

KING OF TRINIDAD
by
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SETTING

Late 1800's

Hotel in El Paso Texas, The Sea Vessel Astoria Deck, Chancellery of Trinidad in New York, Iolani Palace in Honolulu Hawaii, Annie's California home

CHARACTERS

JAMES HARDEN-HICKEY - French writer & duelist, 30-40's

COUNT DE LA BOISSIERE (Bweh-si-air) - ex-military officer & James' friend, 40's

JOHN HALDANE FLAGLER - wealthy owner of an iron & steel manufacturing company, Annie's father & James' father-in-law, 50's

ANNIE HARPER FLAGLER - John's daughter, 20's

RICHARD HARDING DAVIS - celebrity journalist, 30's

QUEEN LILIUOKALANI (lily-oo-oh-kalani)- deposed monarch of Hawaii, ethnic, 50's

RICHARD OLNEY - U.S. Secretary of state, 50's

CHINESE WORKERS 1 & 2, REPORTERS 1 & 2 - Chorus (2 men can play all parts, as well as Richard Olney if desired)

SEAMSTRESS - confidant to Liliuokalani, 20's

"King of Trinidad"

ACT I, SCENE ONE

INT. EL PASO HOTEL - TEXAS

A sparse hotel room - a bed, 2 chairs.
Lying on the bed is JAMES HARDEN-HICKEY,
30's, and he is dead.

Sitting on one chair is COUNT DE LA
BOISSIERE, 40's and well-dressed in late
1800's attire and spectacles - he holds
in his hands a glittering crown, which he
regards sadly.

On the other chair is RICHARD HARDING
DAVIS, a handsome young reporter.

DE LA BOISSIERE

The proper authorities have been notified - soon this room
will be swarming with those godforsaken reporters, and I am
aware of the things they will say. Do you mind...?

RICHARD HARDING DAVIS

Not at all.

(glances at James' body)

I half expect him to be listening. He has a rather calm,
contented expression.

DE LA BOISSIERE

That is how I knew he was gone - it is a look he never wore
in life.

(beat)

It is a shame I am giving this interview so late. The manner
of your inquiry was very pleasant - a change from the usual
jeering I've come to expect from members of the press.

RICHARD HARDING DAVIS

My fellow journalists assumed that the two of you were,
pardon my bluntness, scheming to make money off the gullible.
I didn't believe their assumption to be correct.

DE LA BOISSIERE

Why not? I myself was once a journalist, and so was James -
publishers prefer taking the most entertaining view of a
subject. Did your employer not encourage you to do the same?

RICHARD HARDING DAVIS

They told me to follow my instincts and write something
unique. To me your words seemed sincere. I contacted all who
knew the both of you personally, and not one of them had
anything but fond words to say. Not even Mr. Flagler.

(MORE)

RICHARD HARDING DAVIS (CONT'D)

It is a thing unheard of for a person to be so infamous, and yet have so few actual enemies.

DE LA BOISSIERE

If only James knew that.

RICHARD HARDING DAVIS

How do you mean?

DE LA BOISSIERE

I'm afraid James would not suffer the thought of being without enemies. He would have considered it the gravest of insults - and believe me, he was the foremost expert on such matters.

RICHARD HARDING DAVIS

If you could tell me from the beginning how it came to this, I can make sure he will not go down in history as a charlatan or a fool.

DE LA BOISSIERE

(sighs, regards the crown)

Oh, he was very much a fool. And so was I.

BLACKOUT.

END OF SCENE ONE

ACT I, SCENE TWO**INT. OFFICE OF THE TRIBOULET NEWSPAPER - PARIS - FRANCE**

Lights up: Frenchman JAMES HARDEN-HICKEY is Center Stage, addressing audience.

JAMES

I am quite certain all of you have heard of me, and come armed with your own pre-conceived notions about James Harden-Hickey. Perhaps you think him a fraud; a scoundrel; a vain, avaricious fool. But I assure you, these are the fabrications of small-minded and petty men.

(beat, intense)

...Such as my father-in-law.

(beat, then)

But I shall speak of him later. I must begin my tale a little earlier, when I was all but *forced* to flee France... despite being awarded the title of Baron, a few years prior.

James sits at his desk, writing with a quill pen. De la Boissiere, lawyer and accountant, enters with an absurd stack of papers in his arms - he clears his throat. Delighted to see him, James jumps up, walking with a noticeable limp.

JAMES (CONT'D)

De la Boissiere! What brings you?

De la Boissiere, unable to bear the weight any longer, heaves the load onto the desk and points to it, panting.

DE LA BOISSIERE

That.

JAMES

And what are its contents?

DE LA BOISSIERE

Your lawsuits, James. Among other things.

JAMES

(winces)

...*Other* things?

DE LA BOISSIERE

(lifts the top paper up)

There are letters warning of your impending deportation from France-

JAMES

(takes it)

What! Under what grounds? I am a *Baron* of the French court! I am as French as they come.

DE LA BOISSIERE

According to the government, not so much. You never renounced the citizenship of your homeland - they are petitioning to label you an undesirable American.

JAMES

Ha! Anyone who has attended my parties will attest to my desirability.

De la Boissiere hands him another paper.

DE LA BOISSIERE

Documents of your divorce for you to sign.

James frowns, exhales. He waves a dismissive hand.

JAMES

Ah, set it aside somewhere. I am too preoccupied to deal with such absurdities.

DE LA BOISSIERE

And when will you *not* be occupied?

JAMES

Do you remember the King of Hawaii, who visited France on his world tour?

DE LA BOISSIERE

Yes, but-

JAMES

I met him once, briefly. Fascinating fellow. He had to crown himself and his wife, you know - because no one else had the authority. His sister, L-Lily...

(reads his own writing)

Liliuokalani. She said that during his coronation, the clouds gave way, and a star shone in broad daylight, in honor of his new reign.

DE LA BOISSIERE

A very lovely image, but what-?

JAMES

They favor his sister now. They want him to abdicate.

DE LA BOISSIERE

Who is 'they'? Wait, no, please do not answer-

JAMES

(conspiratorial)

The Committee of Thirteen. 13 wicked businessmen plotting the downfall of their King. Apparently his alliance with Samoa to form a Polynesian Empire ruffled their feathers-

DE LA BOISSIERE

James, what is your point?

JAMES

Simply this: that there are too many grand things happening in the world to worry about the mundane.

(De la Boissiere throws
his hands up)

And let's not forget, my position as Baron was only awarded for my newspaper's defense of the realm, a duty which I must now execute with the pen rather than the sword. I cannot rest until all enemies of church and state have been properly eviscerated - with one tool, or the other.

DE LA BOISSIERE

James, you cannot continue to ignore these lawsuits. As of today, they number forty-two. That is on top of the fines you have already paid. If you allow this to continue, the Triboulet will cease to exist.

JAMES

(as he sits down at desk)

I am not ignoring *them* - it is *they* who are ignoring *me*.

DE LA BOISSIERE

(indicates stack)

How can you *possibly* deduce that?

JAMES

I have challenged each and every one to a duel.

DE LA BOISSIERE

All forty-two?

(James nods; he shakes his head)

It is a sad state of affairs when so many *supposed* gentlemen are challenged to a duel, and none have the fortitude to accept.

JAMES

Napoleon must be rolling in his grave.

DE LA BOISSIERE

But that's just it - he is gone, and all the old ways of doing things are disappearing with him. Just look at the American inventions: the lightbulb-

JAMES

Inefficient and costly. Fire is what Prometheus stole from the pagan gods to give us light and heat, *not* electricity.

DE LA BOISSIERE

The telephone-

JAMES

If I want to speak to someone, I will go to see them in person, or I will use *this*.

(lifts quill pen, continues scribbling)

For I am not lazy, nor illiterate - those are the people interested in telephones, and yet they are the least likely to afford such things. I have no fear of it catching on.

