

8-2018

The Fault in Our Stars: A Director's Process on Life is a Dream

Jeremiah Dean Albers
University of Arkansas, Fayetteville

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.uark.edu/etd>



Part of the [Other Theatre and Performance Studies Commons](#)

Citation

Albers, J. D. (2018). The Fault in Our Stars: A Director's Process on Life is a Dream. *Graduate Theses and Dissertations* Retrieved from <https://scholarworks.uark.edu/etd/2930>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by ScholarWorks@UARK. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@UARK. For more information, please contact uarepos@uark.edu.

The Fault in Our Stars
A Director's Process on "Life is a Dream"

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Fine Arts in Theatre

by

Jeremiah Albers
Old Dominion University
Bachelor of Arts in Theatre, 2008

August 2018
University of Arkansas

This thesis is approved for recommendation to the Graduate Council.

Michael Landman, M.F.A.
Thesis Chair

Amy Herzberg, M.F.A.
Committee Member

Shawn Irish, M.F.A.
Committee Member

Abstract

The following is a journal and reflection on my process as adaptor and director of the play *Life is a Dream* by Pedro Calderón de la Barca. It is equal parts self-evaluation and creative travelogue. The chapters include an Introduction, and The Production Process, and related appendices.

Acknowledgements

The production of *Life is a Dream* would not have been possible without the creative contributions of the talented cast and production team, or the support of the University of Arkansas Theatre faculty and staff. For their contribution, I am eternally grateful.

I want to extend a very special thank you to Michael Landman, whose thoughtful mentorship was a valuable tool to the success of the production, and to my development as an artist.

Dedication

To my parents, who let me keep doing this despite their better judgment, I will be forever grateful.

To my collaborators, both onstage and off, it would not have been possible without you.

Table of Contents

I. Introduction	1
The Production	1
The Script and Story	1
Goals and Vision	3
II. The Production Process.....	5
Play Selection	5
Adaptation	8
Preparation	12
Auditions and Casting	18
The Design Process	22
The Rehearsal Process	36
Tech Rehearsals	49
Performances	53
Evaluation	54
Works Cited	57
Works Consulted.....	59
Appendices.....	62
Appendix A - The Script	62
Appendix B - Research and Analysis	147
Appendix C: Directorial Ideas and Methods	165
Appendix D: Design Meeting Preparation	167
Appendix E: List of Events	179
Appendix F: Cast List	188
Appendix G: Rehearsal Schedule	189
Appendix H: Production Photos	191

I. Introduction

The Production

Life is a Dream by Pedro Calderón de la Barca was produced in a new adaptation by Jeremiah Albers by the University of Arkansas Department of Theatre as part of their season in University Theatre. The production opened on February 16, 2018 and ran for eight performances, through February 25, 2018. Rehearsals began on January 8, with the cast returning a week early from Christmas break to rehearse eight hours a day for six days. During that week, we focused on training the cast in sword fighting and staging the dance. When classes began on January 16, we typically rehearsed six days a week, for four and a half hours daily.

The cast included five graduate students and eleven undergraduate students. The creative team consisted of a faculty choreographer, a graduate fight choreographer, three graduate designers, and two faculty designers. A faculty member served as stage manager, and he was assisted by two undergraduate students.

The Script and Story

Life is a Dream was written in 1633 by Pedro Calderón de la Barca. It received its first performance sometime in 1634 or 1635 in Madrid. Since that time, it has remained a classic of the Spanish language stage, but has only received a handful of English language productions and adaptations in the last century. *Life is a Dream* is a philosophical allegory that explores the conflict between fate and free will through the story of Segismundo, a Polish prince who has lived since infancy as a prisoner in a tower. He was imprisoned by his father, Basilio, in an attempt to prevent Segismundo from fulfilling his horoscope to become a corrupt, tyrannical king who would foster civil war in the kingdom. Eaten up with guilt over what he's done, Basilio concocts a plan to give Segismundo a sleeping potion, then place him on the throne and reveal to

him his true identity. If he acts against the stars' prediction, Basilio will abdicate to him. However, if he proves the horoscope right, they will put him back to sleep, return him to prison, and tell him his experience in the palace was all a dream.

Segismundo, upon hearing the truth, is understandably upset and acts out violently, fulfilling the stars' prediction. He is returned to his tower, and he is driven into an existential crisis when he cannot reconcile his memory with the lie he was told, that everything was a dream. His confusion is only alleviated when the citizens set him free from prison to conquer the throne by force. This is further complicated by the arrival of Rosaura, a Muscovite woman who has come to murder Segismundo's rival for the throne, Duke Astolfo, for taking her virginity and abandoning her in their home country, to pursue power in Poland. Her shifting genders in the play from boy to woman at first confuse Segismundo and exacerbate his frustration. Her final appearance before him as an androgyne, both male and female, helps Segismundo finally make sense of what's real and what's only a dream. In the end, Segismundo and Rosaura join forces and conquer the kingdom. Segismundo decides to forgive his father, thus overcoming his fate and proving the horoscope wrong. He is then free to take his rightful place as king.

There are myriad different English language versions of the play, and each takes its own approach to, and liberties with, the text. In trying to settle on a version of the script to use in the production, I read ten different translations, but did not find any of them satisfactory. I was not able to find a translation that wasn't either slavishly faithful to the poetry, or direct and completely devoid of poetry. I knew that adapting the play would be challenging, but I felt certain how I thought this world should sound, and what voices the characters should have. I also knew I wanted to make structural changes to the play. Having directed a long three act play last year (*Angels in America: Perestroika*), I was interested in exploring reimagining this play in two

acts. Although *Angels* was enormously successful, it also presented a challenge for the audience, who live in a fast, multi-media society and no longer have the attention span for the so-called "well-made three-act play." In order to restructure the play, I was going to have to utilize a translation which was in the public domain, since any copyrighted translation was going to require contractual obligations that would prohibit reconstruction.

Any public domain translation I found was so faithful to the Spanish text that it was not stage worthy. A perfect example of this problem can be found in the Dover Thrift Edition of *Life is a Dream* translated by Stanley Applebaum. Upon discovering Rosaura and Clarion have entered the prison unheeded by the armed guards, Clotaldo says: "This way, you tower guards, / who either from drowsiness or cowardice / have let two people get by / and enter the secret prison" (Applebaum, 8). I understood that a play with this much poetic imagery and rhetoric in the dialogue would be extremely difficult for actors to translate into action, because of its reliance on passive voice. I decided early on to write a new adaptation myself.

Goals and Vision

One of the most appealing things about *Life is a Dream* as a thesis production was the freedom that lives inherently in a dream world. I was excited by the creative possibilities that the story offered and looked forward to working with designers on creating this fantastical playground. I saw tremendous potential for spectacle in several events in the play, with its myriad sword fights, climactic battle, and inevitable court dance. The cosmic imagery, in particular, resonated deeply with me. I've always been fascinated by the mysteries of the universe, and these themes seemed of prime importance in the realization of the production. What better way to create a fantastical dream world than with familiar and mysterious imagery which the audience already understands?

In starting work on the production what was most important to me was that we create a magical and stylized world in which the central theme of the play (fate vs. free will) resonated in the visual storytelling. The greatest challenge in this material, I knew, was putting this dense poetic text into dramatic action. I was excited to work with the actors to understand the text and motivations of the characters. It was also important to me that we make the inner lives of the characters as emotionally rich and full as they could be. Such poetry and rhetoric had to be earned with very high stakes, and deep emotional provocation.

My biggest goal for the production was the same as for any production that I direct: the play must connect to and resonate with its audience. This presented a number of challenges, given the age and style of the play, but I found the themes to be incredibly resonant to our current political situation. The question of kingship that is a secondary theme in the play seemed extremely resonant in the United States at this particular moment in history. In the era of Trump, the question of the qualities of good leadership, and especially the issue of checking emotion in kingly decision making seemed particularly prescient. Similarly, Americans seem to be questioning how much determination we have over our own future. I hoped we would put together a production of the play that would inspire the audience to consider these questions.

II. The Production Process

Play Selection

In seeking titles for a potential thesis production, I read over twenty plays and musicals. Given my personal background with musical theatre, I felt convinced I wanted to direct a musical as my thesis production. It seemed like the perfect undertaking for a couple of reasons. First, musical theatre is something I feel passionately about, and I have only had the good fortune to direct a few musicals in my life. Second, musicals are logistically challenging, and certainly a musical would provide a bigger challenge after the monumental feat that was my second-year project, *Angels in America: Perestroika*. Not wanting to limit myself, I also put many plays on the reading list as well.

It took all summer to work my way through the reading list. Throughout the reading process, plays and musicals shifted around with my whims, and as the summer went on, I was able to narrow it down to a list of five titles. Three of these titles were musicals: *Carousel*, *The Light in the Piazza*, and *Sunday in the Park with George*. I adore all three of these musicals, but had real concerns about their feasibility in the university's theatre season. For one thing, *The Light in the Piazza* is more chamber opera than musical, with a complex musical score that is difficult to sing, and characters speaking and singing primarily in Italian, and occasionally in pidgin English. I had serious reservations about whether this was too demanding of the student actors.

Carousel presented similar problems. The "Beach Ballet" in Act Two is crucial to the plot, but is, in fact, a ballet. How difficult would this be to pull off in a department with no dance major or minor? Much of my interest in *Carousel* was in resurrecting it from the public's preconceived notion of the musical, which is that it's cornpone, sentimental, and most

problematically, winds up in a moral that seems to excuse spousal abuse. All of these perceptions derive from the 1956 movie starring Gordon McRae and Shirley Jones, which was made before the collapse of the Hays Code, which determined and restricted acceptable content in motion pictures. It softened the dark and erotic elements of the story, and unfortunately became the model for nearly every production that came after it. I thought this title might have been an overreach, at least in terms of doing it in the way I would have liked.

Sunday in the Park with George, by contrast, seemed perfectly doable by the department, and it's one of my favorite musicals. A deeply personal meditation on artists and their work, it never fails to move me to tears. I was excited at the prospect of directing it. I did anticipate some pushback from costumes, since the musical occupies two distinct time periods (1884 and 1984, respectively), and the 1884 costumes need to be identical to the Georges Seurat painting *Un dimanche après-midi à l'Île de la Grande Jatte*. I could foresee this being problematic in two ways. One, the demands of designing the costumes in-house might prove beyond the resources of the shop and department, given the specificity demanded of them. Second, while we could rent the costumes, this would prevent one of the M.F.A. designers from having the opportunity to stretch their creativity in a production design. After considerable thought, I decided not to propose this title for my thesis.

I suppose I could have gone and found other musicals to potentially propose, but my mentor, Michael Landman, warned that the faculty would probably not support an M.F.A. candidate directing a musical for their thesis production, unless they had done a musical as their second-year project. Apparently, there had been issues in the past around this. I had almost done a musical for my second-year project, having settled on *The Cradle Will Rock*, until it was proposed that we do *Angels in America* instead. Also, by this point, one of the plays I had read,

Life is a Dream, had become a dark horse contender for the show I most wanted to do. Oddly, it had begun to feel more like a musical to me than any of the musicals I'd read.

I have an interesting history with *Life is a Dream*. I first read the play as an undergraduate in a Theatre History class. I hated it. I found it talky and inactive, and the rhetorical devices the playwright used to construct the conflict of the play were too intellectual for me to really connect with it. On the page, this play bored me. The imagery and metaphors were stunning, but its age and philosophical purpose put too much distance between me and its message. A few years later I was cast in a production that was directed by Jose Zayas, a director based in New York. In working with Jose in rehearsal, I began to understand how vital and active this play actually was, with its broad comedy scenes and swashbuckling sword fights. Jose's production was the kind of show that you know as an actor is beautiful. He was able to build a tight, exciting production whose central themes resonated, despite the fact he had had to bowdlerize the text to accommodate the undergraduate actors who found the material too difficult. I left that process a devoted fan of the play, and after reading it again as a potential thesis project, I knew that this was the show I most wanted to do right now.

In addition to *Life is a Dream*, my final thesis proposal contained three more titles. *The Lieutenant of Inishmore* is a delightful dark comedy by Irish playwright Martin McDonagh. I knew it was unlikely to be chosen, given the amount of live firearms and gore required to pull it off. *The House of Blue Leaves* is a lovely absurdist farce by American playwright John Guare, which I thought was a safe second choice if *Life is a Dream* should not be picked. The final play on the list was *Orpheus Descending*, an extremely problematic and fascinating play by Tennessee Williams.

I submitted my final list of proposed projects to Michael Landman on September 5, 2016. The committee met sometime shortly thereafter, and *Life is a Dream* was approved by the committee without controversy. I was greatly relieved that it was chosen, and was not entirely unaware that *Life is a Dream* was aesthetically very close to how I envisioned *Carousel*. I was excited about the production process on which we were about to embark. However, I also realized I had a ton of work to do: work that started with writing a new script.

Adaptation

Once *Life is a Dream* was confirmed as the title for my thesis production, I turned my attention to preparation and auditions for *Angels in America* and didn't give it much more thought. When *Angels* concluded in March, I was given the opportunity to begin work on the adaptation as part of our Directing Studio class, which was focused on adaptation during the Spring 2017 semester. From the time we returned from Spring Break until the end of the semester, I had two three-hour rehearsal blocks per week to work with a company of student actors in starting work on the script. The actors in the company were members of the Directing Studio Ensemble: graduate students Scott Russell, Mischa Hutchings, Justin Mackey, Mollie Armour, Na'Tosha De'Von (Barron), and undergraduate student Ian Bean.

Having just closed *Angels in America* a couple of weeks before Spring Break, I was both grateful for the time, actors and opportunity to take on this work, and also woefully unprepared. I had not had time to do the necessary research that I would have liked to accomplish before beginning to attempt to put new text to this play. However, I figured it was probably best to take advantage of the opportunity and dive in.

I had, at least, spent some time reading extant translations to find them all variously disappointing. The most recent adaptation was written in 2007 by Nilo Cruz. Cruz retained the

three-act structure, but really cheated the poetry of the text, in my opinion. For example, I found his translation for the closing lines of the play, "... and we must ask / noble hearts / to forgive us / if we make / mistakes," to be a fairly blunt and anti-climactic button on which to end the evening (Cruz, 63-64). The rest of his text was similarly blunt and straightforward. The lines were active, but almost devoid of poetry, despite the imagistic language.

Most other translations were too clever. A 2006 translation by Gregory Racz used rhyming as a device to make the text more direct but also still poetic. His attempts were not often successful. For instance, when Clotaldo discovered that Rosaura was his daughter, and not his son as he believed, he said: "My honor is the one aggrieved, / It's soul by all accounts quite strong, / A vassal I, a woman she. / May heaven steer my hands from wrongs, / Though I'm not certain that it can" (Racz, 33). A translation by Roy Campbell forced the text into a Shakespearean-type iambic pentameter which convoluted the already difficult poetry. In his soliloquy while imprisoned in the tower, Clarion says: "O that a man so hungry as myself / Should live to die of hunger while alive!" (Bentley, 269)

The most egregious translation and adaptation, in my opinion, was the translation for *Dover Thrift* by Stanley Applebaum. It was faithful to Calderón to a fault. Its twisted syntax and persistence on using the passive voice were incredibly frustrating to read. In his opening soliloquy in the prison, Segismundo laments:

Heavens, I seek to inquire—
since you treat me this way—
what crime I committed
against you when I was born;
though, seeing that I was born, I already realize
what crime I have committed:
there was sufficient reason for
your justice and severity,
since the greatest crime of man
is being born. (Applebaum, 4)

In needing to come up with a quick plan for how to start the adaptation work without adequate research and preparation time, I decided this grammatically twisted translation would be a great jumping off point. The first day in studio, I brought in the first scene for the actors to read and discuss.

Predictably, the actors struggled to make sense of the text. They found it almost impossible to put into action. We discussed specifically what they found to be problematic. The punctuation was an issue, as was the passive voice phrasing. Mostly, the general impression of this text was that it was “extra,” as Mischa Hutchings described it. “Extra” is a slang shorthand for something that is over the top, or too ornate for its own good. I agreed. I was reminded of the Emperor’s complaint to Mozart about his new opera: “too many notes” (Shaffer, 46). I promised the actors new pages by Friday’s rehearsal block, and I went home to try to figure out just how I was going to write a new adaptation of a play written in a language I don’t speak.

I found a copy of the Spanish language play online and began to copy and load large chunks of the text into Google Translate. This yielded uneven results. Since the play is written in old Spanish, some lines translated easily, but many others were unclear. As I suspected, the Applebaum translation was slavishly faithful. It didn’t take long for me to find an easy rhythm in adapting the play: consult the crudely translated Spanish, consult Applebaum, and unravel. My main goal was not to alter the text from what Calderón had written, only to make it more active and direct. When both the Spanish translation and Applebaum proved unclear, I consulted the several other translations I’ve discussed and went with the consensus or clearest idea.

Every week for the rest of the semester I worked in this way. The original text of the play featured no scene breaks, but I knew as a director that separating the script into distinct scenes and locations would help clarify communication with the actors and designers. So, every week, I

excerpted a new scene. With the actors, I spent one workshop period reading and discussing Applebaum, then the next we'd read through my pages that covered the same ground. Generally, the response to the new pages was positive. On Mondays during our class meeting time, we would share the reading of the new pages with Michael Landman, the directing mentor, and John Walch, the playwriting mentor who co-taught the class. By the end of the semester, I had completed a first draft of the play, which I submitted to Michael and John. I still had work to do on the script, however, before it was ready for rehearsal.

Once the summer break began, I was able to spend some time doing research on the play, and began to revise the script by the second week of July. By this point, many of the themes and ideas in the script were much clearer to me, and the work over the summer went quickly, with large sections of the play reworded and reimagined. Lines that before had seemed nebulous now seemed clear. There were still some confusing moments. A scene between Clotaldo and Basilio at the beginning of Act I, Scene 3 remained annoyingly unclear to me, well into rehearsals. I hoped to arrange a reading of the revisions before rehearsals began, but it proved to be impossible to schedule. I would not hear the play read aloud in its finished draft until the third rehearsal at the end of November.

I made very few changes, outside of clarifying the text and making it easier for a contemporary audience to understand. Knowing that I wanted the play to be performed in two acts, I decided early on that Segismundo's famous soliloquy which ends Calderón's Act Two should be the end of the first act. This provided the opportunity to focus the dramatic narrative on Segismundo's journey going into the intermission. In the original version of the play, after Segismundo acts out in the throne room, he is rearrested and dragged away. Then Astolfo, Estrella, and Rosaura play out a comic scene in which Rosaura schemes to trick both of them in

order to reclaim her portrait from Astolfo and remain undetected in the court. Then the play moves to the prison for Segismundo's realization that he should try to do better, for "all of life is just a dream."

This structure felt wrong to me, and moving the portrait scene to happen after the prison scene clarified the narrative at the end of the first act, and provided a light palate cleansing beginning to the second act. Otherwise, the structure of the play remains the same. The other place where I diverged the most from the original text was in the character of Clarion, whose clownish antics and humorous observations are critical to the play's success. Most of the jokes from the original Spanish involved untranslatable idioms, or were reliant on topical humor. One monologue in particular, highly critical of 16th Century papal reforms, was especially bewildering. In reimagining Clarion, I tried to give him a more contemporary sensibility to allow him to become an audience proxy. The audience needs to relate with Clarion, as the tragic irony of his death is crucial to the end of the play. Otherwise, my adaptation remains faithful to the original play.

Preparation

I spent about six weeks doing research in preparation for production. After taking a couple of weeks off after the end of the semester, I started research in earnest in June 2017. Outside of my experience with *Life is a Dream*, and having read *Fuente Ovejuna* by Lope de Vega, I was almost completely ignorant of Spanish Golden Age theatre, as well as with the history of both Spain and Poland, where the play is set. I began my research by reading most of a giant tome I found in the library called *A History of the Spanish Stage* by N.D. Shergold. Starting with the early *auto sacramentales*, or religious festival plays, Shergold traced the developments

of the early *comedias* and the Spanish public playhouse. While fascinating to learn, most of this background ultimately proved unimportant to my production preparation.

What was most useful to me in this book was the well-researched detail around what the circumstances of the original production might have been. The stage of the Spanish playhouse was built in a *corrales*, or patio square, surrounded on all sides by buildings. “On either side ran platforms ... on which were seats for spectators. ... Spectators also sat in an upper gallery ... [The windows of the rooms behind this] were used as ‘*asposentos*’ or ‘boxes’” (Shergold, 206-207).

In many ways, the Spanish Golden Age playhouse was remarkably similar to what is known about the English Elizabethan theaters for which Shakespeare wrote his plays:

The stage itself was a large wooden platform, set up ... at one end of the corral. The plays suggest that a large curtain ran across the back. The space behind the curtain ... provided a covered retreat for the actors to put on their costumes; but the curtain could also be drawn back in the course of performances to make ‘discoveries’ (Shergold, 207-208).

The cheapest admission would have been standing room similar to the groundlings of Shakespeare’s theatre. Middle class patrons would have sat on the risers that surrounded the corral. The upper gallery was reserved for women to sit, since playhouse audiences were segregated. The windows of the surrounding houses that abutted the corral would have been rented by the theatre for use during the performance, and would have been occupied by the upper-class persons in attendance. The tenants whose windows were used would have been compensated.

Like Elizabethan playhouses, the Spanish Golden Age public theater was a rowdy place. A telling anecdote from the early Spanish theatre involves a performance of the Nativity starring well-known actors of the Spanish stage. The woman playing Mary (as women were allowed to

perform), was known to be living in sin with the actor playing Joseph. In the performance, "... the Virgin Mary's surprised response to the Angel's news ... was greeted with hilarity by the audience;" and, later in the same performance, "Joseph ... suddenly abandoned his role, heatedly accusing Mary of making eyes from the stage at some other man and call[ed] her a whore" (McKendrick, 201). This event caused the theaters in Spain to be closed for several years, until well after the death of King Phillip II.

I include this anecdote, primarily because it was the most entertaining information I learned in this process, but also because it was extremely helpful in revising the play. I could now feel confident that any repetitions that existed in the play were there primarily to communicate the plot to the inattentive audience, and could be addressed and cut as I went back through the script. In addition to the general history and development of the Spanish Golden Age theatre, I also researched the life of the playwright himself.

Perhaps most revelatory about Calderón was that he was an ordained priest, at least later in his life. Although Calderón was not an example of moral piety (he sired an illegitimate son, for example), he was a true believer in the Catholic dogma that was mainstream in the Spanish culture during his lifetime. A cursory examination of the central themes of his plays show a profound preoccupation with honor, duty, and the idea of free will. "Calderón is above all the dramatist of the agony of choice — between self and other, social expediency [sic] and morality, this world and the next, life and death" (McKendrick, 144). It came as no surprise to me that Calderón later took the vows, and dedicated his life to his duties at court, which included writing plays for the king's theater.

Perhaps the most useful discovery I made in this research involved the Catholic relationship to the questions of fate and free will, since these would have been of principal

importance to the devout Calderón. Catholic doctrine is clear that although God has foreknowledge of all events, men's destinies are not preordained. All men have freedom to choose their own path, but the Lord knows how you will choose before you do. The Catechism is clear that “[e]very act directly willed is imputable to its author,” (Catholic Church, 1736) and “[e]very human person...has the right to be recognized as a free and responsible being” (1738). Calderón, then, clearly had a philosophical stake in convincing his audience that Segismundo was not a victim of fate and the stars, but rather a free agent who has the ability to choose his own destiny. His original audience would have intuitively understood this as well. The journey of Segismundo according to Catholic doctrine would trace his discovery of this freedom.

Less helpful in the research process were the myriad critical literary essays that I read. While I had gotten some use out of similar essays in my preparation for the more structurally and thematically complex *Angels*, my experience in looking at them on this process only reinforced my previous attitude: they only existed to justify tenure. Most of the essays I read on *Life is a Dream* echoed each other's sentiments while largely quoting from each other. While I appreciate the world of Calderónian studies may be a small one, this avenue provided some nice quotes to consider, but little in the way of actual production help.

There was one idea that was elucidated in these essays which I did find extremely useful in approaching my analysis of the play: “While the rational soul has the attributes of reason and will, Calderón follows the traditionalist view by placing reason above the will” (Hesse, 132). At conflict in Segismundo are two differing qualities of leadership: one which “... repudiates the moral basis of political conduct and advocates expediency ...” versus one in which “he is required to use his reason and discriminatory powers in choosing between right and wrong” (Hesse, 132). In the era of the Trump administration, surely this conflict had some resonance in

the broader culture. I had found my way into the most important question in my analysis work: why am I excited to direct this play right now?

The analysis process itself presented the usual challenges. In my training at the University of Arkansas, I have learned two different approaches to script analysis, which I have found complement each other very well. One method involves listing the events both forward and backward to make sure you understand the causal relationships of actions in the plot, defining the spine of the production (the specific noun to which every character has a strong relationship), and defining the characters' super objectives (the specific active verb that defines each characters' strong relationship to the spine). The other method of analysis I've learned is Event Analysis. Event Analysis concerns itself with identifying three critical events in the play: Initial Event, Central Event, and Main Event. The Initial Event is the last thing that happened on the timeline to which every character is in relationship. This event should set up the two thematic forces in conflict. The second crucial event is the Central Event. This is an event very near the end of the play in which you discover which of the two forces in conflict will win. This is different from the climax of the play, in which you discover whether the protagonist or antagonist will win. The Main Event is the last thing that happens in the play, and it occurs in direct response to the Central Event.

This work is my favorite part of the process, but also the most challenging. I tend to focus on it obsessively, to the point where the riddle of the play itself creates a metaphorical app in my brain that constantly runs in the background of my thoughts, trying to define these events and terms. I settled on the events of the play relatively easily. Knowing that the arc of the play wanted to follow Segismundo's journey to discover his free will, it seemed clear that the Initial Event must be about the king's abdication. The Central Event, then, was the crowning of

Segismundo, and the Main Event must be Segismundo's pronouncement of his newfound wisdom. The spine, however, eluded me for much of the summer.

By the time classes were resuming in the fall (and auditions were swiftly approaching), I had decided a potential spine might be "Virtue." It was certainly a thing which every character had a strongly active relationship to, except for Estrella. I had found through the process of adaptation and analysis on the play that Estrella, the princess, was the most underwritten character in the play. She serves primarily as a functionary of the plot, as well as a comic foil for Astolfo and a romantic obstacle for Rosaura. Her motivations and needs were not as clear as those of the other characters, and this was largely because Calderón had not supplied them. At a meeting early in the semester, my directing mentor, Michael Landman, suggested that if I could not connect her to the spine then I must have the wrong spine.

I went back and reexamined the events of the play. Which forces in conflict were resolved with the crowning of Segismundo? None, so far as I could tell. However, in the moment just before this, Segismundo forgives his father instead of killing him, and it becomes clear that he will overcome his fate and exercise free will. Clearly, this was the Central Event of the play, and if so, then I needed to reexamine my Initial Event as it did not tie to these events. It became obvious to me that Segismundo would not know of Basilio's impending abdication.

If the forces in conflict were "fate" and "free will," then clearly it was not the abdication, but Fate itself which defined the Initial Event. I quickly settled on the correct answer, which is "The stars control our destiny." The Main Event, Segismundo's proclamation of what he's learned, remained unchanged. This also clarified that Fate, and not Virtue, was the true spine of *Life is a Dream*. The characters in the play, including the nebulous Estrella, had strong relationships to the predictions of Fate.

In addition to unraveling the tantalizing puzzles that the play contained, I also used my time during the summer to complete the necessary utilitarian paperwork of the director: action charts, rehearsal schedules, a list of events, and a timeline (see Appendices). Having completed these tasks, I was still having a difficult time elucidating for myself what the visual world of this play might encompass, but once I selected audition sides for the callbacks, I at least felt prepared for the auditions, which were scheduled for the end of the first week of the fall semester.

Auditions and Casting

Auditions for *Life is a Dream* and *The Christians* began on Sunday, August 27 with a general audition, a cattle call-style audition in which interested actors at the university present two contrasting monologues in three minutes. I have always found auditions of this type difficult to focus on, particularly because I typically know within the first thirty seconds whether I am interested in an actor, and for which roles I might consider them. Though it was a long day, I felt fairly confident about the callback list I had been able to put together. I had also become convinced I had solved one of my most pressing problems, which was casting the critical role of Clarion.

In the week leading up to auditions, as we talked up the plays to the incoming undergraduates and while presenting the opportunity at the Department's annual Meet and Greet, I discovered several of the undergraduate upperclassmen were not planning to audition. In particular, one of the more promising comedic talents in the program, whom I had planned to consider as a fallback option for Clarion, was passing auditions up to take on more responsibility with his improv comedy group. The role of Clarion, while a supporting part, is extremely important. The audience must root for him despite the fact he does a number of reprehensible things in the course of the play. But his death in the final scene needs to have emotional import,

borne out of the audience's relationship to his antics. Graduate student Justin Mackey, who last year had played a straight emotional role in my production of *Angels in America*, made clear to me in the first forty-five seconds of his auditions that he was exactly the right actor for this role. In a rare instance, I had managed to cast one role just from the general audition, which was a new experience for me.

There were three callbacks scheduled for *Life is a Dream* over the course of a week, with cast lists to be posted the subsequent week. The callback process itself was fairly unremarkable. On the first night, we called back everyone we were considering, and Scott Russell, the fight choreographer, taught them a simple combination with rapiers. That gave Scott, Gail Leftwich, the choreographer, and I the chance to see how the actors moved. Generally, the undergraduate actors proved better at this than the graduate students, with a couple of exceptions: Cody Shelton and Grant Hockenbrough stood out for their grace, poise, and ease of movement.

The next two nights of callbacks consisted of reading sides from the script, which the actors had been emailed in advance. Since the department had graduated a number of extremely capable undergraduate students the prior spring, it became clear to me during the general audition that the department was in a rebuilding year, and there were an inadequate number of undergraduates who seemed ready to take on such challenging material. This was something I had experienced before as an undergraduate student, where every so often there is a year where the majority of students are freshmen and sophomores, and while they may work at varying levels of competence, few of them have much formal training or experience. Knowing that *Life is a Dream* was an incredibly complex and dense text to work with, this gave me pause. It became clear to me during callbacks that most, if not all, of the principal roles may have needed to be played by graduate actors.

Following callbacks, I sent my cast list to my mentor, as well as to the Head of Performance, Amy Herzberg. Amy called me later that night, and raised reservations about casting only graduate students in the principal roles. Both Amy and the department chair, Michael Riha, had recently taken several meetings with undergraduates who were upset about the lack of casting opportunities. She requested that I reconsider at least a few of the seven roles to find places to cast more undergraduates. I raised objections to the request, not least because I had already cast twelve undergraduates in the ensemble, and was worried that moving up any of the students who had been so cast would only be setting them up for failure. The undergraduate men, especially, had not yielded any candidates ready to take on a featured mainstage role. I promised to consider it and be in touch over the weekend.

On Friday morning, I had a meeting with Michael Riha to voice my objections, but Michael was firmly in the camp of casting undergraduates in at least two of the roles. It was an incredibly disappointing meeting for several reasons, but mostly I left extraordinarily concerned about the direction of the production, leaving such difficult text in the hands of actors who were not yet ready to take it on. I conversed with Amy by phone twice more over the weekend, and we agreed that I would release two graduate students, one male and one female, from the cast. We decided I'd hold an additional callback, to include Chandler Reid Evans, a talented undergraduate actor who had not initially attended the audition. His callback was largely a formality, as I was to cast him in the role of Astolfo, and then use this callback as an opportunity to find an undergraduate woman to fill one of the two available principal roles.

There were several talented undergraduate actors, but most proved too green to be able to translate the text into action in the callback. Worse, most were simply too modern for this period piece, not yet having developed the tools to effectively play style. Only one undergraduate

woman, Chloe Haroldson, was able to intuitively bring the bearing and manner required of a seventeenth century princess. Chloe, however, was only a freshman and had not yet had an Acting I class, and I had serious reservations about placing her in either role. The role of Rosaura was simply too big and demanding for an actor of Chloe's relative inexperience, and Estrella, being underwritten, really wanted an actress who could fill in her backstory fully and imaginatively. It became clear that I would have to use Chloe in one of those roles, and I decided to cast her as Estrella, which, while difficult, gave her less material for which to be responsible. Of chief importance to me was not asking her to take on more than she was capable of handling. I would hate to burn a freshman out.

