HENRI
 Yes, Lord Clement.

Lilac, however, is not amused. She crosses her arms over her chest and huffs.

LILAC
 We never get to see anything.

CAULDEN
 Lily. Quiet.

LILAC
 When do we get to go to the parties
 the King throws?

Caulden raises worried eyes to the man before them. However, instead of anger, the man's smile softens into something like admiration. He kneels beside Lilac and takes her hand.

CLEMENT

You wish to go to the ball, then?

Lilac smiles back at him and nods her head furiously. Clement gestures to her clothing.

CLEMENT (CONT'D)

But how will you dance without a dress?

LILAC

Father dances without a dress. So does King Magnus.

Clement CHUCKLES lightly.

CLEMENT

That they do. So, you know how to dance, do you?

Lilac's face falls and she shakes her head sadly.

HENRI

She looks like a drowning chicken in dance lessons.

Lilac shoots him a daggered glare. Clement hooks a finger under her chin and pulls her gaze to his.

CLEMENT

That's all right. Tell you the truth, I can't dance well either.

Lilac turns to Henri and sticks her tongue out at him. Clement stands, Lilac's hand still in his.

CLEMENT (CONT'D)

But you two are more important than I. At least when it comes to presenting yourselves to the court.

Lilac cocks her head to the side.

LILAC

Why?

CLEMENT

You'll see soon. I promise. For now, back to bed. All of you.

Lilac's shoulders fall a little, but she nods anyway. Caulden, watching the rest conversation as if from a distance, suddenly breaks out into a beaming grin. He turns to Henri and Lilac.

CAULDEN

Race you two to the tower.

Lilac and Henri, worries suddenly forgotten, perk up. Clement holds up a hand to stop them.

CLEMENT

Two rules. First, no running in the halls. And second...

(beat)

When you do run, take the servant's passages so you don't get caught.

The three children LAUGH and nod excitedly, bouncing on their heels. He waves them away.

CLEMENT (CONT'D)

Go on. Be careful. And stay quiet.

The children take off at top speed down the stone corridor, Clement watching fondly as they run.

INT. BALLROOM - CONTINUOUS - 2655

Adelaide's eyes scan the room, searching, as the King engages in conversation with Royce beside her.

KING

I'm only insisting that we hold the meeting, Royce.

ROYCE

I'm not saying you're wrong, but also --

A voice speaks from behind Adelaide. Her head snaps up, the only part of her body that betrays her surprise.

CLEMENT (O.S.)

Looking for me?

Clement steps around the throne to stand between the King and Adelaide. She doesn't meet his gaze.

ADELAIDE

Don't flatter yourself.

Clement puts a hand on the King's shoulder.

CLEMENT

Majesty.

Magnus reaches up with one hand and grasps Clement's tightly, warmly. He speaks over his shoulder, breaking conversation with Royce.

MAGNUS

What have you been up to?

Clement leans in to whisper in Magnus's ear.

CLEMENT

Mischief.

The King LAUGHS conspiratorially.

MAGNUS

The children again?

Adelaide rolls her eyes good-naturedly.

ADELAIDE

I hope you put the fear of God in them. They've got to grow out of this foolishness.

Clement shrugs.

CLEMENT

Who needs the fear of God when they have the fear of you?

Royce leans in to interrupt the fun.

ROYCE

Forgive me, Majesty. If we may continue?

The King nods. He pats Clements hand before inclining his head toward the other man in their group. Their voices drone just out of earshot.

Clement sits on the arm of Adelaide's throne with a sigh.

CLEMENT

They really know how to have fun at a party, don't they?

Adelaide follows his wistful gaze, watching Royce and the King converse intently.

ADELAIDE

It would seem so.

She smirks up at her friend.

ADELAIDE (CONT'D)
Not jealous of it, are you?

He scoffs, casting an avoiding gaze into the crowd.

CLEMENT
Please. I'm not that insecu...

His words trail off as something catches his eye, far across the ballroom.

ADELAIDE
Clement?

He squints, examining something closely. Adelaide follows his gaze. Across the room, a row of KING'S GUARDS line the wall. They stand, still as statues. All except one, who stands slightly shorter than the others and fidgets.

Adelaide notices him instantly. Keeping her body still, she pitches her voice low.

ADELAIDE (CONT'D)
Royce.

Royce and the King continue their conversation, neither having heard Adelaide. She turns her head barely, keeping an eye on the guard.

ADELAIDE (CONT'D)
Royce.

He holds up a hand for her to wait. The guard shifts on his feet and reaches into his cloak.

CLEMENT
Get down!

In a flurry of movement, Clement shifts to block the King as a GUNSHOT rings across the dance floor.

The MUSIC comes to an end, replaced by the terrified SCREAMS of the surging crowd. Adelaide shoots to her feet, a katana blade drawn in her hand. She searches the sea of faces for the guard, but he has disappeared.

She calls over her shoulder at the others.

ADELAIDE
Royce, Clement, take the passages.
Go.

ROYCE
Addie!

Adelaide glances down and gasps. Clement lies on the ground, clutching a wound seeping blood. The King kneels beside him, shell shocked. Royce stands ready at his side, a wakizashi - a shortened version of Adelaide's blade - in his hands.

Adelaide and Royce share a look of horror and worry. Then she nods at him, turning back to the party scene.

ADELAIDE

Go! Take the King through the passages. I'll meet you.

MAGNUS

I am not leaving Clement --

Royce grabs him by the arm, hauling him to his feet and ushering him toward the door through which the children watched the party only moments before. Magnus struggles, reaching for a dying Clement.

ADELAIDE

I'll bring him. We'll meet you there. Just go.

Clement breathes haltingly, but turns to Magnus and nods.

CLEMENT

I'll be fine.

With Adelaide guarding their backs, Royce pulls the King through the door, slamming it shut behind him.

END OF TEASER