



## **The Girl Who Changed Her Fate**

### **Readers Theater Play Script and Performance Notes**

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#### **CHARACTERS**

**NARRATOR**  
**WIDOW**  
**CASSANDRA**  
**HELENA**  
**ALENA**  
**CYBILL**  
**SUITOR #1**  
**SUITOR #2**  
**BAKER**  
**SEAMSTRESS**  
**QUEEN**  
**SUITOR #3**  
**FATE #1**  
**FATE #2**  
**FATE #3**  
**FATE #4**  
**SCALE**

*If there are performance notes, they can be found on the pages following the script*

## Scene 1 – The Widow’s Cottage

[**Stage set:** The stage is divided into three sections. The first is the WIDOW’S cottage. Place a table with four chairs onstage, and on the table a vase and a tray with 4 folded napkins, a knife, and food- cheese, figs and baklava. Three small beds lie at one end. (See **Performance Notes** on how to simulate the three beds.) A broom rests against the wall. The middle of the stage is a village market scene. The third section shows a mountain range in the backdrop. (**See Performance Notes** for suggestions on setting up the three areas of the stage.))]

[NARRATOR enters.]

**NARRATOR:**

Hello, everyone. Welcome to “The Girl Who Changed Her Fate.” It’s a folktale from Greece, brought to you by *Stories to Grow by*.

[NARRATOR steps forward.]

**NARRATOR:**

Once there was a widow.

[WIDOW enters from the stage wing, carrying a basket with bread. She sets the basket on the table.]

**NARRATOR:**

She lived with her three daughters.

**WIDOW:**

Cassandra!

[CASSANDRA enters.]

**CASSANDRA:**

Mama?

**WIDOW:**

Come set the table for lunch.

**CASSANDRA:**

Okay.

[CASSANDRA goes to the table and pretends to set it for lunch. She unfolds each of the 4 napkins and lays them out in 4 place settings.]

**WIDOW:**

Thank you, dear. (*calls*) Helena! (pronounce: hel-AY-nah)

[HELENA enters.]

**HELENA:**

Yes?

**WIDOW:**

Cut the baklava for dessert.

**HELENA:**

(*enthusiastically*) All RIGHT, Mama!

[HELENA uses the knife (plastic or cardboard) to cut baklava. If the baklava is pretend, she just pretends to cut it.]

**WIDOW:**

(*to audience*) That's not a hard job to delegate. (*calls*) Alena! (pronounce: ah-LAY-nah)

[ALENA enters with a bouquet of large red flowers (*poppies*).]

**WIDOW:**

Pretty poppies, love. Won't you set them on the table? Come here.

[ALENA sets the flowers in a vase and comes to WIDOW. WIDOW holds out a broom to ALENA.]

**WIDOW:**

The front porch needs sweeping. You never know when a suitor will come to call.

**ALENA:**

(*sighs*) I suppose it COULD happen.

**CASSANDRA:**

Suitors NEVER come here anymore.

**HELENA:**

Even if they did, it's not likely they'd care if the front porch was swept.

**CASSANDRA:**

When's the last time a young man even stepped foot in our cottage?

**ALENA:**

Um, before the harvest?

**CASSANDRA:**

Exactly. And it's nearly harvest-time, again!

**HELENA:**

I can barely remember what a young man even looks like. What DO they look like?

[Pretending to be a young suitor, CASSANDRA rears herself up, steps up to HELENA and bows low.]

**CASSANDRA:**

*(in a deep voice)* Helena! I have come to ask for your hand in marriage.

**HELENA:**

*(laughs)* Maybe it's just as well no suitors come to call anymore.

**WIDOW:**

Girls, please! So it's been a dry spell with the suitors, that's all. I'm sure one will come knocking on the door any moment. *(holds out broom to Alena)* The front porch?

[ALENA takes the broom. A knocking sound at the door. HELENA, CASSANDRA, and ALENA are startled.]

**WIDOW:**

Well, my goodness! Sooner than I expected. If that doesn't sound like the knock of a young man!

**CASSANDRA:**

How can you tell? *(then eagerly)* But what if it is?

[The next lines among DAUGHTERS are rushed through quickly.]

**HELENA:**

*(to Cassandra)* Do I look all right?

**CASSANDRA:**

You look great. Maybe brush your hair? *(Helena gets out a brush and starts brushing her hair)*  
Do you know where my red scarf is?