DE LA BOISSIERE

The point I was trying to make is that you cannot settle everything with a duel.

JAMES

Matters of honor cannot always be fought in a court of law.

James stops writing, and looks at De la Boissiere.

JAMES (CONT'D)

It is all coming to an end.

DE LA BOISSIERE

Do not say that.

JAMES

But it is true. If I must leave France-

DE LA BOISSIERE

I will not allow it.

(indicates James' leg)

At the military academy, you put yourself in harm's way to prevent my end.

JAMES

You need not feel any obligation to me over that-

DE LA BOISSIERE

You were the best swordsman among us, and would have made a fine soldier. But you sacrificed that life for my sake.

JAMES

Not voluntarily. Your horse made that decision for me.

DE LA BOISSIERE

And do you remember how long afterward you were depressed?

JAMES

I remember that you were a continuous presence in the recovery ward, enduring my bitterness and telling me not to despair - that I was still destined for greatness.

DE LA BOISSIERE

And I was right to believe in you. In short order you were a newspaper editor, a Baron, a husband and a father. It has been my pleasure to stand by your side, and I will continue to do so, no matter what antagonistic force presents itself.

JAMES

(smiles)

Says the man whose horse bucked him off, and as I foolishly intervened, then proceeded to kick the blazes out of *me*. After that trauma, I should think you would have the good sense *not* to stand by my side.

DE LA BOISSIERE

No James, even so: that is the namesake duty of a side-kick.

They laugh.

BLACKOUT.

END OF SCENE TWO

ACT 1, SCENE THREE**EXT. THE SEA VESSEL ASTORIA DECK - DAY**

The sound of SEAGULLS & WAVES.

Lights up: James is Center Stage leaning on a section of ship deck rail, holding a wooden rod with a napkin lunch tied to the end.

He's discarded his vest, leaving his undershirt exposed like someone marooned.

JAMES

(addressing audience)

My career as a premiere editor had come to an untimely end - I was adrift, with no direction, and my sole emotion was bitterness. I needed a change. An adventure, to occupy my mind, and to let heal the indignities I had suffered in France. Ready to start anew, I ventured to the East on the vessel Astoria with my comrade, the Count De la Boissiere.

De la Boissiere enters casting looks about, til he spots James.

DE LA BOISSIERE

James! There you are.

JAMES

(sighs, stares out to sea)

Yes. Here am I.

De la Boissiere stands next to him, and follows his friend's gaze.

DE LA BOISSIERE

Melancholy doesn't suit you, James.

JAMES

I never thought it would turn out this way, De la Boissiere. The Triboulet, gone, just like that.

(snaps his fingers)

Cast out, for my conviction and unwavering faith. "Editorial indiscretions," bah!

DE LA BOISSIERE

(pats James' shoulder
reassuringly)

But this is the past, mon ami. You will forget these troubles soon enough in India.

JAMES

Yes, I suppose you're right.

(beat)

Speaking of which, what is our current position? I do believe I see land.

DE LA BOISSIERE

Yes - we're not far from the coast of Brazil.

James spots something.

JAMES

What is that?

DE LA BOISSIERE

What?

JAMES

(points)

That little island.

DE LA BOISSIERE

(adjusts spectacles)

Oh, I believe that is South Trinidad.

JAMES

Trinidad? I've heard of that place. They say it's a lovely vacationing spot.

DE LA BOISSIERE

You're thinking of the English Trinidad. This, you could say, is Trinidad the Lesser. It is nothing but an uninhabited derelict.

JAMES

Could we go ashore and take a closer look?

DE LA BOISSIERE

To be honest, there's not much to see. Edmond Halley was not impressed with its 4 mile expanse - he mentioned it only to relate a failed attempt to capture a turtle, and to catalogue a curious variety of bean that had been hitherto unknown to the rest of the world.

(chuckles, wipes glasses)

Oh, but its shores are rumored to have buried *pirate treasure*, as most islands do I suppose-

James whirls around and grabs De la Boissiere by the shoulders, his eyes full of excitement.

JAMES

Buried treasure?! You don't say!

DE LA BOISSIERE

Why yes, so it's told - something about gold and silver plate plundered from Peru. But James, it seems an unlikely tale: several persons have ventured to look for it, but received nothing for their troubles... of which they found plenty.

JAMES

Splendid. We shall be the first to find it.

DE LA BOISSIERE

I don't think so, James.

JAMES

Honestly De la Boissiere, if I were to pass up an opportunity such as this, I could hardly call myself a man.

De la Boissiere straightens and squares his shoulders, indignant.

DE LA BOISSIERE

Now, just a moment sir: wherever there is a fight, there am I! That is my motto. But this island - it is *unnecessarily* treacherous. It's near impossible to reach half the year, because its coastline is a wall of jagged, rocky, *cliffs*.

JAMES

If pirates were able to do it, so can we. Why, my family owes its fortune to my father discovering gold in California.

DE LA BOISSIERE

Divine providence cannot be inherited, James.

JAMES

You may stay behind if you prefer, and count the money you swindled from that Virginian girl.

DE LA BOISSIERE

Marriage is not a swindle.

JAMES

It is if the poor girl never sees you.

DE LA BOISSIERE

And *whose* fault is that, I wonder? Mind your words friend, or you will answer for them - with fist, or steel.

JAMES

Ha! You need not burden yourself, for I do not need looking after. I *shall* explore that island - even if I have to swim the entire distance!

James attempts to climb over the railing in order to jump 'overboard' (off the stage), when De la Boissiere grabs his shoulders and pulls him back.

DE LA BOISSIERE

I-Incidentally, James, I overheard that our water supply is rather depleted. Perhaps we can convince the captain to make an unscheduled stop?

JAMES

(claps him on the back)

I knew you'd come around, old friend.

De La Boissiere exits Stage Right.

JAMES (CONT'D)

(breathes in deeply)

Ah, the sweet air of Trinidad! Blissfully neglected by the outside world - an untouched, delightful gem ready to be cut by an expert hand!

James removes the napkin from the pole, letting its contents spill out, and unfurls it. He looks between it and the wood pole.

He takes a pin from his pocket and tacks the side of the napkin around it - a makeshift flag. He stands by it proudly.

JAMES (CONT'D)

And now... it is mine.

De la Boissiere returns from Stage Right.

DE LA BOISSIERE

I spoke with the captain, we will be weighing anchor at the island shortly. Assuming they can manage it.

(peers past at the flag)

What is that?

JAMES

The flag I intend to plant on the island's soil.

(beat)

Do not worry - it will look much better than this when it is finished.

DE LA BOISSIERE

I give up, James - what is this about?

JAMES

I am claiming this island in my own name. Henceforth, it shall be known as the Principality of Trinidad, over which I shall be King.

De la Boissiere laughs.

DE LA BOISSIERE

You've quite an imagination - first a baron, now a king!

James has not moved a muscle. In the silence De la Boissiere's laugh gets more nervous, then stops entirely.

DE LA BOISSIERE (CONT'D)

You cannot be serious. Mon Dieu. Of course you are. You're always serious.

JAMES

Perhaps if you hear a bit of my plan, you will not be so inclined to scoff.

James hands the flag gravely to De la Boissiere. He folds his hands behind his back and begins to pace about the stage.

JAMES (CONT'D)

I do not intend to let the whims of the common butcher or baker decide the course of society's fate, no - the best kind of citizen is one who was trained as a soldier, rising through the ranks of the Trinidad military.

DE LA BOISSIERE

But James, what of the people who do not wish to serve? Or those such as yourself, who cannot?

James stops, bristling.

JAMES

Participation is mandatory and open to all, regardless of physical maladies for which other militaries would expel them. And they shall not be taken for granted: their names will be...inscribed with honor, in... The Book of Gold!

