SCENE 6

(It’s the afternoon of the Celebration. MAYA is sat at her dining table, frantically flipping the newspaper whilst her family watches.)

MAYA. No…no…(she flips) where is it?

(MAX walks in, all dressed up for the Magadea Celebration.)

MAX. What are you looking for?
MAYA. The article! My article! It’s not here!

(FATHER and MOTHER walk in.)

FATHER. What article?

(Maya gives him the side-eye as she continues searching through the paper.)

FATHER. I don’t know what you’re up to, but I told you to trust me. You have nothing to fear.
MAX. (Softly, to Maya) What did you do?
MAYA. I wrote an article warning everyone about the eviction. It’s supposed to be published, but it’s…not here!
FATHER. I try to protect you and this is how you repay me?
MAYA. Protect? (She turns on him.) The only person you’ve looked out for is yourself!
FATHER. I have a job to do –
MAYA. Your job! Would you rather send all of us to the slaughter than run the risk of losing your job?
FATHER. You think you’re so clever.
MAYA. I did what I had to!
FATHER. Well as did I!

(Though Father has started towards her and they both come face to face, Maya refuses to back down, piercing him with her glare. Mother is in the background, holding onto Max. Father turns away.)

FATHER. Max! We’re leaving. Do me a favor and make sure you never grow up to be like your sister.
MAX. I don’t know about that…
FATHER. I said come!

(He storms out of the house. A troubled Max follows him.)

MOTHER. Maya.
MAYA. No. Don’t.
MOTHER. I’m not saying what he did was right, I’m just saying he might have had his reasons.
MAYA. But –
MOTHER. He works hard, and he loves you a lot, Maya. He loves us a lot.
MAYA. Can you not look me in the eye and tell me you don’t agree with me?

(Mother looks pained but otherwise silent.)
MAYA. Mother!

(Just then, the sound of stomping boots approach. Maya scoffs, Mother sighs and starts to clean their dining table up.)

MOTHER. Max, I told you, it’s not funny anymore. Now cut it out.

(Continued stomping.)

MOTHER. (Louder, but not looking up from the table) Max!

(Two generals – GENERAL 1 and GENERAL 2 – swing the door open. Maya gasps. Mother drops the cup and it smashes.)

GENERAL 1. You two! Gather your things and get out!
MAYA. The government never planned on giving Dad a deal…
GENERAL 1. Did you hear me? Move now!
MOTHER. (Frantic) Yes…sure, sir. Give us a minute.

(Mother leaves the stage as Maya stands there frozen, mouth agape. On the other side of stage, we see the men and boys getting ready for the Magadea Celebration, unaware of the eviction.)

MEN AND BOYS.
THESE ARE THE STORIES OF OUR FATHERS
THESE ARE THE STORIES OF OUR SONS
BY A KINSHIP WE ARE TETHERED
BY A FRIENDSHIP, WE UNITE AS ONE

MEN.
EACH YEAR THE ELDEST LOT OF CHILDREN
TURN INTO MEN BEFORE OUR EYES
WE RELY ON THEM TO SAFEGUARD
THEIR FAMILIES; WE KNOW THEY WILL RISE

(Mother returns with two full suitcases. The generals lead them out but COLIN runs in, distraught. The generals recognize Colin as the son of one of their bosses and immediately step aside for him.)

COLIN. Maya!
MAYA. Colin! What happened?
COLIN. I just saw the paper too! I ran to find Herbert he said they weren’t able to publish it on time? It’s coming out tomorrow!
MAYA. (Incredulously) They’re here now.
GENERAL 1. Hurry up!
COLIN. Give us a minute! (To Maya) You don’t have to go with them. We can put up a fight right now.
MAYA. That’ll just land me a jail term. Look. You know I’m prepared to fight them. But not now. This time we were too late.
COLIN. How will I find you when I get back?
MAYA. (With a sudden realization) Oh...
COLIN. I leave tonight.

MEN AND BOYS.
WE DON’T LET DRAWBACKS DEFEAT US
WE WON’T LET DISTANCE DIVIDE
IN ONE UNENDING CHAIN OF BROTHERS
WE COME TOGETHER TONIGHT

MAYA. I don’t know how but… I’ll see you on the other side. I promise. Here.

(She gives him her favorite pen as a keepsake, thrusting it into his hand. He tries to decline.)

MAYA. Take it. And take care.
GENERAL 1. Let’s move it!
MAYA. Give it to me when you see me again.
COLIN. I’ll find you.
MAYA. (Smiling through her tears) I know you will.

(Colin pulls her into a tight hug. They exit the house, and Colin leaves on one side of the stage to follow his platoon, whilst Maya joins her Mother on the other side. Maya turns back, as if to tell Colin something, but she changes her mind.)

MEN AND BOYS.
THESE ARE THE STORIES OF OUR FATHERS
THESE ARE THE STORIES OF OUR SONS
BY A KINSHIP WE ARE TETHERED
BY A FRIENDSHIP, WE UNITE AS ONE

(As the celebration is starting, the women and girls of this household and others are being rounded up and led out of the village by the generals to dusty buses waiting to take them to resettlements in multiple towns all over the country.)