Generally, I was satisfied with the cast list. Na'Tosha De'Von, whom I had originally cast as Estrella, was much better suited to the strong and resolute Rosaura. And Reid, who is incredibly adept at playing style, was a much better fit for the smarmy Astolfo than the graduate student I had originally cast in the role. I remained concerned for Chloe, but also was ultimately confident in her instincts, which were naturally astute. Whether this project would be successful for her or not remained to be seen. As mentioned above, Justin Mackey had proved beyond a doubt he was the only choice for Clarion. Chris Tennison and Scott Russell would bring the right gravitas to the roles of Clotaldo and Basilio, respectively, and Cody Shelton would be able to bring the right amount of animal rage and naked vulnerability to the role of Segismundo. I knew from working with Cody on *God of Carnage* and from our acting classes that vulnerability is a particular area of struggle for Cody, but if we could get it there his performance would be absolutely devastating.

In addition to the principals, I also cast twelve undergraduate students as the ensemble. Some of them would cover small speaking roles, while all of them would double variously as

courtiers, guards, servants, and soldiers. The women were far more experienced and farther along in their training than the men, all of whom but one were freshmen. I had some concerns about the ensemble, but Michael Riha was glad to see a cast list with fourteen undergraduate names on it. Within a week, one male member of the ensemble dropped from the cast when he withdrew from the university. He was not to be the last actor who left the production.

The Design Process

In the run-up to the first design meeting, the biggest challenge I faced was finding the words to define the world for the designers. A dream world was too big a sandbox in which to work. I knew it would be important to allow the designers the freedom to work creatively, but for everyone to be focused in the same way. But which way should that be? It wasn't entirely clear to me, and when I closed my eyes I didn't see specific images. I was lamenting this conundrum to Michael Landman, when he suggested I focus my preparation not on defining the world, but on the story it was most important to tell.

I already knew that the question of kingship was important to me, as it seemed extremely relevant given the current political climate. Using this as a jumping off point would be an easy way to lay out the most important thematic ideas, and pointing the designers toward such limitations might help define this seemingly limitless world. Principally, these themes were the stars as a metaphor for fate; and duality, in terms of every man having potentiality for good and evil. As previously discussed, the Catholic idea of fate would have been clearly understood by seventeenth century audiences, and is directly tied to the idea of duality. Catholics believe that men are possessed of the capability for both piety and treachery, and each man must choose his path. Segismundo is possessed of a dual nature, which is illustrated both by his violent behavior at court and the sensitive vulnerability he demonstrates when he is alone in his prison. Since

Segismundo's most important values exist in this duality, it stood to reason that everything that inhabits this world should function similarly. This means that all aspects of the design should try to embody two contrasting qualities at once; for example, indoor and outdoor, or modern and classical. This directly related to the last major thematic idea I planned to impose on the designers, that this world should welcome anachronism, by reflecting a modern idea of the seventeenth century. The description I gave the designers was that this was a twenty-first century man's dream of the seventeenth century. I felt strongly that this would help create a necessary dream-like world, while being more engaging to a modern audience than a production that appeared curated for a museum. I wasn't sure necessarily what this meant in visual terms, but planned to ask the designers to consider how to incorporate the idea into their work.

In addition to finding the clearest vocabulary, I also prepared a few images for visual research to share with the designers at the first design meeting. All the images I found were neo-surrealist images by the artist George Grie. They were strikingly beautiful, and bewilderingly fascinating in their oddness. In each of these images, everything contained in them managed to represent two inherently opposite ideas at the same time. A spiral of stone made the image of a man's face sliced into ribbons, and in another image a tall ship sailed through a mountain canyon which was also the foyer of a beautiful and decadent home. They seemed the perfect embodiment of how I hoped this nebulous physical world would look. Additionally, I put together several songs into a playlist, as is my custom. I have always found music to be the easiest way for me to find my way into a play. The music cuts through the intellect to speak directly to emotion, and can be clarifying in helping to define the right mood or action of a scene.

I planned to play excerpts of three selections: a cover of a song by the boy band One Direction called "The Story of My Life" by The Piano Guys; a Sigur Ròs composition called

“Olsen Olsen;” and a piece of film score called “Russische Träume” by German composer Peer Raben. Each of these pieces defined the all-important concept of duality for me, because each of these pieces seemed to contain opposing elements. “The Story of My Life” presented something ubiquitous, a boy band pop song, in a context and arrangement that was startlingly different from its source, due to its lush arrangement and classical instrumentation of piano and solo cello. The Sigur Ròs piece featured their stylistic trademark of playing modern rock instruments in the manner of classical instruments, in this case with cello bows, which due to its marriage of both modern and classical characteristics, weaved a unique and futuristic aural experience which felt exactly like the world we wanted to create. The Peer Raben piece was a reworking of Schubert’s Piano Trio in Eb Minor, but in an Eastern mode, and featuring traditional Russian instrumentation. Here is something familiar made different in a subtle and fascinating way, which felt appropriate for the production.

The first design meeting was held on September 12, 2017. For most of the meeting I talked about these major ideas. I gave an outline of my spine and super objectives, and talked the designers through the ideas of duality, the question of kingship in the play, the necessity of the omnipresence of Fate (“The stars are the eighth named character in the play,” I advised them), and the importance of anachronism and a modern point of view being placed on this world. I urged them to incorporate duality into their designs. I spoke for roughly forty-five minutes in the meeting, trying to be as clear as possible. There was then time for the designers to ask questions and for me to clarify anything that was confusing to them. I felt generally that the meeting went well, as the only significant question posed at the end was whether my note on the anachronisms was meant to place the play entirely in the twenty-first century. My answer was “not necessarily,” which, while perhaps not the most satisfactory answer, was the best I could give at

the time, considering I was not yet certain how these two time periods could successfully coexist together.

After the initial design meeting, I began a series of individual meetings with Austin Aschbrenner, the set designer. Austin was a first year M.F.A. candidate in scenic design. Austin's principal interest as a designer is in the fantastical and metaphorical design that is usually afforded to opera. I felt confident that this aesthetic sensibility would be a perfect fit for *Life is a Dream*. At our first meeting, Austin's ideas were ambitious, but felt too heavy and dark. Initially he was focused most concretely on the image of the tower, which I thought was the least important thing for the audience to see. Over the course of two or three meetings, Austin came up with several different designs, most of which were still rooted in the tower idea. There was a Tolkien-esque aesthetic that Austin clearly liked, but that seemed to close the world off in a way that felt false; I thought the world wanted to be open.

What Austin came up with in these early stages that would make it into the final design was a turntable. Initially he had conceived it to deliver scenery, a triangular structure of flats which, when turned, would change to one of the three locations in the script. The presence of the walls was wrong, but I liked the orbital and rotational possibilities that were opened up with the disc on the stage. In discussing how the cosmic imagery was important to the major themes of the play, he showed me images of an orrery. Orreries were mechanical models of the solar system, and the first time I saw the image, I knew that Austin should pursue this as a visual metaphor on which to base his design. I sensed that he was skeptical of this idea, but the next time we met, he had already created the foundation for what would become the final set.

At our next meeting, Austin had discovered and suggested copper arches that would fill the sky, and we agreed that we could keep the turntable and incorporate it for choreographic and

blocking purposes. What Austin wasn't clear about was what was happening upstage of the turntable. I asked him to create a structure with a variety of levels, which I knew would be important in staging the play, since power dynamics were so important to the central themes. Austin recommended making the upstage area into rocks, an idea he remained committed to from the earliest drafts with the tower. I suggested fashioning these unhewn rocks in such a way that they looked like finished blocks of marble. At any rate, the star drops and aerial structures were highly imaginative and exciting.

Austin and I didn't meet again until the second design meeting on October 3rd. He presented sketches for what would become the final design for the show. There was an extraordinary amount of enthusiasm for Austin's design from the rest of the team. So much so, that they had already brainstormed a number of construction solutions before I had the opportunity to weigh in on it myself. I wasn't convinced we had yet cracked the issue of the upstage platforms, but generally agreed that this design idea was exciting. When we met again a week or so later, Austin had done more detailed sketches and had built a small model of the design. Seeing it in this context, I became excited about the design. I encouraged him to continue to consider putting a finished marble look on the rocks, as opposed to the gray and black aesthetic he favored. In addition to a star drop that now hung upstage, I asked him to incorporate physical representations of the stars. I also asked him to include a secret exit for Clarion to use when he went into hiding before the battle. If we could find our way to these things, I agreed we had a comprehensive design. At the last design meeting, Austin presented his finalized design, which now contained lit orbs that were suspended from the fly rail and rooted in the turntable. Additionally, he had added several lit star shapes that would hang alongside the orbs. Although the design hadn't yet placed Clarion's exit, Austin assured me that this could be worked out

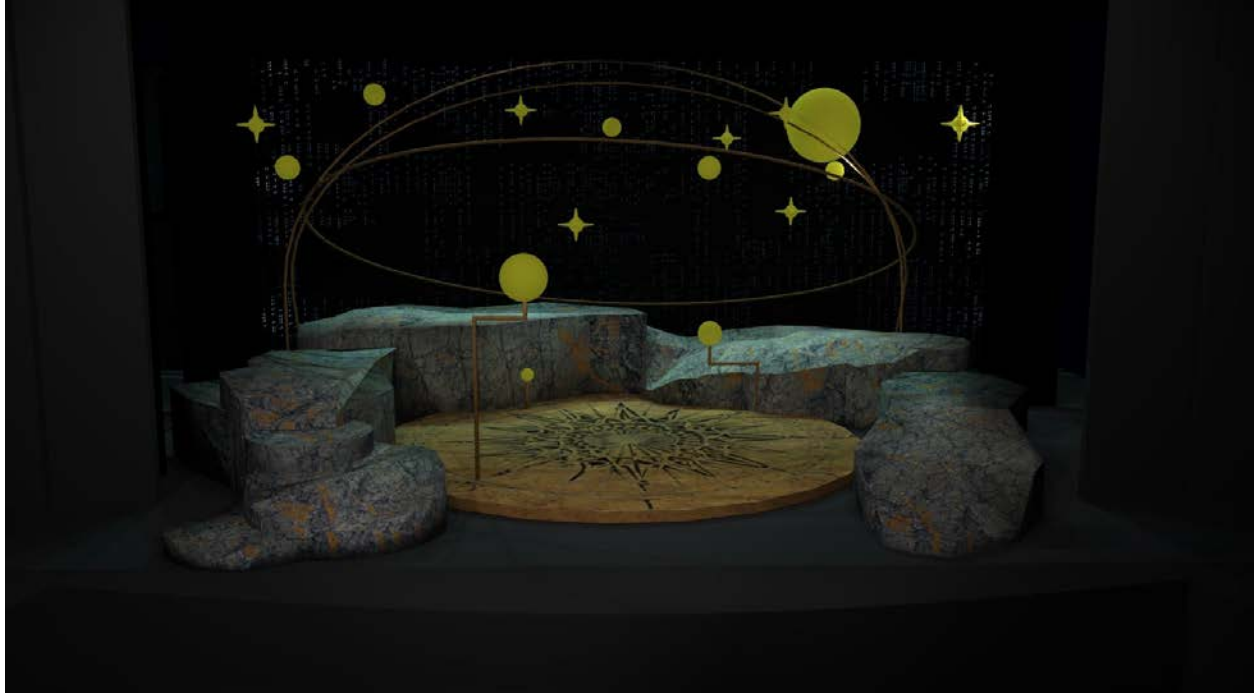
without impacting the overall design aesthetic. I wasn't in love with the dark tones of the rocks on which Austin was insistent, but his promise to add copper to give them a shimmer made me more open to the idea. This process was relatively simple, although I was nervous because of the logistical challenges the set presented. In addition to the turntable, the upstage platforms included two pivoting units that could open and close, allowing for additional upstage entrances and exits as needed. I looked forward to staging the play on this imaginative playground Austin conceived.

Kelsey Looney's costume design came together rather easily, as far as I was concerned. After hearing my thoughts at the first design meeting, Kelsey and I did not touch base until the second meeting, at which point she came in with collages and rough sketches for two concepts. The first was a curated seventeenth century design which was lovely, but not particularly imaginative. She warned that much of that concept would need to be rented, and so she could not guarantee the detail work. In the other concept, which was a little harder for me to assimilate, Kelsey pulled together collages of various characters, and she planned to use a mix of modern fabrics, textures, and pieces in combination with period appropriate looks. Segismundo's motorcycle jacket/doublet and Astolfo's bomber jacket armor at first confused me, but as I stared at the collages, I was taken with the creativity evinced in this concept. After a short discussion, we agreed that this idea was interesting and compelling, and Kelsey left planning to continue working in this direction.

By the third design meeting, Kelsey had completely laid out her ideas for every character and their various looks, and the results were incredibly exciting. I found her ideas for mixing modern textures and period styles fascinating, and while I had a few notes about textures and materials, I felt generally pleased with Kelsey's direction on the show. I expressed concerns that

the actors should be able to move easily in their clothes, and Kelsey felt confident this would not be an issue. At the fourth design meeting Kelsey presented her final designs, which were similar to the looks she had presented previously, with a few minor tweaks of texture and materials that I had requested.

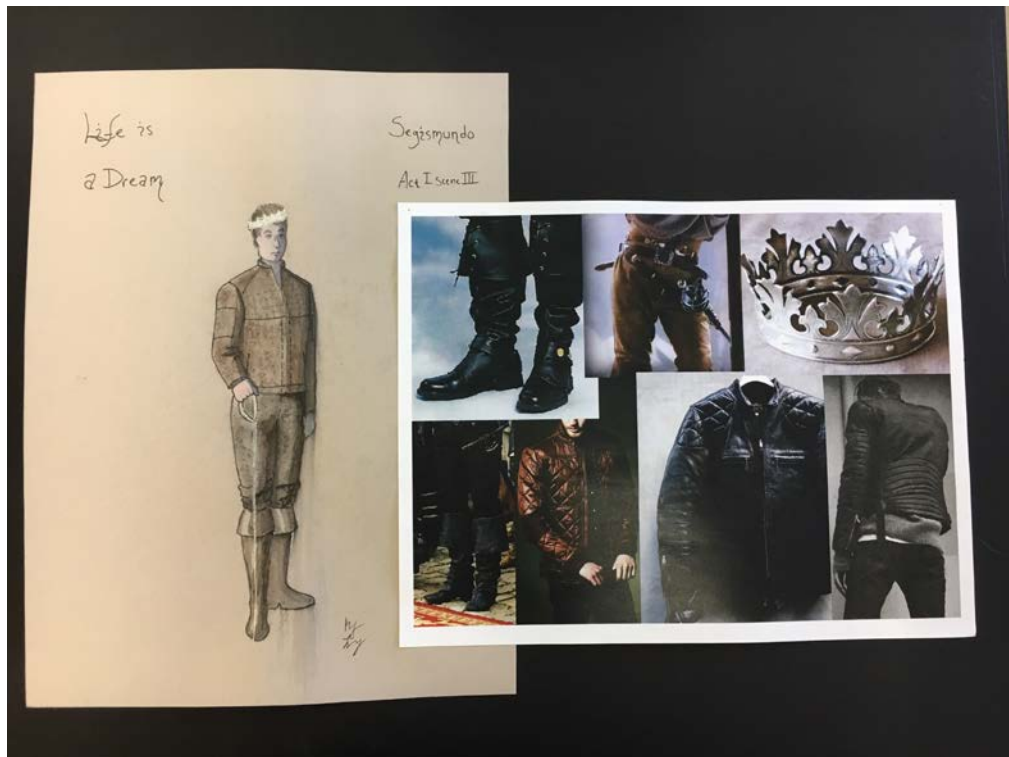
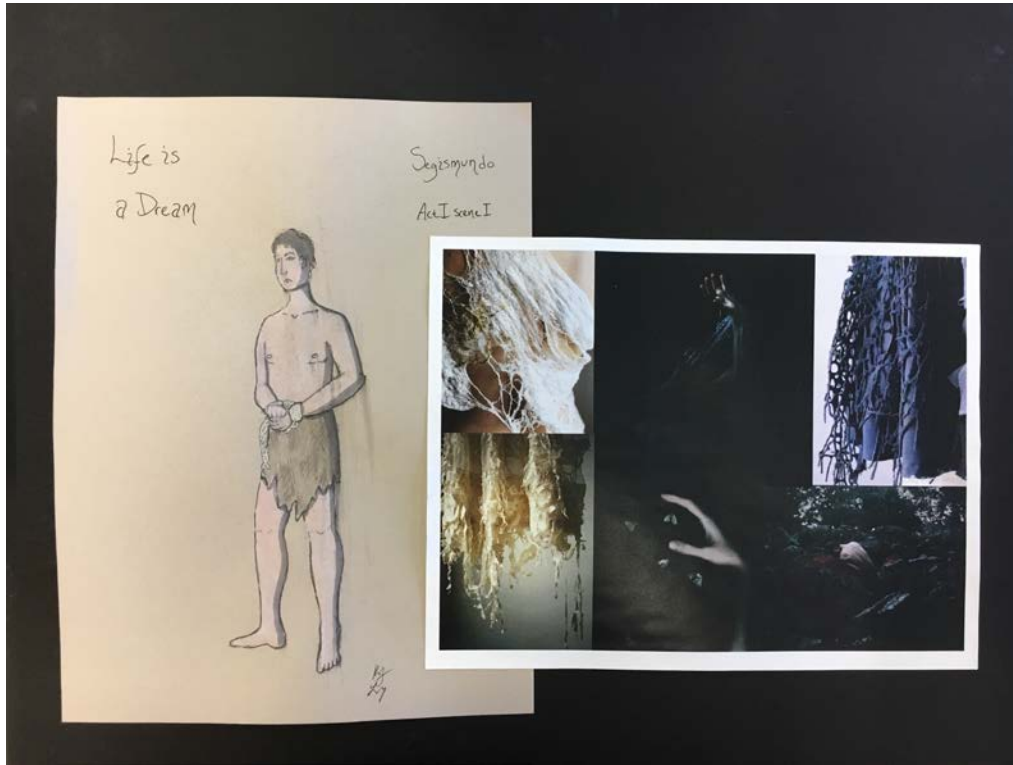
The lighting designer can't truly begin his work until well after the scenic design is finalized, so I didn't do much in the early process with Shawn Irish. We had a meeting shortly after the final design meeting, in which he asked only one question of note: "Do you see this as more classical drama, or more rock and roll?" My answer to him at the time was, "yes." To clarify what I meant, I told him to think of it as a musical, and to light it in the same way. There should be side light, with the actors sculpted, and heavily reliant on style. I trusted Shawn as a designer, as I was a big fan of all the work I had seen him do in the past. We had a few follow-up conversations mostly regarding the spheres and stars. Otherwise, Shawn and I did not really discuss lighting again until tech.



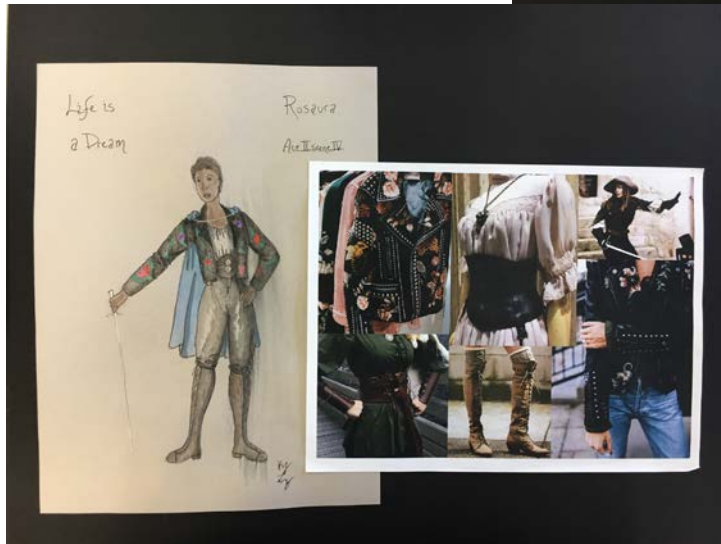
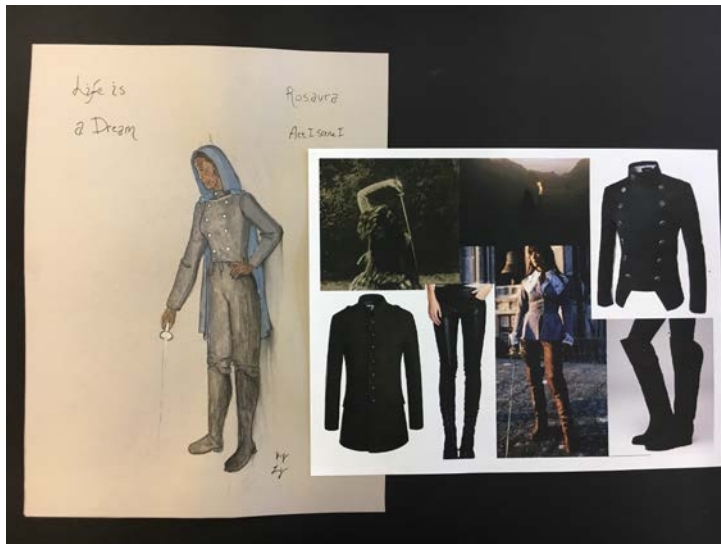
Computer rendering of the scenic design by Austin Aschbrenner. Used with permission.



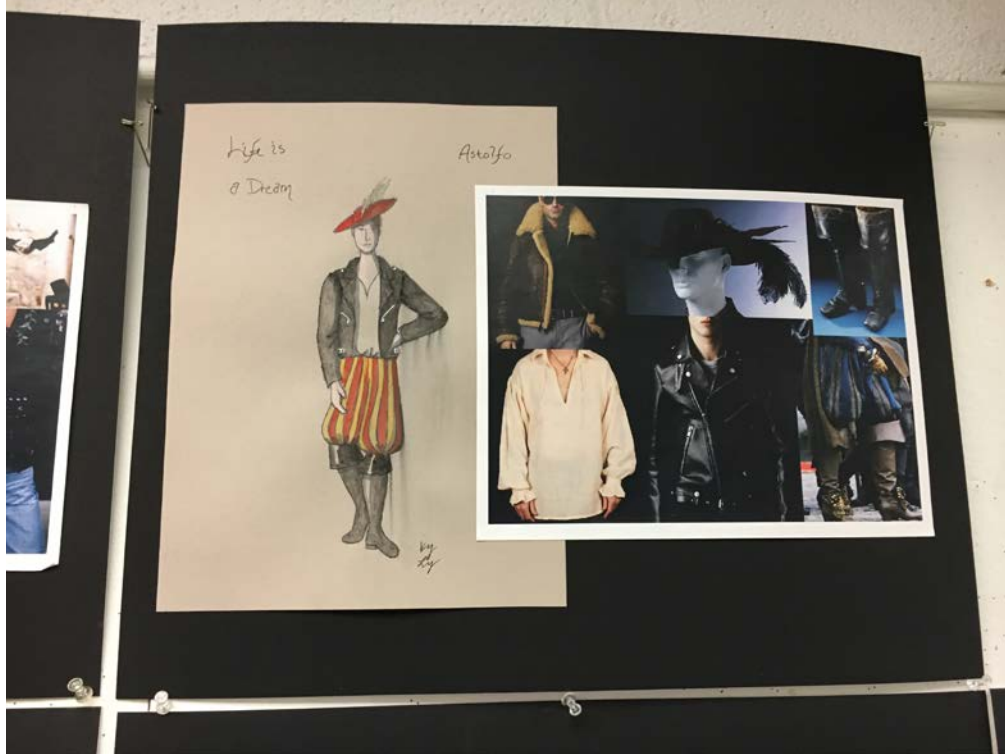
A photo of the finished scenic design. Photo by Austin Aschbrenner. Used with permission.



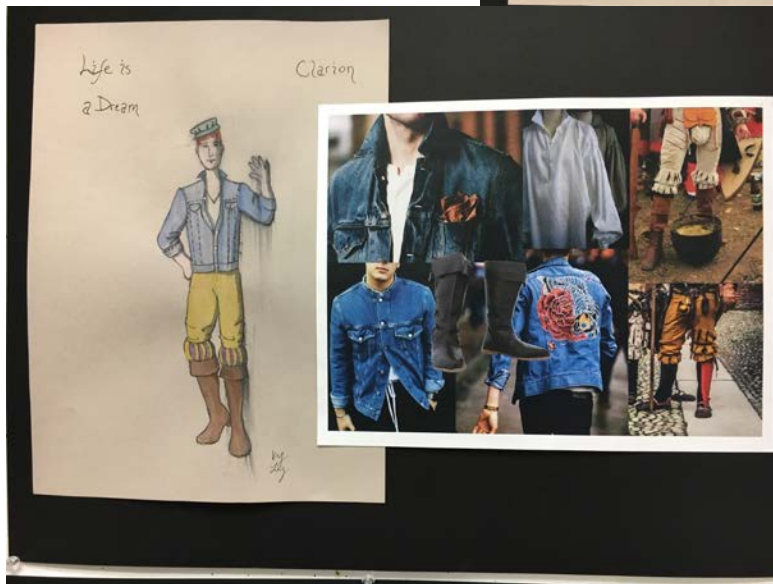
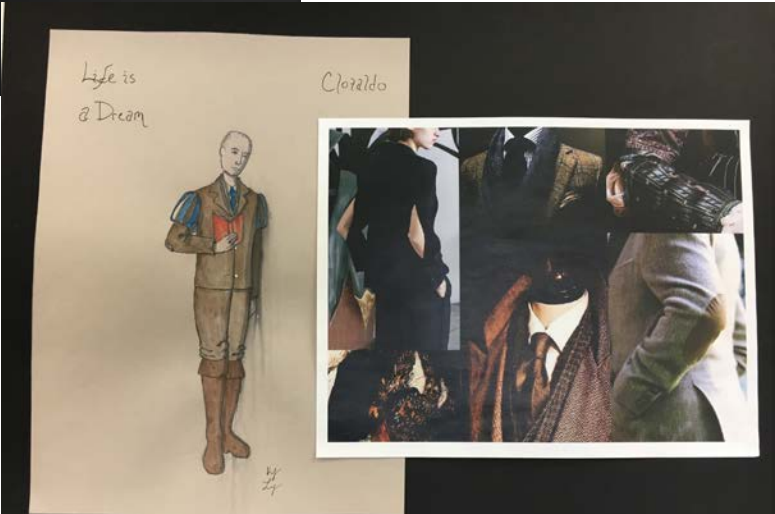
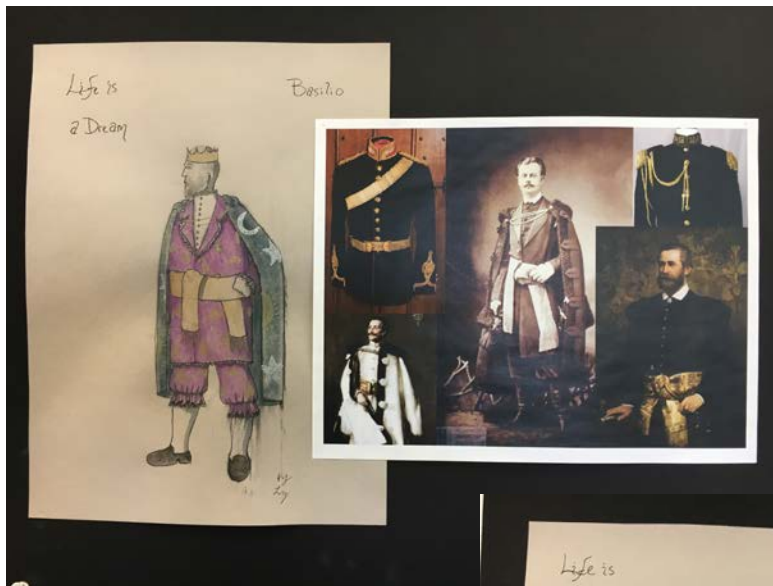
Costume renderings and collages for Segismundo by Kelsey Looney. Used with permission.



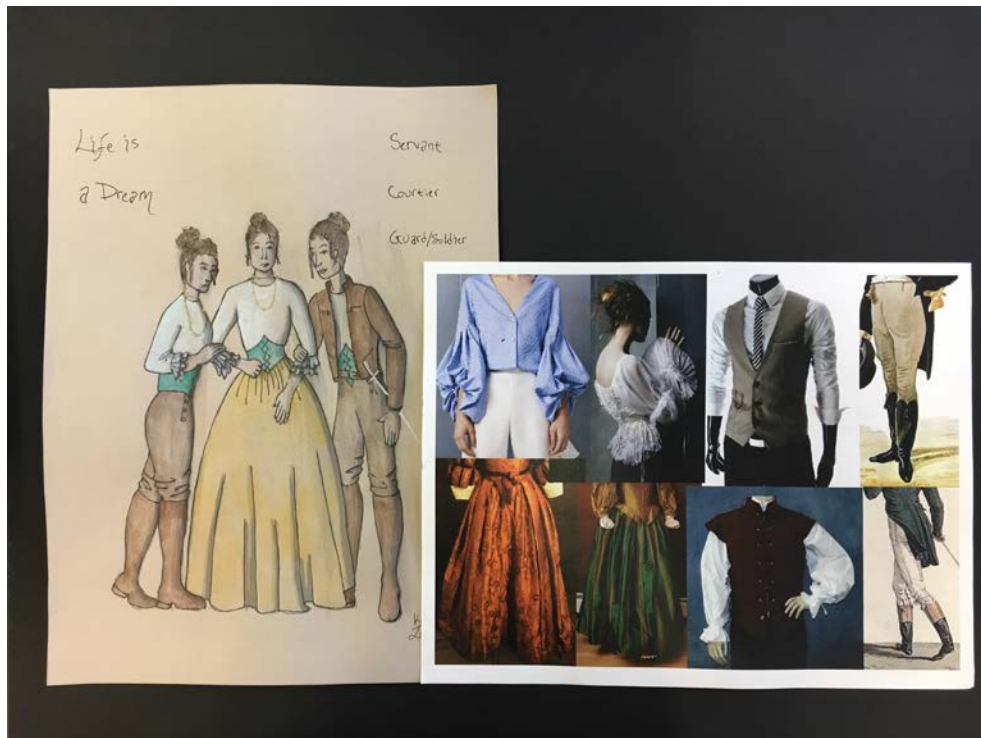
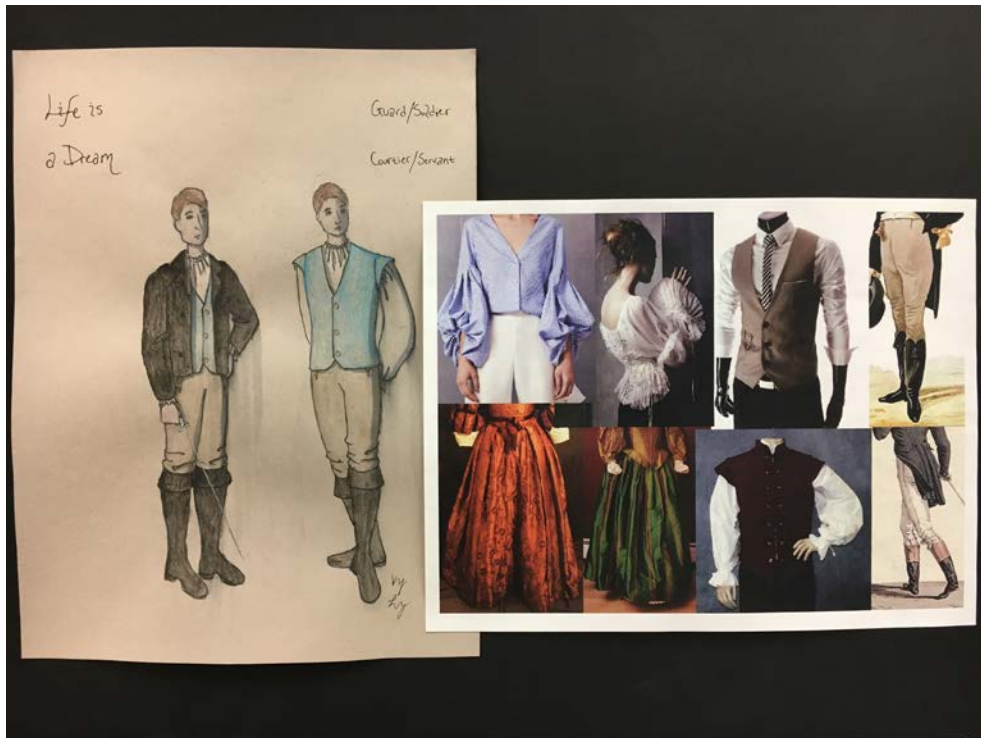
Costume renderings and collages for Rosaura by Kelsey Looney. Used with permission.



Costume renderings and collages for Astolfo and Estrella by Kelsey Looney. Used with permission.



(Top to bottom) Costume renderings and collages for Basilio, Clotaldo, and Clarion by Kelsey Looney. Used with permission.



Costume renderings and collages for the male and female ensemble by Kelsey Looney. Used with permission.