DE LA BOISSIERE

The Book of *Gold*, you say.

JAMES

Yes. Every member of my court shall be forever immortalized in a sacred relic called the Book of Gold.

DE LA BOISSIERE

...Oh. Well, I hope you don't intend to make it with the island's *rumored* gold.

JAMES

Just so.

DE LA BOISSIERE

Of course.

(frowns, thinking)

You realize that by only rewarding military service, you will have a citizenry concerned with nothing but warfare? It would be like ancient Sparta, or worse - ruffians roaming the streets, with nothing on their minds except violence.

JAMES

You are right - we must have an Order of Chivalry, to encourage human virtues, industry, science, literature...

DE LA BOISSIERE

There's technical aspects to consider. Finances. An *economy*.

JAMES

Not a problem, my good sir. As you have noted, this island is full of turtles, exotic birds... as well as those beans that, I'm sure, are positively delectable.

DE LA BOISSIERE

You plan to maintain a country on birds, turtles and beans?

JAMES

And don't forget the buried treasure. Even if *I* do not find it, I shall offer a portion of the treasure to the one who does. An efficient marketing plan, no?

DE LA BOISSIERE

Are you going to manage this all by yourself?

JAMES

Certainly not! I will need a Minister of Foreign Affairs.

DE LA BOISSIERE

And who will that be?

James gives him a look.

DE LA BOISSIERE (CONT'D)

Me? But I hardly deserve the honor.

JAMES

I know of none other I would trust for such a position.

De la Boissiere considers this, smiling.

DE LA BOISSIERE

Throughout my entire career... I've always desired to be a statesman.

JAMES

I have not. I have always yearned for the life of a carefree
adventurer - not the solemn responsibilities of a ruler.

(sighs)

Ah, but such is life.

BLACKOUT.

END OF SCENE THREE

ACT I, SCENE FOUR**INT. CHANCELLERY OF TRINIDAD - NEW YORK**

Lights up: a modest but neatly kept New York bachelor pad apartment, with 3 chairs and a desk with a quill pen & newspaper. De la Boissiere enters bringing 2 guests through a door: middle-aged JOHN HALDANE FLAGLER, and his daughter ANNIE HARPER FLAGLER, a pretty young woman.

DE LA BOISSIERE

I'm so very glad you could visit, Mr. Flagler.

JOHN

Just John will do, my friend.

DE LA BOISSIERE

And who is this stunning young woman?

ANNIE

Really, Count De la Boissiere, I have not changed that much.

DE LA BOISSIERE

I beg to differ! Why Annie, the last time I saw you were naught but a little girl.

(indicates chairs)

Please, have a seat. I can get you both tea, if you like.

They all take a seat.

JOHN

I appreciate the offer, but I'll have to decline - my stomach is being contrary at the moment.

ANNIE

Maybe taking the yacht such a long way was overdoing it, Father. You're as green as a swamp frog!

JOHN

(clears throat)

Talking like one, too. My products are made of iron, but my constitution is not. At least not anymore.

DE LA BOISSIERE

Dear me. Well I do hope the return trip is more pleasant.

JOHN

Speaking of which, you just got back from a trip yourself. Why don't you tell us about it?

DE LA BOISSIERE

Oh, I'm sure James will be able to explain far better than I. After James appointed me Trinidad's Minister of Foreign Affairs, we parted ways - he traveled alone to India for a spiritual pilgrimage.

JOHN

(exchanges looks with Annie)

Minister of Foreign Affairs? Trinidad?

DE LA BOISSIERE

Yes, that is why I invited you here, to our new Trinidad Chancellery. You see, my adventuresome friend James Harden-Hickey, who should be arriving in New York this evening, came upon an island off the coast of Brazil, South Trinidad, and claimed it as his own.

ANNIE

Trinidad! I've heard it's a lovely vacationing spot.

DE LA BOISSIERE

The more well-known of that name, perhaps.

JOHN

Hold on a second - you're telling me he's taken possession of an island?

DE LA BOISSIERE

Indeed. And planning to make it a sovereign territory, with James, himself, as the sovereign.

JOHN

How in the world did he manage that?

ANNIE

Must have been terribly expensive.

DE LA BOISSIERE

Not so. It was relatively simple, actually - you see, the island was a derelict, abandoned by its Portuguese inhabitants long ago. International law states that derelicts belong to whomever is willing and able to declare ownership.

JOHN

Well I'll be!

ANNIE

But if that is the law, I should think all the islands in the world would be taken by now.

DE LA BOISSIERE

A very good point, but then not everybody wants that kind of responsibility. However, James did seem very excited, and I have complete faith in him.

ANNIE

He sounds like a terribly interesting sort of person.

James enters through the door, in his finest suit.

JAMES

Why thank you, Mademoiselle.

DE LA BOISSIERE

James, good timing! I would like to introduce you to John Flagler, founder of the National Tube Company that was acquired by the United States Steel Corporation.

John and Annie stand up. John and James shake hands.

JAMES

Bojour, my good sir.

JOHN

Good to meet you, Baron.

JAMES

King.

JOHN

Beg pardon?

JAMES

My position has been elevated to King, since the founding of my island. But please, do not be embarrassed.

DE LA BOISSIERE

The oversight was mine, I should have mentioned it.

JAMES

Nonsense, I forgo such formalities with those who are my friends.

James eyes light up as he gazes upon Annie.

DE LA BOISSIERE

This is John's daughter, Annie.

ANNIE

Pleased to make your acquaintance.

James takes Annie's hand, brings it to his lips.

JAMES

The pleasure is all mine.

Annie blushes. An awkward moment passes, as James does not release her hand. De la Boissiere clears his throat, which brings James back to his senses.

DE LA BOISSIERE

James, why don't you have a seat and relate your adventures.

JAMES

Actually, there is nothing to tell as of yet. My country will take quite a while to develop.

JOHN

What made you decide to embark on this endeavor?

JAMES

There was not much thought involved. When first my eyes beheld the island, I saw it not as it was, but what it could be.

(at Annie)

When something crosses my path that can evoke such desire, I do not rest until it is mine.

JOHN

So it seems.

JAMES

Which is why I took an interest in Buddhism once I reached India. I realized that I am insatiable, and needed to learn calm through meditation.

ANNIE

I hope I'm not being rude, but...I thought you were a particularly staunch Catholic in France?

JAMES

Impermanence.

(notices her confusion)

I have grown weary of Catholicism. Therefore, Catholicism must have been impermanent, no?

ANNIE

I...suppose...?

JAMES

John, do you enjoy fencing?

JOHN

Pardon me?

JAMES

Fencing. With swords. It is one of my favorite pastimes. I would be honored if we could spar with one another.

JOHN

Oh, uh...I'm afraid, being an American, I don't know a lot about that sort of thing.

JAMES

Do not tell me you have never tried! All right then, what do Americans do for fun?

JOHN

Well, I don't speak for all Americans - but I enjoy yachting and opera.

JAMES

Excellent. Both pastimes will be accommodated on my island. Come visit whenever you wish to escape the drudgery of your business.

JOHN

Oh, I wouldn't call it drudgery.

JAMES

Selling metal pipes to be welded together? Forgive me, but that does not sound enjoyable.

JOHN

All the same, I wouldn't trade it for anything else.

James looks appalled, unable to believe John is serious. Awkward silence.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Well, it's late. We'd better be going.

They all exchange polite 'goodnights' and 'goodbyes'. John exits. Annie hesitates.

ANNIE

Just a moment, father!

(to James)

Trinidad must be a beautiful place, to have captivated you so.

De la Boissiere, sensing where this is going, sits down at the desk and takes up a newspaper.

Meanwhile James beams, as if savoring fond memories.

JAMES

It is. A true diamond in the rough, the like of which I might never find again.

She hesitates, trying to find the appropriate words to continue the conversation.