**ALENA:**

Saw it on the porch a couple days ago. *(holds out her blouse)* Cassandra, can you see the stain on my blouse?

**CASSANDRA:**

Nope. Do you think I should have my hair up (*holds hair up*), or down?

**WIDOW:**

Girls, really!

[Another knocking sound at the door. WIDOW opens the door. CYBILL, an old woman, appears.]

**WIDOW:**

(*on seeing Cybill*) Oh!

[DAUGHTERS sigh heavily with disappointment. MOTHER looks at them sternly.]

**CYBILL:**

My goodness. I get the impression you were expecting someone else.

**WIDOW:**

Oh, I'm sorry. Cybill (pronounce: SIH-buhl), do come in.

[WIDOW ushers CYBILL to the table. HELENA pulls out a chair. ALENA arranges the flowers in the vase. CYBILL sits down.]

**CYBILL:**

Thank you, dear. Don't mind if I rest these weary bones.

**WIDOW:**

May we get you some tea? Fresh olive bread?

**CYBILL:**

No, thank you. (*eyes the loaf of bread*) Though one slice of olive bread wouldn't hurt, would it?

**WIDOW:**

Of course not.

[WIDOW offers a loaf of bread to CYBILL. CYBILL picks it up and tears off a section to eat. If the loaf is not real bread, CYBILL pretends to tear off a section to eat.]

**CYBILL:**

(*eyes the feta cheese*) This feta (pronounce: FAY-tah) cheese looks good.

**WIDOW:**

Here, let me spread some on your bread. (*spreads some feta cheese the Cybill's bread, or pretends to if cheese is not real*) Well then. To what do we owe the pleasure of this visit?

**CYBILL:**

So polite. Reminds me of your charming daughters.

**WIDOW:**

Thank you. I wish I heard more of this from young men, too. Suitors... Ah, never mind.

**CYBILL:**

I think I know what you're thinking.

**WIDOW:**

How could you?

**CYBILL:**

I know there hasn't been a suitor here to call for your charming daughters for awhile.

**WIDOW:**

How do you know that?

[DAUGHTERS gasp and lean forward, surrounding CYBILL and leaning in very closely.]

**CYBILL:**

Ahem! (*holds out both arms outstretched and the daughters step back*) This is something only the mistress of the house can hear.

**WIDOW:**

Girls, go on now! Leave us for a bit.

**CASSANDRA:**

Mama no!

**HELENA:**

We have to hear this!

**CYBILL:**

My, they speak!

**WIDOW:**

Girls, where are your manners? Our visitor and I need privacy. Go out to the garden now. The beans don't pick themselves, you know.

[DAUGHTERS groan dramatically.]

**WIDOW:**

So dramatic. (*sternly, to all daughters*) You heard me! (*points to outside*)

**CASSANDRA:**

*(sighs)* Very well.

**ALENA:**

Come on, let's go.

[DAUGHTERS exit.]

**WIDOW:**

*(lifts platter of bread)* Another piece?

**CYBILL:**

I wouldn't dream of it. *(looks to see all the daughters are outside)* Well maybe just one more. *(Widow cuts another slice and hands it to Cybill, who takes a bite, or pretends to)*

**WIDOW:**

*(prompting her visitor)* And so...?

**CYBILL:**

Ah, yes. *(leans forward)* You might as well know. One of your daughters is ill-fated. And that is why no suitors are coming to call.

**WIDOW:**

Oh my goodness! But why? And when did this start?

**CYBILL:**

*(shrugs)* Like I know? The truth is, somewhere along the way, the fate of one of your daughters changed. As long as that daughter stays here, no suitors will come for ANY of your daughters.

**WIDOW:**

I almost hate to ask, but... which of my daughters is ill-fated?

**CYBILL:**

The one who sleeps with her head on both hands.

**WIDOW:**

Ah, and what am I to do for the poor child?

**CYBILL:**

*(sternly)* Your best bet is to worry about your OTHER daughters. The only solution for your household is for the ill-fated girl to leave the house. Only then will your household return to normal.

**WIDOW:**

Send my daughter out into the world?

**CYBILL:**

You know the old Greek saying: "Everything in its own time, and the mackerel in August." This is the time. You know what needs to happen.

[WIDOW pantomimes an expression of alarm. As CYBILL speaks, NARRATOR enters. The three girls go to their three beds. WIDOW and CYBILL then pantomime saying goodbye, and CYBILL exits.]