I was fortunate to have two sound designers on this project. Graduate student Eric Armstrong was to design the sound effect cues, and Professor Jason Burrow was to design music. When Jason was first recommended to the project by Michael Riha, the idea was that he would compose music for the show, but later Jason confessed that he was not comfortable composing and would prefer, instead, to curate music cues. I was certainly amenable to this plan. I was excited to work with Eric, as he had designed the lights for *Angels in America*, and I found our collaboration on that project to be successful. I had never worked directly with Jason on a production for which I was the director, but I had stage managed and assisted directed on two productions on which he was music director, and had enjoyed working with him. I thought this would be a great team.

Like lighting, much of sound's work can't start until later in the process, so in the early days of the preproduction process, we didn't meet to discuss much, although I encouraged both Jason and Eric to compile cue lists of things that they might imagine incorporating. I particularly stressed this with Jason, as I knew that music was going to be crucial to the overall aesthetic of the evening. In late October, Eric and I met and discussed the effects design, which was mostly soundscapes. The meeting was brief, about twenty minutes, but it was clear by the end of it that Eric and I were on the same page as to the sounds of this world. The only place I figured we might not be in alignment was around the soundscape for the court scenes, which I described as "the sound of stardust." I apologized for not knowing exactly what that meant, but encouraged Eric to think through it on his own, and we could potentially bounce ideas around together until we zeroed in on the final concept for this soundscape.

Jason and I met shortly thereafter, and he played some music samples to elicit my response. There were only four or five, and all of them were YouTube videos. They were mostly

covers of classical music played on different instruments: a Chopin nocturne played on electric guitar, the theme from *Pelleas and Mellisande* played on the organ. I wasn't convinced this was the correct concept at first, and I sent him a Spotify playlist of music I had collected for inspiration. I encouraged him to listen to it, but by the end of our meeting I did have to admit I saw some potential mileage in the direction he was pursuing. I felt confident Jason had what he needed to continue working.

The Rehearsal Process

Rehearsals began on November 27, which was the Monday after Thanksgiving break. I would not normally begin rehearsals so early, but there were fourteen undergraduates in the cast, and none of them had exposure to Viewpoints. I had decided early on that I wanted to work with Viewpoints as a rehearsal tool to create a visual and physical vocabulary for the production.

Viewpoints are defined as:

... a philosophy translated into a technique for (1) training performers; (2) building ensemble; and (3) creating movement for the stage.

Viewpoints is a set of names given to certain principles of movement through time and space; these names constitute a language for talking about what happens onstage.

Viewpoints is points of awareness that a performer or creator makes use of while working. (Bogart and Landau, 7-8)

Generally, the Viewpoints can be broken down into two categories: Space and Time. The Viewpoints of Space are: Topography (Floor Pattern), Spatial Relationship, Shape, Gesture, and Architecture. The Viewpoints of Time are: Tempo, Duration, Repetition, and Kinesthetic Response. Using this vocabulary to make the actors aware of how they are moving and their bodies' movement through space and time would be critical in helping to define the visual storytelling inside the dream world we needed to create. Similarly, I hoped that using this vocabulary would help the cast come to an intuitive understanding of what this world was,

without needing to spend much time verbalizing it. I also hoped this work would help to create an ensemble, especially since many cast members would serve largely as supernumeraries. My past experience working with Viewpoints suggested this would be an excellent tool for ensemble building, after all, this work “[emphasizes] ... the fact that the piece will be made by and belong to everyone in the ensemble—there are no small roles” (Bogart and Landau, 122).

I first started working with Viewpoints as an undergraduate at Old Dominion University. I was trained in Viewpoints and Suzuki technique by Leon Ingulsrud of the SITI Company in New York, when he directed a production of *Saint Joan* in which I appeared. Following my undergraduate years, I performed for several years with CORE Theatre Ensemble where I continued my training in these techniques. Having had the opportunity to work intensively with Viewpoints with a small and consistent ensemble of actors for over two years, I knew how effective a tool they could be, especially in highly imaginative work. Using Viewpoints, we had once built a forty-five-minute-long adaptation of Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s *The Yellow Wallpaper*. Since the graduate actors had a course in Viewpoints the previous semester, I felt confident that using this training as a rehearsal tool would be a considerable asset to the final production.

Typically, Viewpoints training is reserved for graduate students at the University of Arkansas. Therefore, our first rehearsal week was three evenings of four and a half hours focusing exclusively on Viewpoints training. I called both the graduate and undergraduate students for these rehearsals. Having the whole company do the training from the beginning is critical to building an ensemble. I had big ambitions for these three days, as I hoped to get all the way through the training and still have time for a read through, since I hadn’t heard the whole play read out loud since May. In retrospect, I should have started with a reading of the play on

Monday, but at the start of the process I was worried about the amount of time we had to get the undergraduate actors, who were all new to Viewpoints, up to speed.

The early Viewpoints work is largely about enhancing the actors' physical awareness, and to help the group to begin finding a shared silent communication. Movement exercises like "12-6-4," involves the actors running in a circle and trying to simultaneously decide when to stop, change direction, or jump in the air and change direction. It is challenging to accomplish, even with a group that works together regularly, and the first rehearsal on Monday after Thanksgiving was the first time that this group was exploring together, with the majority new to the training. The undergraduates were skeptical of the training at first, though as we went on and began exploring the Viewpoints of Time, they loosened up and began to have fun. By the end of the night, we had covered all the material I had hoped to introduce, but the cast was exhausted.

On Tuesday, about an hour before rehearsal began, I received word from the stage manager that one young man from the ensemble would not be available to attend rehearsal. He also informed me Chloe was going to be leaving early for a sorority event. I was extremely concerned about actors missing this critical training. Additionally, I tend to overreact to breaches of protocol, and unexpected conflicts are a guaranteed irritant. I strive to improve on this shortcoming, but needless to say, I don't always succeed. On the advice of my mentor, I reached out to the young man, to offer to communicate with his professor to see if I could help to alleviate his conflict. Apparently, the deadline on an assignment had changed in an architecture studio course, and he was going to have to miss rehearsal to meet the new deadline. I wrote him again to stress the importance of attending the training, which was critical to our process, and that not being able to attend might negatively affect his ability to be part of the show, but he said his situation would not change.

At this point, he dropped out of the cast. He was apparently very upset about our correspondence, and met with the chair about the situation, though I am not personally knowledgeable of the outcome of that meeting. I know it made me the topic of conversation at the faculty meeting at the end of the semester, which isn't my proudest moment in graduate school. The impression was that I seemed to want retribution on the student for missing rehearsal, but as usual, the reaction appeared emotional, when in reality it was more rooted in logistical concerns. Mostly, I think, I wanted to protect the ensemble, and was perhaps worried that the differentiation in knowledge would derail the work. I eventually learned that this would not have been the case, and I regret that the situation ended up the way that it did. He seemed like a nice guy. And now, the ensemble was down two men, and I was planning on the court dance to be partnered, so on the bright side, I had another opportunity for an undergraduate.

At the beginning of Tuesday's rehearsal, I talked to the cast about the importance of attendance, as well as the importance of becoming a company, reminding them that started with being responsible to each other. This provided a nice segue into that evening's Viewpoints work, which started with a truncated review of the ensemble building exercises and Viewpoints exploration we had covered the night before, which I then led into exercises which would help them understand the last of the last four Viewpoints we hadn't yet covered. Afterwards, I eased them into their first open Viewpoints session. "Open Viewpoints" is a movement improvisation done with awareness of the nine Viewpoints. Their work was expectedly awkward and self-conscious, but provided me a great opportunity to see any individual actor ticks or challenges. I immediately noticed that Reid had a tendency to think instead of do, and that his desire to plan and intellectualize prevented the spontaneity that Viewpoints requires. Bethany Kasper, one of the ensemble, was holding back, not willing to jump in to her fullest ability, perhaps for fear of

looking foolish. Cody still tended to hold tension in his abdomen. In the second half of the night, we did some deepening exercises. Since the majority of the work was more creative and free form, the cast began to let go, and the undergraduates started really enjoying the work. By the break, Chloe's conflict had gone away, and I felt confident that I had earned the remaining cast's buy-in. We ended the night with the cast working in small groups to create short theatre pieces that told the story of a quest. The results were imaginative and adorable.

The final night of rehearsal started with a review of the nine Viewpoints that built to an Open Viewpoints session, which I then transitioned to exercises in working with music. The cast had a great time with this work. I introduced Viewpoints with music by having the graduate students who were in attendance (Scott and Chris had long-standing conflicts) demonstrate. Cody, Na'Tosha, and Justin did exquisite work, and had a beautiful chemistry. The result was mesmerizing, and when I invited the undergraduates to begin to enter the improv, no one did for about ten minutes. When they did, they had a great time with the exploration, and the excitement of the music led to some wonderful discoveries and small breakthroughs. I was excited about this cast, and the progress they had already made.

After a break, we had a read-through of the script. We went about fifteen minutes over time, which Joe was kind enough to overlook so we could finish, and we were missing Chris and Scott. Still, I finally had the opportunity to hear the play out loud since the revisions over the summer. The read-through went generally well, and I was relieved to find by the end that I would not need to spend my Christmas vacation rewriting the play. It landed well enough and was free of verbal tangles. It was a huge relief, and I was thrilled by the end of rehearsal that week. The Viewpoints work was still timid and clunky, but that is to be expected as people learn to use the training. Their creativity, enthusiasm, and solid work over the course of the three days

of rehearsal were inspiring. I was excited to get started in earnest, but first I needed to recast the actor I had lost.

Of course, by that late point in the fall semester, any undergraduates who might have been seeking an opportunity had found other things to occupy their time, and men were in short supply. I still had serious reservations about bringing in anyone at this point who hadn't had the Viewpoints training. At the end of the semester, I was finally able to recruit Peter Kieklak, a freshman who had done strong work in *The Christians* earlier in the fall. In the initial round of auditions, he had marked on his paperwork that he was only trying out for *The Christians*, but when I reached out to him he explained that he had done so in error, so in adding him to the company we were at least able to rectify that error. I was uncertain how to adequately catch him up on the Viewpoints work, but with him in the ensemble, there were enough people to keep the partnered court dance and still have one person left to help with the setting of the throne, which would involve a flying set piece.

Rehearsals resumed on January 8, 2018. The weekend before classes began, a different young man from the ensemble emailed Joe regarding some conflicts, before he finally decided to drop out of the show. Since the first week of rehearsal was to be devoted to sword training and the staging of the dance, this created a conundrum about what to do with half of the rehearsal block for the week. I was positively stymied as to how to stage the dance to the music I had decided on (the Piano Guys' piece from the design meeting), if it were not going to be a partnered dance.

This problem was further exacerbated when another young man in the ensemble failed to appear for rehearsal that morning, and he had not been available when Joe tried to contact him. He did not make contact until Tuesday morning when he wrote to explain that mental health

issues were keeping him out of town and that he wouldn't be back to start rehearsal until the weekend. Given that he would miss both a weeks' worth of Viewpoints work, as well as all the critical combat training, I decided it was in the best interest of all involved if he didn't continue in the show. With dance work scheduled that day, I spent Monday morning in a slight panic about what to do with that afternoon's rehearsal, while the cast learned the basic vocabulary of sword combat with Scott. In the afternoon Gail came in and taught the ensemble, Reid, and Chloe a pavane, though I was still unclear whether we could use it, and how to salvage the dance.

If one thing was certain, there was no hope of replacing either of the actors we had lost, but Michael Landman had a great suggestion for how to salvage the dance. He recommended giving the cast a composition assignment to create an event for the entrance of the king. In Viewpoints, composition assignments are small performances made in a short amount of time with certain parameters around them that encourage the actors to use their creativity and the Viewpoints vocabulary. Surely the imaginative work the company would bring to these compositions would spark ways to reconceive the event. The positive side of losing the initial concept for the dance was that it opened up more time for Scott, who had expressed concern that the cast would not have time during the week to receive the necessary twelve hours of training and leave him enough time to get most of the actual fights constructed. The downside was that I had big plans for getting a head start on work with the principals during the dance, since only three of them were involved. That would cost us time, but wasn't the end of the world.

As the week progressed, the cast became less tentative with the sword fighting, and their compositions for the "Mysterious Court Event," as we were now calling it, were insightful. Alex Larson, an actor in the ensemble, had demonstrated considerable skill as a juggler, and was

frequently seen on breaks balancing a club on his nose. I had an idea that it would be interesting during the dance to see him perform this balancing trick, and for some reason, the image I saw was an open umbrella. I wasn't sure what the significance of the umbrella meant, but something about it felt right. I Googled its symbolic meaning, and the persistence of the concept became clear. The ideas of safety and shelter, which an umbrella connotes, were absolutely right for the story we were telling. On some level, I must have intuitively understood this, and I hoped the audience would subconsciously comprehend it on a thematic level, even though the moment was startlingly surreal. Through the course of the week, the actors did a few more composition assignments in relationship to the dance, and we were able to build several pieces of the dance on Friday.

The cast continued in Viewpoints training for an hour every day, and the work began to synthesize nicely, with the cast pushing themselves in exciting directions. The grad students came in an hour early for three days during the week to help Peter catch up on the training, and he proved to be a remarkably quick study. Because he ended up getting only a limited exposure to the training, he was not as adept at intuitively finding spatial relationships in the crucial tableaux in performance, but he still picked up on the work quickly and easily, and ultimately was a tremendous asset to the production, both due to his talent and professionalism.

A planned read-through and table work session that was scheduled for Sunday had to be scrapped when we discovered too late that the HPER building, where we had been rehearsing, did not open in time for us to start. The loss of table work was a huge blow. I thought the show was fairly straightforward, but I still believed it would be helpful to talk the cast through the story and the characters' motivations. On the other hand, I was concerned that it might be detrimental to reschedule it and lose blocking time, especially since the turntable added a number

of logistical concerns that I wasn't entirely sure how to work out. I decided to soldier on without the table work, with the hope we could revisit it later in the process.

The second week of rehearsal we moved into Kimpel 404, which is a challenging space in the best of circumstances. Attempting to stage this particular production in that space proved to be extraordinarily frustrating. I have never been able to plan out blocking in advance, and typically make better choices when they are informed by the movement instincts of the actors in the rehearsal room. The stage of University Theatre is large, roughly thirty feet wide and thirty-five feet deep, and Austin's set used every square inch of it. In addition to the turntable, there were two large moving platforms, and three large stationary platforms. The square footage of 404, at most a third the size of the stage, would not allow for us to tape the set out on the floor. Joe did have the inspired notion to use the risers in the room in place of the upstage rocks. Still, I had a difficult time envisioning how the scenic design functioned in this smaller space, and the only marker we had was a tape outline of the top two-thirds of the turntable.

Blocking for Act One went relatively smoothly. The cast was energized and excited, and despite the limitations of the room, I felt confident we were building the framework for some interesting visual storytelling. But as the week wore on and we moved into Act Two, I struggled with the available space, and things I intuitively understood (like the placement of the escape stairs) frequently confused me. I lost track of entrances and exits, and consistently became unclear about how high in the air people upstage might be standing. As the week wore on the rehearsals became grueling, and every second in the room made me feel like a total fraud. This is not unusual; there seems to come such a moment in every process. I was excited to move into University Theatre, though. By the end of the week, if I never had to work in 404 again I might have died happy.

The third and fourth weeks of rehearsal blurred together as we moved into the University Theatre. The turntable and several of the upstage rocks were installed, but not yet functional for use in rehearsal. So, the spacing issues continued, though at least we could work in scale on the deck. Various throughout the two weeks different rocks disappeared, as they went into the shop to be carved and painted. As different places on the stage became available or not, the blocking itself became a constantly shifting target, and much of the time I had planned to use to focus on moment-to-moment work became more about tweaking blocking and giving adjustments to the ensemble to help teach them how to function as a crowd, which is its own skill.

Some of the principal actors got off book quickly, but many struggled. It was evident to me that the actors were working hard, but the text was complex, and several actors had dense monologues that proved challenging. I gave the actors space to do the work, but having actors on book in the third week of rehearsal made doing any meaningful scene exploration impossible. Na'Tosha was off book on the entire show, except for her long monologue in Act Two. As the week progressed we grabbed time in the dressing room and she would perform what she knew. Na'Tosha is an extremely gifted actress, and I realized that her slow methodical approach to the speech was helping her to clarify the intentions behind it. I continued to encourage everyone to flub their way through rather than remain in their heads about lines, but actors continued to carry books or derailed scenes trying to get the lines "right." It became extraordinarily difficult to find the through-line of scenes when actors were still concentrating on the memorization of their text, rather than acting the scenes. There was only one person to blame, and that was myself. It was becoming clear that the lack of table work earlier in this process was harming the actors. Perhaps the difficulty in memorization was coming out of a lack of understanding of the actions and beats

in the scenes. I knew I needed to rectify this as soon as possible, but we were facing a much-needed run through at the end of the week.

This is also the point in the process when illness began to plague the company. First Madi Watkins, an actor in the ensemble, was out with strep throat. Then Cody Shelton, who was playing Segismundo, came down with the flu. He was a trouper through the process, coming into rehearsal and giving his all, but it was clear he was very sick. On the third day of looking and feeling like death he went to the doctor and got the flu diagnosis. He was out of rehearsal on doctor's orders and then came back, still ill but looking much better. His absence did buy us some time to construct the dance, and Gail came in for a rehearsal to help build the event. It was easy and fun work, and I felt fairly confident that what we had created was exciting and creative. I was also going to get my umbrella moment.

Cody's illness created an obstacle for him, and I'm not convinced he ever really recovered. The grind and demands of the role, coupled with the fairly aggressive strain of flu, exhausted him, and in the absence of table work, I began to encourage the actors to drop in deeply in the hope that the proper provocation might help them to better identify their character arcs throughout the scenes and the play. Cody struggled to imagine a rich inner life. During one rehearsal, I asked everyone to leave the room and led him through a dropping in exercise, in which we worked together to try to create the right emotional provocation, but he was entirely blocked. It was clear to me that table work was in order.

The third week ended and the fourth week began with our first run through of the full show, which Michael Landman and Shawn Irish attended. The show was clunky, the line issues were persistent, and the actors were largely in the weeds, which is roughly what I suspected. We also had not had time to construct the giant battle in Act Two, and the slow speed fight call that

happened in its place did not help to illuminate how the second act was flowing or its length.

Michael Landman also observed in his notes that the actors seemed unclear on their through lines and their individual acting beats.

On Sunday, we were scheduled to rehearse again in 404, so I took advantage of the space limitations to do individual work with the principal actors. We started the day at the table, and the conversation with the actors clarified a lot of their questions. We spent the second part of the rehearsal working small scenes, including the enigmatic scene between Clotaldo and Basilio that was eluding us. Chris had decided early on to affect a character voice of an “old man,” and the choice was proving more of an obstacle to character development than a pathway in. I tried during this rehearsal to get him to explore the scene without it, but he was entrenched in the choice. I would attempt various tactics over the next couple of weeks to persuade him off of it, but it wouldn't ultimately happen until tech.

Work on the show progressed rapidly through the next week. We had spent some time the week before programming the turntable moves so we could begin rehearsing with them, and we had incorporated its movement into the dance, which was working well. Tweaks to the cueing continued through the next two weeks as we attempted to perfect the positioning and deal with sight line issues that were created by the orbs that protruded from the disc. The final rocks came into position, and it became clear that the entrances and exits were not wide enough to allow easy passage for the actors. Personally, I had serious concerns about the safety of the upstage right escape stairs, and Austin and Matt and I met in the scene shop to discuss the issue. Matt was very helpful in solving some of my concerns, but generally the entrances were simply going to be narrow. The actors would have to make the adjustments. Over the course of the next two weeks I

was able to eliminate all entrances and exits from the upstage right stairs, and they were ultimately removed before tech.

I planned to use the early part of the week to deep dive into the moment-to-moment work in Reid and Chloe's scenes. Reid was doing excellent work, and Chloe was not concerning me as much as she had been during auditions. Still, she had a tendency to run over beats, and to play attitudes more than action, which is a reflection of where she is in her development, not of her talent or her work ethic, both of which frequently impressed me. Chloe was the next to suffer from illness and was out for two days with a bad case of the flu. By now, the official rehearsal policy had become to excuse sick actors so as not to spread contamination, but it did cost us time at this critical moment in regard to her scene work. I wouldn't be able to address it until right before tech. The upside was that we had two days to work on constructing the fight now that all the rocks were in place. Scott's choreography was stellar, and exciting, but had gotten sloppy. The actors were not as specific with the movements as they had been when they first learned them. It would be imperative to schedule fight time for the rest of the process.

The most difficult scene to stage was the end. This was an incredibly large scene that involved the entire cast (granted with four of them lying dead on the stage), in which the most critical events of the play occur. We rehearsed this scene many times during the three weeks between when we moved into University Theatre and tech rehearsals. Finally, before the designer run we had a long rehearsal on this scene where we were able to clarify both the stage picture and the active beats for the actors. In the end, I was quite pleased with it. It would be a lovely ending to a beautiful show.

The week concluded with the designer run, which went well, but ran long and felt slow. Overall, pacing at this point was a concern for me. The times for the acts were coming in fairly

consistently, and about ten minutes longer than they should have been. However, the amount of growth that had occurred since the first run that Shawn Irish and Michael Landman had come to see just a week earlier was impressive. We continued to drill the fights, and I bore into as much scene work as I could. Na'Tosha's long monologue in Act Two came off book, and we finally put it on stage. The staging of this scene clarified the character arc for Cody, and from that point forward his progress really blew me away.

Tech Rehearsals

Tech kicked off on Thursday the week before opening. I was to meet Shawn, Eric, and Jason for a review of lighting and sound cues. When I arrived at the theatre, Shawn informed me that technical issues with the moving lights, as well as the fixtures that were being used to light the star drop, had prevented him from getting the cues built. I felt confident that Shawn's work would be great, and he promised that by the time the cue to cue started on Friday he would have looks. The more frustrating news he shared was that Jason would not be there at all, as he had gone out of town for a recruiting event. Jason and I had ended up collaborating on finding the final sound cues, which ended up as a mixture of his classical theme idea, as well as several avant-garde cosmic soundscapes, some composed on a synthesizer, but others with full orchestral instrumentation.

Eric's work, which I heard at the Thursday review, was right on target. I had a few notes, and he hadn't yet found the soundscape for the court scenes, because he was not clear at that point what I wanted it to be. I suggested he find a faint chime sound, which I thought would provide the desired impression of a kingdom blessed by the stars. Eric was doing his first sound design on this show, and he did altogether fantastic work. I enjoyed working with him; he did not require too much guidance, and was typically able to come up with pitch perfect choices. While I

had notes on the cues, he continued to tweak and revise the design though the weekend and the week leading to opening.

The cue to cue began on Friday. We had been smart to work out well in advance the interpolation of the turntable and the moving rock platforms, and I believe this saved us a ton of time. Shawn's lighting design, though written during tech due to equipment issues, was stunning. Weston Wilkerson, our Technical Director, had an inspired idea to use mylar pieces behind a scrim to create a starscape, and the result was staggeringly beautiful. As stunning and spectacular as Austin's design was in concept, it was nothing compared to how beautiful it was under lights. The goal for Friday night was to get through all the cues in Act One by the end of the night. However, tech began slowly, and we did not meet this goal. Still, even with some sound cues that we discovered would need to be altered, the process had gone smoothly.

Sunday was the ten out of twelve cue to cue. The goal was to hopefully get through the end of the show and still have time for a run through. Tech continued to go smoothly, except for the sound, which needed a lot of finessing in regard to cutting, setting levels, and setting how the cues were being called. I attempted to do this through notes, but problems persisted through the early part of the week, despite Eric's valiant attempt to get them incorporated. We did not finish the cue to cue of the show on Sunday, which meant we would have to continue Monday. This meant that not only would we not get a full run on Sunday night, but the Monday night run would have to be scrapped as well. This wasn't ideal with opening looming on Friday, particularly since I had made the decision to forego runs the week before to do scene work I found more pressing. If there was a silver lining, it was that runs of the show had not proved to be an issue for the cast. If the pace was a bit slow and the run-time about ten minutes too long, it was nevertheless consistent, bolstered by the character growth that had taken place.

Wardrobe moved in, and the actors completed their makeup training. When Chris Tennison realized that we did not plan to gray his beard, he was receptive to my last-minute appeal to drop the old man character voice he was still using, which solved one of my biggest concerns. Before opening, Melissa Rooney, the hair and makeup designer, and I decided to gray his beard anyway, but the voice stayed out, and Chris would make remarkable progress that week in finding the true emotional arc for his character that the affected voice had kept distant from him. On Monday night, we finally finished the full cue to cue, but did not have enough time for a run-through, so Scott took over the rest of the night to put the finishing fixes on the battle, the smaller sword fights, and bits of physical staging.

Our first dress rehearsal was on Tuesday. Kelsey's design looked fantastic, although I had a few notes. Basilio's crown, in particular, had to be reconceived when the crown that had been purchased never arrived. Kelsey built the piece, and it looked like it had taken some time to construct, but onstage it read as flimsy. I had a hard time believing that everyone would be so covetous of it. By Wednesday she had found a halo crown which worked perfectly. My other concern with the costumes at the first dress involved the ensemble women's costumes for the court scene, which seemed to exist in a different world from the principals and the male ensemble, who wore elegant vests. My biggest concern was their visible camisole and bra straps. Over the course of the week, Kelsey added shawls for the women which proved a fine, if not entirely elegant, solution.

The first dress went okay. A costume change, in which several ensemble women had to transform from soldiers to courtiers and immediately reenter, took a long time, so there was dead air between the first two scenes that I needed to resolve. I figured out relatively quickly how to fix it, which was to build a bit for Christina Aronowitz, who was playing the king's page, and

whose comedic texture in the court dance wasn't yet fully clear to the audience. It was the perfect opportunity to kill two birds with one stone. The main issue was finding the time to do it. While the run generally went well, it was slow and clunky, and Scott was still battling for lines in a couple of places, mostly out of a desire to get it absolutely right. I could tell by the end of the night we were on our way to a great show.

The second dress rehearsal on Wednesday was a disaster, largely due to a ton of sound problems. For most of the run, the sound cues fired wrong, too loud, too early, or too late. The sound designer, stage manager, and I planned to meet the following afternoon to go through the show cue by cue to figure out the music cues together. Otherwise, the run went well. Pace continued to be a problem, but the actors continued to find more fullness inside of their roles, and I was impressed with where the cast was going.

Prior to Thursday's final dress rehearsal, I still had some work to do with the cast. I needed to stage the transition for Christina, the Page, as we still had dead space after the first scene; we needed to adjust the staging of a scene transition in Act One in which Cody had an onstage costume change; and I needed to stage the curtain call so we could put it in the end of the run and try it once before opening. Highly pressed for time, we also needed to accommodate the fight call and give the cast time to get into costumes, hair, and makeup. We managed to fit it all in just under the gun.

There was one scenic element that we hadn't figured out yet, which was the back of Basilio's throne. A flying piece that was supposed to come in and then be attached to the chair had never been stabilized, and tended to wobble distractingly when the king sat. We had discussed finding a solution before the final dress, and when it was still unstable at the beginning of Thursday I made the executive decision to cut it. The run that night featured the chair by itself,

and while it wasn't as creative and arresting as when the chair had a beautiful back piece, it wasn't a show killer. Austin was amenable to cutting it, as it seemed like the best solution. At the end of the night, Susan suggested finding a way to attach it to the platform instead of the chair. I said if we could do that then we could certainly keep the piece in. By the time the crew was called for the opening on Friday a solution had been worked out. We were teching the scene change only an hour before house opened, but the last piece was falling into place. We were ready for opening.

Performances

Life is a Dream opened on Friday, February 16. The opening night crowd was large, vocal, and friendly, as it was made up of many friends and family of the cast and theater students. The performance went very well. The production had finally gelled into exactly what it needed to be, and the actors, for the most part, had found their bearings in their roles. The response from the audience was an enthusiastic standing ovation. I felt confident that we had a success.

The second performance was a typical second night: the predictable cast slump combined with a predictably sluggish house. This performance was characterized by extremely low energy, but the cast soldiered through admirably, and the audience was appreciative even if they had a hard time showing it. For the remaining performances, I primarily only saw pieces of the shows and relied on the performance reports to fill me in. The houses, particularly on the student nights, varied from enthusiastic to dead, but the show itself continued to grow, and by the time I saw the show again the second Friday, as I sat with my mom and my best friend, I saw one of the best shows I had ever directed. I was incredibly grateful for the tremendous cast and talented

designers. I came in just before the closing matinee to wish the cast well, and watched the first scene before I departed. I was sad to see our lovely fairy tale go, but I was ready to let it go, too.

Evaluation

The production was well-received overall, by audiences as well as within the theatre department. Kate Frank gushed over the production, calling it “wonderful,” and she, like many others including lighting designer Shawn Irish, complimented the stage pictures. Amy Herzberg was highly complimentary, saying that I “filled [the script] with great invention and imagery and humor and pathos,” in a text message congratulating me on "wonderful work." Michael Landman, who had seen the production at various stages in process was impressed that all of the questions and concerns he had around the production had cleared up by the time he saw it in public performance. Cole Wimpee, my colleague in the directing program was also highly complimentary, singling out the clear visual storytelling and "gestural style" of acting that I was able to elicit from the actors. Betsy Jilka, an instructor in the department, was also highly complimentary of the style, though she had some questions about the time period of the piece.

This was a sentiment largely echoed by Betsy's Theatre Appreciation students, with whom I was lucky to converse with after the production closed. Most enjoyed the production, though many found the style of the production confusing as to the time period. It had not dawned on any of them that this disorientation was exactly the point. Their biggest issue of confusion was in the character of Clarion, whose modern way of speaking and turn of phrase largely felt out of the world of the play. They may have had a point.

The postmortem meeting for the production was largely constructive and positive, outside of the sound design issues. There was discussion about the rehearsal shoes and the amount of wear and tear that happened to them. Similar issues were expressed around the use of the

women's petticoats which were used as rehearsal skirts, and the number of repairs that were done to them as well. Valerie Lane, the costume shop manager, expressed concern that I did not prioritize the staging of an onstage costume change, which she said would have gone a long way to alleviating Cody's anxiety about it. I don't, in retrospect, think the time was available to do this work, but her point is well taken. In terms of the issues with the sound design, it was the consensus of the mentors that I should have expressed these issues to Riha much sooner, and I agreed.

The feedback from the actors and stage management was largely what I expected. Most of the feedback was positive, though there were a few in the company who found I was condescending at times. Since a lifetime struggle with patience is nothing new to me, I measure this as a success, since far fewer people expressed this concern than on productions past. This is going to be a career-long struggle, and I will continue to strive for improvement with my impatience in the room. Even so, I feel confident that most of the cast had a generally positive experience. An anonymous piece of feedback I received that I found extremely helpful was about my own preparation. This person suggested I come to each rehearsal armed with a plan B and plan C, since, as this person wisely observed, this seems to have led to my frustration in the room.

Personally, I think this production was extremely successful. The production was beautiful and engaging, and the performances across the board were strong. Audience responses were positive, and the audience reaction is the only metric with which I am actually concerned. If I had to do it over again, there are several things I might change. I would certainly have double-checked the sizes of the entrances and exits on the set in advance of signing off on it. I would not skip table work next time, as the actors really needed the opportunity to talk through their

character motivations well in advance of scene work. As we got close to opening I did some work with Na'Tosha on her voice and speech, focusing on scansion, directly related to her opening text. I didn't realize until the end of the process that this work was directly responsible for putting her in her head, and preventing the text from landing on her scene partner or the audience, and I would certainly talk differently about that work if I had realized it sooner. In retrospect, it would have been more useful for her to talk about the lines in terms of action rather than as speech.

However, I have no illusions that I will ever really master this work, and I'm going to make mistakes as I continue to perfect my craft in the future. What is most important to me is that I continue to grow and improve for as long as I am fortunate enough to work in this business. I am reminded of a quote from *Julius Caesar*: "The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars / But in ourselves..." (Shakespeare, 21). This is the principal lesson Segismundo must learn in *Life is a Dream*, and one that I intuitively understand. So, I will look to Segismundo as a role model, as I continue to grow and explore my own artistic voice, and struggle, like him, to overcome my worst instincts, as I continue to strive to be the best artist I can be.