ANNIE

I...would like to know...if you had any plans to return to Trinidad?

JAMES

Most certainly. A king can never be away from his country for too long, especially when there is so much work to be done.

ANNIE

I can't believe you intend to take on so much responsibility.

JAMES

Oh, but I really do not see it that way. It is an adventure, not a chore. Just think of it: companies, hotels, resorts, houses, schools...

As he speaks, James makes big, sweeping gestures out into the empty air, as if seeing it all around him. Annie looks as if she sees it too.

JAMES (CONT'D)

...all of it standing where there was once nothing.

ANNIE

(sighs)

I would love to see it.

JAMES

You would?

ANNIE

Yes!

JAMES

I am very glad to hear it.

(snaps his fingers)

I nearly forgot!

James digs around in his pocket, brings out a sheet of postage stamps.

ANNIE

Postage stamps?

(looks closer)

Why, they have a picture of the island on them!

JAMES

I just had these made - first edition stamps! Remarkable, aren't they?

ANNIE

Very.

JAMES

I want you to have one.

James takes one, licks it, and sticks it on her forehead. Annie giggles.

JAMES (CONT'D)

I shall reserve you a spot on the very first passenger cruise to Trinidad - once I have more time to discuss it with De la Boissiere, we shall be sending boats to the island every month. Round-trip for anyone who invests in our government.

De la Boissiere's ears perk up - he grabs the pen and makes note on the newspaper.

ANNIE

(points to her forehead)

...Or you could just mail me there.

James and Annie laugh.

BLACKOUT.

END OF SCENE THREE

ACT 1, SCENE FIVE**EXT. SOUTH TRINIDAD ISLAND BEACH**

Lights up: James stands center stage.

JAMES

(addressing audience)

De la Boissere gave formal announcement to the world powers, establishing my claim to Trinidad. I raised enough investment money to begin construction at the hands of 400 workers, when the first passenger ship to the island arrived, and deposited on Trinidad's shores none other than miss Annie Harper Flagler.

Annie enters with a parasol. James comes to greet her, kissing her hand.

JAMES (CONT'D)

So good of you to come!

ANNIE

I said I would, didn't I? Though I must confess, I am something of a spy.

JAMES

Intriguing. How so?

ANNIE

Father asked if I would report back to him what I saw here.

JAMES

He was suspicious?

ANNIE

It is simply his habit when he considers making an investment.

JAMES

That would be much appreciated. So you are here for business rather than pleasure?

ANNIE

(looks around)

I wouldn't say that. You're much farther along than I anticipated - to think that it was uninhabited just a short time ago, and now so many people and buildings!

2 Chinese workers in conical Asian hats walk behind them carrying a wood plank.

JAMES

Halt!

(they stop)

No no no, this won't do at all. We need uniforms for you.

ANNIE

Can they understand, James?

JAMES

Oh yes, I forgot: I must speak the Eastern tongue.

(badly pronounced Hindi)

Hama apa ke li'e vardi ki avas'yakata. Yes?

WORKER 1

(exchanges look with cohort)

...We are *Chinese*.

JAMES

Ah! They speak English. All is well then - why did you not say so before?

WORKER 2

(looks at wood plank)

Do you want us to carry the lumber...?

JAMES

Absolutely not! Palace guards do not carry lumber.

WORKER 1

Palace guards...?

JAMES

(draws sword from sheathe)

Kneel.

They set down the plank and kneel. He taps them both on each shoulder.

JAMES (CONT'D)

I hereby dub you knights of the realm. Now, rise and go at once to the royal tailor!

WORKER 1

Truly?

James waves a hand.

The workers lean into each other.

WORKER 2

We got a promotion?

They both shrug, and exit.

ANNIE

What charming young men. So, I take it that you have a palace for them to guard?

JAMES

It is under construction, unfortunately.

(points)

But we have a lovely hotel finished, right over there, where you will be staying.

ANNIE

Superb!

(looks, cocks her head)

Why those curtains?

JAMES

Pardon, mademoiselle?

ANNIE

Well...they're alright, but... such *drab* colors...

JAMES

I apologize! I did not realize they would not be to your liking...

ANNIE

I think there should be red curtains trimmed with gold. I have always liked that combination, don't you?

JAMES

Yes, I quite like it. I shall send for them to be made immediately-

Annie steps out in front of him,
surveying the island (toward audience).

ANNIE

Perhaps it can be the official colors of Trinidad? Do you have a flag designed?

JAMES

Not yet-

ANNIE

I think it should be a red flag, with... a golden triangle as its emblem!

JAMES

Why a triangle?

ANNIE

Because that's the shape of the island - it's rather triangular-shaped, don't you think?

JAMES

....Yes. Yes, I suppose you are right...

ANNIE

(muses anxiously)

I must find a pen and paper, and write these things down before I forget...

James takes a small ring-case from his pocket.

JAMES

Annie?

ANNIE

(turns)

Hm? Yes, James?

He drops to one knee.

JAMES

Will you marry me?

Annie gasps as he opens the ring case.

ANNIE

James! Don't tell me you had that in your pocket all along?!

JAMES

I wanted to ask you the moment I saw you.

ANNIE

Well...it is a bit sudden...

James looks crestfallen, nods his head sadly. He almost gets up - but then, Annie smiles and laughs.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

But there is so much work to be done.

(puts ring on her finger)

And, therefore, not a moment to lose!

BLACKOUT.

END OF SCENE FIVE

ACT 1, SCENE SIX**INT. CHANCELLERY OF TRINIDAD - NEW YORK**

Lights up: De la Boissere sits at the
Chancellery desk with the quill pen.

James and Annie enter, arm-in-arm.

JAMES

What news, my good Minister of Foreign Affairs?

DE LA BOISSERE

(smiles)

It just arrived this morning.

ANNIE

...What is it that arrived?

De la Boissiere reaches down, recovers a
box. Beaming, he sets it atop the desk.
Their eyes widen as they peer at it.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Have you opened it yet?

De la Boissiere shakes his head. They
gaze at it, like kids at Christmas.

JAMES

Well what are we waiting for? Let us open it at once!

Beat. They look as if they are waiting.
James turns and looks at De la Boissiere.

DE LA BOISSIERE

Oh no, I couldn't possibly. My hands are shaking.

JAMES

As are mine! Please, I would be most appreciative if you
would do the honors.

(De la Boissiere hesitates)

Surely you would not refuse a request from your king?

Silence. Annie takes the package and rips
it open - she gasps and takes a step back
in awe. Slowly, De la Boissiere lifts out
a dazzling crown, hands visibly shaking.

DE LA BOISSIERE

Perhaps you should try it on, before I drop it.

JAMES

By all means.

De la Boissiere gives it to James, who places it on top of his head. James tries to situate the unwieldy thing.

JAMES (CONT'D)

How does it look?

DE LA BOISSIERE

Perfect. Your Highness.

Annie's smile falls.

ANNIE

...How much did it cost?

James is surprised, then puts an arm around her.

JAMES

Ah. Forgive me Annie, the Penelope of my Ithaca - how very rude of me, to purchase a crown for myself first, before thinking of my betrothed.

ANNIE

Oh no, it's not that...I just think you're moving too fast. Trinidad isn't profitable yet-

JAMES

That is the way it works. New endeavors always cost more money at first than it makes. That's why one must have enough capital to survive a few years without a penny of profit.

ANNIE

Yes, I know - I am not ignorant of business, James. But you have no capital.

(stops him from replying)

And don't tell me you've got plenty from the sales of your philosophy books, because I know that isn't true.

JAMES

Annie, Trinidad is my life, and I need very little in the way of luxuries.

Annie turns away. A knock at the door.

DE LA BOISSIERE

I wonder who that can be?

ANNIE

It's my father. Excuse me - I shall let you gentlemen talk privately.

