

# **LISBETA**

**THOU SHALT NOT SUFFER A WITCH TO LIVE**

**18 December 2019**

**Opera Libretto by Carina Karlsson and Ida Kronholm**

## Characters

**The magpie/the Devil** – Dancer/accordion.

**Lisbeta** – Per Skarp's wife in Persnäs, is convicted and executed.

**Karin** – Cotter Karin Persdotter in Markusböle, the first woman to be convicted and executed for witchcraft.

**Psilander** – District Judge Nils Psilander

**Kjellinus** – The parish priest of Sund, Bryniel Kjellinus

**Per** – Lisbeta's husband, Per Markusson Skarp, farmer on a large farm.

**The castellan's wife** – Kristin Olsdotter, married to the castellan.

**Ebba** – widow, known as the most honourable in the parish, is convicted and executed.

**Elin** – former maid at Lisbeta's house.

**Olof** – a juryman

**Margreta** – Lars Hansson's wife in Bjärström, convicted and executed.

**Maria** – Maria Nilsson in Markusböle, convicted and executed.

## Choir

The 8 accused women – Anna, Josef Olsson's wife in Högbolstad; Cotter Jöran Thomasson's wife, Ingeborg in Wästansunda; The superstitious wife Kirstin Hansdotter from Lemböte; Julia, Anders Thomasson's wife in Näfsby; Julia, Thomas Olsson's wife in Bovik; Karin, Erik Månsson's wife in Hindersböle; Mats Clemetsson's wife in Tosarby, Karin Isaksdotter; Wife Anna, Mats Larsson's mother-in-law, in Tranvik

11 jurymen

# ACT I

## Overture – The magpie’s prelude

*Accordion solo*

*(An empty stage, the curtain down. The magpie comes in and sits at the edge of the orchestra pit. Plays.)*

## Scene 1 – The mission

*Psilander’s aria*

*(The curtain goes up. District Judge Psilander alone at a table covered in books.)*

**Psilander**

Did you see him?

Did you see him?!

The tricks he plays

to

gain more power!

I know him, I know what he wants

and what I have to do

to

destroy him!

I have studied,

my eyes are tired

but the faith is

strong

and I know what it takes.

While you were feasting

I starved in my study!

While you played,

I read!

You played dear games

and I

learned everything!

*(Parish Priest Kjellinus has entered during Psilander's aria, listening. Arrives at Psilander's table)*

**Kjellinus**

I know what you mean!

**Psilander**

Did you see him?

**Kjellinus**

He is everywhere!

I see him clearly!

**Psilander**

Yes, he is everywhere.

I know what I have to do,

I can sacrifice myself

for the mission I have been given.

God wants to use me!

**Kjellinus**

And me!

**Psilander**

God needs me now!

**Kjellinus**

And me!

**Psilander**

God has given me a sign!

**Kjellinus**

And me!

## **Scene 2 – In the village**

*Solo, ensemble, choir: Lisbeta, Per, Karin, Ebba among others, choir.*

*(Tutti on stage – an everyday situation. The villagers gossip about various superstitions. Karin tries to enter the conversation, is the most extreme, goes too far, therefore gets caught later.)*

### **Lisbeta**

*(Shouts across the forests to protect the cows)*

Wickedness and devilry!

The darkness is full of it!

They want

my cows.

They laugh at my agony.

I have tipped a cauldron

over deep-set stone.

### **Women's choir**

We have tipped cauldrons

over deep-set stones.

### **Men's choir**

The womenfolk just love the cows!

### **Lisbeta**

Our child

I have pulled through the roots of a tree!

I have put embers

in the bathwater

and prayed for his happiness.

### **Per**

He is baptised,

and he drinks his mother's milk

for strength and prosperity.

**Lisbeta**

I have shouted  
from the highest hill in the village,  
let the shout grow out of my body!  
I'm the one laughing!

**Karin**

*(Blowing on Lisbeta)*

As the cows long for  
fresh water,  
you must long...

**Per**

Dear Lisbeta!  
What makes you happy  
makes me happy.  
Go ahead and shout!  
Shout as loud as you can!

**Ebba**

I have shouted  
like you!  
Shouted  
With heat as  
if from a fire  
in my voice.