Works Cited

- Applebaum, Stanley, translator. *Life is a Dream*. By Pedro Calderón de la Barca. Dover Publications, Inc. 2002.
- Bogart, Anne and Tina Landau. *The Viewpoints Book*. Theatre Communications Group. 2005.
- Calderón de la Barca, Pedro. *La vida es sueño*. Libros en la red, 2001. Web. Accessed March 2017.
<https://www.dipualba.es/publicaciones/LibrosPapel/LibrosRed/Clasicos/Libros/VidaSue.pdf>.
- Campbell, Roy, translator. “*Life is a Dream* by Pedro Calderón de la Barca”. *Life is a Dream and Other Spanish Classics*. Ed. by Eric Bentley. Applause Books. 1959.
- Catholic Church. “Life in Christ.” *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. 2nd ed. Vatican: Liberia Editrice Vaticana, 2012.
- Clifford, John, translator. *Life is a Dream* by Pedro Calderón de la Barca. London, Nick Hern Books, 1998.
- Cruz, Nilo, translator and adapter. *Life is a Dream*. By Pedro Calderón de la Barca. Dramatists Play Service. 2008.
- Gussow, Mel. “Theater: Calderón’s ‘Life is a Dream’.” Review of *Life is a Dream* by Maria Irene Fornes. *New York Times*. June 4, 1981, C15.
- Hesse, Everett W. “Calderón’s Concept of the Perfect Prince in *La Vida es sueño*.” *Critical Essays on the Theatre of Calderón*. Ed. by Bruce W. Wardropper. New York University Press. 1965.
- Klein, Alvin. “Theater; Possibilities, Real and Surreal.” Review of *Sueño* by Jose Rivera. *New York Times*. March 15, 1998. (www.nytimes.com/1998/03/15/nyregion/theater-possibilities-real-and-surreal.html)
- McKendrick, Melveena. *Theatre in Spain: 1490-1700*. Cambridge University Press. 1989.
- Porter, Anna. *The Ghosts of Europe: Journeys Through Central Europe’s Troubled Past and Uncertain Future*. Douglas & McIntyre. 2010.
- Racz, Gregory, translator. *Life is a Dream*. By Pedro Calderón de la Barca. Penguin Books. 2006.
- Rich, Frank. “London Theater Has a Double Life.” *New York Times*, August 5, 1984, p. B2.

Shaffer, Peter. *Amadeus*. Penguin Books. 1984.

Shakespeare, William. *Julius Caesar*. Simon & Schuster. 2011.

Shergold, N.D. *A History of the Spanish Stage: From Medieval Times Until the End of the Seventeenth Century*. Oxford University Press. 1967.

Spencer, Charles. "Life is a Dream at the Donmar Warehouse, a review." Review of *Life is a Dream* by Pedro Calderón de la Barca/adapted by Helen Edmundson. *The Telegraph*. 14 October 2009. (www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/theatre/theatre-reviews/6325214/Life-Is-A-Dream-at-the-Donmar-Warehouse-review.html)

Works Consulted

- Barton, Simon. *A History of Spain*. Hampshire, Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.
- Bickerstaff, Russ. "'Sueno' suffers from uninspired script." A review of *Sueño* by Jose Rivera. *On Milwaukee*. January 27, 2006. (<https://onmilwaukee.com/ent/articles/sueno.html>)
- Billington, Michael. "Life is a Dream." A review of *Life is a Dream* by Pedro Calderón de la Barca, adapted by Helen Edmundson. *The Guardian*. 15 October 2009. (www.theguardian.com/stage/2009/oct/15/life-is-a-dream-theatre-review)
- The Broadway League. "La Vida es Sueno." *Internet Broadway Database*, (www.ibdb.com/broadway-production/la-vida-es-sueo-13349).
- Brody, Ervin C. "Poland in Calderón's *Life is a Dream*: Poetic Illusion or Historical Reality." *The Polish Review*, vol. 14, no. 2, 1969, pp. 21-62. (www.jstor.org.library.uark.edu/stable/25776834).
- Bruckner, D.J.R. "Theater Review; When Life is Not a Dream But an Unending Nightmare." A review of *Sueño* by Jose Rivera. *New York Times*, March 3, 2000. (<https://www.nytimes.com/2000/03/03/movies/theater-review-when-life-is-not-a-dream-but-an-unending-nightmare.html>).
- Carreño, Antonio. "The Poetics of Closure in Calderón's Plays." *The Calderonian Stage: Body and Soul*. Ed. by Manuel Delgado Morales. Lewisburg, Bucknell University Press, 1997.
- Cascardi, Anthony J. *The limits of illusion: a critical study of Calderón*. Cambridge University Press, 1984.
- Cocteau, Jean, director. *La Belle et la Bête*. Janus Films, 1946.
- De Armas, Frederick A. *The Return of Astraea: An Astral-Imperial Myth in Calderón*. University Press of Kentucky, 1986.
- Dunn, P.N. "Honour and the Christian Background in Calderón." *Critical Essays on the Theatre of Calderón*. Ed. by Bruce W. Wardropper. New York University Press, 1965.
- Duran, Manuel. "Towards a Psychological Profile of Pedro Calderón de la Barca." *Approaches to the Theater of Calderón*. Ed. by Michael D. McGaha. Washington, D.C., University Press of America, 1982.
- Edwards, Gwynne. *The Prison and the Labyrinth: Studies in Calderonian Tragedy*. Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1978.

Grie, George. *Insomnia or Nocturnal Awakening*. 2009, graphic design, George Grie neosurrealism art gallery. (www.neosurrealismart.com/modern-art-prints/?artworks/insomnia-or-nocturnal-awakening.html)

Grie, George. *Mindscape or virtual reality dreamscape*. 2008, graphic design, George Grie neosurrealism art gallery. (www.neosurrealismart.com/modern-art-prints/?artworks/mindscape-or-virtual-reality-dreamscape.html)

Grie, George. *The Stormbringer or Existential Awakening*. 2014, graphic design, George Grie neosurrealism art gallery. (www.neosurrealismart.com/modern-art-prints/?artworks/the-stormbringer-or-existential-awakening.html)

Halecki, Oskar. *A History of Poland*. New York, Roy Publishers, 1966.

Hesse, Everett W. *Calderón de la Barca*. New York, Twayne Publishers, Inc. 1967.

Hesse, Everett W. "La Vida es sueño and the Labyrinth of Illusion." *Approaches to the Theater of Calderón*. Ed. by Michael D. McGaha. Washington, D.C., University Press of America, 1982.

Honig, Edwin. *Calderón and the Seizures of Honor*. Harvard University Press, 1972.

Phillips, Jr., William D. and Carla Rahn Phillips. *A Concise History of Spain, 2nd. Ed.* Cambridge University Press, 2016.

The Piano Guys. "The Story of My Life." *Wonders*. Sony Masterworks, 2014.

Prażmowska, Anita J. *A History of Poland*. Hampshire, Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.

Raben, Peer. "Russische Träume" *Peer Raben: The Great Composer of Film Music, Vol. One*. Universal Music. 2009.

Rupp, Stephen. *Allegories of Kingship: Calderón and the Anti-Machiavellian Tradition*. Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996.

Sigur Rós. *Ágætis byrjun*. Bad Taste. 1999.

Sloman, A.E. "The Structure of Calderón's *La vida es sueño*." *Critical Essays on the Theatre of Calderón*. Ed. by Bruce W. Wardropper. New York University Press, 1965.

Ter Horst, Robert. *Calderón: The Secular Plays*. University Press of Kentucky, 1982.

Wardropper, Bruce W. "The Standing of Calderón in the Twentieth Century." *Approaches to the Theater of Calderón*. Ed. by Michael D. McGaha. Washington, D.C., University Press of America, 1982.

Whitby, William M. "Rosaura's Role in the Structure of *La vida es sueño*." *Critical Essays on the Theatre of Calderón*. Ed. by Bruce W. Wardropper. New York University Press, 1965.

Wilson, E.M. "On *La vida es sueño*." *Critical Essays on the Theatre of Calderón*. Ed. by Bruce W. Wardropper. New York University Press, 1965.

Appendices

Appendix A - The Script

LIFE IS A DREAM

By Pedro Calderón de la Barca

Adapted by Jeremiah Albers

University of Arkansas Theatre
February 16-25, 2018
August 1, 2017

CHARACTERS

SEGISMUNDO, Crown Prince of Poland

ROSAURA, Muscovite Lady

BASILIO, King of Poland

CLOTALDO, Advisor to the King

ESTRELLA, Princess of Poland

ASTOLFO, Duke of Muscovy

CLARION, A Clown, Rosaura's Servant

ENSEMBLE who play Courtiers, Guards, Soldiers, Servants, etc.

LIFE IS A DREAM

ACT ONE

Scene 1: Mountain Canyon/Segismundo's Tower

(High atop a mountain. ROSAURA tumbles onto the stage.
SHE is dressed as a male wayfarer with a sword.)

ROSAURA

You call yourself a horse?
You're an impetuous hippogriff!
Bolting away as fast as the wind;
Leaving me to crash like a comet
Into this confusing labyrinth
Of barren boulders and cliffs!
You're lightning without fire,
A bird without feathers, a fish without scales!
Remain in the mountains, then:
Become a banquet for the wolves.
I'm lost. A poor woman, tired and bewildered,
And without so much as a map to guide me.
How shall I escape the tangled head
Of this lofty mountain,
Which furrows its brow angrily at the sun?
Is this any welcome for a foreigner, Poland?
You stain his entrance on your soil with blood,
And hardly has he come when he falls into disaster.
Oh, is there no mercy for a miserable person?

(Enter CLARION, the clown, weighed down with luggage.)

CLARION

"Two miserable people," you should say. Not one.
It's not as though I stayed back at the inn this morning.
You may remember it was two of us
Who left our homeland in search of adventure,
It was two of us who arrived here
In this unfortunate folly,
And it was two of us who tumbled down this mountain.
Do I not matter at all in your account?

ROSAURA

I didn't include you in my lament, Clarion,
Because I wouldn't want to rob you
Of your own right to seek comfort;
It is not for me to grieve your troubles.
A famous philosopher once said

There is such pleasure in misfortune
That, in exchange for a good cry,
People should actively seek heartbreak.

CLARION

Your philosopher was a drunken billy goat!
If he were here now, I would kick him in the balls!
That would give him something to really cry about!

But, my lady, what will we do
On foot, alone, lost on a desolate mountain
At this frightening hour,
When even the sun abandons us?
Oh, why did we leave the comforts of Muscovy
On this ill-fated adventure?

ROSAURA

You know full well; to avenge my honor.

Clarion, look there: Do you see it?
Perhaps it's my imagination,
But in the fearful light the dusk allows,
I think I see a building.

CLARION

Unless my eyes deceive me,
I think I see it, too.

ROSAURA

It's so crude and small amid the barren crags
That tower over it and block out the sun.
The structure is of such rude construction
That, sitting here, it almost resembles
A boulder that has fallen from the mountaintop.

CLARION

My lady, let's go!
Why are we standing here looking,
When we could just ask the people
Who live there to let us in
To warm ourselves by their fire?
I could use some supper.
And some wine.
Mostly wine.

ROSAURA

The door stands open like a gaping mouth,
And a fearful darkness springs from its jaws,
From which night itself could have been born.

(A cry of anguish is heard from within.)

CLARION

Sweet Jesus! What was that?

ROSAURA

I can't move. I'm a block of fire and ice;
I burn with curiosity, but I'm frozen in fear.

SEGISMUNDO

All I know of life is pain!¹

ROSAURA

That voice is so sad! So desperate!
It pierces my heart with searing grief and pity.

CLARION

And mine with terror and fear!
I'd love to run away,
But I don't have the courage.

ROSAURA

Is that a small lamp, that pallid star,
Which, in trembling beams and flashes,
Makes the sinister dwelling
Somehow even darker with its reluctant light?
Yes, it is, and by its illumination
I can perceive a dark prison,
Which is the tomb of a living corpse,
A man; shackled like a wild beast,
With a faint lamp for his only company.
Let's move closer. We cannot hear his laments
From where we stand.

(SEGISMUNDO is discovered shackled, in a loincloth, like
a wild beast.)

SEGISMUNDO

All I know of life is pain!

¹ This line comes from a translation by John Clifford. It is far superior to the actual line, and cannot be improved upon.

And I want to understand why I must live like this.
What have I ever done to justify this imprisonment?
What crime have I committed? Tell me stars!
I have been born, but that is not a crime;
For every man is born, is he not?
But other men were born with favor,
Which Fortune has denied me.

The bird is born, and soon develops
The feathered luxury that supplies its splendor.
No sooner is its transformation complete,
That it swiftly slices its way
Through the pillars of the sky,
Abandoning its family and childhood home
Without the least twinge of remorse.
Surely I have more soul.
Why should I have less liberty?

The beast is born, naked, but soon
Is patterned with beautiful spots.
No sooner are these constellations present,
Than the inhumanity of man
Teach it only abuse and cruelty,
Making it a monster in its own labyrinth.
Surely I have more intelligence.
Why should I have less liberty?

The fish is born, which can't even breathe,
A freakish marriage of algae and slime,
And no sooner does it discover itself in the water,
Than it swims in every direction,
Exploring all of the immense space
Its creator has made available for it.
Surely I have more free will.
Why should I have less liberty?

The stream is born, a snake
That winds through the plains,
And, like a silvery serpent, no sooner
Does it dance among the flowers
Than its waters break on the banks, singing
A hymn of praise to the vitalizing sky,
As it flees past on its way to the sea.
Surely I have more life.
Why should I have less liberty?

I am eaten up with rage.
My heart burns like a volcano.
I want to wrench it from my chest
And tear it to pieces!
What law, justice, or reason
Could justify denying man
So wonderful a privilege,
So fundamental a treasure,
Which God has granted to a stream,
A fish, a beast, and a bird?

ROSAURA

Your words fill me with pity and fear.

SEGISMUNDO

Who is there? I can't see.
Clotaldo, is it you?

CLARION

Say yes!

ROSAURA

No, we are weary travelers,
Lost in this canyon,
Who in this damp crypt
Have overheard your sorrow.

SEGISMUNDO

Then you must die!
My pride will not allow you
To know my weakness.
Because you overheard me,
I will tear you to shreds!

CLARION

I'm deaf. I didn't hear a thing.

ROSAURA

I kneel before you.
If you are human, I know that you will spare us.

SEGISMUNDO

Your voice fills me with tenderness,
Your presence makes me hesitate.
You disturb me. Who are you?

I know so little of the world,
Since for me this tower
Has been both my cradle and my grave;
I have never known any place besides this wilderness
Where I have lived alone, a living skeleton.

I have never seen nor spoken to any man but one,
Who, even though I am a beast among men,
Has taught me everything I know
About heaven and earth;
And even though my life is unfortunate,
I have studied political science,
Instructed by the beasts,
Informed by the birds;
And have measured the perfect orbits
Of the harmonious stars.

But only you have calmed my anger.
You have eased my eyes and charmed my ears.
You fill me with wonderment,
And the more I gaze on you
The more I long to do so.
If seeing you is a kind of death,
I think my eyes must thirst for it,
For even though it's death to drink,
They want to drink in more and more.

ROSAURA

I don't know how I should answer you.
I, too, am filled with wonder and awe...
I'll only say that heaven
Has guided me here today
To give me comfort,
If it can be a comfort
To an unfortunate man to see
Another more unfortunate.

I once heard the tale of a wise man
Who was so poverty stricken
That his only nourishment
Was a few herbs that he picked.
"Can there be another man," he said to himself,
"Poorer and sadder than I?"
And when he turned around,
Behind him, he discovered
Another wise man who was gathering

The leaves that he had discarded.
He found his answer. And so have I.
I have been lamenting my misfortune,
And when I asked myself
Whether there was anyone else
With a more sinister fate,
You kindly gave me the answer,
Because, I now realize,
That you would have gathered my sorrows,
Collecting the leaves I had cast off, and turned them into joy.

Well, if by chance my woes
Can offer you any comfort,
Listen to them closely and take
Any of them, for they are all too much for me.
My name is—

(CLOTALDO is heard from within.)

CLOTALDO

Guards! Slumberous cowards!
There are intruders in the tower!

SEGISMUNDO

That's Clotaldo, my jailer:
There's worse yet to come.

(Enter CLOTALDO with a gun, and GUARDS, all with
their faces covered.)

CLOTALDO

Arrest the intruders!
Kill them if they resist!

CLARION

Brave Guards of this Tower,
Who allowed us to enter here,
Since he's giving you a choice,
Arresting is easier than killing!

(The GUARDS surround them.)

Is this a masquerade ball?

CLOTALDO

In your ignorance, you
Have broken the laws of this kingdom
By entering this forbidden place.
The King of Poland has decreed
The punishment is death for any man
Who attempts to examine the monster
That dwells amid these boulders.
Surrender your weapons,
Or this pistol will tear out your throats
Like a metal viper.

SEGISMUNDO

Tyrannical master, if you
Harm either of them,
I swear to God, I will tear you all apart
With my bare hands! With my teeth!
I will never consent to their capture!

CLOTALDO

Segismundo, remember your own fate.
Remember that these shackles
Serve to restrain
Your arrogant pride.
Why do you boast?
Guards, bolt the door to this cramped cell;
Lock him inside.

SEGISMUNDO

You are wise to deprive me
Of freedom! If I was free,
I would rise up like a giant,
And pile up stones and make a staircase to heaven
So I could smash the windows of the sun.

CLOTALDO

Perhaps your present sufferings are meant
To stop you doing just that. Take him away.

(GUARDS take SEGISMUNDO off.)

ROSAURA

My lord, I see my pride has offended you.
I am no fool. I beg you humbly
For my life, which I place at your feet.
I hope you will be moved to pity,
For it would be extreme cruelty

If neither pride nor humility moved your heart.

CLARION

And, if you don't like Humility and Pride,
Then I, neither humble nor proud,
But somewhere in between,
Just ask that you do what you can to help us!

CLOTALDO

You there!

GUARD I

My lord!

CLOTALDO

Take away
Their weapons from both of them, and
Blindfold them, so they can't see
Which way, or from where, we leave.

ROSAURA

This is my sword, which to you
Alone can be given.
I will not yield it into less noble hands.

CLARION

My sword's not picky. Any rube can have it.
Here, you take it.

ROSAURA

If I must die, I wish
To leave this with you.
Treat it with respect,
For my father, who once
Wielded it; I caution you
To keep it safe, because
I know that this golden sword
Is the key to a great secret.
Armed with only this,
I have come to Poland to avenge myself
On a man who has wronged my honor.

CLOTALDO

Holy God! What's this?
Sorrow and confusion
Floods my heart.

Who gave this to you?

ROSAURA

My mother.

CLOTALDO

What is her name?

ROSAURA

I can't tell you that.

CLOTALDO

How do you know this sword
Contains a secret?

ROSAURA

When my mother gave it to me, she said:
"Go to Poland, and do everything you can,
Through ingenuity, and cunning,
To be seen with this sword
By the noblest men in the court;
For, one of them will become
Your friend and protector."
In case he had died,
She refused to tell me his name.

CLOTALDO

Dear God! What am I hearing?
I don't understand.
Is this illusion or reality?
The last time I saw this sword was in Muscovy.
I left this same sword with my lover,
The beautiful Violante,
As a token that any man who came
Girded with this sword,
Would find in me a kind and loving father.
I never imagined it would be like this!
The man who wears it has finally arrived,
And has immediately surrendered it to me
Under sentence of death! Oh, tragic fate!

This man is my son. Heaven help me!
What do I do? If I take him
To the king, I take him
To certain death. But I can't
Conceal him from the king,

For such disloyalty would stain my honor.
I am torn between
Selfishness on one hand,
And fealty on the other.
But, why do I hesitate?
Doesn't loyalty to the king come before
Life and honor?

The most imperative course
Is to go to the king and tell him
That this man is my son, and that he should kill him.
Perhaps the very pity the king feels
For my honor will place him under an obligation,
And if my merits save this man's life,
I'll help him take revenge
For his affront; but if the king,
Unbending in his severity,
Puts him to death, he will die
Without knowing I'm his father.

Follow me, strangers.
Consider me an ally in your misfortune.

In sadness I am set adrift,
For death now seems a welcome gift.

(CLOTALDO exits. GUARDS lead ROSAURA and
CLARION out behind him.)

LIFE IS A DREAM

ACT ONE

Scene 2: The Court of King Basilio

(ASTOLFO enters from one side, and ESTRELLA from the other, with COURTIERS. A flourish of trumpets.)

ASTOLFO

Highness, your eyes shine like the comets in heaven.
On seeing you, the trumpets and the birds sing
A harmonious song in praise of your beauty.
The cannons exalt you as their queen;
The birds proclaim you Goddess of the Dawn;
The trumpets esteem you as Goddess of War;
The fountains celebrate you as Goddess of Spring.
Night may have begun to exile the sun,
But you radiate beauty like the first break of dawn.
Estrella, you are the queen who reigns over my soul.

ESTRELLA

If actions prove the value of words, yours reveal you a liar.
How dare you flatter me in this flamboyant fashion?
Your amorous poetry and military display
Are at odds with the ambivalence in your heart.
Remember, Astolfo, it is beneath the dignity
Of a man of your station to talk of romance
When what you truly seek is power.

ASTOLFO

You misunderstand me, Estrella;
If you doubt the sincerity of my words,
You owe me, at least, the chance to plead
My case, and win your Highness' trust.
Our uncle, King Basilio, now dodders in age,
And will soon no longer be capable to rule.
His wife, long dead, sadly never bore him children.
Basilio is more inclined to books than to Women,
And so there can be no natural heir to his throne.

ESTRELLA

Except for us.

ASTOLFO

Except for us, dear cousin.
We both lay claim to succeed him on the throne;

But, as the eldest son of his own sister—

ESTRELLA

You may remember he had two sisters,
And I am the daughter of his eldest sister.

ASTOLFO

It's true, gentle cousin, I am the youngest sister's son,
Being born to her and my father in my ancestral home of Muscovy.
But, though it's unfair, I must, as a man, take precedence
Over you in the line of succession, as I have argued to our uncle king.
He said he intends to reconcile our royal claims
And chose today to announce his difficult decision.
And that is why I've come to Poland, not to make war,
As you make war on me with your exquisite beauty,
But to make love to you, that you may be the queen
I choose to wed. If we rule united on the throne
Poland's kingdom will grow ever stronger.

ESTRELLA

My heart thanks you for your courtly courtesy,
But I am dubious that you mean what you say.
Do not confuse your longings for the throne
With your own romantic longings, "gentle cousin,"
Correct me if I'm wrong, but I think I see
Another woman's portrait clasped around your neck.

ASTOLFO

I am all too happy to explain that, Highness;
But the occasion is cut short by those trumpets
Which announce the entrance of the king.

(Trumpets sound. KING BASILIO enters and processes to
the throne, as the COURTIERS DANCE. At the conclusion
of the dance, ALL bow to the king, ASTOLFO and
ESTRELLA directly at his feet.)

ESTRELLA

Wise King...

ASTOLFO

Learned Basilio...

ESTRELLA

Gracious ruler of the Zodiac...

ASTOLFO
Judicious master of the heavenly stars...

ESTRELLA
Permit me to humbly wind...

ASTOLFO
Permit me to tenderly embrace...

ESTRELLA
...My arms about you like gentle ivy!

ASTOLFO
...Your noble trunk, so sturdy and strong!

BASILIO
Niece and Nephew, you may embrace me!
I do not doubt how much you love me,
Coming, as you do, with such affectionate words;
And I want to satisfy your royal claims equitably
And fairly, but, before I do,
I must first share a burdensome secret.
So I must ask for your patience,
And for silence, for what I say will
Astonish and amaze you all.

It is true I am known throughout the world
As Basilio the Wise. My scientific pursuits
Amongst the Stars, Time, and Oblivion
Have bestowed upon me the title of "learned."
You already know that the science
I chiefly study and revere is
Subtle mathematics,
By which I steal from Time
And ravish from Fame
Their jurisdiction and their function.
In the stars I see the future events
Of ages to come, and earn men's gratitude
By forecasting their future in my astrological charts.
The planets twinkle like circles of snow.
The stars stretch out like a canopy of crystal.
These are the principle study of my years.
I read the heavens like I'm reading a book
Of diamond paper with cerulean binding,
In which the stars write in golden lines

And distinctive characters
The events of our lives,
Sometimes tragic, sometimes joyful.

If only Heaven had made my life
The first victim of its cruel fate,
Before I learned to interpret its messages
And understand its signs, for a man
Whose knowledge is harmful to him
Is unfortunately his own murderer!
It pains me to see you marvel
At the unfortunate events of my life,
But even so, it must be told.
So once again, I ask you to be silent.

With Clorilene, my wife, I sired a son.
His birth so unlucky, its omens so ominous
They exhausted the miracles of the stars.
Before he emerged from the womb's living grave
And into the light of beautiful day, she dreamt
Again and again of being ripped apart
By a monster in the shape of a man!
And on the day of his birth, the sun itself
Engaged in bloodstained battle with the moon,
Choosing Earth for their miserable battlefield.
This was the most terrifying eclipse the world
Has suffered since the sun wept for the death of Christ.
The planet was consumed in living fire.
The heavens darkened, palaces trembled,
The clouds rained stones,
And the rivers flowed in currents of blood.
And it was under this fatal sign
That my son, Segismundo, was born.
By being born, and as an indication of his cruel nature,
He killed his mother, and boasted with masculine ferocity:
"I am a man, and this is how men repay a kindness."

I consulted my books,
and found in them,
And in the ominous stars,
That Segismundo would be
The most insolent man,
The most cruel prince,
And the most vicious king.
That under his rule the country would be
Divided, torn by civil war;

A school for treason
And an academy for vice.
I saw him inspired and strengthened by rage and fury.
I saw myself surrendering and groveling before him.
His feet—oh, it's too painful to confess it—
Would make a carpet out of my white beard.
Vanity is an important part of science,
So, how could I not believe
The omens that were revealed to me?

I believed my unfortunate destiny.
And, convinced I had no alternative,
I decided to imprison this wild animal
That had been born my son, Segismundo,
To find out if a man could develop
The wisdom to conquer the stars.
It was announced that the baby was stillborn,
And, as a precaution, I had a tower erected
In the mountains, and passed strict laws
That no man should enter under penalty of death.
There Segismundo lives, wretched, poor, a captive,
where only Clotaldo has spoken to him or seen him.
Clotaldo has taught him sciences,
And has instructed him in the Catholic faith,
And been the only witness to his misery.

Now, in all this there are three factors at play:
One, is that I love you, loyal subjects,
And wish to free you from the rule of a tyrannical king;
For one who would leave his kingdom in such peril
Would be an unwise and unkind monarch.
The second, is that he is my son,
He has the right to freedom. He has the right to be your king.
In depriving him of these rights, I have committed a crime,
A crime so terrible, I cannot justify it, even though I acted
In the best interest of all of Poland.
The third and final factor
Is the realization it was a tremendous mistake
To so easily believe this prediction of events.
Because, even if his nature
Is inclined toward outrages,
Perhaps it won't overcome him,
Since even the most dire fate,
The most violent inclination,
The most evil planet,
Merely incline our free will in one way or another,

They cannot force it.

And so, my friends, after struggling for
Many months with these dilemmas,
I came upon a solution that will astonish you.
Tomorrow, without telling him
That he is my son, and your king,
I shall place Segismundo on the throne,
Where he will govern and rule you
And where all of you will swear
Obedience to him:
Because, in so doing, I resolve
The three issues I previously set before you.
First: I love my country, and if he is a king
Who rules with justice, wisdom, and goodwill,
Then the predictions of the stars are proved false,
And you shall enjoy the monarchy of
Your rightful king.
Second: If he acts haughtily, boldly, insolently,
and cruelly and gives free rein
to viciousness and vice,
Then I will have committed no crime;
For I would have simply complied with my obligations,
Since returning him to his mountain prison
Will not be cruelty, but just punishment.
Third: If the prince
Is really as the stars predicted,
Out of my love for you, my subjects,
I shall give you rulers more worthy
Of the crown and scepter,
By marrying Astolfo to Estrella,
And placing them on the throne.
This I command you as your king.
This I ask you as a father.
This I request of you as a philosopher.
And, if it's true the king is the humble slave
Of his commonwealth,
This I humbly beg you as your slave.

(General uproar among the COURTIERS. ASTOLFO
finally speaks.)

ASTOLFO

I must confess, Majesty, the shock I feel on hearing this,
But since Prince Segismundo is your son, I think
Justice herself could not imagine a plan more fair.

ESTRELLA

God save the Prince, and let him be your heir.

ASTOLFO

Long live Basilio.

ESTRELLA

God save the king.

ALL

Long live Basilio, God save the king.

(ALL exit. Before BASILIO completes his exit, CLOTALDO, ROSAURA, and CLARION enter, and CLOTALDO detains BASILIO.)

CLOTALDO

May I speak with you?

BASILIO

Oh, Clotaldo!

A heartfelt welcome to you.

CLOTALDO

I must admit, your majesty,
I always warmly welcome your counsel,
But this time, sire, a sad
And malignant fate overwhelms
Matters of courtly custom.

BASILIO

What's wrong?

CLOTALDO

While this should be a
Joyful moment, Sire,
I'm afraid it's tempered
With tragic misfortune.

BASILIO

Go on.

CLOTALDO

This handsome youth,
Whether through boldness or ignorance,
Entered the tower, Sire,
Where he caught sight of the prince.
And he's—

BASILIO

Don't fret, Clotaldo.
If it had occurred any other day,
I confess I would have been furious;
But now I have divulged the secret,
And it no longer matters that he knows it,
Seeing that everyone else knows it, too.

See me later, for I have
Much to tell you,
And much for you to do;
Because, you are to be a player
In the greatest event
In the history of the world.

As for these captives, I forgive you
For your negligence. Unbind their
Arms and eyes. They are both pardoned.

(BASILIO exits.)

CLOTALDO

God save the king!
And may he live a thousand centuries!
Heaven is kind. I did not need to
Confess he is my son, after all.
Strangers, you are set free.

ROSAURA

I could kiss your feet,
Your Grace.

CLARION

And I could kiss you anywhere.
Within reason.

ROSAURA

You saved my life.
I'm forever in your debt.

CLOTALDO

You have no life to save, stranger,
For when a noble man has had his
Honor wronged, he has
Neither life nor honor
Until he is avenged.

ROSAURA

That may be true, your grace,
But, with my revenge, I
Shall reclaim my honor completely,
And surely then, you will have
Saved the life I've reclaimed.

CLOTALDO

A fair point.
Take back your sword, stranger,
And use it to exact vengeance
On your enemy. I know it
Will serve you well, as it was mine
(I mean, it was just now, when I held it).
It should serve you well.

ROSAURA

I wield it now in your name,
And on it I swear revenge
Against my foe, no matter
How powerful he may be.

CLOTALDO

Is he very much so?

ROSAURA

So much so, that I dare not tell you his name
For fear of losing your kind favor.

CLOTALDO

No, you would win it instead
By demonstrating your trust in me.
Oh, if only I could tell him who I am!

ROSAURA

It's true I owe you better, grace,
Than to withhold the name of my enemy.
The man I've come to avenge is
None other than Astolfo,

Duke of Muscovy.

CLOTALDO

Consider this carefully, stranger,
As a Muscovite yourself, Astolfo
Is your natural lord, and so
Could not have wronged your honor.

ROSAURA

He is indeed my prince, but
I know that he has wronged me.

CLOTALDO

A prince can do no wrong,
Not even if he were to slap you in the face.

ROSAURA

The wrong done to me was far worse than that.

CLOTALDO

Then confess it, for it can't
Be worse than I imagine.

ROSAURA

I'm afraid to confess the truth to you,
But owe you an explanation in your kindness.
I am a kind of riddle, in that
I am not what I seem.
If what you see is a mere disguise,
And if Astolfo has come here to marry
Estrella, then how do you think
He might he have stained my honor?

(ROSAURA and CLARION exit.)

CLOTALDO

Listen! Wait! Stop! Woman!
What muddled labyrinth
Is this, in which reason
Cannot find the thread?
She is my daughter.
In assaulting her, he has assaulted
My own honor.
He is a powerful foe.
When torn between duty and family ties
One finds little consolation in these ominous skies.

(CLOTALDO exits.)

LIFE IS A DREAM

ACT ONE

Scene 3: The Court of King Basilio

(The next day, BASILIO is alone in the throne room.
CLOTALDO enters.)

CLOTALDO

Everything was carried out
According to your instructions.

BASILIO

Tell me how it happened.

CLOTALDO

I mixed the sleeping potion,
Just as you prescribed,
With a subtle mixture of
Various uncommon compounds:
Opium, henbane, and valerian.
These potent herbs were brewed
Into a concoction which,
With tyrannical force,
Deprives and dispossesses
A man of his will and reason,
Placing him in so deep a sleep,
That he is like a living corpse.

I carried this miracle elixir
Into Segismundo's cell.
I talked with him, as you instructed,
About the subject of his studies,
The arts and sciences which I have taught him,
And which he has learned from observing
The beasts, the birds, the fish, and the streams.
At this moment, a fiery eagle ascended
To the heavens, scorning the sphere
Of the wind, and soaring to the stratosphere
Where it fell to earth as a meteor, a shooting star.
I remarked to him how the eagle was the king
Of all the birds, so majestic in its flight
That all others must swear fealty at its stateliness.
This moved his heart to talk of power and ambition,
Which is not unusual in one of such noble birth.

