

**AUDITION SIDES**

**“THE CAGE”**

***SULTANA and ABD-AL-AZIZ***

(The door opens and SULTANA enters, furious. ELMAS jumps up.)

SULTANA

*What did you do?*

ABD-AL-AZIZ

Good evening Madam Sultana.

SULTANA

*Years! You spent years with him! He knows nothing of his birth! Nothing of his duties! What did you tell him? What did you do for the past twenty-three years?*

ABD-AL-AZIZ

Have you met my daughter, Sultana? Elmas, come.

SULTANA

Vizer, you were trusted. You are the only person who knew of his birth whom I did not have put to death. You were to be rewarded for your teachings and your care of my son! But what did you tell him? Why does he know nothing of his life?

ABD-AL-AZIZ

He knows enough.

SULTANA

Enough? He is a shadow! He is like an emerging child or a prisoner!

ABD-AL-AZIZ

And so he *is*.

SULTANA

He is the living Sultan!

ABD-AL-AZIZ

Yes- he is. Now. What do you think would have happened if he had know from the start that all the world was his, but he must live as a prisoner in a cage? His mind would not have been able to contain the strain of it.

SULTANA

So what did you teach him? *What?*

ABD-AL-AZIZ

I taught him of God. I let him know that all men are unworthy of God's love.

SULTANA

And what of his mother's love? What did you tell him of his mother?

ABD-AL-AZIZ

I told him all that God would have him know of mothers. Surely that is more important than learning of a woman's love that never came to see him.

SULTANA

I couldn't! You know that!

ABD-AL-AZIZ

Ask yourself, Sultana, what would you have had me do? What selfishness and pride is motivating your outburst? You are merely a mother who wants her son, but you charged me with the task of making this country a Sultan.

SULTANA

He does not understand what it means to be Sultan. You never told him.

ABD-AL-AZIZ

I told him to honor God. That should be the first duty of every Sultan. Was that not the problem with your dead husband? Did he ever understand that though he was powerful he was not above the laws of God?

SULTANA

But he's like a child... *You filthy Arab! You made him like a child!*

ABD-AL-AZIZ

Yes, Madam Sultana. Only an Arab would do what I did. Only an Arab would go against his Sultan and raise your son in secret. Only an Arab could be trusted not to present the boy and his traitorous mother to the Sultan for execution. Only an Arab would find pleasure not in the material wealth that betrayal would bring, but of the opportunity to bring the laws of God back to the Empire!

SULTANA

You never said this to me before.

ABD-AL-AZIZ

But you knew. Why else did you ask the Arab to help you?