**Karin**

*(Blows on someone in the choir)*

You stand on hot slabs  
you shall go thirsty  
from morning till–

**Women's choir**

We have shouted  
like you!

**Ebba**

Shouted louder than  
storms and rain!

**Men's choir**

What the critters need are cattle houses  
and fodder and fresh water!

**Ebba**

As far as the shout goes,  
the cattle go in peace.

**Margreta**

I have hung the farm's  
sharpest blade  
over the door  
and protected our cows!

**Women's choir**

We have protected our cows!

**Men's choir**

But there's no harm  
in shouting from the hills,  
There's no harm in sticking a knife  
in wood.

**Maria**

I have shouted, too!  
And carved crosses  
on every threshold!

**Women's choir**

We have carved crosses!

**Men's choir**

A cross here and there...

**Elin**

Lisbeta has taught me  
to collect nine kinds of wood  
to burn away the wickedness with.

**Karin**

*(Blows on Elin)*

Get thee hence! Get thee hence!  
Up and away!  
Get thee hence! *(continues in parallel with below)*

**Women's choir**

We have burned away the wickedness  
with nine kinds of wood!

**The castellan's wife**

You do what you can  
to keep the animals alive!



**Ebba**

We do the best we can!

**Women's choir**

We all do the best we can.

**Men's choir**

We build cattle houses,  
we dig wells and harvest hay, the  
women carve symbols  
and shout from hills, so be it.  
You do what you must and are able.

**Karin**

I have asked the Devil  
for help!  
HE has the power to protect  
my precious animals!

*(Instrumental group with accordion, during which the Devil steps in and leads Karin out. The Devil's dance.)*

**Choirs**

Who is he?  
So handsome and proud.  
He steps in  
as if he owned the hall!

Have you seen  
a virgin dancing?  
Her hair flutters  
like a crown of ribbons.  
She twirls around and around  
on light feet.

She hums the melody  
and her body  
follows the beat.  
In her eyes  
a fire burns  
with desire and vice.

Who is he?  
He stepped in as if he owned the hall,  
but he has cloven hooves!  
What the Devil?! Blech!

Have you seen  
a witch dancing?  
Her hair flutters  
like rats' tails,  
she twirls around and around  
completely haphazardly.  
She screeches the melody  
and her body  
jerks.  
In her eyes  
a fire burns  
with hatred and menace.

He leads, she follows,  
eyes ablaze.  
He leads, she follows,  
though her feet are  
bleeding!

*(The dance continues until Karin collapses)*

### **Scene 3 – Blame/Wrath**

*Kjellinus, Karin, the women*

*(Karin confesses and names the twelve women. The jurymen gather in a cluster, stand out from the rest of the villagers for the first time.)*

**Karin**

I did it!

Yes, it was me!

It was me!

It was always me!

I have cursed and blessed,

I have divined and foretold.

I can become a bird!

I can become a wolf!

It was me!

But it was also you!

**Kjellinus and Psilander**

Who? Who then?

**Karin**

And you and you and you!

**Kjellinus and Psilander**

Who else? Who else?

**Karin**

The blame was mine, yes!

But just as much yours!

And yours and yours and yours!

**Kjellinus, Psilander and the jurymen**

And whose and whose and whose?

## **Karin**

Maria Nilsdotter in Markusböle

Margreta, Lars Hansson's wife in Bjärström

Cotter Jöran Thomasson's wife, Ingeborg in Wästansunda

Karin, Erik Månsson's wife in Hindersböle

The superstitious wife, Kirstin Hansdotter from Lemböte

Julia, Anders Thomasson's wife in Näfsby

Julia, Thomas Olsson's wife in Bovik

Wife Ebba in Finby

Anna, Josef Olsson's wife in Högbolstad

Mats Clemetsson's wife in Tosarby, Karin Isaksdotter

Wife Anna, Mats Larsson's mother-in-law, in Tranvik,

Lisbeta, Per Skarp's wife in Persnäs

Later I do not exist,  
but the blame remains  
with all of you!

## **Kjellinus**

In this house

the twelve men and the people  
have gathered.

We must get answers!

Those who have sinned  
shall receive their punishment!

## **Karin**

I am bird and wolf,

I can become whatever I want!

## **The women**

We do not know the right answers.

They braid creels

with their questions.