**NARRATOR:**

That night after her daughters were asleep, the widow visited their beds.

[WIDOW first goes to CASSANDRA's bed.]

**NARRATOR:**

At Cassandra's bed, she saw her daughter sleeping on her back.

**WIDOW:**

It's not you, dear Cassandra.

[WIDOW goes to HELENA's bed.]

**NARRATOR:**

At Helena's bed, she saw her daughter sleeping on her stomach.

**WIDOW:**

Nor is it you, Helena. This must mean...! *(to audience, clasping her hands to her cheeks)*

**NARRATOR:**

She came to Alena's bed, and alas! The youngest daughter was sleeping with her head on both hands.

**WIDOW:**

Alena! My dear girl, what woe has befallen you!

[WIDOW sits beside ALENA's bed and cries. ALENA wakes up.]

**ALENA:**

Mama. What's wrong?

**WIDOW:**

Nothing, dear. *(weeps)*



**ALENA:**

Mama, SOMETHING is wrong! Tell me!

[HELENA and CASSANDRA wake up. They gather around WIDOW and ALENA.]

**NARRATOR:**

So the widow told her daughters what the old woman had shared with her.

**ALENA:**

Well, there is only one thing to be done.

**WIDOW:**

Dear girl, you can't be thinking about leaving our home! Put that thought out of your mind this very moment!

**ALENA:**

Mama, what choice do I have? I can't stay here. I'm the one who's keeping my sisters from finding happiness.

**WIDOW:**

The world is a dangerous place!

**HELENA:**

We want you to stay, Alena.

**CASSANDRA:**

We don't care if you're ill-fated. You're our sister!

**NARRATOR:**

But Alena wouldn't listen. The very next morning, she packed a bag and said goodbye to her family.

[HELENA and CASSANDRA line up at the door to say goodbye to ALENA. WIDOW takes basket of bread from the table and places more food in it, including baklava.]

**HELENA:**

Goodbye, Alena!

**CASSANDRA:**

We'll miss you!

**WIDOW:**

*(handing her the basket of food)* Here, for your travels. Be safe, my child.

**ALENA:**

Goodbye, everyone!

[ALENA exits through the door.]

**NARRATOR:**

No sooner had she left when there was a knock at the door.

[A knocking sound is heard from offstage. SUITOR #1 enters.]

**SUITOR #1:**

Is Cassandra here?

**CASSANDRA:**

*(stepping forward)* Here I am.

**SUITOR #1:**

Fair Cassandra, *(holding up a gold necklace)* I offer you a necklace of gold.

[Another knocking sound. Again, from offstage. SUITOR #2 enters.]

**SUITOR #2:**

Is Helena here?

**HELENA:**

*(stepping forward)* Yes, here I am.

**SUITOR #2:**

Lovely Helena, *(holding up a silver talisman)* I offer you this silver talisman.

**WIDOW:**

*(to audience)* Oh, MY! This worked quickly!

[All actors other than NARRATOR exit.]

## Scene 2 – A village street

[**Stage set:** A street scene in Greece. A backdrop shows a marketplace of different shops, which is the middle set.]

**NARRATOR:**

Alena left her home and wandered the streets of Greece. Soon, she found herself in a village market. Her basket of food was running low and she had no money to her name.

[ALENA enters carrying the basket of food.]

**ALENA:**

*(puts hands in her pockets and they come out empty)* I do not have a single drachma *(pronounce: DRAK-mah)* left. I'm hungry! I must get a job, right away.

[BAKER enters and shakes hands with ALENA. BAKER exits.]

**NARRATOR:**

At last she got a job working at a bakery.

**ALENA:**

What a relief!

[BAKER enters again, shaking his or her head.]

**NARRATOR:**

Uh-oh.

**BAKER:**

My dear young lady, you are very hard-working. And pleasant with the customers, when we had customers. But *(looks offstage as if that is where the empty store is located)* what has HAPPENED to all of them? *(returns focus on Alena)* And if an empty shop wasn't bad enough, the oven is broken. Now there are beetles in the flour sacks!

**ALENA:**

Oh, dear!

**BAKER:**

There are just too many troubles, all at once! I'm afraid I must let you go.

**ALENA:**

*(hangs head)* I understand. I'm sorry.

[BAKER exits.]

**ALENA:**

What's next for me?