James watches with concern as Annie exits Stage Right. De la Boissiere opens the door, and John Flagler enters Stage Left.

JOHN

I hope I'm not interrupting, I just thought I'd drop by and see how you two were doing.

JAMES

No, no, actually, I am glad you have come.

They take their seats.

JAMES (CONT'D)

John, out of mutual respect, I would appreciate if we could be frank with one another.

JOHN

Alright.

JAMES

I fear my forwardness with your daughter may have offended you.

JOHN

I'm more surprised than offended.

JAMES

I hope so. I am going to be married soon to your daughter. It would be tragic if something were to set us at odds, placing Annie in the middle between the two men she loves most.

JOHN

That won't happen.

JAMES

Are you saying you have no issue with my marriage to your daughter?

JOHN

(beat)

Well, I have my concerns, sure. But it's nothing we can't clear up.

James looks like a cat waiting to pounce. He lowers his voice.

JAMES

What concerns, monsieur?

JOHN

Listen James, I'm aware that you've been having some...financial problems lately. And Annie comes from a privileged background-

James springs from his seat, snarling.

JAMES

I knew it. You've poisoned Annie against me.

John also rises, indignant.

JOHN

Now wait just a minute! I haven't done anything of the sort.

JAMES

Now you are being dishonest with me, and that I cannot tolerate! I heard it from your own mouth - you think I am marrying her for her money!

JOHN

Calm down James. I have no doubt you love Annie. But I'm also not a fool. I know what Trinidad means to you-

JAMES

Ah! The truth comes out at last. You have convinced poor Annie that I am marrying her solely to back my efforts on Trinidad.

Annie steps into the room behind the chairs, to listen with De La Boissiere.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Well, I can put those fears to rest this instant. My love for Annie and my love for Trinidad are two separate things, and I will not compromise one for the other. I will support Annie and provide everything she needs. And I do not need yours or anybody else's money to do so. In fact, if you need further proof, I shall marry her without settlements.

Annie looks aghast.

JOHN

Alright, alright, sorry if I misjudged you. But if you should ever get into a tight spot...

JAMES

No. I am sorry Mr. Flagler, but I do not accept charity.

JOHN

Fair enough. Take good care of her, James.

They shake hands.

JAMES

That I will do, sir.

John begins to exit Stage Right when Annie stops him.

ANNIE

He's going to need the money.

James is straining to hear their conversation, while badly pretending to be unaware of it.

JOHN

I know. But there's nothing I can do if he's not willing to accept it.

(beat)

Annie, I have to ask: are you sure he's the one?

James hears this, and is furious.

ANNIE

Positive.

JOHN

You'd tell me if you weren't?

Annie smiles and rolls her eyes.

ANNIE

Yes, Father. He's just stubborn and prideful, in the way men often are. Don't worry so much.

John nods, and exits. Annie holds herself, and sighs. James is seething.

BLACKOUT.

END OF SCENE SIX

ACT I, SCENE SEVEN**INT. CHANCELLERY OF TRINIDAD - NEW YORK**

Lights up: James now stands front and center before the audience. Behind him, De la Boissere (holding a newspaper) and Annie sit in their chairs, frozen. In Stage Right is the State Department desk, but it's in shadow for now.

JAMES

I remember that time as one of bliss. I had done my solemn duty, in taking a suitable bride - a princess, as close to one as could be found in America - and wedded her. I spent my days in travel, buying properties and organizing the trips to Trinidad. But alas, these halcyon days were to end with a sudden jolt, as one rudely shaken out of a heavenly dream.

James joins the scene, sitting between De la Boissere and Annie. De la Boissere hands him the newspaper. James notices tension from both of them. James takes the paper, opens it, reads it. As he reads the headlines, his face falls. He stands up.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Great Britain is overtaking Trinidad for a cable station?! This is preposterous! They did not ask my permission, nor did they have the common decency to notify me! I discovered the island. How can they take what is rightfully mine in such an outrageous fashion?!

James tosses the newspaper to the floor, and sits back in his chair to stew.

DE LA BOISSIERE

They maintain Halley discovered it first.

JAMES

Bah! He never created a settlement on Trinidad.

ANNIE

Well...that is exactly what officials in Brazil have said, in protest of the seizure.

JAMES

Good, at least SOMEONE is protesting!

DE LA BOISSIERE

But not in our favor, I'm afraid: Brazil is now trying to claim Trinidad as well.

James picks up the newspaper and buries his nose in it.

JAMES

Tch! Naturally, they cite the illegal Portuguese settlement. I don't know which claim is more absurd - Great Britain's disinterested explorer Halley, or Brazil's once-upon-a-time tenants who vacated the premises. They all abandoned the island to obscurity, and all of them are long dead!

DE LA BOISSIERE

Nonetheless, James, we have a problem on our hands.

ANNIE

They've been predicting a conflict between the two countries.

JAMES

We could send a protest to both of them.

ANNIE

With the conflict this heated, I doubt anyone will pay attention to a third bid for Trinidad. Especially when we have no leverage, either financially or militarily.

JAMES

Right, the military! I knew we forgot something!

(slaps forehead)

If only this had not happened so soon, we might have established a passable militia.

DE LA BOISSIERE

That could have made things infinitely worse - besides, even a few *hundred* armed men would fail to give an empire like Great Britain much pause.

JAMES

Perhaps, but we must do something. De la Boissiere, you have always been my most trusted ally and friend. We have been through a lot, you and I, and I need you now more than ever.

DE LA BOISSIERE

I shall do whatever your majesty advises.

JAMES

Thank you. Send a letter to every world power that was informed of my taking possession of Trinidad. Include a letter to the State Department of America as well. They may be isolationists, but we have been very popular with the press and the public. They might just agree with our protest, and champion our cause with Great Britain and Brazil.

DE LA BOISSIERE

As you wish. I shall begin immediately.

He sits down at the desk, and takes up the quill pen.

JAMES

I am counting on you, my friend.

James sighs. Annie gets up and embraces him, and he hugs back.

JAMES (CONT'D)

I need a drink.

James & Annie exit Stage Right. A spotlight comes up on RICHARD OLNEY, 50's, US Secretary of State, who is also at his desk Stage Right. He has his feet propped up on the desk and a cigar in his mouth. He's reading the envelope containing that De la Boissere sent.

DE LA BOISSIERE

To His Excellency Mr. Secretary of State of the Republic of the United States of North America, Washington, DC...

RICHARD OLNEY

Mr. Count De la Boissiere, Minister of Foreign Affairs for the island of Trinidad. Never heard of him.

Richard opens the envelope, pulls out the letter and reads it. Meanwhile, De la Boissiere narrates the letter as he's composing it.

DE LA BOISSIERE

Excellency, I have the honor to recall to your memory that in the month of September, 1893, Baron Harden-Hickey officially notified all the world powers of his taking possession of the uninhabited island of Trinidad.

RICHARD OLNEY

Who the hell IS this guy?

DE LA BOISSIERE

As the law of nations prescribes that derelict territories belong to whoever will take possession of them, his Serene Highness King James the First was authorized to regard his rights on Trinidad as perfectly valid and indisputable.

A piercing cackle erupts from Richard Olney on the other side of the stage.

RICHARD OLNEY

"Serene Highness?" Oh, that's rich.

DE LA BOISSIERE

Nevertheless, in spite of all the legitimate rights of my sovereign King James, an English war-ship has disembarked on Trinidad a detachment of armed troops, and taken possession of the island in the name of England.

RICHARD OLNEY

Whatever shall we do?!

DE LA BOISSIERE

Following this invasion, the Brazilian Government demanded the English Government surrender the island to Brazil. I beg of Your Excellency and the United States Government to recognize Trinidad as an independent State.

RICHARD OLNEY

So that's what you want. Uh huh, sure. Right after I settle that labor dispute - the one between Santa and his elves.