**Lisbeta**

Want to catch us like carp  
in the currents.

**Psilander and Kjellinus and the jurymen**

*(In parallel/interrupting)*

Tell it like it is!

**The women**

We flow like water.

We do not know their answer.

**Ebba**

We have not! Never!

flown like magpies.

**Psilander and Kjellinus and the jurymen**

Tell it like it is!

**Karin**

*(Animal sound)*

**Per**

*(To Lisbeta, kindly)*

Tell it like it is!

**Lisbeta**

But how is it though?

## **The women**

The wrath –  
a rustling wave of cow piss  
washes through us.  
It rips and stinks!  
We have not! Never!  
flown like magpies.

## **Scene 4 – How is it though?**

*Duet Lisbeta and Per, Lisbeta's aria*

*(Night. Lisbeta and Per have gone home and talk alone on their farm, taking care not to wake their sons or the maid.)*

### **Lisbeta**

*(Upset)*

What should I have said?

### **Per**

You should have  
told it like it was!

### **Lisbeta**

Like it was?  
I certainly know  
how it was!  
I'm not a witch!  
How  
Can you believe such bullshit?

### **Per**

Then you should have just  
told it like it was!

**Lisbeta**

If no one believes my word  
then who am I?  
In the village, the mumble grows  
to a rumble.

*(Lisbeta alone, out in the farmyard and at the edge of the forest)*

**Lisbeta**

The nail mark  
in the blue infinity of the sky.  
The keyhole of the universe.  
There are times when  
my life depends on  
if I can fix my eyes on the  
moon  
between the wind-swept  
fingers of two treetops.  
But how is it though?

**Scene 5 – Shalt not suffer to live**

*Ensemble Psilander, Kjellinus, Elin, The castellan's wife*

**Elin**

Lisbeta greased the cows' teeth  
with butter!

**Psilander and Kjellinus**

It's satanic work!

**The jury**

Satanic work!

**The castellan's wife**

But it's an old cure for cows!

**Olof**

An old cure!

**Psilander and Kjellinus**

Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live!

**Elin**

Lisbeta burned nine kinds of firewood  
at the barn door!

**Psilander and Kjellinus**

That's devilry, too!

**The jury**

Devilry?

**The castellan's wife**

She just wanted to protect her cows from wolves and lynx!

**Olof**

Beasts and predators!

**The jury**

The defenceless cows!

**Psilander and Kjellinus**

Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live!



**Elin**

Lisbeta collected sea foam in the spring!

**Psilander and Kjellinus**

To appease the Devil, of course!

**The castellan's wife**

It is a well-known cure for toothache! She was in pain!

You shouldn't listen to a lass like Elin!

**The jury**

Old cures are the best cures! But...

**Psilander and Kjellinus**

Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live!

**Elin**

Lisbeta carved crosses over doors and thresholds!

**Psilander and Kjellinus**

Not even the cross she held too sacred!

**The castellan's wife**

*(To the jurymen)*

So you are Christian men? Show it then!

**The jury**

...who are we to put ourselves above judges and priests?

**Psilander and Kjellinus**

Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live!

**Psilander**

You call it folklore!  
A satanic tribulation perhaps,  
you say.  
But I'll tell you  
what it is!  
It is a covenant made with Satan,  
for knowledge of such things  
that are hidden

**Kjellinus**

Secrets!  
That belong to Satan!

*(The jurymen squirm, look at each other anxiously.)*

**Psilander**

These are no ordinary women!  
Karin from Emkarby sold her soul  
to the Devil!  
You heard her say it yourself!

**Olof**

But aren't you getting a little ... carried away?!

**Kjellinus**

No! This is serious!  
Satan is in your homes!  
Olof, are you sure  
that your wife was not at Blockula  
feasting?!

**Psilander**

You have not known better!  
I understand, I understand!  
Now I am here,  
I will protect you from evil,  
I will save the whole village  
From Satan's corruption.  
No witch can avoid  
her judgement!  
All those who promised Satan their body  
after death,  
we will purge them and burn them!  
Such is the strict commandment of God,  
such is our judgement!  
Per! Did Lisbeta grease the cows' teeth?  
That's a serious matter!

**Kjellinus**

You're talking about old cures!  
But old or modern -  
there is only one truth,  
it is written in God's law.  
Exodus! Exodus!

