

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 Nilsson 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