He said to me: "Clotaldo, do you mean to say

That even in the commonwealth of the birds,
There are some who swear obedience to others?
If I had not been born under unfortunate stars,
And could have the freedom the birds have,
I would never submit to another person
Of my own free will.” He was overcome
With overwhelming fury and sadness.
It was then I gave him the potion,
And, no sooner had it passed his lips,
Than he surrendered his passions,
Slipping deep into a comatose state.
His circulation slowed and chilled
His limbs, so that had I not known
This was merely the illusion of death,
I might have been afraid for his life.
At this moment, your trusted attendants
Arrived to carry out your specific instructions.
They carried him to a carriage, and brought him
To the royal palace, and placed him in your bed.
An army of liveried servants surround him in your bedchamber.
When the wearying effects of this magical brew
Finally free him of their dominating effects,
They will serve him as they would serve you,
Which I understand are your direct orders.

Having carried out my end, and just as you instructed,
I do not hope for any reward, but only ask
That you explain why it was necessary
To deliver Segismundo to the palace,
In such an unorthodox fashion.

BASILIO

Clotaldo, your concern is justified,
And I will do what I can to reassure you.
You are certainly well acquainted with
The problem of Segismundo’s miserable birth;
And you know I intend to determine whether
The predictions of the ill-omened stars
Can be assuaged, or at least overcome.
Here, in this place, he will learn he is my son
And I will put his character to the test.
If he shows wisdom, strength, and compassion,
He will remain on the throne and become your king.
But if he displays a cruel and tyrannical nature,
I shall send him back to the chains of his prison.
It is for this reason it was necessary

To bring him here as he slept.

For, if he learned today that he is my son,
And found himself tomorrow once again
Confined to his wretched prison, he would,
For his character assures it, seek revenge.
So it is necessary, to leave a loophole
To insure against this dangerous situation.
If he awakes tomorrow back in chains,
You will tell him that all he experienced here
Was just a dream. For, if he finds himself
Obeyed as king today, but discovers he is
Still a prisoner tomorrow, we will have done
No wrong, as all men are dreamers from time to time;
And he is certain to believe this all was just a dream.

CLOTALDO

I only hope this plan works as well
As you feel confident that it will.
But, it seems he has awakened
And is heading this way.

BASILIO

I will withdraw. You are his tutor
Go to him, and ease his mind
By telling him the truth. It would
Be cruel not to ease his bewildered thoughts.

CLOTALDO

You are giving me permission
To tell him who he really is?

BASILIO

Yes. For, maybe, if he knows the truth
He will conquer his evil character more easily.

(Exit BASILIO. Enter CLARION.)

CLARION

The guard at the door just
Threatened to beat me. Why?
Are you selling tickets to see
Events unfolding here? Well,
I will never buy a full price ticket
When the view is just as good

From outside the window.

CLOTALDO

Here is Clarion, the servant
Of that woman, my daughter,
That trafficker of misfortune,
Who, in arriving from Muscovy,
Has informed me to the wrong done to me
By the deceitful Duke, Astolfo.
What's new, Clarion?

CLARION

Great lord, we could kiss your feet
For your kindness in helping Rosaura
To claim her revenge against her foe.
I understand that you have told her
To wear clothes appropriate to her gender.

CLOTALDO

And rightly so, to avoid
The appearance of scandal.

CLARION

I also understand that she is
Using a fake name, and wisely
Calling herself your niece.
And that she now resides in the palace
As a lady-in-waiting to the beautiful
Estrella.

CLOTALDO

I feel responsible for her reputation.
All of this will be set right. In time.
And I will help her to avenge this wrong.

CLARION

What's most interesting, your grace,
Is that she now lives in great luxury.
She is entertained and served like a queen,
All on account that she is known here as your niece.
While I, who took the tangled journey with her,
Am starving to death: forgotten, ignored.
No one here seems to even know my name is Clarion
Which means trumpet. And, like a trumpet, I am ready
To blow the lid off these secret schemings,
To the king, Astolfo, and Estrella, and anyone who hears!

A trumpet and a servant are alike,
After all. Both are ill-suited
To secret keeping.

CLOTALDO

I think I understand your meaning.
As of today, I'm placing you in my employ.
Here's an advance on your first week's wages.

CLARION

Oh, look!
Here comes Segismundo.

(Enter SEGISMUNDO and SERVANTS. Sweet music
plays. THEY are attempting to dress him in royal finery.)

SEGISMUNDO

Heavenly stars! What's this I see?
Heavenly stars! Is this a vision?
I am startled and amazed by everything I see.
I awoke from a deep sleep in a luxurious bed
Tangled in satin and brocade.
I was surrounded on all sides by such
Well-dressed and energetic servants.
Now there are so many people
Helping me get dressed.
I don't think I'm dreaming,
When I pinch myself I know
That I'm awake.
Oppressive stars!
Clarify my confusion!
I do not understand what
Is going on, and yet, I
Wonder why I fear it?
Why question this kingly treatment
When any man would like to be served.

SERVANT 1

He seems sad somehow.

SERVANT 2

Who wouldn't be, after
The wretched life he's had?

CLARION

I wouldn't.

SERVANT 1

Go ask him if he needs anything.

SERVANT 2

Would you like more music, majesty?

SEGISMUNDO

No.

I hate this music.

SERVANT 1

We just want to entertain you.
You seem so preoccupied.

SEGISMUNDO

This sweet romantic music
Does nothing to remove my sorrow.
Military marches are the
Only music that can do that.

CLOTALDO

Your highness, great lord,
It humbles me to be the first
To kiss your hand, and promise
To you my unending loyalty.

SEGISMUNDO

You are Clotaldo, my jailer.
Why is a man who mistreats me
In prison, now treating me with
So much respect? What's going on here?

CLOTALDO

I understand this is confusing.
No doubt you have a million questions.
And I am happy to answer all of them,
If possible. But the first thing,
Which you need to know is that
You are Crown Prince of Poland.
It was foreseen in your astrology,
Written in the stars, that you would be
A most ill-natured king. You lived in
Your tower prison as an act of obedience
To your father, the king, who in his wisdom

Has contrived to bring you here as you slept,
In order to give you the opportunity to overcome
These ill-omened predictions of the cosmos;
For a man can overcome them if he wills it.
Your father, the king, will be in to see you shortly
The rest is best for you to hear from him directly.

SEGISMUNDO

You base, vile traitor!
Knowing who I truly am
Fills me with pride!
Knowing my noble birthright
I am flooded with power!
Treasonous wretch, who are you
To imprison the Crown Prince
And deny me of this luxurious life?

CLOTALDO
Treachery!

SEGISMUNDO

You are a traitor to the law,
A sycophant of the king.
You have treated me with intolerable cruelty.
I condemn you to death.
Manner of execution? I will murder you
With my bare hands.

SERVANT 1

Sire!

SEGISMUNDO

Do not
Try to stop me, it's a waste of time
And if you try, I'll throw you out the window.

SERVANT 2

Clotaldo, run!

CLOTALDO

What a pity!
So proud, and yet completely
Unaware you're only dreaming.

(CLOTALDO exits.)

Your highness, I must object...

SERVANT 1

Get out of here!

SEGISMUNDO

In imprisoning you, he was
Only obeying his king.

SERVANT 1

When the orders ask you to violate the law
The king's orders do not have to be obeyed.
I am his prince. It was immoral.

SEGISMUNDO

It is not his place to question
Whether the king's orders were
Proper or not. Moral or not.

SERVANT 1

Stop talking to me.
You are making me angry.
That will be worse luck for you.

SEGISMUNDO

The prince is absolutely right.
You are behaving very badly.

CLARION

Who asked your opinion?

SERVANT 1

I did.

CLARION

Excuse me,
Who are you?

SEGISMUNDO

A busybody.
I'm a master of my trade,
Because I'm the nosiest person
I've ever known.

CLARION

SEGISMUNDO

You amuse me more than
All the people here.

CLARION

You know, I have a side business
As a pleaser of Segismundos everywhere.

(Enter ASTOLFO.)

ASTOLFO

It is a happy day indeed when
You arrive, radiating light like
The sun over Poland at long last,
O my prince! And though the laurel wreath
Is a little late in crowning your divine head,
I praise you and hope you rule
A hundred summers!

SEGISMUNDO

Good day.

ASTOLFO

I will excuse your lack of respect
For I know you must not recognize me.
I am Astolfo, Duke of Muscovy,
Your cousin. We are equals, you and I.

SEGISMUNDO

I'm sorry. Did you misunderstand me?
I said good day to you. I did not ask you
To boast to me of who you are.
I dispense with the pleasantries. Be gone.

SERVANT 1

Your highness, he doesn't mean what he says
He behaves this way with everyone, being raised
As he was in the mountains with the beasts.
Your highness, Astolfo would prefer if you—

SEGISMUNDO

He annoyed me with his perfumed
Poetry of exaltation. What is unforgivable
Is that he didn't bow to me and dared
To put his hat on in my presence.

SERVANT 1

He is allowed to do that,
He is as of noble station as you.

SEGISMUNDO

This sissified dandy is not as noble as I am!

SERVANT 1

That may be so, your highness,
But all the same, your nobility demands
You treat him with more respect
Than how you treat others.

SEGISMUNDO

Who asked you?

(Enter ESTRELLA.)

ESTRELLA

Your highness, it is a welcome sight
To see you on the throne at last.
I am humbled to know you will be
A gracious king, so may you rule
For a century at least!

SEGISMUNDO

Tell me, friend, who is this
Beautiful woman, this goddess
Who shames the heavens
With her radiance.

CLARION

That is your cousin, sire,
The princess Estrella.
Her name means “star.”

SEGISMUNDO

You might as well have said the sun.
I thank you, princess, for your congratulations
On my sudden windfall of good fortune.
Estrella, you are the star that is so bright
It still twinkles at dawn, keeping merry
Company with the sun.

Allow me to kiss your hand,
From whose snowy cup
The sky drinks its beauty.

ESTRELLA

You are too forward, sir.
Such amorous advances are
Beneath a woman of my station.

ASTOLFO

If he kisses her hand
I am ruined!

SERVANT 1

I know how this grieves you,
Astolfo, I will stop him.
Sire, it is not right to be so bold,
Especially with Astolfo so near,
Since they are intending to—

SEGISMUNDO

Have I not
Told you to mind your own business?

SERVANT 1

I am only standing up for what's right.

SEGISMUNDO

You are making me very angry.
Everything is right if I say it is.

SERVANT 1

But you yourself just said, I heard it,
That it is not necessary to follow orders
If they are not moral or lawful.

SEGISMUNDO

Then you also heard me say I would
Throw you from the window
If you kept nagging me this way.

SERVANT 1

It is impossible to do that
To a man of my station.

SEGISMUNDO

Oh, yeah?
Let's find out, shall we?

(SEGISMUNDO throws SERVANT 1 out of the window.
ALL look on in horror.)

ASTOLFO
What did I just see?
Estrella, run and fetch the king.

ESTRELLA
I will bring him here
As quickly as I can.

(ESTRELLA runs out.)

SEGISMUNDO
He plunged into the ocean in a graceless fall.
I guess the impossible is possible after all.

ASTOLFO
Your highness, you must
Act more calmly, and restrain
These rash instincts of yours.
Remember the difference between
Man and Beast is as vast as
The difference between Palace and Prison.

SEGISMUNDO
Astolfo, if you carry on giving heartfelt advice,
You will find you no longer have a stupid head
On which to perch your stupid hat.

(SEGISMUNDO charges at ASTOLFO. ASTOLFO runs
out. Enter KING BASILIO.)

BASILIO
What is going on here?

SEGISMUNDO
Nothing.
A fellow was annoying me
So I chucked him out the window.

BASILIO

It pains me that you've committed murder
Already, less than a day since you arrived.

SEGISMUNDO

He told me it could not be done.
He was wrong.

BASILIO

I thought when I came to see you
That I would find you triumphing
Over your destiny, the stars, and planets;
Forewarned as you were of how ill-fated they are.
How sorry I am to find you have
Already taken a life.
I came here prepared to offer you love,
To open my fatherly arms to you.
But how can I warmly embrace
A cold blooded butcher?
You have no heart.
So, I'm sure you understand
If I prefer to avoid the arms of an assassin.

SEGISMUNDO

I do not care for your "fatherly love"
Or your embraces. I have gotten this far
Without them. If you are my father
You have been incredibly cruel,
Casting me into a dank, lonely prison,
Raising me like a wild animal,
Treating me like a monster.
I must confess that I feel
Nothing for you, father.
Nothing.

BASILIO

I gave you life.
I wish I never had.

SEGISMUNDO

Me too. Then we both
Would have been better off.
You gave me life, yes,
But then you took it away.
To give is an act of noble charity.
To give and take away

Is the most despicable thing a man can do.

BASILIO

I have rescued you from your prison
And transformed you into a prince!
Is this the thanks I get?

SEGISMUNDO

There is nothing on Earth
That I would thank you for.
You are old, and daft, and feeble.
A dying king!
And when you die you must
Give over to me what is rightly mine.
This kingdom is mine!
Poland is mine!
I owe you nothing. You owe me
Life, and happiness, and freedom.
You should thank me for not
Choosing this moment
To collect the debt, old man.

BASILIO

Behold him, everyone!
See how the stars have kept their word!
Observe how insolent, prideful,
And conceited he is!
My son, I warn you,
Be humble. Be kind.
Please heed this sage advice.
For things are not always what they seem,
And this may all be an elaborate dream.

SEGISMUNDO

You think this is a dream?
I'm wide awake.
I think, I feel, I touch.
I know what I have been and who I really am.
And, knowing that, I will never return to the shackles
Of my mountain prison.
I am half man, half beast, and I will never be your son.

(SEGISMUNDO charges at BASILIO. BASILIO runs off.
The SERVANTS flee.)

CLARION

Of everything you've seen and admired,
What is the thing that has given you the most pleasure?

SEGISMUNDO

Nothing has amazed me at all.
But, if there's anything I wonder at
In the whole of the universe, it's
The beauty of a woman. I read once,
In one of the books I was given,
That in the whole of creation,
God spent the most time building man,
Because man is the whole world in miniature.
But I suspect he worked harder to create woman,
Because women are a replica of heaven.
For instance, who is this radiant vision
Who appears now before us?

(ROSAURA enters.)

ROSAURA

I've looked everywhere for the princess, Estrella,
And I'm terrified I may run into Astolfo,
Since Clotaldo has decreed he should not see me
Or know who I really am.
I owe Clotaldo my life,
For insuring my safety,
Protecting my true identity,
And vowing to help me avenge this wrong.
The prince is here; I must withdraw.

SEGISMUNDO

Wait! Madam! Stop! Please!
Don't run away from me. It is cruel
To be both sunrise and sunset all at once.
Do I know you?

ROSAURA

I can't believe what I'm seeing.

SEGISMUNDO

I have seen this gracious beauty before.

ROSAURA

I have seen this power in chains.

SEGISMUNDO

I have found my life, woman.
Just to call you woman
Is the greatest compliment I can muster.
Who are you? You are familiar to me,
But I know I can't have seen you before.
Yet I sense you feel the same joy
And compassion that I feel now in seeing you.

ROSAURA

I wish I could tell him who I am,
But Clotaldo swore me to keep it secret!
You must be mistaken, your highness,
I am just a sad lady who waits on Estrella.

SEGISMUNDO

You wait on Estrella? That's sinful!
Estrella is merely a star, but you are
The sun itself! I can assure you, my lady,
Estrella's star steals all its light from you.
I have studied the beautiful kingdom
Of fragrant flowers, and discovered
They all are governed by the beauty of the rose.
I have studied the rigorous classifications
Of precious gemstones, and discovered
They all are ruled by the brilliance of the diamond.
I have studied the awesome nobility
Of the cosmic stars, and discovered
They all are led by the brightness of the evening star.
I have studied the fearsome gravity
Of the swirling planets, and discovered
They all are compelled by the power of the sun.
So, if it's true that among the stars,
Stones, planets, and flowers, the most beautiful
Are preferred, then how can you
Serve someone of lesser beauty,
When it is so clear you are
The sun, the evening star, the diamond, and the rose?

(Enter CLOTALDO.)

CLOTALDO

I've come to try to pacify Segismundo.
I feel it is my responsibility as his tutor.
But, what's happening here?

ROSAURA

I thank you for your kind words:
Let silence be my only reply,
For when words fail you,
The most eloquent speaker
Is one who stays quiet.

SEGISMUNDO

Wait! You may not leave!
How dare you run away
And leave me in the dark?

ROSAURA

Your majesty, I request
Your permission to go.

SEGISMUNDO

To leave right now is not
Asking my permission,
But taking it.

ROSAURA

Well, if you won't give it,
You leave me no choice
But to take it.

SEGISMUNDO

You are trying my patience.
I am being polite to you,
You won't like me when I'm angry.

ROSAURA

That may well be, your highness,
But I have faith your anger
Could not overcome your respect for me.

SEGISMUNDO

It's true your beauty does unsettle me.
But today is my day to conquer the impossible.
Only earlier today I threw a man out the window
Simply because he said I could not do it.
And right now, I feel moved
To toss your honor out the window, too.

CLOTALDO

His uncontrolled lust frightens me.
As her father I feel responsible for her safety,
But I cannot interfere with the king's test of the lad.
I will remain close by if things get out of hand.

ROSAURA

It seems the predictions about you are true.
I've heard it said the stars never lie.
You are the tyrant I've heard spoken of,
A walking allegory for crime,
Deception, Hate, and Death.
You are no better than the wild beasts
Who haunt the mountain canyon
That you call your childhood home.

SEGISMUNDO

You would dare to insult me?
I treated you kindly, and slathered you
With flattery, in hopes that I might
Win your favor. But, in spite of my poetic
Proclamations of my love,
You would still call me a monster?
I will show you a wild beast, Madam.

You there, leave us alone!
And lock the door behind you!
Let no man enter here.

(CLARION runs out, bolting the door behind him.)

ROSAURA

I'm as good as dead!
Please, listen—

SEGISMUNDO

No! I'm a tyrant,
A wild beast-man, is what you said.
Words could never be enough to satisfy me.

CLOTALDO

I must stop him from this!
Sire, please, think of what you're doing!

SEGISMUNDO

Oh, it's you, you feeble old fool!

Do you doubt the sincerity of my hate for you?
How did you get in here?

CLOTALDO

I heard your voice and followed it here
In hopes that I could reason with you
To be more even-tempered if you want to be king.
Just because you find yourself master of the universe,
Is not a reason to engage in cruelty and violence.
For all you know this could all be just a dream.

SEGISMUNDO

Why does everyone keep saying that?
You infuriate me when you suggest
That this is merely an illusion.
I have an idea. I will kill you, and then
We will see if this is dream or reality.

(SEGISMUNDO draws HIS sword. CLOTALDO stays his
hand and kneels before him.)

CLOTALDO

I won't let go. I intend to live.

(THEY struggle over the sword.)

SEGISMUNDO

Let go of my sword!

CLOTALDO

Until you overcome your rage
I can't let go.

ROSAURA

Please stop!

SEGISMUNDO

Let go, I say,
Feeble old man! Traitorous fool!
I will kill you with my bare hands!

ROSAURA

Someone come help! Quickly!
Clotaldo is being murdered!

(ROSAURA exits. SEGISMUNDO and CLOTALDO continue to struggle. ASTOLFO enters, just as CLOTALDO is overcome, and places himself between SEGISMUNDO and CLOTALDO.)

ASTOLFO

What's going on here, noble prince?
Would you stain your steel with the
Blood of some foolish old man?
Away. Sheathe your sword.

SEGISMUNDO

Not till I see it drips with the blood
Of my jailer and betrayer!

ASTOLFO

I will answer for his life.

SEGISMUNDO

Then let it be your death as well, for all I care.

ASTOLFO

Then I draw in self-defense my lord.
No one will accuse me of treason.

(THEY draw their swords. A short skirmish.
SEGISMUNDO is disarmed and held by ASTOLFO and
CLOTALDO. Enter BASILIO and ESTRELLA, with
GUARDS who surround SEGISMUNDO. CLARION
enters and watches while obscured.)

CLOTALDO

Don't kill him, highness!

BASILIO

Who has drawn swords in the palace?

ESTRELLA

Astolfo, are you hurt?

BASILIO

Explain to me what's going on.

ASTOLFO

Nothing, now that you are here.
No decent man would dare

Draw his sword before his king.

(ASTOLFO and CLOTALDO sheathe their swords.)

SEGISMUNDO

Oh, a great deal has happened
Whether you are here or not.
I was attempting to kill the old fool!

BASILIO

Do you have no respect
For his advanced age?

CLOTALDO

I am not harmed, majesty,
Despite my old age.

SEGISMUNDO

I will have my revenge, on him
As well as you, for the treacherous
Cruelty in which you raised me!
Take heed, Great King, that someday
I may use that beard as a carpet for my feet!

BASILIO

Now I know the stars told me the truth!
You insist on revenge, you insolent coward?
No, Segismundo, before that happens
I'll see to it that you sleep in prison yet again.
And you will think that all that happened here today
Was all a dream, like all the great wonders on Earth.
Clotaldo, return him to his mountain cell,
Estrella and Astolfo shall reign in Poland!

(ASTOLFO, BASILIO, and ESTRELLA exit.
CLOTALDO and the GUARDS force SEGISMUNDO to
drink. HE faints. THEY strip SEGISMUNDO of his
clothes. CLOTALDO and GUARDS chain him back up
with CLARION following, transition to the mountain
tower.)

LIFE IS A DREAM
ACT ONE
Scene 4: The Mountain Tower

(Segue as One from Scene 3)

CLOTALDO

Leave him here. Today his
Pride ends where it began.

GUARD 2

He is back in chains.
Where he belongs, I say.

CLARION

Don't wake up, Segismundo,
It breaks my heart you will
Awake to see your fate reversed
So tragically. Your princely tenure
Was just illusion, a shadow, the wisp of a dream.

CLOTALDO

Ah, Clarion! My trumpet friend,
You sing a beautiful song. You know,
A trumpet is a valuable instrument,
And must be handled with great care.
Seize this man!

(The GUARDS seize CLARION.)

CLARION

Why, your grace? What have I done?

CLOTALDO

It would be negligent, indeed, if the trumpeter
Did not put his trumpet away in its case
When it is no longer useful. Particularly when the trumpet
Knows as much as you do and is liable to sing a song
Revealing secrets!

CLARION

This is outrageous!
Did I just threaten to murder my own father?
No, I did not.
Did I just chuck that low-rent Icarus out the window?
No, I did not.

I understand why he's here.
Why am I being locked up?

CLOTALDO

You introduced yourself
As a "trumpet." I will do what
I must to keep you quiet.

CLARION

Did I say "trumpet?"
You misunderstood me, grace.
I said "crumpet." I'm a crumpet,
You see, because I have a firm bottom
A soft head, and you will like me
All the better when I'm slightly toasted!

CLOTALDO

You jest too much, Crumpet!
Take him away!

(GUARDS carry CLARION out. Enter KING BASILIO,
muffled in a cloak.)

BASILIO

Clotaldo!

CLOTALDO

Sire! Why have you come here
So late at night? And cloaked in disguise?

BASILIO

I am so troubled by what happened,
That I had to come here for myself
To see what lessons, if any,
Segismundo might have learned.

CLOTALDO

There he sleeps, brought down
By his wretched pride.

BASILIO

I pity him, born as he was
Under such unhappy omens.
Go and wake him up, Clotaldo,
I'm sure the drug has worn off by now.

CLOTALDO

He has had restless sleep, majesty,
And talks frequently as he dreams.

SEGISMUNDO

The merciful punish tyrants!

BASILIO

I hear him! We should listen
To determine what he dreams.

SEGISMUNDO

I will kill Clotaldo with my bare hands!
His royal highness will be made to kiss my feet!

CLOTALDO

He threatens me with murder!

BASILIO

And me with humiliation and scorn!

SEGISMUNDO

(Dreaming.)

Let my power be known throughout the world!
I will have my revenge on all of you!
Soon everyone will know how Segismundo defeated his father!

(Awaking.)

What? Wait. Where am I?

BASILIO

I can't let him see me.
You know what to do now.
I will conceal myself and
Listen from over here.

(BASILIO withdraws.)

SEGISMUNDO

Am I really myself?
Is this me awaking
In my grim prison again?
I know it must be, and yet
I can't believe that all I experienced
Was only just a dream.

CLOTALDO

Heaven forgive me for
What I have to do now!
Are you finally awake, then?

SEGISMUNDO

Yes.

I am awake, I think.

CLOTALDO

I believe you've slept the day away!
From the time you and I spoke of that eagle
Until my return just now, have you not
Stirred from your dreams?

SEGISMUNDO

No,

And I think I'm dreaming even now.
Everything I dreamed was irreducibly real,
I felt it, heard it, smelled it, tasted it, and saw it.
It was all so real that it makes me doubt reality
Now, for if dreams can be reality,
Maybe what's real is only a dream!

CLOTALDO

Tell me what you dreamt.

SEGISMUNDO

Since I'm not sure it was a dream,
I can only tell you what I experienced.
I awoke in sheets of such fine woven fabric
And decorative brocade that they might have been
Woven by the Goddess of Spring herself.
A thousand noblemen knelt before me, and
Swore to me their unending service.
And you, Clotaldo, are the one who turned
My misfortune to joy, when you announced
That I was really Crown Prince of Poland.

CLOTALDO

You must have rewarded me handsomely for that.

SEGISMUNDO

I didn't. I called you a traitor,
With hatred in my heart.

I tried to kill you. Twice.

CLOTALDO

Why were you so cruel to me?

SEGISMUNDO

I was lord over everyone,
And I took revenge on the world!
There was a woman, though,
And I know that I loved her.
I'm sure that part was real,
For the feeling remains alive inside me.

(Exit BASILIO.)

CLOTALDO

The king was moved by what he heard.

It was talking about the nobility
Of the eagle that caused you
To dream of power. But, even in dreams
It is only proper and moral to respect
The honor of a man who has raised you,
And cares for you a great deal.
Even in dreams, Segismundo,
Good deeds are never wasted.

(CLOTALDO exits.)

SEGISMUNDO

Perhaps that's true. If so,
Then maybe I should restrain
My pride and ambition, and
My beastly nature, just in case
I ever dream again.
And I know that I will dream again,
For the world is so bewildering
That just living is merely dreaming;
And, if I've learned anything from
This experience, it's that every man
Who lives his life, is merely dreaming
His reality until he is awakened by death.

The king dreams that he's king, and lives
Inside that fiction, giving orders,
Dispensing justice, and governing.

And all that fame and honor is
On loan to him; for his death
Will dissolve the dream to ashes
To be scattered on the wind,
On which his dream was written.
How could any man dare to rule if he knew
He'd only wake up in the sleep of death?

The rich man dreams about his riches;
Which only causes him trouble.
The poor man dreams that he suffers
In his misery and poverty.

The man who just gets by in life
Is only dreaming.
The man who is ambitious and strives
Is only dreaming.
The man who destroys, hurts, and offends
Is only dreaming.
Yet, no one realizes that,
In this world, you merely
Dream what you are.

I'm only dreaming that I'm here,
Shackled in this dank prison;
But, I also dreamt that I could live
In finer, more luxurious accommodations.

What is life? A frenzy.
What is life? An illusion,
A shadow, a fiction,
And the greatest good might be
Worth nothing after all.
For all of life is just a dream,
And even dreams are only dreams.

(SEGISMUNDO ponders the weight of the oppressive stars
as the lights fade to black.)

—— INTERMISSION ——

LIFE IS A DREAM
ACT TWO
Scene 1: Estrella's Garden

(ESTRELLA waits. ASTOLFO enters.)

ASTOLFO

It would seem, Estrella, the omens
Surrounding our unfortunate cousin are true.
This is predictable, of course, for omens of
Misfortune are always proven true,
While predictions of good things
Are uncertain to occur, in the best case.
Take, for instance, the examples of
Segismundo and myself.
For him, the stars predicted Cruelty,
Pride, Misery, and Death; and as we have seen,
Those predictions already have come true.
For me the horoscope was more fortuitous;
For fate promised me Fame, Success, Power,
Triumph, and Great Fortune. But I realize when I gaze
Into your eyes, which shame the sun with their brilliance
And make the most beautiful sunset envious,
That the chances of those predictions coming true
Are dubious at best, for all is hopeless without your love.

ESTRELLA

I do not doubt, your highness, that these
Compliments are sincerely felt, but clearly
They are meant for someone else. Perhaps
You mean to flatter the woman whose
Portrait you wore around your neck
When we first met?
You must think me very naive, Astolfo.
Make love to that woman, then, and see
That she repays you in kindness.
For vows made to me that are truly meant
For her are nothing more than forgeries,
And are worth nothing in the marketplace of romance.

(ROSAURA enters unnoticed.)

ROSAURA

Will my misfortunes ever end?
The one situation I wanted least to

Encounter is happening in front of me!

ASTOLFO

I have already removed the portrait
From my breast, so that you, Estrella
Can enter my heart. And her
Memory shrinks in your shadow,
For your beauty eclipses hers
Like the light of the sun eclipses
All the other stars in the sky.
I will go and fetch the portrait now.

Forgive me, lovely Rosaura,
For this betrayal. But, being apart from you,
You can hardly expect me to be faithful!

(ASTOLFO exits.)

ROSAURA

I'm so relieved I wasn't seen.
I wish I could have heard what they said.

ESTRELLA

Oh, Astraea!

ROSAURA

My lady?

ESTRELLA

I'm so relieved to find you here
For to you alone, can I entrust
An important and very secret task.

ROSAURA

My lady, you know you have
My undying obedience.
It is flattering to know I have your trust.

ESTRELLA

Astraea, although I've only known you
For this brief period of time, I've come
To think of you as a good friend and
Trusted confidante. For this reason,
And because of your honest character,
I will tell you a secret that
I'm afraid to admit, even to myself.

ROSAURA

Your confidence will not be betrayed.

ESTRELLA

Then I should tell it quickly, for it
Is so embarrassing to confess it.
My cousin, Astolfo (and let it suffice
To call him my cousin, because I'm
Afraid to jinx it by calling him anything more),
Was promised my hand in marriage,
If I consent to it. I confess that this wedding
Would reverse many misfortunes with a great joy.
And I desire him. I do. But he unnerves me.
When we first met, he wore about his neck
The portrait of another lady. Just now I asked him
To give it to me, and as a token of his love,
He has gone to fetch it and bring it here to me.
But now I am embarrassed to have asked for it at all,
And could not possibly receive it directly from him.
So, I'll withdraw. When he returns have him give
The portrait over to you, and you can bring it to me.
I know this must all seem so silly, but I'm sure you understand.
You are so beautiful and clever, that I'd bet you are
Well acquainted with the complexity of a woman's feelings
Where men and romance are concerned!

(ESTRELLA exits.)

ROSAURA

Oh, if only I weren't! Now what do I do?
Is there anyone in the universe who is
Wise enough to advise me what to do?
Is there anyone in the universe who is
More unfortunate than I am?
There was a philosopher who once said
That misfortunes are cowards, for they
Never ever come alone. But I think they are brave,
For they never stop advancing and they never turn their backs!
Oh, heaven, what am I to do?
If he discovers my real identity,
Then I will have betrayed Clotaldo,
Who has protected me, and to whom
I owe my life. But, once Astolfo sees me,
It will be impossible to maintain the lie,
For even if I attempt to wear a disguise,

Or affect a funny voice, he will know
The second he looks in my eyes,
For he'll see my soul and know that I am lying.
It doesn't even matter how much I prepare,
For the second he sees me he'll know who I am.
Oh, what am I supposed to do? What do I do?

(Enter ASTOLFO with the portrait.)

ASTOLFO

My love, I bring you the portrait
Just as you requested, and—
Good God!

ROSAURA

Your highness seems
Bewildered. What shocks you so?

ASTOLFO

Seeing you, Rosaura.
And hearing your voice.

ROSAURA

Rosaura? Me? Your highness,
I think you mistake me for another lady.
My name is Astraea, and I am just an
Attendant to the princess, hardly worthy
Of your notice.

ASTOLFO

Don't lie to me.
You may call yourself Astraea,
But I know I loved you as Rosaura.

ROSAURA

Your highness, with all due respect,
I don't understand what you're talking about.
All I know is that Estrella, the princess
So beautiful she's Love itself,
Asked me to wait here and hand over
Your portrait to me, so I may bring it to her.
It is a reasonable request, I think.
That is what Estrella has asked,
And it is my duty to do what she wants
Regardless of benefit or consequence to myself.