**Psilander**

There is only one truth!  
It saves us;  
Pray for God's peace  
and blessed grace  
in the evenings  
and say a prayer  
for the law and for the statutes

## **The jury**

We will pray! We will pray for the statutes!

## **Scene 6a – The Fear**

### *Kjellinus' aria*

*(The crowd disperses or ends up in the dark. Kjellinus is alone on his way home from the village. His eyes play tricks on him in the darkness.)*

### **Kjellinus**

Shimmering in the dark, shimmering of teeth  
and knives and claws,  
of spying eyes.  
It's teeming  
with running and jumping.  
Mumbling and hissing, chewing and chomping.

Black wings search for me,  
I see them descend  
from heaven.  
They leave no trace  
over the firmament.

Black beaks search for  
me, I hear their chatter,  
they call louder and louder  
    – soon I'll hear only them!  
Black claws tear at my hair,  
rip my flesh.  
The blood runs down my face,  
I am blinded,  
but can't stop seeing.

And so you say to me:  
The sky is blue!  
Hear how the birds sing!  
Your hair is thick,  
no one has torn at it,  
and your face is smooth,  
good sir!

## **Scene 6b – The Fear**

*Ebba's aria*

*(In the castellan's cabin next to Kastelholm Castle. Ebba takes care of Karin before her execution.)*

**Ebba**

*(puts her hand on Karin's cheek)*

Good Karin! Let me ...

*(Karin pulls away, but Ebba keeps her hand there)*

Good Karin! Let me

heat up some water

and wash your body!

Look, I have white linen

to dry you with!

I have a smock -

it is worn but perfectly clean -

to dress you in after the bath.

Come and sit by the fire!

I have breathed life into the flame

and the heat is good!

Karin! Let me make you some gruel!

I have  
enough flour  
for several servings.

Are you full, good Karin?  
Or would you like some more?  
Are you warm?  
Are you warm, good Karin?

## **Scene 7 – The execution**

*Karin's aria, choir, Psilander*

*(Stage change: the jurymen's high bench is dragged in and forms a concave background on the stage. The jurymen climb up and sit down.)*

### **Karin**

The water shimmers,  
the wind makes ripples,  
The surface is light and the depth dark.

### **Choir**

Now she's talking about darkness again!

### **Olof**

Surely she doesn't deserve death for that?

### **Karin**

I want to dip my hand in the water,  
and drink it  
and it is fresh.

**Choir**

She speaks with as much sense as she has!

**Olof**

Shall we punish foolishness?

**Karin**

Silver beads drip from my hand,  
I want to make a piece of jewellery  
out of them.  
Never be thirsty again.

**Choir**

She's crazy! She's crazy!

**Juryman**

... but to execute a crazy person ...

**Psilander**

Sententia! For the reasons stated, along with the unanimous verdict of the jury, Karin, Sigfrid Eriksson's wife in Emkarby, who was caught performing witchcraft and superstitious deeds, and furthermore, has confessed that the selfsame things transpired, and as almighty God in the highest has himself in his holy law, as described in Exodus 22, verse 18, strictly commanded that a witch shall not be suffered to live, I sentence the previously named wife Karin, Sigfrid Eriksson's wife in Emkarby, to be put to death by axe and her body then burned on the pyre.

**Karin**

*(spoken)*

For the last time, I  
receive communion  
From the priest's hand.

I swallow the bread  
and the wine,  
and give myself over  
to the executioner.  
I fall to my knees  
and he  
takes a firm hold of my hair,  
he bends down my head  
to the execution block  
and raises the axe  
towards heaven.  
He rears back  
drawing strength from the  
depths of the earth and the  
embers in the underworld,  
and lets the axe fall.  
Once -  
and I am dead.  
Once more -  
my head separates from my body.  
He lights the pyre  
and lays my body to burn there.  
The flames quickly rise,  
The fire rages with a particular heat,  
and I ascend towards heaven  
in loops and puffs  
of thick smoke.  
  
I will fall.



*(sung)*

I will fall

like rain over your rye fields and hop land.

Everything I have said is true!