DE LA BOISSIERE

Thus the United States will once more accord its powerful assistance to the cause of right and justice, and re-establish concord between two great countries ready to appeal to arms. In the expectation of your reply, Grand Chancellor, Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Count De la Boissiere.

Looking satisfied, De la Boissiere puts down his pen, and looks it over. He sighs.

DE LA BOISSERE

That should do it. I do hope he responds quickly.

The light dims on De la Boissiere, leaving the focus on Richard Olney.

RICHARD OLNEY

(yells, to assistant o.s.)

I can't read the handwriting on this thing!

(tosses the letter)

Give it to the Washington press. Tell them it's a crank letter from some crazy French guy.

BLACKOUT.

END OF SCENE FIVE

ACT I, SCENE FIVE**INT. CHANCELLERY OF TRINIDAD - NEW YORK**

De la Boissiere is pacing anxiously in front of the desk, sifting through a small stack of papers. James enters.

JAMES

Anything yet?

DE LA BOISSIERE

No. Nothing.

JAMES

Pray do not give up hope. Justice must always prevail, even if it does not seem likely at first.

DE LA BOISSIERE

Perhaps, but sometimes it comes late - such as after those involved have died, and are already contented with the rewards of the hereafter.

JAMES

You know that I have been writing books on Buddhism, yes?

DE LA BOISSIERE

Yes.

JAMES

Well, I have found that Christianity and Buddhism have more in common than you might think. And on one point in particular they agree - people always get what is coming to them. In Christianity, it is called heaven and hell. In Buddhism, it is called karma. The only difference is karma just might pummel somebody in this life instead of the next.

DE LA BOISSIERE

I am sorry James, but I am afraid I cannot focus on revenge quite yet.

JAMES

Really? Lately, that is all I can think about.

De la Boissere reads his newspaper. A knock at the door.

DE LA BOISSIERE

Who could that be?

JAMES

It must be someone for me. I shall go see.

As James heads for the door, De la Boissiere sees a headline in the paper that alarms him.

DE LA BOISSIERE

Uh, perhaps it isn't wise to answer-

JAMES

Nonsense. We cannot keep them waiting, whoever they might be.

James opens the door. 2 suited REPORTERS breeze in, notebooks and pencils in hand.

REPORTER 1

Hi there. Where can we find Mr. De la Boissiere?

JAMES

There is no finding to be done, he is right here.

The Reporters zero in on De la Boissiere, like predatory animals to its prey.

JAMES (CONT'D)

I am sorry, but De la Boissiere is busy at the moment securing the future of Trinidad.

REPORTER 2

(chuckle)

Good! That's exactly the kind of thing we want to talk to him about.

JAMES

If you want an interview with De la Boissiere, you must schedule it ahead of time. On the other hand, if you wish to talk to *me*-

The Reporters stride right past him and gets right in De la Boissiere's face, holding up a letter.

REPORTER 1

Did you send this crank letter to the US State Department?

REPORTER 2

Is it true you feel you are being cheated of your rights concerning Trinidad?

REPORTER 1

Did you really think the US Government would intervene? Was it a joke, or a shot in the dark?

DE LA BOISSIERE

Well, yes...

REPORTER 2

(writes that down)

Aha, it was a joke! I'll quote you on that 'monsieur'...

DE LA BOISSIERE

Hold on. I shall answer everything in due course, if you would just slow down-

REPORTER 1

What is your motive serving a lunatic who thinks he's a king?

JAMES

Now wait just a minute!

James positions himself between De la Boissiere and the Reporter.

JAMES (CONT'D)

I do not appreciate this rather brusque way that you have chosen to present yourself, unannounced and uninvited.

DE LA BOISSIERE

James, let me handle this.

REPORTER 2

So this is King James, huh?

The reporter makes a mocking, grandiose bow to James.

JAMES

Enough! Get off this property or suffer the consequences! Get out I say!

James and De la Boissiere push them toward the door. They finally manage to close the door. James and De la Boissiere sink to the ground with exhailes of exhaustion.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Rude miscreants...

DE LA BOISSIERE

James, I hate to say it but...I told you not to open the door.

Beat. James looks apologetic.

JAMES

Just out of morbid curiosity, what did the papers say about us?

DE LA BOISSIERE

The question is what did they *not* say. They criticized every part of our regime, including the way we speak and dress.

JAMES

It just goes to show you how low and wretched they are if they have to find some reason to laugh at us, instead of giving us much needed support.

DE LA BOISSIERE

I believe support is completely out of the question.

JAMES

Which is why there is always revenge. And the best revenge is showing them we do not give a damn what they think. Yes?

DE LA BOISSIERE

(sighs)

I suppose.

Beat. They both look depressed. Annie enters, cautiously.

ANNIE

Are those horrible men gone? I barricaded myself in the next room, thinking it was intruders.

JAMES

It was.

(gets up and goes to
Annie)

Reporters caught wind of our plight and thought it amusing.

ANNIE

Oh. Shame I didn't come out with the gun, then.

DE LA BOISSIERE

(gets up)

We don't need you in the press too, Annie. So far they've shown restraint where you're concerned, whether it's due to your father's reputation, or your gender. But they shall target you as well, should you become conspicuous.

(looks out window)

There's more of them out there. A veritable mob.

James covers his eyes.

JAMES

Perhaps a letter is not sufficient. Maybe I need to seek an audience with the heads of state, and make my appeal to them in person-

ANNIE

You've been away so often already...and let's just face it, we're nearly impoverished.

James sits down, as De la Boissiere goes to organize papers on the desk.

JAMES

I have lost Trinidad in the blink of an eye. With all our hard work...all it amounts to is debt and laughter.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

(sits down beside him)

I think maybe, until everything is resolved, we should focus on matters here at home. It would be good to get your mind off this Trinidad business, and to catch up on things.

JAMES

So, you are blaming me for our financial situation while I built our kingdom?

ANNIE

I have been patient *because* of Trinidad. But now I need you home. With me.

JAMES

You feel I have been neglectful toward you?

ANNIE

I didn't say that.

JAMES

And just what do you propose I do?

ANNIE

James, I'm trying to tell you that we have options. I have an inheritance from my mother that could be of help.

JAMES

Really? Why didn't you tell me this before?

ANNIE

...My father's in charge of it.

JAMES

(jumps up)

What?! I cannot believe this. That man always manages to rule over our lives.

ANNIE

My father is not unreasonable. I'm sure he would agree, if you just approached him in the correct manner.

JAMES

You assume wrong - I already asked your father for money to go to Ireland and launch a retaliatory invasion of Great Britain, and he refused me.

ANNIE

That's because it was an outrageous idea to begin with.

JAMES

The Irish would not think so. But more to the point, I will not go begging him for money again. My pride will not suffer it.

ANNIE

Your pride has been making a lot of the decisions lately.

James folds his arms and turns away in a huff, like a young boy. De La Boissiere finds a letter in the paper stack and hands it to James.

DE LA BOISSERE

A letter arrived from a gentleman named Ralston Markowe.

James opens and reads the letter.

JAMES

It is from Hawaii. How very peculiar. The late King Kalakaua was the only person I knew from Hawaii. Annie, come look at this! You will not believe it!

ANNIE

(goes to see)

Oh, I'm sure I won't.

JAMES

This Ralston fellow is an agent of the Royalist party. Liliuokalani, who succeeded as Queen of Hawaii after her brother's death, is under house arrest. Ralston and his friends have been working to restore her to the throne. Listen to what he says: "only a strong hand can unravel the situation - it is on the island of Kauai that I propose to establish you as an independent sovereign."

Annie throws up her hands, while De la Boissiere claps James on the back.

DE LA BOISSIERE

How exciting! A chance to expand the empire!

ANNIE

As of last week, we don't even have Trinidad! How is James supposed to help another ruler reclaim her kingdom, when he can't even do the same for himself?!