ASTOLFO

You are a good liar, Rosaura,
But not that good. Your eyes
Betray the falsehoods that you speak.

ROSAURA

I am here for the portrait only,
Just as the princess requested.

ASTOLFO

All right,

Astraea, since you are determined to
Carry on this lie to the bitter end,
You may tell the princess for me
That I simply respect her too much
To merely send her the portrait.
So, because I esteem and respect her,
Tell her I have sent the original instead,
Since there is no difference between your face,
Rosaura, and the face that's painted in this portrait.

ROSAURA

Estrella asked me to bring her a portrait,
So keep your original, no matter how valuable
It may be. Give me the portrait, your highness,
I must take it to the princess.

ASTOLFO

And, what if I don't give it to you?
What will you do then?

ROSAURA

I'll take it by force!
You're a bully! Let go of it!

ASTOLFO

Never!

ROSAURA

I swear to God, I will not let it
Fall into another woman's hands!

ASTOLFO

You're a devil!

ROSAURA

And you're a liar!

ASTOLFO

Enough, Rosaura dear.

ROSAURA

I am not now nor have I ever been
Your "dear". You lie, Astolfo!

(Enter ESTRELLA.)

ESTRELLA

Astraea? Astolfo? What's going on?

ASTOLFO

It's Estrella!

ROSAURA

Goddess of Love,
Protect me in the giant lie I'm about to tell!

My lady, I am only too happy
To tell what's happening here.

ASTOLFO

And what exactly is happening here?

ROSAURA

I was sitting here waiting for Astolfo,
Just as you had ordered, so I could
Request from him the portrait you desire.
I was sitting here alone for a few minutes,
And my mind began to wander, as it does
From time to time, and in hearing you
Speak of portraits, I was reminded
Of the one that I wear here, in my sleeve.
I pulled it out to look at it, it's so strange
The small things that amuse us sometimes,
And in my clumsiness, I dropped it.
Just then Astolfo arrived, to bring the
Portrait you requested. Rather than hand
Over his own portrait, he picked mine up
And refused to give it back to me.
I asked and asked, but he has not given me
My portrait back, and I got angry and impatient,

And was trying to take it away from him.
That's when you arrived, your highness.
But, the portrait he's holding in his hand
Belongs to me. I think you'll be convinced
Of that when you look at it and see
The portrait is my own.

ESTRELLA

Astolfo, give me that portrait.

ASTOLFO

My lady...

ESTRELLA

Indeed,
The portrait's resemblance reveals the truth.

ROSAURA

It is my portrait, is it not?

ESTRELLA

An exact likeness.

ROSAURA

If you want the Duke's portrait
You will have to ask him for it yourself.

ESTRELLA

Take your portrait and go.

ROSAURA

I have my portrait back!
Now, whatever happens happens.

(Exit ROSAURA.)

ESTRELLA

Astolfo, give me the portrait I asked of you.
Because, even though I never plan to speak to you again,
I will not allow it to stay in your possession, as humiliating
As it was for me to ask for it in the first place.

ASTOLFO

Oh, how do I get out of this one?

Beautiful Estrella, you know I value and esteem you,

But I cannot give you the portrait that you have requested,
Because—

ESTRELLA

You scheming cad!
On second thought, you needn't give it to me after all,
As I would never touch it after it had been in your hands.
Just to look at it would remind me you had tricked me
Into asking for it to begin with!

(Exit ESTRELLA.)

ASTOLFO

Princess, wait! Let me explain!
Damn you, Rosaura!
If you ruin my chance of kingly fate
You will see how swiftly love turns to hate!

(Exit.)

LIFE IS A DREAM

ACT TWO

Scene 2: The Mountain Tower

(Segue as one. Transition to the tower, CLARION is in chains.)

CLARION

I am being held prisoner in this desolate enchanted tower,
Apparently on a charge of First Degree Knowing Stuff.
If they treat you this way because of what you know,
I'd hate for them to find out how much I don't know!
This is no way to live! I have a very big appetite.
It's actually a very serious medical condition.
Don't they have any respect for people
With special dietary needs? I'm starving!
Don't judge me. I can feel sorry for myself
If I want to. I've never done well in silence.
I am actually incapable of holding my tongue.
It's a very serious medical condition.
But the only company I have here are spiders and mice,
And we don't have as much to talk about as you might think.
I have terrible nightmares every night, and I know it's only
Because I'm shriveling away from starvation, and it's

Playing tricks on my brain. You know the bitter irony in all of it?
My biggest crime was not telling everything I knew,
Which is what the smart servant should always do;
But I never choose to do the smartest thing.
It's actually a very serious medical condition.

(Noise of drums and people, VOICES OF SOLDIERS from off.)

SOLDIER 1

This is the tower where he's being held.
Batter down the door if you must!
We must get him out!

CLARION

Do they mean me? Praise Jesus!
They must be talking about me
Because they said "This is the place
Where he's being held."
I'm being held here. That much is true.
Oh, but whatever do they want with me?

(Enter SOLDIERS.)

SOLDIER 1

Let's look in here!

SOLDIER 2

He's here!

CLARION

No, he's not!

(SOLDIERS kneel before CLARION.)

SOLDIERS

All hail our Prince!

CLARION

Are they drunk?

SOLDIER 2

Hail, noble prince; as patriots we won't accept
Another prince but you to take the throne;
And certainly not a foreigner from Muscovy.
We bow before you and pledge our fealty to you alone.

ALL SOLDIERS

Long live our great prince!

CLARION

Holy bananas, I think they're for real!
It must be a local custom here to arrest someone,
Then make him prince, then arrest and imprison him again.
At any rate, it seems to keep happening every day.
I guess I have no choice but to play my part and be the prince.
It's a dirty job, but somebody's got to do it.

ALL SOLDIERS

Let us kiss your feet!

CLARION

You'll be grateful if I pass.
Trust me.

SOLDIER 2

We have already told your father
We recognize only you as our prince.
We told him we would never recognize
The opportunistic foreigner, Astolfo.

CLARION

You can just leave my father out of it!
You've crossed a line, sir!

SOLDIER 1

Apologies, my liege. We did it
To express our loyalty to you.

CLARION

Well, if you did it out of loyalty,
I guess it's all right!

SOLDIER 1

Join us then, and lead us in a fight
To regain your sovereignty!
Long live Segismundo!

ALL SOLDIERS

Long may he live!

CLARION

But why are they calling me Segismundo?
It must be the name they give to all their princes.

(Enter SEGISMUNDO.)

SEGISMUNDO

Who is calling my name?
I am Segismundo.

SOLDIER 2

Which one of you is Segismundo?

SEGISMUNDO

I am.

SOLDIER 2

Then why were you claiming to be Segismundo
You imbecilic dumbass?

CLARION

I object! I never claimed
To be anybody, you see, I didn't. You came in here
And Segismundized me! I was just sitting here minding
My business, until you busted the whole door down!

SOLDIER 1

Great Prince, Segismundo!
Your father, King Basilio, has the full support
Of his court to deprive you of your birthright,
And place the usurper Astolfo on the throne.
The common people are near revolt, as
We will never accept a life under the rule
Of a foreigner, especially now that we know
We have a rightly king who should rule us.
Lead us to fight for the crown and scepter,
So we can deny them to that tyrant.
Freedom is yours: Take it!

SOLDIERS

Long live Segismundo! Long may he live!

SEGISMUNDO

Oh, stars! What does all of this mean?
Once again you want me to dream of majesty,

Which I know will be proved false with time?
Once more I'm to experience wealth and power
Only to see it dissipate on the wind?
Once again you ask me to risk being disillusioned,
Perhaps the most painful thing a man can feel?
I won't do it. I won't do it.

I've been returned to my tragic fate, and since
I now know that all of life is temporal and illusory,
I demand you go away phantom shadows;
And leave me alone to rot here in my mountain cell.
Because I don't want feigned majesty, or imaginary power.
I don't want illusions that will disappear at the first sign of the breeze,
Like the beautiful flowers of an almond tree which bloomed
Too early, and is stripped of the beautiful decoration of its pink buds.
I know who you are. And I know you do the same thing
To everyone who falls asleep, but I see now,
For the first time in my whole life, the truth:
Which is that Life is a Dream, and nothing more.

SOLDIER 2

If you think you are dreaming, majesty,
Look to those mountains and see
The soldiers who number there
Awaiting your orders.

SEGISMUNDO

Once before,
I have seen the exact same thing;
Just as clearly and vividly
As I see it now, and it was all a dream.

SOLDIER 2

My lord, it is not unusual for historical events
To be foreshadowed by predictive dreams; and that
Is the case right now, if you really dreamed this before.

SEGISMUNDO

You may be right, it might have been predictive,
And, in case my dream was true, and seeing
That life is so short, let me dream, O Stars,
Let me dream once again. But this time I now
Know that I will be forced to awaken just when
The dream is most pleasant, and, perhaps knowing that
Will mitigate the disappointment when it happens.
And should this fortune-telling dream prove true,

I now know my power is borrowed, and must
Be returned eventually to its rightful owner.
And, if that's the case, it's right to risk everything.
Vassals, I thank you for your loyalty to me;
In me you have found a man who will fight alongside you
To free you from servitude to a foreign king.
Sound the alarm! Now you shall see my boundless valor!
I will take arms against my father the king, and ensure
Everything he most feared is proved to be truth.
Soon, I shall stand over him while he cowers at my feet!
But perhaps it's better not to talk too much about it;
For fear I wake up before I'm able to see it happen?

ALL SOLDIERS

Long live Segismundo! Long may he live!

(Enter CLOTALDO.)

CLOTALDO

What's going on in here?

SEGISMUNDO

Clotaldo!

CLOTALDO

Sire? He means
To kill me now, I'm sure.

CLARION

Fifty bucks
Says he throws him off the mountaintop.

CLOTALDO

I throw myself on your feet, even though
I know it means my death.

SEGISMUNDO

Stand up,
Clotaldo, get up off of the ground. I owe
My life to your care and teaching, and wish
To show you the respect and honor I owe you.
Embrace me, Clotaldo.

CLOTALDO

What do you mean?

SEGISMUNDO

I am certain I'm dreaming, and am trying,
To do what's good; for you yourself said,
Even in dreams a good deed is never wasted.

CLOTALDO

It encourages me to hear you say that.
And I hope you will understand when
I say that I must do the same. If you
Intend to take arms against your father,
I cannot help or counsel you, for he is my king,
And to take arms against him is treason.

SEGISMUNDO

I am your prince! You are a traitor!
But heavens, maybe I should keep my temper,
Control my nature, for I don't know yet whether
I wake or sleep.
Clotaldo, if that is how you truly feel,
Then go and serve the king.
Your loyalty is a credit to your character.
I will see you on the battlefield.
You there, sound the alarm!

CLOTALDO

If my loyalty is a credit to my character,
Your generosity is a credit to yours.

SEGISMUNDO

To the palace! Cosmos, let me be
Victorious and reign as is my right!
If I'm awake I never want to fall asleep,
And if I'm dreaming, don't wake me up.
Either way, what matters is to try and do
What's right, for if this is real, then Right
and Justice are justifications of themselves.
But if this is unreal, it can't hurt to establish
Some credit with my creator up in heaven:
For on the judgement day the debt comes due,
And judiciousness provides your only revenue.

(THEY exit, sounding the alarm.)

LIFE IS A DREAM
ACT TWO
Scene 3: Court of King Basilio

(Enter King BASILIO and ASTOLFO.)

BASILIO

But who can stop a runaway horse, Astolfo?
Who can hold back the roaring flood as it races
To the sea? Who can halt the course of a boulder
Once it begins its fall from the jagged summit?
No one. Yet even that is easier to stop than
What we now face. An entire nation is rising up
In pridefulness and treason! In the streets you hear them,
The shouts of the divided factions, which echo in the canyons:
Some shout "Astolfo!", others "Segismundo!"
My kingdom has become a grisly theatre for Fate
To stage its monstrous tragedies!

ASTOLFO

Your majesty, cancel the wedding, and put an end
To all engagement party plans as well, for if Poland,
Which I someday hope to rule, is not united behind me,
It must be because I have not earned their loyalty.
Give me a horse! And I will ride into battle armed with
My pride and my rage! I'll strike those treasonous rebels
With the force of the mightiest thunderstorm!

(Exit ASTOLFO.)

BASILIO

What was predicted as inevitable
Has unfortunately come to pass.
Can you defend yourself from what's predetermined?
No. The man who impedes the predictions of Fate,
Only ever succeeds in helping them to occur!
Cruel horror! I tried to save my kingdom from tyranny,
And in doing so, have hastened my own downfall!

(Enter ESTRELLA.)

ESTRELLA

Your majesty, you must do something.
Divided factions battle in the streets and squares.
Already the whole country floats on currents of blood,

So tragic is the misfortune that we now suffer!
So great is the ruin of your kingdom,
So cruel the violence that's broken out,
That people are blinded by the horrors
And deafened by the sound of people's screams.
The sun darkens, the wind breathes calamity,
Every stone marks a grave,
Every flower a funeral wreath,
Every building a mausoleum,
And every man a living corpse!

(Enter CLOTALDO.)

CLOTALDO

Thank God I have found you alive and unharmed!

BASILIO

Clotaldo, my friend! Tell me, where is Segismundo?

CLOTALDO

My lord, he's been freed from his tower prison
By an army of commoners, blind and vengeful,
Monsters bent on the destruction of the kingdom at all costs.
The moment the prince found himself freed, he quickly
Displayed his honor, in announcing his intention to
Overthrow your majesty and make you grovel at his feet!
He vows to make his hateful horoscope come true.

BASILIO

Bring me a horse, Clotaldo, and I will ride into battle
To overcome the fury of a disloyal son, and so that
I may defend my crown and my kingdom!
Let my sword set right what my astrology got wrong!

ESTRELLA

I have battled the fierce enemy known as jealousy,
So I am unafraid of the terrors that await on the battlefield.
Then, let me ride alongside of you, swinging my sword,
Striking men dead with the fury of Athena herself!

(BASILIO and ESTRELLA exit. CLOTALDO starts to follow, but is detained by ROSAURA, who enters.)

ROSAURA

Your Grace, I request a moment of your time, if I may?
I know that all around us has devolved into war, I hope

I may appeal to your honor and your kindness which I've
Relied upon before.

CLOTALDO

Speak quickly, please.

ROSAURA

I'm eternally grateful to you for your protection here,
And I have done everything you have asked of me.
Despite the fact I disagreed, I have lived in the palace
Under a fake name in service to the princess, and have
Actively tried to avoid meeting Astolfo; even though it
Was incredibly difficult to restrain my jealousy, I did it,
Because you asked it. But, try as I might, he saw me. And
In spite of the fact he knows that I'm here, he continues
To woo Estrella at night, in private meetings in a secret garden!
For that reason, it's time you make good on your promise
To help me avenge the wrong Astolfo has done to me.
I have taken the key to their garden. I will give it to you,
So that you may enter while they meet and take revenge for me.

CLOTALDO

From the moment I first saw you, Rosaura,
I felt bound to do whatever was in my power
To help you in your quest to avenge your honor.
Like you, I have considered several options for
Accomplishing this task, but, all of this has been
Madness, an illusion. I admit I was prepared to take
Astolfo's life, until the moment Segismundo attempted to take mine.
When the Duke placed himself between me and the prince,
He offered to sacrifice his life for my own.
How could I repay that kindness with an assassination?
You once said I gave you life by promising to help you avenge your wrong.
But he gave me life by coming to my rescue when the prince attacked.
I find myself torn between responsibilities to both of you,
And, not knowing what to do, find I can do nothing.

ROSAURA

You are a prominent man, your grace, so I'm sure you know
That giving is the noblest thing a man can do, but by that token,
Then surely it logically follows that receiving is equally dishonorable.
By giving you life, he placed you in a position to compromise
Your honor. And, if that's the case, then you owe Astolfo nothing.
Do the honorable thing, help me kill him to regain my honor.

CLOTALDO

It may be more noble to give than receive, but when one
Has received so precious a gift as life, the only honorable course
Is to dishonor yourself in gratitude to the one who gave you life.
I am a dignified and noble man. I have no doubt that I can manage
To be both honorable and grateful at the same time.

ROSAURA

Your grace,
You yourself told me that a life lived in the shadow of honor wronged
Was no life at all, so with due respect, what kind of life have you given me?
Therefore, you have done no honor to cancel out the dishonor of Astolfo.
You said you can be both honorable and grateful at the same time.
You say you are grateful, now do what's honorable. Help me kill the Duke!

CLOTALDO

Your reasoning makes sense, but your conclusion is flawed.
It's true I owe you better than this broken promise,
But I can make it up to you by giving you some money.
Accept this compensation for my debt, and enter a convent.
I feel confident that this plan is the most logical, as it
Permits me to be generous to you, as I have promised;
And grateful to Astolfo, as I must be, all while remaining
Loyal to the king. It's the safest alternative for you, for in
Plotting the death of Astolfo, you have committed a crime.
Seeking sanctuary seems like a sensible course of action.
I will ensure you safe passage beyond the palace walls.
I could not do more for you if I were your own father.

ROSAURA

If you were my father, I might endure this insult.
But since you are not, you'll excuse me.

CLOTALDO

And then what? And then, what do you intend to do?

ROSAURA

I intend to kill the Duke.

CLOTALDO

And a woman with no father
Has such honor to defend?

ROSAURA

Yes.

CLOTALDO

What makes you so determined?

ROSAURA
The value of my reputation.

CLOTALDO
You understand, that someday we will see Astolfo—

ROSAURA
He has trampled on my honor!

CLOTALDO
—As husband to Estrella and King of Poland!

ROSAURA
It will never happen, if I have anything to say about it!

CLOTALDO
This is insanity.

ROSAURA
That may well be, your grace.

CLOTALDO
Then don't give in to it!

ROSAURA
That's impossible.

CLOTALDO
Then you stand to lose—

ROSAURA
I know I do.

CLOTALDO
Your life as well as your honor.

ROSAURA
That may well be.

CLOTALDO
What is your endgame?

ROSAURA
My death.

CLOTALDO
Can't you see

This is no more than spite?

ROSAURA
It's honor, not spite.

It's madness.
CLOTALDO

ROSAURA
I have more value than the Duke thinks.

It's a frenzy.
CLOTALDO

ROSAURA
It's grief. It's hate.

CLOTALDO
So, is there no
Stopping you from giving in to blind emotion?

ROSAURA
No.

Even with no one to help you?
CLOTALDO

ROSAURA
I can do for myself.

Is there no changing your mind?
CLOTALDO

ROSAURA
I'm afraid not.

CLOTALDO
Think hard. I'm sure there are other ways...

ROSAURA
All roads lead to my own ruin. I will keep my present course.

CLOTALDO

You think you set about to cause your own undoing,
But we all may be undone by the storm that is brewing.

(THEY exit.)

LIFE IS A DREAM
ACT TWO
Scene 4: The Battle

(Trumpets. SEGISMUNDO and CLARION enter, leading SOLDIERS.)

SEGISMUNDO

Rome in its greatest glory days would have been honored
To see their army headed by a wild animal like me!
I am ready to conquer the kingdom and the heavens!
But maybe I should check my pride, for if it turns out
All of this is just a dream, I don't want to awake disappointed
That all I have achieved and won has suddenly disappeared.

(A trumpet sounds within.)

CLARION

Your highness, I see a horse; a swift steed, of patchy gray coat,
The body of which is like a map of the whole world. Its chest
Encloses a soul made of fire, and its breath is as powerful
As the tides of the sea. And on that horse I see a woman, who,
Like the horse appears to fly rather than run toward us.

SEGISMUNDO

I see her, Clarion, and am blinded by her elegant beauty.

CLARION

Sake's alive! It's Rosaura!

(CLARION withdraws.)

SEGISMUNDO

Heaven has brought her back into my sight!

(ROSAURA enters, dressed as an androgyne.)

ROSAURA

Heroic Segismundo, noble prince,
Whose halo lights the firmament
Like the sun; resplendent King of Poland,
Your honor emerges from the darkness
Of shadow, to shine its light on all the mountains
As well as the sea. And as you rise to protect Poland,
May you also offer the light of your protection
To an unfortunate woman who throws herself

On your mercy by kneeling at your feet.
I hope you will honor my request, your majesty,
And being a brave and honorable man, you will
Be placed under my obligation as a supplicant.
This is the third time that you have looked on me,
With wonder and amazement, never knowing
Who I am, as each time you saw me, I wore
A different disguise. The first time you saw me,
I appeared as a man, when we met in your solitary prison,
And your own misfortunes comforted me at a time
Of great misery. The second time you saw me,
You thought I was a woman, when your princely reign
Occurred in the ghostly shade of a dream.
Now we meet for a third time, and I am neither man
Nor woman, dressed as I am in both women's clothes
And masculine armor, with weapons as my only accessories.
It is my sincere hope that I may earn your pity,
As you are more likely to offer me protection out of pity,
By recounting for you my unfortunate history
Which has brought me to this strange and wondrous place.
I was born in Muscovy, to an honorable mother, who,
(Oh, how great is a woman's misfortune), was exceedingly
Beautiful. She was seduced by a man, a deceiver.
I don't name him because I don't know his name,
But I know he was a noble man, because my mother said so.
As a child, I used to imagine my father was a god who came to Earth,
So enamored of my mother's beauty, he could not control himself
From transforming to an animal to take advantage of her honor.
But it was not a god, but only a double-dealing man, who will say
Whatever he must to wear down the resolve of noble women;
And, so he did, for he made all manner of romantic promises,
And swore that he would one day take her for his wife,
And his lies were so convincing that even to this day, she considers
Him her lawful husband. This was not a marriage, but a crime.
But out of this unholy union, I was born, a nearly exact copy of my mother.
Not in looks, though I would have been grateful to receive her beauty,
But in my terrible luck and ability for repeating her terrible mistakes.
I, too, loved a man, a deceiver, who just like my father, whispered
Sweet promises to me when he lay beside me, but who left me
At the first opportunity to pursue power and fame.
I loved the Duke, Astolfo, your cousin, oh, how it makes me angry
To utter his name. For, even though he promised me marriage,
He abandoned me in Muscovy to come to Poland to seduce
Your cousin, the Princess Estrella, in order he may achieve the throne.
I was so enraged by his abandonment, that I was lost in a personal Hell.
I was offended and sad, and these emotions would have driven me mad,

But, I kept my misfortunes secret, and dealt with them alone,
For to admit them would have meant death to my honor.
Only mother was able to break down the wall I built around my torment,
And one night, through tears, I confessed everything to her,
My thoughts tumbling out of my heart, one after another.
She heard my misfortunes patiently, for she herself had suffered
A similar indignity, and her understanding was a comfort to me.
She wanted me to handle the situation differently than she did,
And so suggested that I follow him into Poland, and force him
To honor his debt to me. And, in order to insure my safe travel,
She dressed me in men's clothes, and gave to me an old sword,
Which hung on the wall; it is the one you see me wearing now.
She told me to wear this sword and venture into Poland,
So sure was she that anyone who saw me with this blade
Would do everything in their power to insure my safety.
Shortly after arriving in Poland, I was thrown from a bolting horse,
And that's how I first stumbled on you in your dark lonesome cell.
Clotaldo, who could have had me killed for visiting you there,
Instead took pity on me, and encouraged me to dress as my own sex,
And take a position in service to the princess Estrella.
This is the second time you saw me, when you dreamed you ruled the kingdom.
Clotaldo had promised to help me take my revenge on Astolfo,
But has since changed his mind, and decided that he and Estrella
Must wed and rule in Poland. He advised me to let my claim go.
But, I cannot. I will not. And so, I appeal to you, noble Segismundo,
For the stars have decided today is the day you take your revenge,
And take up arms to claim your noble birthright from your tyrant father.
I wish to assist you, majesty, hence why I wear the armor
And weapons of a male soldier, for it is advantageous for the two of us
To help each other. It is advantageous to me, so the man I mean
To call my husband is not wed to another woman. It is advantageous
To you, for in halting this marriage, you ensure that you are king.

As a woman, I beseech you to help me restore my good name.
As a man, I vow to fight alongside of you to recover your crown.
As a woman, I hope to soften your heart with my misery.
As a man, I hope to aid and comfort your army however I can.
As a woman, I beg you to help me to right this wrong to my honor.
As a man, I will stand beside you and put my life on the line for you.
But if you attempt to seduce me as you would any woman,
I will kill you like a man, for in this war of love
I am a woman in my sadness and rage,
But I am a man in my strength and nobility.

SEGISMUNDO

Oh stars, what does all of this mean?

If I am really dreaming, then let my mind rest,
Because it seems impossible for so much confusion
To live in one dream alone. Oh, if only I could escape.
But, if I only dreamed of the kingly grandeur I once knew,
How does this woman describe it all so accurately?
It must have been reality, and not a dream at all,
But somehow all of this only adds to my confusion.
Is glory like a dream? I think it must be, for the real ones
Are always believed to be false, and the lies take the
Aura of legend. If there's so little difference between the two,
Then can one ever be sure that what they see is real or a lie?
How can a copy look so like the original that you can't see the difference?
And, if that's the case, it seems we have no choice but to see
Grandeur and pomp, majesty and power, dispersed in darkness.
Then, we must all learn to make the most of what time we are given,
Because everything we enjoy in real life are also the stuff of dreams!
Rosaura is in my power, that's clear; and yet, I tremble at her beauty,
Even as she kneels at my feet and asks for my charity.
Figure it out, Segismundo, do you dream, or do you wake?
I suppose it doesn't matter, since pleasure is a lovely flame,
Whose ashes are scattered on the first wind that blows.
Rosaura asks me to give her back her honor, and surely it is
More befitting of a prince to give honor than to take it away?
Oh, stars, I know what I have to do! I will restore her honor,
Before I take my revenge and claim the rightful crown!
Sound the alarm! For we will take siege of the palace today!

ROSAURA

Sire! Surely you don't run from me before satisfying my request!
Doesn't the confession of my painful secret warrant at least a response?
Why won't you look at me? Do you hear me, majesty?
Please, Prince Segismundo, turn your face and look at me!

SEGISMUNDO

Rosaura, it is because I value your honor that I must be cruel to you now.
My voice doesn't answer you because it can't, only actions can.
I am silent because I hope my deeds will answer your request fully.
I don't look at you because it is too painful to see your beauty
When I feel so responsible for your good name and honor.

(SEGISMUNDO exits, with soldiers.)

ROSAURA

Why answer me in riddles?
I have suffered so much

And continue to suffer,
Because of ambiguous non-answers!

(Enter CLARION.)

CLARION

My lady, is this a good time to talk?

ROSAURA

Clarion! Where have you been?

CLARION

Alas, my lady, I was locked in the tower,
Playing a game of cards with Fate.
But the dealer was only dealing me
The Ace of Spades, which means Death,
As sure as I stand here talking to you.

ROSAURA

But why? I don't understand.

CLARION

Because I know the truth about you.
In fact, Clotaldo—

(Drums within.)

But, what's that?

ROSAURA

What could it be?

CLARION

The king is raising a large squadron of soldiers
In order to overcome the fierce Segismundo,
Who comes with a powerful army of his own.

ROSAURA

Then what am I doing standing here like a coward
When I should be fighting right beside him?
The world is a cruel and unforgiving place, Clarion,
But we must fight against injustice wherever we see it!

(ROSAURA exits.)

VOICES

Long live King Basilio! (Within.)

OTHERS
(Within.)
Long live our liberty!

CLARION
Long live liberty and the king!
Personally, I don't give a fart for either!
All I care about is that I am safe and comfy,
And with that in mind, I will go into hiding.
From this position, I should have a great view
Of the whole damn show! And, in hiding here,
Death could never possibly find me!
Up yours, Death!

(CLARION hides.)

(The battle begins. There is a lengthy sequence of swashbuckling swordfights, cannon fire, and gunfire; culminating in a violent confrontation between SEGISMUNDO and CLOTALDO, and, finally, ROSAURA and ASTOLFO. As the battle rages, the stage is soon littered with bodies.)

Astolfo! ROSAURA

Rosaura! ASTOLFO

ROSAURA
I bring your death,
My lover and betrayer!

ASTOLFO
Never!

(They fight. ROSAURA wounds ASTOLFO.)

Help! I'm wounded!

ROSAURA moves in for the kill, but is distracted by a soldier who comes to ASTOLFO's rescue. THEIR battle

takes them off. CLOTALDO enters, followed by BASILIO and ESTRELLA. Segue as one to next scene.)

LIFE IS A DREAM

ACT TWO

Scene 5: The Court of King Basilio

(ASTOLFO is wounded, but not mortally. Enter BASILIO, CLOTALDO, and ESTRELLA.)

BASILIO

Was there ever a more unfortunate king?
Was there ever a more miserable father?

CLOTALDO

Your army is defeated, and those who live
Are deserting, fleeing as fast as they can.

ASTOLFO

The kingdom is lost. All is lost. The traitors
Are the victors of this war.

BASILIO

When the battle ends,
The only traitors who exist are those on the losing side.
Come, Clotaldo, we should flee Poland and the fury
Of my cruel, inhuman, tyrannical son!

(CLARION, who was wounded during the battle while in
hiding, falls from his hiding place.)

BASILIO

Heavens, who's this?

ASTOLFO

Who is this injured soldier who falls at our feet
Dyed red with his own blood?

CLARION

I'm only an unfortunate man, who in trying
To evade death has only ensured it has come.
In my pride, I mocked death; and, in fleeing
From it, found it hiding, lying in wait for me.
You can't outrun Death, no matter how fast you run.
Go back! Don't do as I did, and try to escape.
Go back to the blood-soaked battlefield,
And make your stand. For it is safer among the cannons
And the soldiers than it is in any quiet crevice.
For no matter where you hide, Destiny will find you,

If it's your fate. You can be certain that you will die,
If it is God's will for you to die.

(CLARION dies.)

BASILIO

"You can be certain that you will die,
If it is God's will for you to die."
Oh, cruel stars! How eloquently our follies are told
By this speaking corpse; His wounded, bleeding mouth speaks truth.
I tried to protect my country from violence and war,
And have only given it the very things I tried to protect it from.

CLOTALDO

Sire, it is true that no man can ever run away from Death,
But a good Christian does not despair in this way,
Claiming there is no escaping misfortune. For the wise man
Can create his own safety, by trying to control his own destiny.
And, at the moment, we are not at all safe, and must
Seek a place to hide where we're protected from our misery.

ASTOLFO

Your highness, what Clotaldo is telling you is sage advice,
Befitting of a man of his mature age; I am a young man,
And, amid the dense branches of this mountain canyon,
I see a horse. You should ride it to escape, while I stay
Behind and protect you from the traitorous army.

BASILIO

No. If it is God's will that I die,
Or if death is waiting for me here,
I will confront it here. Face to face.

(An alarm sounds, and SEGISMUNDO and ROSAURA
enter with SOLDIER 1, and the members of the ensemble
who are still alive.)

SEGISMUNDO

Search the entire forest!
Tree by tree and trunk by trunk.

ESTRELLA

Sire, run!

BASILIO

Why should I?

ASTOLFO

What will you do?

BASILIO

Step aside, Astolfo.

CLOTALDO

What are you going to do?

BASILIO

Clotaldo, I

Want to try the one thing I haven't done yet.
Prince, if I am the one you are seeking,
You have found me. I prostrate myself before you,
And offer to you my snowy beard to be a carpet for your feet.
My crown is yours to topple from my head.
Take revenge on my honor, treat me as your prisoner.
Let heaven's unfortunate omens be proven true at last!

SEGISMUNDO

Illustrious court of Poland, you who are witness
To the remarkable miracles you've seen today,
Please, attend me, for your Prince is speaking.
That which is decided by heaven, and written
In the stars by God, will always be proved true.
The only one who lies is the man who interprets
Heaven's plans, and then uses his knowledge
To try to defeat what is already inevitable.
My father, the king, attempted to outsmart the stars,
And in so doing he turned me into a monster, a wild animal.
Because of my noble birth, I might have had a reasonable
Nature, and might have learned the way to do what's correct.
Instead, he raised me in the one way that would reinforce
A brutish and unyielding nature! You made the stars' omens true.
But misfortune is not overcome by injustice or revenge,
For those things only reinforce the cruelty and misery.
No, the man who expects to overcome his fortune
Must do so by being prudent and moderate.
Your mistake was trying to defeat impending harm
Before it began, which is impossible, you will only make it true.
It is possible to overturn the stars' predictions, but
Only after the actual situation begins; you can't prevent it.
Let this unusual spectacle be an example for you all,
For I could not plan a better one if I tried.

Here is your king, whose pride led him to outwit the stars,
A father, prostrated submissively at my feet,
And a monarch defeated and trampled by Fate.
It was the will of heaven, and it was foolish to try
To overcome it.
Rise, Sire. Rise, and give me your hand; for
Now that the stars have made you wise to the fact
That you were wrong in your methods of defeating them,
I kneel before you and offer you my neck,
Which humbly awaits your revenge.