**PAUSE**

## **ACT II**

### **Scene 8 – On solid ground/we are animals**

*Ensemble, duet Lisbeta–Ebba*

*(Above the jurymen's bench, now sits the magpie and Karin, looking down as the audience comes in. The twelve accused women stand and lie on the stage floor, frozen in the dungeon at Kastelholm Castle. It's in the middle of winter. Soon the orchestra begins to play an unbelievably long, monotonous tone. In the middle of that, Ebba can be heard speaking.)*

**Ebba**

*(spoken)*

How much longer?

**Lisbeta**

It never ends.

At night, all eyes are closed  
and the darkness has hands  
that slit holes in our bodies,  
pull out our bowels,  
scratch and slap,  
and sling the smell of blood  
in our faces.

**The women**

Who led us here to  
this room of terror  
without any door cracks?

**Ebba**

I have never lied,  
they have to believe me!

**Lisbeta**

They chop your thoughts  
into small pieces!

**Ebba**

I'm honest,  
they know it!

**Lisbeta**

They polish your earthy words  
and chew them up like turnips!

**Ebba**

I can swear to God,  
I'm not a witch!

**Lisbeta**

You have to take their lies  
in your mouth  
as your truths,  
only then will you be believed!

**Ebba**

I have to be believed!

**The women**

We have so many stories to share with you.  
So many truths to present to you.

**Lisbeta**

So many words, so much unsaid,  
but we only know one language and you do not know the same.

*(GAME: embody different animals. How should you be to get to live?)*

**Margreta**

They think I'm a flying ram!  
*(she flies around clumsily, bleating)*

**Maria**

They say I'm a milk-hare!  
*(she jumps around and milks invisible cows)*

**Ebba**

... and me they have seen jumping around in the dirt  
like a toad with yellow eyes!  
*(she jumps on the floor, croaks)*

**Lisbeta**

They claim that I am a magpie,  
that I fly free over the treetops!

*(she runs with flapping wings, all the women join in. The castellan's wife has entered the stage, and everyone thinks that she is there to play along. But she takes Ebba away, the free flight is over.)*

**The women**

We sneak around in the forests  
like predators among the trees,

but we have no teeth,  
no thirst for blood,  
no claws.

### **Lisbeta**

We drift around outside the farmyards  
like magpies in the wind,  
but we are not black and white,  
not birds,  
not free.

## **Scene 9 – God’s will/torture**

*Kjellinus’ aria, Ebba’s aria, ensemble.*

*(During the scene, all the women in the dungeon are tortured, they portray it in some scenic way without being descriptive. the jurymen are all seated on their bench.)*

### **Kjellinus**

Another boundless woman  
about to destroy us all!  
I stand between human and human  
and must choose as God, understand as God.  
The words bounce around in the room –  
are light reflections and glimmers.  
I say: answer!  
But for you  
words are not a language,  
but a game  
and nothing is for real.

I have been disturbed in prayer  
by the sunlight's game.  
I've been disturbed in my sleep

by dreams of green moss.

To fall, and sink deep  
into the softness!

But I know  
what the Lord says,

I know  
his holy scripture.

Line by line,  
just follow them  
from left to right.

Line by line,  
letter by letter.

As simple as that.

Don't let yourself fall!

### **Ebba**

My Lord God!

Free me!

Free me from the torments!

I've told

all the truths

I know

and then some.

My words

weigh as little as down feathers.

God, give me the words that

have meaning

and weight!

The right ones!

**The women**

Our words are turnips,  
homemade dough,  
butter yellow as sunshine.

Our words are troughs,  
wadmal  
and thumping looms.

**Lisbeta**

They read:  
referred.  
action.  
Exodus.  
named.

We will chew their truths  
like paper,  
belch up their bizarre words.

**Karin**

*(quickly inhaling, as she spoke in tongues)*

Tell it like it is!  
The truth has a thousand sides!

**Lisbeta**

There is no end!

**Ebba**

I am a black bird,  
I am a white bird.  
Like a magpie I sit  
at the top of the highest tree in the forest,  
where earth and sky meet.  
I sit on the border,  
and the border does not exist.  
I breathe in so hard  
that the universe fills my lungs  
and the universe does not exist.  
I fly to the end of the world,  
and there is no end.  
*(She dies)*

**Kjellinus**

Word for word,  
I know what it takes,  
from left to right,  
not to fall  
between the lines.