DE LA BOISSIERE

Well, we shouldn't feel so bad - we are in good company, if the Hawaiian queen is having the same troubles we are.

JAMES

Indeed. And he explains his plan here: "my plan is to successively occupy all the islands, leaving the capital to the last. When the others have fallen, the capital of Honolulu, being cut off from all its resources, will be easily taken."

Annie groans and takes a seat again, holding her head.

JAMES (CONT'D)

"I think it must be clear to you that the opportunity now offered is of incomparably greater value than Trinidad. Hoping that I may have an interview with you soon, Respectfully yours, Ralston Markowe."

(to Annie)

What do you think? Is it not truly extraordinary?

ANNIE

(sighs)

My dear, I think you have redefined the word.

BLACKOUT.

END OF SCENE FIVE

ACT I, SCENE SIX**INT. IOLANI PALACE - HONOLULU - HAWAII**

Lights up - QUEEN LILIUOKALANI, 50's, an elegant Hawaiian woman in a black dress, is seated, idly fanning herself. Standing next to her is a SEAMSTRESS, 20's, carrying several dresses.

SEAMSTRESS

I have finished tailoring the garments that you requested, Your Majesty.

LILIUOKALANI

Thank you.

(pause)

You still defer to me as 'Your Majesty'.

SEAMSTRESS

Of course. You are the Queen of Hawaii.

LILIUOKALANI

Not according to the document I signed, to abdicate the throne. They did not even want me to write the name 'Queen Liliuokalani' - they insisted I sign as 'Liliuokalani Dominis'. Whoever that is supposed to be.

SEAMSTRESS

Shameful. Did you refuse?

LILIUOKALANI

No. It did not matter how wrong or insulting it was - the lives of my allies and Minister of Foreign Affairs depended upon my cooperation.

(shakes head, sighs)

Oh yes, before you go - I have one more task for you - there is a troublesome button on my cuff that wants to get loose.

SEAMSTRESS

(looks at it)

I see it. It looks like an easy fix.

Liliuokalani sighs, rubbing her temple.

SEAMSTRESS (CONT'D)

Are you alright? Are you feeling unwell?

LILIUOKALANI

No, no...just struggling to accept that my home has become my prison. Naturally, I prefer being confined to my chambers to serving the sentence first imposed upon me - but it was not mercy. Rather, I suspect the tribunal thought it amusing, to keep a deposed Queen jailed inside her own palace.

Beat. The seamstress looks sympathetic.

SEAMSTRESS

...I have some news for you.

LILIUOKALANI

Child, the guard could overhear-

SEAMSTRESS

Look, Your Majesty, this button does not match!

LILIUOKALANI

(leans in closer)

What have you heard?

SEAMSTRESS

A rumor has been going around, and if it is true there is someone who might help your cause.

LILIUOKALANI

Is there word from the United States? Has President Harrison changed his mind?

SEAMSTRESS

I'm afraid not.

LILIUOKALANI

(shrugs)

My appeals have fallen on deaf ears since Cleveland left office. Go on.

SEAMSTRESS

There is a king who has been made aware of your situation. He wants to help lead a revolt against your opponents and free you.

LILIUOKALANI

Someone from outside the islands advocating for the monarchy? That would be a welcome change. Who convinced this king to get involved?

SEAMSTRESS

Ralston Markowe.

LILIUOKALANI

Ralston? That's peculiar.

SEAMSTRESS

Why?

LILIUOKALANI

Ralston is one of the more zealous of my supporters. I believe he took part in the skirmishes that led to my arrest.

SEAMSTRESS

Wouldn't a revolt require radical measures?

LILIUOKALANI

I don't know. Diplomacy hasn't worked for me, any more than revolt worked for the rebels fighting in my name.

They hear footstep sounds from the guard outside the door.

SEAMSTRESS

...And we shall have to do something about the stitching on that bit of lace right there...

Footsteps again, receding. Then silence.

SEAMSTRESS (CONT'D)

Well, this monarch and Ralston plan to set themselves up on Kauai. And then-

LILIUOKALANI

What country did you say this king rules?

SEAMSTRESS

An island. Off the coast of Brazil.

LILIUOKALANI

What island off the coast of Brazil?

SEAMSTRESS

Trinidad.

LILIUOKALANI

Trinidad? I have heard it is a lovely vacationing spot.

(pause, thinking)

But...Trinidad is a territory belonging to England. It does not have its own sovereign.

Liliuokalani frowns. Then she gasps.

LILIUOKALANI (CONT'D)

The *derelict* Trinidad?

SEAMSTRESS

I-I guess so. I am not very familiar with geography, Your Majesty.

Liliuokalani stands up abruptly, perturbed.

LILIUOKALANI

Not only does the Emperor have no clothes, he has no kingdom. This 'king' rules over a rock so small it's not even on the map.

SEAMSTRESS

I'm sorry. I only meant to help.

LILIUOKALANI

There are certain things I am not in need of. Top among them is another foreigner, attempting to seize the kingdom of Hawaii.

BLACKOUT.

END OF SCENE SIX

ACT I, SCENE SEVEN**INT. CHANCELLERY OF TRINIDAD - NEW YORK**

Lights up - James and John Flagler are seated, staring at one another guardedly. For a beat, nothing is said - the tension is palpable.

JOHN

I have to say, I didn't expect to be invited back so soon. Especially after our disagreement over that reprisal venture of yours.

JAMES

I assure you, it is a surprise to me as well.

JOHN

Since you're tolerating a meeting with me, I take it things have not improved for you?

JAMES

You guess correctly. My contact in Hawaii has not conferred with me about their military coup in weeks - now that Liliuokalani has given up the throne, I think they see no point in continuing to put up a fight.

(sighs, beat)

Yet the papers have never ceased in hounding De la Boissiere and myself. And to think, that the press used to be so friendly to my cause. You remember the article that called Annie the 'American Queen'? Right after we married?

JOHN

Yes, I remember. I was asked to comment on it. I didn't really know what to say, other than to show my support for the both of you.

JAMES

Well, you have no further need to support my cause, for those days are now nothing more than history.

JOHN

...What is it you need from me this time? For some reason I doubt I'm here for moral support.

JAMES

I believe you know why I asked you here.

JOHN

Honestly, I don't. I cannot read minds - yours least of all.

JAMES

Fine.

(rises)

...I wish to inquire about Annie's inheritance.

JOHN

What about it?

JAMES

I request that it be placed to our account.

Intense beat, as John thinks that over.

JOHN

...I have never had any problem providing you and Annie with an allowance. But this is a large sum of money.

JAMES

Would you deny your daughter what is rightfully hers?

JOHN

It's not that. You see, in business, men learn how to properly manage money.

JAMES

You forget, I am a businessman as well.

JOHN

I'm afraid Trinidad didn't give you the experience necessary.

JAMES

Nonetheless, I can be trusted with Annie's inheritance.

JOHN

Regardless of what you may think - Lord knows I'll never understand how you operate - it's nothing personal. I just think the money would be safer if I take care of it and hold on to it for you and Annie. It's really no different than having it stored at a bank.

James turns away, taking a breath and trying to keep his temper in check.

JAMES

Why do you refuse to trust me with anything concerning Annie?

JOHN

You haven't yet done anything to put me at ease. Perhaps if you would try to see things rationally...

(James turns and glares)

...I would be more inclined to trust you.

JAMES

This is the most hypocrisy I have ever heard you utter in one sitting.

JOHN

You can perceive it any way you want. I am not yielding.

JAMES

Neither am I, Monsieur.

JOHN

I'm going home, James. I will ensure that my daughter has everything she requires.

JAMES

And just what are you implying?

JOHN

Don't be a fool. Your wife has only seen you infrequently over the last many months. Most of the time, you're living in separate parts of the globe.