(SEGISMUNDO kneels before BASILIO.)

BASILIO

My son, by this action you are reborn as Prince,
The laurel and the palm of victory belong to you.
You have overcome the stars' omens.
This achievement delivers you victory.

ALL

Long live Segismundo! Long may he live!

SEGISMUNDO

Since my nobility brings the expectation
Of great victories, the first I must try
To overcome is myself: Therefore, Astolfo,
Give your hand in marriage to Rosaura,
For you owe her a debt of honor, and I intend to collect.

ASTOLFO

It is true, your highness, that I owe her
An obligation, but I must object, majesty,
She doesn't know who her father was,
And for a man of my station to marry her
Would be infamous to say the least—

CLOTALDO

Don't continue, stop. Please.
Rosaura is as noble as you, Astolfo.
It was my sword that girded her on
In battle. She is my daughter,
And that should be sufficient, your highness.

ASTOLFO

What are you saying?

CLOTALDO

Only that,
Before I could see her married, noble,
And respected, I was forced to conceal
Her true identity. The story behind this
Is too long to tell now, but rest assured,
She is my daughter.

ASTOLFO

Well, if that is the case, I must keep my word.

SEGISMUNDO

And, so that Estrella will not be unsatisfied,
Now that she's lost a prince of great merit,
I will offer to her my own hand to wed as a husband
Who, in worth and fortune, is at least his equal
If not his better, as I could never be.
Give me your hand!

ESTRELLA

It is my gain
To deserve such great happiness.

SEGISMUNDO

Clotaldo, allow me to embrace you.
You served my father faithfully,
And I will repay that kindness
With any request that you may ask.

SOLDIER 1

If that's the honor you bestow
On a man who fought against you,
I am curious to know how you will reward me,
For it was I who instigated the uprising,
And set you free from your prison.

SEGISMUNDO

The tower for you! And, in order
To insure you remain there until you die,
You shall be kept under armed guard,
For a traitor is no longer needed
Once the treason is done.

BASILIO

How wise he is!

ASTOLFO

So changed!

ROSAURA

How clever he's become!

SEGISMUNDO

Why are you all so amazed?²
My teacher was a dream, and still
I am so afraid I may wake up again,
And find myself once more locked in my cell.
And, even if that never happens,
Merely dreaming that it might is enough,
For that is how I came to know that everything
In life passes by in the end like a dream,
And I wish to enjoy my life for as long as it may last.
So, acknowledging our human folly, it is for
Forgiveness of our faults we humbly pray,
As we conclude, at last, our modest play.

(Music. The actors bow as the lights fade to black.)

² This line comes from a translation by John Clifford. It is far superior to the actual line, and cannot be improved upon.

Appendix B - Research and Analysis

A. Playwright's Biography and Works

Pedro Calderón de la Barca was born in Madrid, Spain, on January 17, 1600. He was one of four siblings, the son of an affluent family. His father, who served as Treasury Secretary, died in 1615 when Calderón was only fifteen. The will that his father, Diego Calderón, left behind provides ample evidence that he was a hard and authoritarian figure. The will was written shortly before his death, in which his sons' inheritances were tied to their fulfilling his specific wishes for their lives, attempting to control their actions and behaviors after their deaths. His oldest brother, Diego, who was nineteen at the time of his father's death, discovered his inheritance was contingent on his not marrying a specific young woman of whom his father did not approve. Similarly, Pedro was expected to devote his life to the Catholic priesthood. It seems clear he fervently wished to do as his father wanted, as he flirted with entering the priesthood several times throughout his life. Obviously, though, he is best remembered as a playwright, and it seems he was constantly torn between poetry and the theatre and his Catholic faith. He also had an illegitimate younger brother, the product of his father's relationship with a domestic servant, which was not revealed until Calderón was nineteen years old. His bastard brother had grown up with the family, working in the household as a servant. Certainly, his father was a difficult man, and perhaps Calderón's own relationship with his father is what informs the conflict between fathers and sons that permeates many of his best plays, and especially *Life is a Dream*.

At his father's insistence, Calderón studied in Madrid at a Jesuit college, with a plan to follow his father's wishes and enter the priesthood; but by 1620, he abandoned this plan to go to Salamanca to study law. There is some controversy about where Calderón went after his studies terminated in 1622. For years, scholars believed that he served in the Spanish army from 1625-

1635, in Flanders, and in Italy, but this has since been disproved by contemporaneous legal documents. For instance, we know for a fact that Calderón was back in Madrid in 1629, when his brother Diego was stabbed by an actor, who then sought sanctuary in a convent of Trinitarian nuns, Pedro Calderón and some of his friends broke and entered the cloister, and attempted to drag the offender out. This act was vocally denounced by a celebrated priest, Félix Paravicino in an impassioned address before King Philip IV. Calderón was so incensed, he included a parody of the speech in one of his early plays, *El Príncipe Constant*. This passage caused considerable controversy and had to be removed, and Calderón was briefly imprisoned for this minor scandal.

After his release, he became dedicated to playwriting, and by the time Lope de Vega passed away in 1635, Calderón was the inheritor of his title as Greatest of the Spanish playwrights of the era. Having started as the author of religious *autos*, he eventually graduated to honor tragedies and open air *comedias*. *Life is a Dream* is believed to have been written in approximately 1633, and to have first been performed in 1633 or 1634. It was published in a quarto edition by 1635.

From 1640-1642, he most certainly saw service in the Spanish military, having distinguished himself and been awarded for his bravery in battle at Catalonia. In 1642, with his health failing, he returned to Madrid, and by 1650 decided to give up his work as a playwright to finally enter the priesthood according to his father's wishes. He was ordained in 1651, and presided over a parish in Madrid. He was not successful in his attempt to give up playwriting, but tried after his vows to confine his work to the creation of *autos*. In 1662, two of his *autos*, *Las órdenes militares*, and *Misticay real Babilonia*, were confiscated and condemned by the Spanish Inquisition, and the condemnation was not rescinded until 1671.

In 1663, he was appointed King Philip IV's personal chaplain, and until his death, his patronage at the court allowed him to write his mythological plays, for the proscenium theatre at the palace, which built the foundation for Spanish opera, the earliest of which featured libretti by Calderón. Despite his popularity, and the royal patronage he enjoyed in the later years of his career, he died in poverty in 1681.

His major works consist of four popular styles of drama of the Spanish Golden Age. He wrote several *auto sacramentales*, including *Devotion to the Cross* (c. 1630), *The Constant Prince* (c. 1629). His *comedias* include *Life is a Dream* (c. 1633), and *The Phantom Lady* (1629). He wrote several honor tragedies which were very popular with audiences of the era, among them *The Surgeon of His Honor* (c. 1636), *The Painter of Dishonor* (1645). At the end of his career he wrote mythological plays for the court theatre. Most well-known is *The Daughter of the Air* (c. 1652).

B. Production History

Original Production

Life is a Dream was originally produced in Madrid in approximately 1633-34. Like most secular *comedias* of the Spanish Golden Age, it was performed in a *coralles*, a large open-air public theatre staged on a scaffold erected in a patio between four buildings. The highest ticket prices were indoors at the windows, which functioned like upper galleries and box seats. The cheapest tickets were standing room seats on the ground. There was a section reserved upstairs for lower class women, as audiences were segregated. Unlike in the Elizabethan and Jacobean drama in England, women performed in Spanish Golden Age drama, and would have performed in *Life is a Dream*. The original production would have run a few days, but seems to have received a revival in the court theatre in the 1660s.

Subsequent Major Productions

Life is a Dream has been performed countless times in the centuries since it was written, and remains a widely performed classic in Spanish language theaters. It has been translated into many languages, and performed all over the world. For this section, I have cherry picked high profile productions in American and British theaters, which used English translations.

Broadway (1953): La Vida es Sueño was performed for 31 performances at the Broadhurst Theatre. The production was performed by the Spanish Theatre Repertory Company. It was performed in repertory with productions of: *Don Juan Tenorio*, *El Alcade de Zalamea*, *Reinar Duspués de Morir*, *El Cardenal*, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, and *La Otra Honra*. There is scant record of this production outside of an incomplete listing on ibdb.com. This is the only time that *Life is a Dream* was performed in a Broadway house.

Off-Broadway (1981): To correspond with the tercentenary of the death of Calderón, the Intar Theatre, which is one of the longest-running Spanish language theatre companies in the United States, opened a production downtown NYC. It was adapted and directed by Maria Irene Fornes. According to Mel Gussow, the critic for the New York Times, who reviewed the show, Fornes's production was a "Goya-esque nightmare." He damns with faint praise the actors who played Segismundo (Dain Chandler - "somewhat overdoes the prince's stupor and subsequent brutality"), and Rosaura (Margaret Harrington - "acceptable"), but called the other performers "insecure [to] amateurish." He called Cliff Seidman, who played Basilio "all too obviously a young actor trying to pull off the airs of an old man." Fornes staged the early scenes "in slow motion and in dim light, which makes the characters seem like somnambulists" (Gussow). Gussow compares the production unfavorably to a production a few years earlier by Yale Rep.,

and was ambivalent to several thematic changes and new ending Fornes wrote to give the show a more contemporary feel.

Royal Shakespeare Company (1984): John Barton adapted and directed a production that premiered in Stratford-on-Avon in 1983, and then played to tremendous success in repertory at The Pit (the smaller space at the RSC's Barbican Centre) in 1984. Frank Rich, reviewing the production for the New York Times in its London stand, called it "both magical and lucid," and remarked it was playing "in repertory to turn-away crowds." It received two Olivier Award nominations at the end of the 1984 season; one for director John Barton, the other for Miles Anderson in the role of Segismundo.

Sueño - Hartford Stage Company (1998): Hartford Stage Company commissioned this new adaptation from playwright José Rivera. In this production (as well as a 2006 production of this script at Milwaukee Rep), Rivera's adaptation came in for criticism for its uneasy marriage of classical poetry and modern "anachronistic insistence, which ranges from low-down vaudeville to contemporary street talk with an occasional raunchy side trip to gratuitous slang. Commands like 'come out of the closet' and 'give me a break' alternate with references to the minimum wage, double dealers and flakes" (Klein,). The script was also criticized when it was produced in 2000 by MCC and in 2006 by Milwaukee Rep.

Donmar Warehouse (2009): The most recent high-profile production which was extremely well received, was the recent production at Donmar Warehouse Theatre in London. The translation for this version was by Helen Edmundson, and the production was directed by Jonathan Mumby. Edmundson's adaptation was criticized by Charles Spencer in *The Telegraph* for "mov[ing] between blank verse and rhyme, mixing the cod-Shakespearean with the language of a fairy tale, sometimes makes this fresh and startling play feel fustily old fashioned. And the

jangling, wailing score is far too intrusive.” Still critics praised the dark, and violent production design, with high praise going to Angela Davies’s scenic design, described by Spencer as “the black back wall smeared with peeling gold leaf” (Spencer). The cast came in for high praise, with Dominic West (of *The Wire* fame) receiving love letters for his performance as Segismundo.

It seems obvious, then, that English language adaptations of *Life is a Dream* are historically problematic, and efforts to modernize the play are often criticized and derided. The most successful of these productions, the Donmar production and (perhaps) the Broadway production are the productions here who may have been most successful kept the show in its milieu and adhered to its classical roots.

C. The World of the Play

The 17th Century in Spain was a time of vast decline for an empire which had seen great expansion under the line of Habsburg kings that was to end with the death of Charles II in 1700. The Spanish government continued the Spanish Inquisition, just as in the 16th Century. It was a time of Christian primacy on the Iberian Peninsula: the Catholic Church had by this time gained cultural dominance over the Jewish and Muslim Moorish populations who had been the dominant cultural groups in Spain in the Middle Ages.

Beginning with the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588, Spain, which at the time controlled a vast empire that stretched from America to Africa, began a period of slow and complete economic decline. King Philip IV, who was an ineffectual king, ruled from 1621-1665, and was monarch at the time Calderón wrote *Life is a Dream* (approximately 1633-1635). Due to his own leadership incompetency, Philip IV turned over much of the decision making to an advisory board of corrupt aristocratic advisors. One of these advisors, Gaspar de Guzmán, Count

of Olivares, attempted to usurp the king's authority in much the same way Cardinal Richelieu had effectively done in France, by establishing a centralized parliamentary government. His unpopular political attempts to rob the monarchy of its power, as well as high taxes that he implemented, led to the revolt of Catalonia, which was immediately annexed by France. Clearly, Philip IV's feckless leadership served to only foment Spain's decline as a superpower.

To further exacerbate the political and foreign policy problems being experienced in Spain during the 17th Century, Portugal (which had been under Spanish control since 1590) asserted Independence and began the Restoration War, which coincided with Spanish involvement in the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648), as well as the Franco-Spanish War (1635-1659). This period of involvement in various wars across Europe had a negative economic effect, and the end of the Portuguese Restoration War marked the end of the Iberian Union, effectively ensuring Spain's decline as an Empire. Spain's economic woes were equally exacerbated by the fact that income inequality was marked.

All this crisis was further deepened when, after the death of Philip IV, he was succeeded by his son, Charles II. Charles II would be the last Habsburg monarch in Spain, and the centuries of Habsburg inbreeding exhibited themselves most unfortunately in the person of Charles II, whose physical, emotional, and mental handicaps made him an unfit monarch. His mother, who on the death of Philip IV was tasked with being a kind of shadow monarch, who could help to cover up Charles's emotional and mental handicaps, instead ceded most of the authority to a cabal of corrupt aristocrats who looted the treasury, and further cemented Spain's decline, both financial and political. The Habsburgs of Spain fought alongside Poland in the Polish-Ottoman War (1633-1634), in which Poland defended itself against Ottoman invasion as "the last bulwark of Christianity." This military alliance coincided with the writing of *Life is a Dream*.

Clearly, Spain in the 17th Century was a vast empire facing a serious crisis of leadership, at a time when a perfect storm of political, economic and foreign policy problems were ensuring its global influence would decline in perpetuity. This must have been especially difficult for a culture of people who had labored for centuries under the idea that kings received their power through divine right, and that monarchical lines were chosen by, and led with the providence of God.

17th Century Spain was a devoutly Catholic country, although that had not always been the case. The Muslim Conquest of the Iberian Peninsula, which took place in 711-732, imposed a long period of Islamic rule in Spain, which lasted until 1482, when King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella were able to topple the Emirate of Granada and place Spain back under Catholic rule. The roughly 750 years of Muslim rule in Spain had marked an era where Catholics, Jews, and Muslims peacefully cohabited, and in which all three cultures could flourish. This period of history is often referred to as the Golden Age of Spanish Jewish culture. When Ferdinand and Isabella brought Spain firmly under the control of the Catholic Church, all of this ended, culminating in the establishment of the Spanish Inquisition.

Most modern people think of the Spanish Inquisition as an occupying force, but it wasn't. The Catholic Crusades, which ravaged the Middle East and resulted in the deaths of millions of Jews and Muslims, was indeed an invading occupying force. But the Spanish Inquisition was a local government agency that operated in full view of and with the full support of the Spanish citizenry. This meant not only wholesale torture and murder of Jews and Muslims still residing in Spain who refused to convert to Catholicism, but also to a culture of religious censorship of art. Plays performed in the public playhouses were frequently called in front of the Inquisition for hearings. Calderón himself had to defend his play *The Constant Prince*, because it contained a

section that satirized a priest who had condemned Calderón for violating the sanctuary of a cloistered abbey in order to avenge the man hiding there who had stabbed his older brother.

In 1599, an anonymous document written to the Board of the Inquisition, detailed an account of a nativity play in which the audience laughed when Mary stated “How can I be with child? I never have known a man.” The audience was familiar with the actress playing Mary, who was very popular, and were well aware of her living in sin with the equally popular actor playing Joseph. This performance apparently culminated in Joseph completely breaking character at the play’s climax to accuse Mary of making eyes at a man in the audience. He called her a whore. Because of this, the theaters were closed for several years. Clearly, the supreme authority in Spain in the 17th Century, resided with the Pope, even more so than with the king. This may have helped many cope with the shaking of the foundational idea that kings ruled with divine right.

16th and 17th Century Poland

Like Spain in the 17th Century, Poland was a vast empire in a long period of precipitous decline, although the decline of Poland started earlier and happened much more quickly.

With the death of King Sigismund Augustus II in 1572, the long monarchic dynasty that had ruled Poland for centuries ended with no natural heir. This was followed by a period of interregnum in which a council of aristocrats ruled and tried to figure out how to restore a monarchy in Poland. This problem was solved within three years, when King Sigismund’s sister Anna (a woman, and therefore ineligible to ascend to the throne) convinced the interregnum

government to agree to the marriage of Anna to the French prince, Henri de Valois, to marry her and succeed to the throne in 1575. This began a period in Poland in which the monarch was almost exclusively a foreigner. This fate was sealed when Henry fled Poland after a year to return to France to succeed his brother as King of the more influential country. He was succeeded by Stephen Bathory, a Lithuanian soldier known for his valiance. After his death in 1586, he was succeeded to the throne by King Sigismund III, who married one of the grand-daughters of Sigismund I. He ruled until 1632.

This series of foreign kings led to a series of uneasy political alliances, which resulted in a series of wars which further eradicated Poland's empire and economy. The first of these was the War of Polish succession, which was fought in the second interregnum after the death of Stephen Bathory. As a result of an uneasy alliance between Poland and Russia to defeat the Ottoman Turks, upon Bathory's death, Archduke Maximilian of Russia tried to lay claim to the Polish throne. This led to a conflict between Russia and Poland, which helped install the Swedish Sigismund III on the throne in 1587. He was the first of three monarchs from the Swedish House of Vasa, which would rule in Poland.

Sigismund III ruled in Poland from 1587-1632, while also serving as King of Sweden from 1592-1599. This seven-year alliance between Poland and Sweden saw the Polish Empire expand its territory to its size that made the Baltic Sea an internal lake. Sigismund III, a devout Catholic, lost the throne in Sweden when Protestant Reformationists seized control of the nation. Sigismund was determined to restore Sweden to Catholicism, and involved Poland in a series of largely unnecessary wars involving Sweden and Russia.

The first of these conflicts was the Commonwealth-Sweden-Muscovy War which was fought from 1605-1618. This period is known today in Russia as the Time of Troubles.

Sigismund III was so determined to reclaim the throne of Sweden for himself that he engaged in a series of military misadventures, both in Sweden and in Russia, in an effort to increase his power. Russia, which was going through a difficult economic and political time during this period, was almost conquered on several occasions by Poland, but was unable to do so, largely because of other smaller military conflicts that arose during this time with the Ottoman Empire which was trying to advance its Muslim Empire into Eastern Europe. The Polish saw themselves as “the last bulwark of Christianity” (Porter, 79), and fought alongside the Western European Habsburgs to defend Poland from Muslim invasion. They were victorious in this conflict, but the financial burden of being so long at war caused the government to dissolve into anarchy during the 17th Century.

Poland in the 16th and 17th Centuries was a devoutly Catholic country. When Sweden became Protestant in 1599, King Sigismund III, who had been king of both Poland and Sweden lost the throne in Sweden. He embarked on a thirteen-year campaign to defeat Protestant rule in Sweden, but was completely unsuccessful. When the Islamic Ottoman Empire tried to advance its Empire into Eastern Europe, Poland saw itself as “the last bulwark of Christendom.” In alliance with the Habsburg monarchs of Western Europe they were able to stave off the threat from the Ottoman Empire, but the cost of these wars was too much financially and politically for Poland, which saw the collapse of its government in the second third of the 17th Century.

D. Analysis and Perceptions of the Script

Life is a Dream is a Spanish Golden Age *Comedia*. Originally performed in a *corralles*, a courtyard patio surrounded by 3-4 buildings which formed the boundary of an open-air playhouse. The audience and seating arrangement was strikingly similar to the Elizabethan playhouse, though box seats may have been at the windows of private residences which backed

up to the patio, and who would work out a financial arrangement with the manager for use of their window. Audiences were extremely rowdy, just as in the Elizabethan theatre. The theaters were run by Catholic charity guilds, and proceeds from the performances went to support the charity hospitals.

Because of this, the earliest plays performed in Spain were religious *auto sacramentales*, but eventually the Italian *comedia* troupes began to perform in Spain, and were immensely popular. The Spanish *comedias*, as pioneered by Lope de Vega, borrowed from the *autos* their allegory and metaphor, and from *comedias* he borrowed the stock characters. The Spanish *comedias*, unlike their Italian forbears, are serio-comedies. *Life is a Dream*, like most of Calderón's *comedias*, begins as a tragedy (but with humor), until the final moments when it becomes a comedy.

Segismundo's inability, due in whole to Basilio's well-meaning plot, to distinguish reality from dreams is a central tenet of this play. It is through this uncertainty that Segismundo discovers that he should always do what's right, and is fundamentally transformed through the process. Calderón, who was deeply Catholic and lived the end of his life as a priest, used this metaphor as an allegorical lesson for doing good on Earth (the dream), so you do not suffer when you awaken to actual life (Death). In Calderón's thinking, waking life is the dream, because life is temporal and illusory, and your time here is short and never guaranteed. Looking at this play from a contemporary viewpoint, and as an atheist to boot, I do not respond much to the Catholic allegory side of this theme. However, I am very much enamored with the way this play uses the metaphor of the dream to make a point about the temporal and illusory nature of life, which I think is a Universal truth. Human beings, after all, are largely inconsequential in the broader universe, and a human life span is milliseconds in the context of space time.

The central question at the heart of *Life is a Dream*, is whether Segismundo can overcome his savage nature, in order to serve as a wise and judicious monarch. This question is complicated by the choices of Basilio, which have impacted Segismundo negatively (see *Nature v. Nurture*, below). Regardless of Basilio's parenting techniques, Segismundo faces a clear choice: to accept the astrological predictions about his savage and vicious nature (his fate), or to choose by free will to be a good and decent man. Calderón, as a devout Catholic, of course, would have firmly been on the side of Free Will. The idea of all men as inherently good is a fundamentally Christian viewpoint (or, at least it used to be), and he would have believed that people were shaped "bad" by circumstance, but had self-determination to become good. In Calderón's case, the path to this was accepting Jesus as your savior and observing the Catechism. I fundamentally agree with Calderón on this issue. I believe people are fundamentally good, and go astray most often due to circumstances beyond their control.

Basilio is right to fear the omens presented to him in Segismundo's horoscope, but is so blind to his own hubris that he fails to predict his own role in helping it to come true. Had Basilio not made his fateful decision to lock Segismundo in the tower, Segismundo would not have grown up to be possessed with such uncontrollable rage, and a lack of impulse control. Calderón is arguing that Segismundo (possessed of a fundamentally good nature) was turned into the savage beast he becomes by the actions of his father.

It is the literary conflict as old as time. The sins of the father resulting in the fall of the son, though in this case, the son overcomes his fall through his inherent goodness. This theme provides an important sense of history in the play, and gives the play its universality. The legacy of fathers and sons, of kings and princes, has universal appeal, as it asks important questions

about a person's place in the grand scheme of things, as well as people reconciling their own mortality (viewing children as a vessel for legacy).

The conflict between duty and honor is most present in the Rosaura subplot, and in fact, it is the principle thematic focus of that plot. Rosaura is stuck in a tough position, after Astolfo's abandonment, finds her honor destroyed (her lack of virginity being a serious liability for future prospects, at least for a woman in the 17th Century), and has no path forward to fulfill her societal duty to become a wife and mother. She sees herself as having no choice but to either force Astolfo to face his responsibility to her, or to end his life in return for having hers ruined. Clotaldo, who believes that honor is only attained through a slavish devotion to duty, is fundamentally challenged by the arrival of his daughter, and her similar values (at least insofar as this issue is concerned). But, when the quest for Rosaura's honor collides with Clotaldo's fealty to the king, his core foundations are shaken. Calderón clearly believed that honor was only found in one's duty (to the church or the monarch). I fundamentally disagree, though I think this theme is most relevant today, because an allegorical story on the question of the qualities of character a ruler should have, seems alarmingly prescient.

All of these conflicts are resolved in the final scene of the play: Segismundo learns there is no real distinction between reality and a dream (*Waking Life v. Dream*), and discovers the temporal nature of life is reason enough to quench his darker instincts and do what is right, just, and good (*Predetermination v. Free Will/Nature v. Nurture*). Segismundo's decisions once he attains the throne at the play's conclusion ensure that everyone's honor is intact, while everyone sacrifices something for the sake of their duty to the court (*Duty v. Honor*). At the play's climax, when Basilio discovers the dying Clarion, the death of the young man forces him to stop fearing his son, and to acquiesce to him. Segismundo, in turn, forgives his father (*Father v. Son*).

The central dramatic question of *Life is a Dream* is: Will Segismundo overcome his fate? Perhaps the biggest obstacle to Segismundo's kingship is the fact that his nature is as his horoscope foretells. Segismundo must learn to control his emotions and his worst impulses, in order to display the judiciousness necessary for him to ascend to the throne.

Of course, Segismundo would not present any threat to the kingdom had Basilio not made the choices he made, and decided to lock Segismundo in the tower in the first place. This is further complicated by the fact that he then tricks Segismundo, tearing away from him the divide between waking life and dreams. This crisis ultimately has a salutary effect on his character, but in the main aids a transformation that was never truly necessary.

Astolfo arriving in Poland to make a dubious claim on the throne provides another obstacle to Segismundo ascending to the kingship. While Astolfo is clearly of lesser character than Segismundo (at his core), he has had the benefit of a life spent at court, and so, is politically cunning. He excels at courtly love and palace intrigue. Therefore, he can cover up his worst faults and be perceived as a good choice for king, when in fact, his motives are as questionable as his claim. In coming to Poland, he ensures the arrival of the last of the major obstacles to Segismundo's success.

While it is clearly Rosaura who is responsible for putting the final pieces in place to ensure Segismundo's transformation, she also provides his greatest test. Since she appears of a different gender every time he sees her, she only further causes him to doubt the difference between dreams and reality. On their first encounter (when she is a man), he is moved and profoundly touched by her, but doesn't understand why. In their second encounter (when she is a woman), he is overcome with lust for her, and without the intervention of the royal court, would

rape her. It is only in their final encounter (when she is an androgyne), when she is able to inform him of the sources of his confusion, so he can synthesize the two parts of his duality.

The language of *Life is a Dream* is poetic verse. The verse structure changes variously, depending on the character and situation, which was a characteristic of the style of the Spanish comedia, as pioneered by Lope de Vega. The play is rich in visual metaphors related to mythical monsters (hippogriff, minotaur in the labyrinth), the cosmos (planets, stars, sun, moon, meteors, comets, constellations), and Greco-Roman mythology. It is clear that the cosmos (as a metaphor for fate/destiny, or god), are an ominous concern in the world of this play. They portend doom, and also praise beauty and grace. Clotaldo and Rosaura speak almost explicitly about duty and honor, and it is a principle motivating force in their motivations.

In adapting the play, I have tried to remain true to these qualities, using long sentences, and economical sentences in order to mirror some of the changing verse structure. In every instance, I have kept references to mythological monsters, and the image of the labyrinth, as I think they are thematically incredibly important. Segismundo is, himself, a wild beast in the mountain labyrinth (and the labyrinth of his own disillusionment), who learns civility and virtue by accepting his better self. In most (but not all) places where the script references god, I have substituted the stars, to further underline the importance of the cosmos and astrology in the world of this play. Stars are also more universal than god (about which there are many different perceptions). I have kept references to god and religion where they relate to the character of Segismundo, his training, and his upbringing. The purpose of this is not to erase god from the play, but to open it up in a more universal fashion, so it is more relevant to a 21st century audience, who is not explicitly Catholic.

The rhythm of the verse in *Life is a Dream* is inconsistent in structure. It does not contain the pseudo-rigid structure of Shakespearean drama, instead varying the number of syllables per line depending on the character who is speaking and the situation they are in. Clotaldo tends to speak in larger speeches and soliloquies, with longer lines, which usually weigh the benefits and costs of two solutions to a problem. The rhythm of scenes with Segismundo varies depending on which of his two natures we are encountering. He is short and declamatory in his wild animal phase, but slow and contemplative in his more genuine goodhearted moments. Rosaura, like Clotaldo, tends to speak in shorter lines and shorter speeches, except in her long speech to Segismundo in Act II. Here, due to the urgency of her desperate need, she violates that rule. In a scene slightly earlier, with Clotaldo, the play reaches its fastest rhythm with a lengthy scene in overlapped lines. Basilio speaks in longer speeches, in a slower, sager, and contemplative fashion than other characters. Astolfo's rhythm of speech most contrasts with the other characters, in that his peacocking leads him to speak in long florid sentence structures, which are mellifluous and full of purple language.

In general, *Life is a Dream* wants to move between an easy, floaty, dreamy rhythm, punctuated by sharp bursts of rage and violence, that threaten, but never fully overwhelm the dreaminess. The rhythm indicates to me a clear dichotomy between dreams and nightmares.

The main soundscape of *Life is a Dream* wants to be evocative music. There is very little need for sound effects; but music will go a long way to providing the dreamy evocative atmosphere that the play needs in its duality. In the grand scheme of the play, I don't hear any sound effects, and, in fact, made slight changes in the dialogue to avoid having to use sound cues to alert Clarion and Rosaura as to Segismundo's presence. I think the sound of the horse bolting from Rosaura at the top of show will be necessary, in order to help communicate what exactly is

in media res when the lights come up. I also imagine the sound of guns and cannons punctuate the music that underscores the war in Act II.

Appendix C: Directorial Ideas and Methods

It is my preferred approach to direction to see myself, not as the author of the production, but as the editor. Since theatre is such a highly collaborative art form, it becomes stifling to the artistic process for a director to impose too much onto a production. Rather, the director should steer the actors' and designers' collaborations to ensure that we are telling the story that is most clear and highlights the themes which are most important to communicate to the audience.

I see my role as director of *Life is a Dream* no differently. As we set out to approach this work, I will try to put together and elucidate the most relevant themes as a way to frame the story. A dream world gives the designers a lot of freedom for exploration, and one of the biggest challenges of this play for me is finding a way to box them in, without the box becoming too narrow, or imposing too many of my own ideas on their work. In my experience, collaborators typically have better ideas than I do, and it is important that I allow their voices to be present in the final production.

The same is true of the actors, who, even though several will have non-speaking roles, are vitally integral to the creation of this world. I am extremely excited about the approach that I have planned for work with the actors: we are going to use Viewpoints technique to build the world of the play through group improvisations and rehearsal exercises. Viewpoints training is excellent for creating a close and collaborative ensemble, and it also will allow a vocabulary to emerge for the construction of the staging and the ensemble characters. In this way, every actor, no matter the size or significance of their role, will have a creative voice in the process, and will be present in the final visual production.

I am excited for what a wonderful opportunity this presents for undergraduate students, who largely are not exposed to Viewpoints training (it is typically introduced at the graduate

level). I was exposed to this training and technique as an undergraduate, and it had an extremely positive effect on my artistic sensibilities in my work. Having the opportunity to expose undergraduates to this work, will potentially equip them with invaluable creative tools, which I hope they will continue to use as they continue their educations.

In order to stage *Life is a Dream*, I will need both a dance choreographer and a fight choreographer, and consider myself very lucky to have Gail Leftwich (dance) and Scott Russell (combat) on the creative team. They are both delightfully talented artists, who will bring the right kind of collaborative support to the room, and will be able to realize their work quickly and well. It is a huge task, as the current plan is to feature a full four-and-a-half-minute dance in Act One, and a five to seven minute, full-cast sword fight in Act Two. These two moments of spectacle are the anchor points of each act; they balance each other across the play, and allow an opportunity to use the Viewpoint of Duration in an interesting way, so that we can experiment with storytelling through prolonged periods of action through movement.

I am extremely excited to begin work on this production. I feel extremely confident about my design team, and although there are many inexperienced young actors in the cast, I feel confident that using the Viewpoints work will create a fun and interesting way to cut through their inexperience. It will allow us a fun way to work outside-in in the creation of three-dimensional characters to inhabit this world. Viewpoints will also help us create a world for the play that tells this beautiful story in a way that every member of the cast can be proud of, and will know could not have happened without their contribution.

Appendix D: Design Meeting Preparation

Why am I excited to direct this play?

At the core of *Life is a Dream* are universal questions about the human condition and one's place in this world. I am fascinated by and deeply enamored of this play. Its rich imagery, and not-so-subtle allegory explore these deep questions in a creative and original way with a compelling fantasy story as the landscape. I am taken with the rich metaphors that draw on the cosmos and the solar system, and the stars for inspiration. These things obviously delight and torment the author and characters, and me as well. After all, a star is a nuclear furnace that forms and floats in a void, which is both amazing and terrifying.