**Karin**

*(Ebba sees and hears Karin, who welcomes her to the bench of death.)*  
Everything I have said is true!  
Farthest to the east  
is a house  
with lighted rooms,  
a blue fire,  
a noblewoman who swings her veils  
forever.  
And I ...  
... swing my veils for-  
ever.  
It is true!

## Scene 10 – She is not here

*(Per alone with his thoughts and his grief over Lisbeta's situation. Lisbeta visible in parallel, she is in the dungeon and thinking of Per. She sees him, as in a dream, he does not see her.)*

**Per**

From my farm

I see the whole world, every-  
thing that happens in it.

Villagers pass on the road,  
the hay grows lush and green,  
the axe of the rye field shines like gold.

In the stable, the horse stands  
and chews its fodder,  
the cows drone on in the stalls  
and the sheep bleat  
as I walk by.

From my farm

I see the whole world,  
everything that is in it.

The maid is by the stove, stir-  
ring the kettle of porridge, she  
is rocking my son  
on one arm.

From my farm

I see the whole world, every-  
thing that is missing in it.



## Scene 11 – Come to your senses/Blockula

*Trio Per, Kjellinus, Psilander, choir.*

*(Per meets Kjellinus and Psilander and doubts Lisbeta for the first time. He ends up on the stand, at the far end, rocking the child. Then Psilander and Kjellinus demand information about Blockula, and the women's story becomes a hypnotic reality.)*

### **Per**

What should I believe?

All thoughts

have two sides

or more.

On one hand ...

But on the other hand...

### **Psilander and Kjellinus**

We know!

We know how it is!

There will only be more testimonies,

and the women

have nothing to gain

by lying!

### **Per**

But what if they are

lying to say

what you are asking them to say?

### **Psilander and Kjellinus**

We know!

Just listen

to what they are saying

before judges and jury!

Just listen!

*(To the women)*

Have you been to Blockula?

**Lisbeta**

*(Insolent)*

Yes! We have been there!

**Psilander and Kjellinus**

Were there nobles there?

**Lisbeta**

Yes! There were!

**Psilander and Kjellinus**

Money and treasures?

*(The other women join Lisbeta's game of pretend)*

**The women**

Yes, in heaps and piles!

**Psilander and Kjellinus**

Was there food to eat?

**The women**

*(Everyone is involved, talking over each other)*

Pike and hams and eggs and butter and white flour and round apples and roasted birds and crayfish tails and peas and waffles and bitter oranges ...

**Psilander and Kjellinus**

Was there a fire burning?

**The women**

Yes, a blue and terrible fire!

### **Psilander and Kjellinus**

How did you get to the Devil's banquet?

### **The women**

*(Take the men and the others with them, the jurymen are dragged down to the floor, the magpie and the Devil and Karin and everyone are there.)*

We have flown  
like magpies.

### **Lisbeta**

We have greased  
ramsey-ram-ram  
and with a firm grip  
on his fleece  
we have twirled freely  
in the boundlessness.

### **Margreta**

We have blasted  
through the clouds  
with cold winds  
flowing in our hair.

### **Maria**

With the frost of the universe  
in our eyelashes  
We have traipsed and tramped.

### **Ebba**

Here the poor become rich!  
Here the fool becomes wise!  
The weak become strong,  
the one who has always been silent  
roars with the voice of a bellowing beast!

### **Lisbeta**

And those who have never been allowed to decide,  
suddenly decide everything!

### **The women**

THE DEVIL! He gives us

what we pray for!

THE DEVIL!

We give in

to his power!

*Instrumental piece – Dance Macabre. Everyone is in Blockula, dancing, orgiastic moods. Psilander and Kjellinus are about to go too far – the women physically force Psilander and Kjellinus to the floor, ride them like horses, force them to drink and eat – then everything stops and the villagers/jurymen/Psilander and Kjellinus wake up and realize what they have just done.)*

### **The women**

Body, fire, rain.

### **Lisbeta**

And everything is just an illusion.

Flows like water between the fingers.

## **Scene 12 – According to scripture**

### *Psilander's aria*

*(The music stops, everyone is confused and upset – this was going too far, the jury is doubtful, etc. out loud. Psilander calms everyone with a calm voice and empty gaze – see here it is written in my books that this is how it is, all while the Devil whirls around and the women are tormented and die. Only Psilander's voice and the accordion.)*

### **Psilander**

I know

what the books say,

I know

how the law is written.