JAMES

You...are cutting me off?!

JOHN

I tire of your attitude toward me and I will not endure it any longer.

John gets up and heads for the door.
James looks angry and panicked.

JAMES

You scoundrel! You would have me live on the streets while you bathe in piles of cash!

JOHN

You won't live on the streets. My advice to you would be to sell your lands in Mexico and California.

John walks out the door.

JAMES

You would have me left with nothing, Flagler!

The door closes. Annie emerges, fully dressed and carrying a bag - James hears her approach, and turns to face her.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Annie, I am sorry. I tried to do as you asked. But that man-

ANNIE

-Is my father.

James looks down and sees the bag.

JAMES

...Where are you going?

ANNIE

I am going with him.

JAMES

Annie, please do not listen to him - you and I will be fine without him and the inheritance he stole from you.

ANNIE

Perhaps you will. But I will not.

Annie tries to move past him, but James makes sure to block her.

JAMES

And why is that? Because he is able to buy you things that I cannot?

She stops, gives him a look of cold fury.

ANNIE

It's rather curious: you respond with such immediate ferocity whenever you feel your honor is questioned...and yet, you have no qualms about continuously questioning mine.

JAMES

Why don't you simply admit that I am not providing you with the lifestyle to which you feel entitled?

ANNIE

I do admit it. There is no denying that staying with you will leave me financially bereft. But you have grossly misunderstood me - I am going to repair the rift you caused.

JAMES

Between whom? Your father and myself? Annie, there is no rule that states a father and his son-in-law must get along, or pretend to like one another. In fact, tensions between relations are as old as mankind itself.

ANNIE

Yes, you're so clever - you think you've done it. You've finally managed to cut me off from my father, in order to play out this invented enmity between the two of you.

JAMES

Invented? And who was it that invented it, hm?

ANNIE

You! It does not exist, James! It's a figment of your imagination, just like your kingdom!

James looks hurt, he sits down, in shock.
Annie steps forward, worried.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

...I didn't mean it that way.

JAMES

Yes you did.

(beat)

Did you ever believe I could make Trinidad a reality?

ANNIE

I thought it was a beautiful dream. One I wanted to share. I had run out of dreams, until I met you.

JAMES

And now?

ANNIE

...I don't know.

Annie passes him - he takes her hand.

JAMES

I will do as your father suggested. I will sell the lands.

She withdraws her hand.

ANNIE

Let me know when you do.

Annie continues out the door. Blackout,
except for the spotlight on James.

JAMES

(addressing audience)

That was my darkest time. Trinidad was gone. My finances were in ruin. And Annie...

(beat)

For the first time in my life, I felt utterly alone.

(sighs, beat)

Though far from the blind optimism of my youth, I was still certain that it was only a matter of time before I would sell my land, and life would resume as normal. Annie bought a home in California, and lived there awaiting my arrival. But the months dragged on. One by one, my prospective buyers dwindled. No one would commit, no matter how I pressed them. I was down to the last buyer.

James reveals an envelope he has been holding behind his back.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Their letter would determine my fate.

James regards the letter, hesitating. Light comes up on the El Paso set - he takes the envelope there, sitting down on the bed.

A spotlight appears on the other side of the stage - on Annie and De la Boissiere. Technically they are in California somewhere close to Annie's new home, but that hardly matters.

DE LA BOISSIERE

Where is James?

ANNIE

He is away... in Mexico, I think. He'll be returning when he closes a real estate deal.

DE LA BOISSIERE

Annie, I have the most terrible feeling. It isn't like him to go months without sending word.

ANNIE

You forget, there were long stretches of time where he would just write his philosophy books, and hardly speak to a soul.

DE LA BOISSIERE

Yes, well...that is why I have come.

De la Boissiere anxiously hands her a book.

ANNIE

What's this?

DE LA BOISSIERE

You do not know?

ANNIE

I'm sorry - I'm ashamed to admit it, but I haven't read all of his books. He was loathe to have any copies in the house, for fear that he would be compelled to rewrite them. Thank you for bringing this to me.

DE LA BOISSIERE

Read it.

Annie opens the book, puzzled.

Meanwhile, James takes a deep breath and opens the letter. He begins to read it.

ANNIE

(reads from book)

"We must shake off this fond desire of life and learn that it is of little consequence when we suffer; that it is of greater moment to live well than to live long, and that oftentimes it is living well...not to live long."

(stops, taken aback)

What horrendous illustrations. What book is this?

She closes the book, and takes a harder look at the cover.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

'Euthanasia: The Ethics of Suicide'...

Annie swallows, looks between De la Boissiere and the book.

DE LA BOISSERE

I fear for him, if we don't act quickly.

Annie lifts her chin, stubborn, and hands the book back.

ANNIE

I know what you would ask. And I will not do it.

DE LA BOISSIERE

Annie, you must! His life is at stake.

ANNIE

I do not believe so. He wrote that book for the controversy.

DE LA BOISSIERE

It is not just the book, Annie - he told me himself...

ANNIE

(shakes her head, mirthless smile)

James always had a flair for the dramatic. You've let him frighten you into acting as his spokesperson - well, I am not so easily swayed. He will do as he promised - only then will I take him back.

Annie exits. Meanwhile, in the El Paso Hotel set, James lets the letter fall to the floor. Blackout on James.

BLACKOUT.

END OF SCENE SEVEN

ACT I, SCENE EIGHT**INT. EL PASO HOTEL - TEXAS**

Lights up - we return to where we were in the beginning: James is in bed, forever resting in peace; De la Boissiere holds the crown as he speaks with Richard Harding Davis.

DE LA BOISSIERE

I promised Annie I would find James and report back to her. But by the time I arrived...well, you can see for yourself... James' research into the different kinds of lethal poisons, which he documented in 'Euthanasia: the Ethics of Suicide', was put to good use. Or bad use, as it were.

RICHARD HARDING DAVIS

(shakes head)

Hard to believe, after living so large a life, he died alone in a hotel room, in silence.

DE LA BOISSIERE

Oh no, of course he left a note - as his book points out, there is a proper way of going about this sort of thing.

De la Boissiere produces a folded letter from his pocket.

DE LA BOISSIERE (CONT'D)

It was pinned to the chair above the crown.

(reads)

"My Dearest Annie - no news from you, although you have had plenty of time to write. I have just received a letter informing me that there is no one in view at present to buy my land. Well, I shall have tasted the cup of bitterness to the very dregs, but I do not complain. Good-bye. I forgive your conduct toward me and trust you will be able to forgive yourself. I prefer to be a dead gentleman to a living blackguard like your father."

RICHARD HARDING DAVIS

He never changed.

DE LA BOISSIERE

No. He never did.

RICHARD HARDING DAVIS

What now?

DE LA BOISSIERE

I do not know. I suppose I will have to deliver this note to Annie.

(MORE)

DE LA BOISSIERE (CONT'D)

What I failed to mention before was his children: a son and a daughter from his first marriage to a Countess, whom he divorced before departing from France. Those children were entrusted to me.

RICHARD HARDING DAVIS

He did not want to be a father?

DE LA BOISSIERE

He never had one growing up - I suspect he did not have the first idea how to be one.

(rises)

They found a replacement in me, but I worry that I spent so much time looking after James that I left too much of the burden to my wife. I think it is high time they had my full and devoted attention.

De la Boissiere places the crown on the seat.

RICHARD HARDING DAVIS

You're going to leave the crown here? I don't mean to impose, but I should think his children would like to have it.

DE LA BOISSIERE

(smiles)

This crown was meant for one purpose only: to be worn by the King of Trinidad.

De la Boissiere and Richard Harding Davis exit. The lights go dim, leaving one spotlight - centered over the rickety old chair with the crown on its seat.

The light stays on for a few moments, before it is extinguished.

BLACKOUT.

- CURTAIN -