And all of this is quite strange, since the first time I read this play as an undergraduate in a Theatre History class I absolutely detested it. My first impression of it was that it was static and talky, and overly obvious in its poetry and metaphor. I found it grueling. A couple of years later I was cast as Basilio in a production my friend José was directing, and through the process of working on it, I fell in love with it. Having directed the play already several times in Spanish, José, who was directing the play in English for the first time, was able to awaken moments in the story and text that had created distance for me when reading it, and allowed them to become moving through his rich understanding of the text and his staging. Through the process of rehearsing and performing in that production over a decade ago, I came to have an abiding love for this story, these characters, and the imaginative possibilities the dream world it encompasses allows us to explore together as collaborative artists.

Why are we doing it right now?

So, some of the big Important questions that Life is a Dream is asking are things like: How do we define our own existence? Where do we fit in the cosmic structure? Are all men equally capable of altruism and atrocities? How can some people manage so well through their lifetime to control their worst impulses, while others seem intent on self-sabotage? Do men have free will? Or is our destiny already laid out for us before we are born by a divine intelligence we can't truly know or understand? How do the traumas of our childhood impact our personhood as adults? Can people ever truly get past the violation of trust created by an abusive parent? Should parents be forgiven for abusing their children if they thought at the time they were acting in the child's best interest? What are the qualities that make a "good king"? Can a "good king" be deeply flawed? Can a deeply flawed person ever become a "good king"?

For the past few months I've had this overwhelming sense of doom that the world is hurtling toward self-destruction. Whether you love or hate this president, and I'm sure we all have a strong opinion, it is hard to deny he is rash, impulsive, and emotional. The President now, regardless of your opinion of his politics or policy, has shown no sign in his character that he is ever going to be a "good king". Do his personal character flaws preclude his ability to become a good leader? Does a "good king" condemn anti-fascist protesters in the same breath that he praises Nazis and Klansmen? Similarly, our former president Barack Obama, was a good man, who was a flawed, but ultimately a "good king". But was he really? Does a "good king" dramatically increase the number of civilian casualties in war by increasing the number of indiscriminate drone strikes? Does a good king allow an already unstable region to destabilize with no real plan in place how to stem the damage? Does a "good king" run on a platform of

uniting the country, but only manage to deepen our divisions? Can any person ever truly be a “good king”?

Last, and perhaps most important: Do we, in fact, have free will, or are we caught up in God’s plan for humanity, incapable of controlling our destiny? You might have thought that this debate was cleared up in the Enlightenment, but these questions are just as relevant now as they ever were. Right now, we are living through a period where we have once in a half-century hurricanes every two weeks. Do we have the power to reverse it? Can we overcome our own hubris and fear and find the power to do it? In a country in which a large and vocal subset of the population, fundamentalist Christians, long for the destruction of humanity and the world (as prophesied in the Bible), can we ever find the democratic popular will to do it?

The major questions explored by Calderón in 1633 are just as relevant today, as they were in a 17th Century Spain in which people were, for the first time, beginning to realize that the “divine right of kings” which they had always accepted, was in fact a fraud, and their kings were as human and fallible as they were. What delights me about exploring this context with *Life is a Dream* is that it seems innocuous, a storybook fable which says nothing truly deep, but has great potential to change hearts and minds.

What do I want to create with my team?

I want to create a beautiful and engaging world, and a magical storybook atmosphere. I should take a moment to define “storybook atmosphere.” I would like to look at a short clip from Jean Cocteau’s *La Belle et La Bête*. Obviously, we don’t want to mimic that style, but to my mind this is the most magical movie I’ve seen, and this atmosphere feels absolutely right. Since *Life, in this world, is a Dream*, there is a lot of creative freedom in how the world of the play can

be structured, imagined and realized. I met with a few of the designers next week, which was helpful in finding my way into setting the parameters for the world. My contribution will be a bit fuller today. My focus today will be on narrowing in on the story we want to tell, and possible methods we want to explore in telling it. My ultimate hope is that we can create a purposefully illogical, emotionally heightened, metaphorically rich world, which best serves the story we're telling, which I'll elucidate as we go on.

What do I want our audience to walk away with?

The real beauty of *Life is a Dream*, for me, is the power it has to make people think about contemporary issues in such a deceptive fashion. A successful production of *Life is a Dream* will seem completely innocuous to an audience, an enchanting allegorical fable with the look and feel of a fairy story, but whose themes and central ideas haunt the audience for hours or days after. How do we create this dream world that illuminates what's most essential to the story, and in a way that is surprising, imaginative, strange, beautiful, and exciting? I honestly don't know the answer to this question, but I am very excited to work with all of you to figure out. The main thing is that the story should uplift and enlighten the audience. They should leave inspired, at least, to try to be better, kinder, more empathetic people.

Whose journey is this?

There is a word I'm going to bring up a bunch of times in the next few minutes that I'm talking, and that word is "duality." What I mean by this, is the "opposition or contrast between two concepts or two aspects of something." Everything embodies or represents two opposite things at the same time. Dreams follow an odd logic, or you might say no logic at all, but the emotional life of dreams is acute and outsized. This subconscious centering of emotional life

over intellectual/logical life, creates a world in dreams in which nothing is what it seems, locations can change in the blink of an eye, and where you may intuitively know that what you understand a thing to be, while the thing is not what you understand it to be. I had a dream years ago I have never forgotten in which I was in my backyard with a friend, even though we were clearly on a carnival midway. Dreams embody opposition and contrasts between concepts all the time, and creating a world that embraces and showcases this duality will be our most effective tool to create the Dream/storybook world.

The Prince Segismundo also illustrates this duality. He is imbued of an opposition of aspects of himself. When first we discover him, it is in a moment in which he thinks he's alone, in a sweet melancholic vulnerability that should break the audience's heart. But in a moment, we experience him as a wild animal, brutal, violent and murderous. The journey the audience should follow is Segismundo's. His journey from wild animal raised in captivity to wise and judicious ruler of his own destiny, the stars, and a kingdom, is the central dramatic arc of the story.

The dream we are experiencing then, is Segismundo's, but can it also be the audience's? I think it is extremely important that this story be filtered from a 21st Century point-of-view, even though I don't fully know what that means. What does it mean if Segismundo is a 21st century man imagining himself in a 17th Century kingdom? How do we invite the audience to come along on this dream? This is a nut that I don't think I can fully crack, at least until the visual world starts to define itself more clearly, and we have much work to do before that happens. But I think that filtering this story from a 21st Century point-of-view will only serve to illuminate the universality of the central themes and ideas of the play, as well as opening the door to anachronisms, which will help to define the duality of the dream world, and a dream-like atmosphere.

How do I want to tell the story?

This idea of duality is extremely important, because, inherently all people are possessed of a dual nature, and in dreams our subconscious exploits that. In this way, Segismundo is a kind of everyman. Like all people, he must learn to put away the rash, emotional reactions to the world that are common in childhood, and learn to absorb the world with objectivity, reason, and logic. I want to illuminate the potential heroism in Segismundo that exists in all people, and the incredibly valuable lesson that no matter how bad the circumstances in which one finds oneself, you can always choose the right and righteous path. Everyone has the ability to overcome themselves and their circumstances.

The stars are the eighth named character in this play. And, in the beginning, this world is populated by people who are acted upon by the stars, but by the end, understand they have the power to control their own destinies. The spine of the play is Fate. The world of this play is unjust. The world is unfriendly. The things that happen don't make sense. People are possessed of a complex and contradictory nature, and so is the world of this play. There is menace and danger in the world. You must confront it or turn away from it. Every character in the play is faced with this choice.

The World of the Play

Austin and I discussed the locations of this play, he was thinking of it as two locations (the prison and the court), and so was I, but really, it's three: the mountains, the prison, and the mountains. How can the mountains exist in both locations and awaken a duality of place? I don't know the answer to this, but I am excited to find out. But, I think the mountains are always present. The prison, for Calderón is not so much a place of imprisonment, but a place of rebirth.

Characters who are imprisoned in Calderón are typically unjustly imprisoned, and it is through their imprisonment that they discover the necessary values to achieve their resolution. The prison is dark, even the light in the scene is described as bringing darkness. For me, this darkness is a sense of foreboding, a calm before the storm, before destiny calls Segismundo to his purpose, and a place of reflection where he retreats when all seems lost. It feels dark, dank, it is a quiet space, it smells of mildew. The prison should squarely reckon with the cruelty, injustice, and inhumanity in the world. At some point in everyone's life, they go through a period of great struggle or stasis, which potentially allows them the ability to grow, to change, to improve as people.

The court (both the throne room and the garden), is anything but dark. Though it occupies the same cruel insensitive world at the prison, the king and the people in the court have blinded themselves to it. There is peace, and light, and harmony, and sensuality in the court. The court is an illusion. An illusion that all is happy and well, and in which a man who firmly believes he is controlled by the stars still has the hubris to try to outwit them. It is an illusion that is fractured, and later collapses. The court is destroyed in the battle. In some ways, Segismundo is almost a Christ figure. His rebirth awakens the world to a broader truth.

I want to talk briefly about the end of the play. For a 17th Century Spanish audience, the resolutions that occur in the final moments of the play would have seemed an acceptably happy ending. This devoutly Catholic audience would still have at least paid lip service to the idea of the divinity of their king, and in the culture of the Spanish Inquisition (which was not occupying Spain, but operating with popular support of the Catholic citizens), everyone did what duty and their station in the class system dictated. Modern audiences, however, particularly American ones, in which our culture contains no monarchy in its DNA, will not understand this in the same

way. The idea that people would choose honor and fealty to the king over the yearnings of their own heart seems discordant with our understanding of what a happy ending means. But here again there is a duality that feels right to this world. The citizens of this world are choosing again to hold up the illusion, but the illusion is not as strong as it used to be. The stars no longer control them. They know they can control themselves, and now must take the onus on themselves to make the decision for what is best. But are the decisions Segismundo makes here as wise as they are proclaimed? Is it really “good” to negate all emotions?

Every character in the main plot suffers a fall. Basilio is conquered by his son, Clarion’s cowardice causes his death, Segismundo is thrown back in prison for his behavior at court, Astolfo’s pride puts him within a finger’s grasp of social elevation, but finds himself fall in the line of succession (providing Segismundo sires a son). Estrella loses the man she truly loves, and accepts the hand of a man she doesn’t know and doesn’t like. It is no mistake then that the play opens with the image of a woman tumbling or falling down a mountain. This is not only a strange and exciting image, but a loaded and symbolic one, as well. It foreshadows the allegorical falls that most of the other characters will eventually suffer. How can we explore showing that moment?

This is a world in thrall to the cosmos. How do we create a world that appears to rotate and orbit, and how do orbits and rotations inform the design and the staging? My sense is that movement in this world is circular, as far as topography is concerned. How do we awaken that idea in the broader environment? As I said before, the stars are the eighth named character in the play. They interact with the plot, the characters, and the dialogue. They are an oppressive and animated force. At first, they control the action, but eventually become passive observers of action.

Eroticism is welcome in this world, when juxtaposed with physical and psychological violence. Segismundo's second interaction with Rosaura, the woman he truly loves, involves an attempted rape. Early on, I got fixed on one idea, which is having Segismundo tied up in silks rather than chains. There is a practical reason for this, which is they seem simpler for the actor to manipulate himself, rather than having him tethered to scenery or plaster. But, there is an inherent eroticism to the image of a man in a loin cloth tied up in silks, and the treatment he's undergoing is the worst kind of physical and psychological violence. Segismundo is being imprisoned by his father, but it's really his fate, destiny, and the universe that have imprisoned him here. What are these shackles attached to? I don't think it's the wall.

There should be levels in this world. The picturization of power relationships seems absolutely necessary in telling the story. Similarly, how does the world of the play allow for characters to be discovered and revealed, rather than having them enter? In the opening scene, rather than Clarion entering the stage, can he pop up from concealment to surprise us? As though he landed first? Before the lights came up. Similarly, several times in the play people withdraw, conceal themselves, and eavesdrop. How does the world of the play allow for that convincingly? Aside from the throne, and perhaps a stone-looking garden bench to awaken the garden location, I am not imagining any furniture in this world. How does the scenic installation allow for natural (if not logical) places for people to sit?

The court dance and the battle are lengthy sequences. The dance functions to establish the denial atmosphere of the court, as well as the relationship of the court and the stars and atmosphere to the king. Gail and I are talking about using orbital and rotational patterns to tell this story. The physical world interacts with the king. Does his taking his place on the throne cause the world to start rotating? Does it rain? Does it snow? Does the sun rise in his presence?

Since we know Basilio is controlled at this early point by the stars, how is this interaction misread by him? How is the universe psyching them out and fueling this illusion?

The battle similarly, is a crucial sequence, in which the illusion finally collapses, or is blown apart by Segismundo and Rosaura and their invading forces. It is pseudo-important to note that the forces Astolfo raises would have been a Muscovite army, not a Polish one. The Polish forces all would have taken arms against the king. The play doesn't make this explicit, but it is important, I think, to note that these are two differing factions.

I imagine this as a thrilling, dynamic, acrobatic, swashbuckling scene, in which sound (effects and music), lighting, costumes, and scenery will play crucial roles. How does the world of the play naturally (if not logically) become the proper playground for an action sequence? Many members of the Ensemble and Clarion will be dead on the stage by the end of the battle and through the final scene. I despise consequence free violence, but how do we present stylized violence? Do the fallen soldiers and Clarion bleed fabric instead of blood?

Characters

To reiterate, the spine of this production is "Fate."

Segismundo: Segismundo's super objective is "to conquer Fate." My metaphor for him is an abused pit bull. He is described as a wild beast, enraged, proud, willful. In the final moments, he is described as wise and judicious.

Rosaura: Rosaura's super objective is "to overthrow Fate." My metaphor for Rosaura is a hurricane. She is an unstoppable force of nature. She is described as proud, insolent, honorable, rash. She takes three forms. Man, woman, androgyne. Most people understand androgyne figure

as in a dress wearing armor and weapons. But in a world where duality is the surface, what does that image mean?

Basilio: Basilio's super objective is "to prevent Fate." My metaphor for Basilio is a besieged soldier. He is trapped in the foxhole and is sure to be taken or captured. How can he prevent this? He is described as old, doddering, wise, learned, good, and kind. But the sincerity of the latter four are uttered by himself Astolfo and Estrella.

Clotaldo: Clotaldo's super objective is "to serve Fate." My metaphor for Clotaldo is a rope. He is practical and functional and often being pulled in two directions at once. He is loyal and honorable and conflicted and afraid.

Astolfo: Astolfo's super objective is "to purloin Fate." My metaphor for Astolfo is Eddie Haskell. He's so nice and charming you just know he's up to no good. He has a dubious claim to the throne at best, but plans to affect and charm his way into power. He is a liar, a cad, a scoundrel, dishonorable. But near the end of the play he learns honor, in his attempt to sacrifice himself to protect the king.

Estrella: Estrella's super objective is "to desire Fate." My metaphor for Estrella is a daydreamer. She has romanticized her future queenship, as well as her inevitable marriage to Astolfo. It animates her jealousy and passion. She is described as beautiful, radiant, jealous, silly.

Clarion: Clarion's super objective is "to dodge Fate." My metaphor for Clarion is a hamster. He is cute and adorable, but he's sneaky and evasive. He can fit into tight spaces and hide away. He is crafty, cunning, fearful, cowardly.

Aural Research

“The Story of My Life” - Piano Guys: The duality is alive in this. Court dance. A song the entire audience will know presented in a foreign, but atmosphere appropriate context. A juxtaposition of meaning and placement.

“Olsen Olsen” - Sigur Rós: The duality is alive in this. Classical styles and composition techniques that feel Baroque and Renaissance mixed with contemporary rock instrumentation and rhythms. Contemporary instruments (guitar) being played in an unusual and classical way, with a cello bow.

“Russische Träume” - Peer Raben: The duality is alive in this. This is a piece you are already familiar with, Schubert’s Piano Trio No. 2 in E Flat Major, reworked tonally and in instrumentation to feel Russian and modal. It is playful and sad at the same time.

Appendix E: List of Events

Life is a Dream: List of Events

Clotaldo and Violante have a romantic/sexual relationship.

King Basilio foretells Segismundo's horoscope.

Segismundo is born.

Queen Clorilene dies in childbirth.

Segismundo is locked in the tower.

King Basilio passes a law promising death for any who enter the tower.

Clotaldo is appointed Segismundo's jailer/teacher.

Clotaldo leaves his sword with Violante.

Clotaldo returns to Poland.

Rosaura is born.

Astolfo and Estrella are born to Basilio's sisters.

Astolfo and Rosaura have a romantic/sexual relationship.

Rosaura gives Astolfo a portrait.

King Basilio decides he needs to abdicate.

Astolfo goes to Poland to lay dubious claim to the throne.

Rosaura decides to go to Poland to avenge her honor.

Violante gives Rosaura her father's sword.

Rosaura and Clarion leave Muscovy for Poland.

Astolfo arrives in Poland.

Astolfo argues his case to Basilio.

Basilio announces he will make a decision tomorrow.

————— START OF PLAY FORMAL —————

Rosaura and Clarion are thrown from their horse.

Rosaura and Clarion see the tower prison and go in.

Segismundo bemoans his fate.

Rosaura and Clarion overhear Segismundo's woe.

Segismundo threatens to kill Clarion and Rosaura.

Rosaura kneels before Segismundo for mercy.

Segismundo is softened by her earnestness.

Rosaura begins to tell Segismundo who she is.

Clotaldo catches Rosaura and Clarion in the tower.

Clotaldo arrests Rosaura and Clarion.

Segismundo threatens to kill Clotaldo and the guards.

Clotaldo locks Segismundo in the tower.

Rosaura begs Clotaldo for mercy.

Clotaldo demands that the guards disarm Rosaura and Clarion.

Rosaura turns her sword over to Clotaldo.

Clotaldo realizes Rosaura is his "son" when he sees the sword.

Clotaldo is torn between loyalty to Rosaura and loyalty to Basilio.

Clotaldo decides to take Rosaura to the king and tell him he is his son.

Clotaldo takes Rosaura and Clarion to the king for sentencing.

Astolfo attempts to win Estrella's favor and hand in marriage.

Estrella rebuffs Astolfo's advantage.

The king arrives to address the court.

The king confesses to the birth and imprisonment of Segismundo.

The king announces his plan to the court.

The court erupts.

Astolfo concedes to Basilio's plan.

Estrella concedes to Basilio's plan.

Clotaldo brings Rosaura and Clarion to the king.

The king pardons Rosaura and Clarion.

Basilio tells Clotaldo to meet him later to discuss the plan.

Clotaldo attempts to dissuade Rosaura from revenge on Astolfo.

Rosaura coyly confesses that she is a woman.

Clotaldo decides to help Rosaura.

Clotaldo makes a sleeping potion.

Clotaldo gives Segismundo the potion.

Clotaldo and Segismundo discuss the eagle and majesty.

Segismundo falls asleep.

The servants come to fetch Segismundo and take him to the palace.

Clotaldo goes to the king to tell him his plan is underway.

Segismundo awakes in the palace surrounded by servants.

The servants dress Segismundo as a prince.

Segismundo wanders into the throne room.

Basilio gives Clotaldo permission to tell Segismundo who he is.

Basilio withdraws.

The servants attempt to soothe Segismundo.

Segismundo rebuffs their attempts.

Clotaldo greets Segismundo as the Prince.

Segismundo is confused by Clotaldo's reverence.

Clotaldo explains Segismundo's true identity.

Segismundo threatens to murder Clotaldo.

A servant tries to intervene on Clotaldo's behalf.

Segismundo threatens to throw the servant out the window.

The servant tries to rationalize Clotaldo's behavior.

Segismundo warns the servant not to make him angry.

Clarion takes Segismundo's side against the servant.

Segismundo tells Clarion he likes him best of all the court.

Astolfo arrives to greet the Prince.

Astolfo does not take off his hat in Segismundo's presence.

Segismundo is dismissive of Astolfo.

The servant attempts to intervene with Segismundo on Astolfo's behalf.

Segismundo throws the servant out the window.

Astolfo sends Estrella for the king.

The king confronts Segismundo.

Segismundo threatens the king.

Basilio rearrests Segismundo and announces Astolfo as the next king.

The citizens are displeased with this foreign king.

Clotaldo administers a sleeping potion and the guards return him to the tower.

Clarion follows Segismundo back to the tower.

Clotaldo discovers Clarion and arrests him.

Basilio comes to see what Segismundo has learned.

Segismundo has angry dreams.

Segismundo threatens Clotaldo and Basilio in his sleep.

Segismundo awakens.

Basilio conceals himself.

Clotaldo asks Segismundo to tell him his dream.

Segismundo tells him everything that happened, and confesses to being in love with Rosaura.

Basilio is moved and departs.

Clotaldo warns Segismundo that even in dreams good deeds are never wasted.

Segismundo pledges to the stars that he will try to be better.

Astolfo meets Estrella in a secret garden to win her as queen.

Estrella rebuffs his advances.

Rosaura enters undetected and eavesdrops.

Estrella convinces Astolfo to retrieve the portrait and turn it over to her.

Astolfo goes to retrieve the portrait, and Estrella regrets her decision.

Rosaura tries to sneak away, but is seen by Estrella.

Estrella tells Rosaura to wait for Astolfo's return and demand the portrait.

Rosaura freaks out about her inevitable discovery.

Astolfo reenters and recognizes Rosaura.

Rosaura denies her true identity.

Astolfo refuses to give her the portrait.

They fight over the portrait.

Estrella discovers them in combat.

Estrella demands to know what's happening.

Rosaura lies to Estrella that this portrait is her own.

Estrella gives the portrait to Rosaura.

Rosaura goes with her portrait.

Estrella demands Astolfo give her the portrait.

He confesses he can't.

Estrella refuses to speak to him again.

Astolfo knows his shot at kingship is tenuous.

Clarion is still being held in the tower.

Soldiers arrive to free Segismundo.

The soldiers think Clarion is Segismundo, and Clarion goes along with it.

Segismundo hears the commotion and reveals himself.

The soldiers berate Clarion.

The soldiers beseech Segismundo to lead them in battle against the king.

Segismundo is confused whether this is real or a dream.

Clotaldo enters and discovers Segismundo freed.

Clotaldo surrenders to Segismundo.

Segismundo grants Clotaldo clemency.

Clotaldo explains why he can't repay this act of compassion.

Clotaldo and Segismundo depart vowing to meet on the battlefield.

Rosaura discovers Estrella's garden and steals the key.

Astolfo asks the king to be proactive in response to the coming revolution.

Basilio refuses.

Astolfo leaves to raise a Muscovite army to take arms on the king's behalf.

Estrella begs the king to respond to the outbreak of violence.

Clotaldo arrives and tells Basilio that Segismundo has taken arms against him.

Estrella and Basilio vow to fight on the battlefield.

Rosaura arrives to give Clotaldo the key to the garden.

Clotaldo refuses to kill Astolfo.

Rosaura considers this a dishonor.

Clotaldo attempts to explain his debt to Astolfo.

Rosaura vows to take arms against him.

Clotaldo gives Rosaura money and promises to stash her in a convent.

Rosaura refuses his money and leaves to take her place on the battlefield.

Clotaldo leaves to honor his duty to the king and Astolfo.

Segismundo and his soldiers are ready to attack.

Rosaura arrives dressed as an androgyne.

Rosaura pleads with Segismundo to help her.

Segismundo refuses.

Rosaura explains everything that has happened to Segismundo.

Segismundo realizes this is not a dream, and all of it is in fact real.

Segismundo vows to take up arms and reclaim her honor.

Segismundo and the soldiers leave to stage their attack.

Clarion and Rosaura are reunited.

Rosaura tries to convince Clarion to fight with her.

Clarion refuses and goes into hiding. Rosaura leaves to fight with Segismundo.

The war is fought. Astolfo is wounded.

The battle ends.

Clarion comes out of hiding and discovers he is mortally wounded.

Basilio, Clotaldo, and Estrella discover Astolfo.

Basilio and his party plot their escape from the country.

The king discovers the wounded Clarion.

Clarion warns the king against cowardice.

Clarion dies.

Segismundo, Rosaura, and the soldiers surround the king's party.

Basilio surrenders to Segismundo.

Segismundo makes an example of Basilio to the assembled parties.

Segismundo forgives his father and spares his life.

Basilio crowns Segismundo as king.

Segismundo demands Astolfo marry Rosaura to cleanse her honor.

Astolfo refuses due to her questionable birth.

Clotaldo confesses that he is her father.

Astolfo agrees to wed Rosaura.

Segismundo proposes to Estrella.

Segismundo promises favor to Clotaldo for raising him.

The soldier who led the revolt asks for similar favor.

Segismundo orders the soldier arrested and sentences him to life imprisonment.

The assembled people are amazed at Segismundo's transformation.

Segismundo addresses the court and the audience, explaining all he's learned.

Appendix F: Cast List



Life is a Dream

CAST

Segismundo	CODY SHELTON
Rosaura	NaTOSHA DeVON
Basilio	CHRIS TENNISON
Clotaldo	SCOTT RUSSELL
Estrella	CHLOE HAROLDSON
Astolfo	CHANDLER REID EVANS
Clarion	JUSTIN MACKEY

ENSEMBLE

WOMEN

CHRISTINA ARONOWITZ (Soldier #2)
JACINDA FLETCHER (Servant #2)
BETHANY KASPER
MADI WATKINS (Guard #2)
MAGGIE WOOD
CHARL YOUNG

MEN

PETER KIEKLAK
ALEX LARSON (Soldier #1)
LANDAN STOCKER (Servant #1)

ARTISTIC/PRODUCTION STAFF

Director	JEREMIAH ALBERS
Fight Choreographer	SCOTT RUSSELL
Choreographer	GAIL LEFTWICH
Composer	JASON BURROW
Scenic Designer	AUSTIN ASCHBRENNER
Lighting Designer	SHAWN IRISH
Costume Designer	KELSEY LOONEY
Hair/Makeup	MELISSA ROONEY
Sound Design/Music	JASON BURROW
Sound Design FX	ERIC ARMSTRONG
Props	SUSAN CRABTREE
Stage Manager	JOSEPH MILLETT
Assistant Stage Manager	MONTANA McCOY
Assistant Stage Manager	AUTUMN PEARCY

Appendix G: Rehearsal Schedule



J. William Fulbright College of Arts & Sciences
Theatre



Life is a Dream January 2018

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 HAPPY NEW YEAR!	2	3	4	5	6
7	8 11A-3P READ/TABLE WORK 4P-7P CHOREO: FIGHT	9 11A-2:30P CHOREO: DANCE 3:30P-7P CHOREO: FIGHT	10 11A-2:30P CHOREO: FIGHT 3:30P-7P CHOREO: DANCE	11 11A-2:30P CHOREO: DANCE 3:30P-7P CHOREO: FIGHT	12 11A-2:30P CHOREO: FIGHT 3:30P-7P CHOREO: DANCE	13 OFF
14 11A-7P CHOREO: FIGHT	15 1P-5P BLOCK ACT I MLK DAY	16 6P-10:30P DESIGNER PRES.? WORK I.1-1.2 LINES DUE	17 6P-10:30P DESIGNER PRES.? WORK I.3-1.4 LINES DUE	18 6P-10:30P BLOCK ACT II	19 6P-10:30P WORK II.1-II.3 LINES DUE	20 OFF
21 1P-5P SPACING FOR FIGHTS AND DANCE 1ST DAY ON DECK	22 6P-10:30P WORK II.4-II.5 LINES DUE	23 6P-10:30P WORK I.1-1.2	24 6P-10:30P WORK I.3-1.4	25 6P-10:30P WORK II.1-II.3	26 6P-10:30P WORK II.4-II.5	27 OFF
28 1P-5P STUMBLE THROUGH/ WORK NOTES	29 6P-10:30P CHOREO POLISH/ PUNCH LIST	30 6P-10:30P RUN/WORK ACT I	31 6P-10:30P RUN/WORK ACT II			



Life is a Dream February 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 6P-10:30P RUN FULL SHOW WORK NOTES DESIGNER RUN?	2 OFF? DESIGNER RUN(?) UPTA	3 OFF UPTA
4 1P-5P PUNCH LIST (TBD) UPTA	5 6P-10:30P RUN ACT I NOTES/WORK	6 6P-10:30P RUN ACT II NOTES/WORK	7 6P-10:30P RUN FULL SHOW NOTES/WORK	8 6P-10:30P RUN FULL SHOW NOTES/WORK	9 5:30P-10:30P TECH	10 OFF
11 10A-10P TECH (10/12)	12 5:30P-10:30P TECH	13 5:30P CALL FIRST DRESS GO TBD	14 5:30P CALL 2ND DRESS 7P GO	15 6P CALL FINAL DRESS 7:30 GO	16 7:30P PERFORMANCE (OPENING)	17 7:30P PERFORMANCE
18 2P PERFORMANCE	19 OFF	20 7P-10P PICK-UP REHEARSAL	21 7:30P PERFORMANCE	22 7:30P PERFORMANCE	23 7:30P PERFORMANCE	24 7:30P PERFORMANCE
25 2P PERFORMANCE (CLOSING) STRIKE	26	27	28			

Appendix H: Production Photos



Scott Russell as Clotaldo and Chris Tennison as Basilio in *Life is a Dream*. University of Arkansas Theatre. February 2018. Photo by Shawn Irish. Used with permission.



(l. to r.) Alex Larson, Cody Shelton (as Segismundo), Christina Aronowitz, Maggie Wood, Peter Kieklak, Bethany Kasper, and Justin Mackey (as Clarion) in *Life is a Dream*. University of Arkansas Theatre. February 2018. Photo by Austin Aschbrenner. Used with permission.



(l. to r.) Peter Kieklak, Maggie Wood, Alex Larson, Justin Mackey, Scott Russell, Jacinda Fletcher, Landan Stocker, Cody Shelton, Bethany Kasper, Madi Watkins, Charl Young, and Christina Aronowitz in *Life is a Dream*. University of Arkansas Theatre. February 2018. Photo by Shawn Irish. Used with permission.



(l. to r.) Na'Tosha De'Von as Rosaura, Cody Shelton as Segismundo, Peter Kieklak, Justin Mackey as Clarion, Bethany Kasper, Maggie Wood, Christina Aronowitz, and Alex Larson in *Life is a Dream*. University of Arkansas Theatre. February 2018. Photo by Shawn Irish. Used with permission.



Cody Shelton as Segismundo in *Life is a Dream*. University of Arkansas Theatre. February 2018. Photo by Shawn Irish. Used with permission.



(l. to r.) Scott Russell as Clotaldo, Chris Tennison as Basilio, and Chloe Haroldson as Estrella in *Life is a Dream*. University of Arkansas Theatre. February 2018. Photo by Shawn Irish. Used with permission.



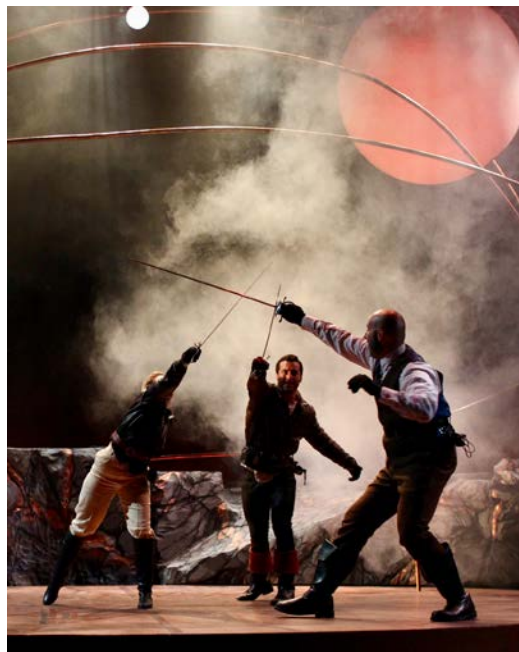
(l. to r.) Chloe Haroldson as Estrella, Chris Tennison as Basilio, and Chandler Reid Evans as Astolfo in *Life is a Dream*. University of Arkansas Theatre. February 2018. Photo by Shawn Irish. Used with permission.



(l. to r.) Madi Watkins, Justin Mackey as Clarion, Maggie Wood, Na'Tosha De'Von as Rosaura, Charl Young, and Scott Russell as Clotaldo in *Life is a Dream*. University of Arkansas Theatre. February 2018. Photo by Shawn Irish. Used with permission.



The death of Clarion. Justin Mackey in *Life is a Dream*. University of Arkansas Theatre. February 2018. Photo by Shawn Irish. Used with permission.



(l. to r.) Maggie Wood, Cody Shelton, and Scott Russell in *Life is a Dream*. University of Arkansas Theatre. February 2018. Photo by Shawn Irish. Used with permission.