Line by line,

just follow them

from left to right.

Line by line,

letter by letter.

But this boundless woman

without shame

in her body,

she thought she deceived me!

Thou shalt not suffer

a witch to live!

*(Maria dies)*

She feasted

when I starved in my study,

she was playing dear games

When I studied

and learned

everything,

learned

that:

Thou shalt not suffer

a witch to live!

*(Margreta dies)*

Line by line,

letter by letter.

Don't let yourself be deceived!

Thou shalt not suffer

a witch to live!

*(Lisbeta is imprisoned – in the torture chamber or in front of the pyre.)*

### **Scene 13 – Lisbeta's destruction**

*Lisbeta's aria, Per, Kjellinus, Psilander, ensemble, choir.*

*(Lisbeta is the last living, the magpie and eleven women plus Karin are sitting on the top bench.)*

#### **Lisbeta**

You can chop me to pieces

like coal,

I'm not going to

lie!

My blood is pure,

and my innocence

will become obvi-

ous in time.

Obvious!

I have no guilt!

*(torture during the following)*

#### **Lisbeta**

I liked

living with you

so much.

The groove in your shoulder,

made to rest

my head in.

Your hair

that curled at your neck,

so soft in my hand.

How you pulled me next to you,

strong and happy,

my body  
followed every line  
of your body.

**Per**

You came from the forest bringing greetings  
from the tree nymph home with you!  
Smiled and lured me  
to the barn  
where the hay smelled  
of herbs.  
I followed your skirt,  
a splashing fish  
in play  
over the thresholds.  
Your cheeks were red,  
your eyes were radiant.  
We let ourselves fall  
into the warm darkness.  
Now they've  
taken you  
away from me.

*(Lisbeta gives up.)*

**Lisbeta**

I have nothing more to give you.  
Now you've taken everything away from me.  
I'm not human anymore,  
I do not exist,  
but there is a hole in the sky  
through which no one enters.

I confess! Rather than be tormented any more by you, I confess! Everything you have said is true!

**Kjellinus**

I knew it!

**Psilander**

I knew it!

**Choirs**

We knew it!

**Lisbeta**

One day my innocence will be obvious and clear. But not today.

*(pause)*

They have taken me  
away from me.

*(She dies)*

**Scene 14 – Enough is enough**

*Choir*

*(Only Kjellinus and Psilander remain on the floor. The jury is in.)*

**Men's choir**

If we had any way to get away from  
the same questions over and over again,  
the same calls for action.  
We say: this is black, this is white  
and the border is thin and sharp  
like it was carved with a knife.  
But that red that always seeps out of the scratches!

That red  
that flows between the lines!



When we've seen it  
we can no longer avert our eyes.

We have forced lies out  
of the women,  
we have tormented them  
to make false confessions.  
Enough is enough now,  
District Judge!  
Enough,  
Parish Priest!  
We see clearly again,  
and what we see  
is innocence rewarded with death.  
Enough is enough!

*(Magpie laughter)*

*(The women sing from their top row. For the first time, the jurymen see them from behind, they get scared. Even the castellan's wife and Elin have now joined. Kjellinus and Psilander crouch on the floor. The choir and solos are sung powerfully.)*

### **Women's choir**

There are so many truths,  
so many  
to choose between.  
Tones and nuances,  
a thousand shades of everything.  
You look bitter.  
Your faces are dark!

### **Lisbeta**

You silenced me  
with your black truth,

I turned my face to the ground  
and saw fears grow,

**Women's choir**

*(Lisbeta continues in the first person with "I" and "my")*

We/I saw distance sprout  
but now it is  
our/my world that will be born here.  
We/I turn our/my faces/face towards the ground.

Body.

Fire.

Rain.

Your black truth – the stars will pierce it with holes.  
We fall like rain over your rye fields and hop land!

My body.

My fire.

Rain.

*Psilander and Kjellinus have been convicted by the jury and the women. The Devil comes to them with his accordion and takes them by the hand. They bow, leave. The Devil remains, turning his head towards the audience. At the same time, the conductor does the same, showing their black beak.*

BLACK