[SEAMSTRESS enters. SEAMSTRESS and ALENA pantomime talking quickly, and they shake hands.]

**NARRATOR:**

Alena was glad to get a job helping a seamstress.

[SEAMSTRESS exits.]

**ALENA:**

My luck is bound to change, this time.

[SEAMSTRESS enters.]

**SEAMSTRESS:**

*(shakes head)* What am I to do, child?

**NARRATOR:**

Poor kid. Not again...!

**SEAMSTRESS:**

How can I tell you? Right after you started working for me, the price of fabric skyrocketed. My needles started breaking. And I NEVER break needles! Whenever I sit down, I sit on a needle. I've ALWAYS been careful not to leave needles lying around.

**ALENA:**

Ouch!

**SEAMSTRESS:**

Strange things are happening, mark my words! I watch customer walk right by my storefront *(gestures as if to customers walking by)* going – going – GONE! Customer who used to come in all the time! My dear girl, with all this bad luck I just can't afford to keep you on. You understand, don't you?

**ALENA:**

*(hangs head)* More than you know.

**SEAMSTRESS:**

*(smooths out her dress, then sharply pulls back one arm)* Aughh, again! Pins EVERYWHERE!

[SEAMSTRESS exits.]

**NARRATOR:**

Ah, Alena! Was there no hope for our heroine?

**ALENA:**

Whenever I get a job, troubles follow! What am I to do?

[QUEEN enters carrying a bouquet of flowers. As QUEEN walks past ALENA, QUEEN drops a flower.]

**ALENA:**

*(picking up the flower)* Excuse me, Your Majesty. You dropped this.

**QUEEN:**

Keep it, dear. *(seeing Alena)* My, you are a charming young maiden.

**ALENA:**

You'd probably best not talk to me. I wouldn't want to cause you any ill luck.

**QUEEN:**

What? Why would just talking to you bring anyone ill luck?

**ALENA:**

Bad things happen around me. No matter where I go, or what I do. I can't get away from it!

**QUEEN:**

Hmm. I once met someone like you. He was, oh what is it called? Ill-fated.

**ALENA:**

Yes ma'am. That's the word for me. *(drops her head)* I don't know why.

**QUEEN:**

You know what? This fellow was able to change his Fate.

**ALENA:**

How?! That's possible?

**QUEEN:**

First you have to find your Fate. All the Fates live in the mountains. Over there. *(points to area of backdrop that depicts a mountain range)*

**ALENA:**

All of them?

**QUEEN:**

How they manage it, I can't say. But that's where they live.

**ALENA:**

If mine is there, I'll go. But how will I know which Fate is mine?

**QUEEN:**

I didn't say it would be easy.

**ALENA:**

Your Majesty, if I find my Fate, is there something I should do?

**QUEEN:**

You have to do something to change her bad mood. Look your Fate in the eye and offer her a gift. If your Fate accepts it, your fate will change, like that (*snaps finger*).

**ALENA:**

Really? What kind of gift does a Fate like?

**QUEEN:**

Each Fate is different. It's your Fate. Think what you might like.

**ALENA:**

Hmm. I have an idea.

**QUEEN:**

Go for it, child. As for me, back to the castle and those royal duties. (*sighs*) Never ends! Well, good luck.

**ALENA:**

Thank you, Your Majesty. (*curtsies*)

[QUEEN exits.]

**ALENA:**

(*to audience*) This may be the last chance I get.

[ALENA exits.]

### Scene 3 – The mountains

[**Scene set:** This scene takes place in front of the portion of the backdrop that depicts a mountain range. Possibly some large “rocks” can be scattered around stage. (See **Performance Notes** for how to create rocks.)]

[FATE #1, FATE #2, FATE #3 and FATE #4 enter from the side of the stage where the backdrop depicts a mountain range. FATES pantomime talking among themselves.]

[ALENA enters, carrying a basket covered with a cloth.]

**ALENA:**

(*pants*) Finally! It’s not easy getting all the way to the top of a mountain. (*looks around*) How will I know which Fate is mine? Well, here goes.

[ALENA approaches FATE #1.]

**ALENA:**

Are you my fate?

**FATE #1:**

What, did you think that I was your fate? Ha ha ha! (*turns away*)

**ALENA:**

Guess not. (*to audience*) Just as well. (*approaches Fate #2*) You have a nice smile. Are you my fate?

**FATE #2:**

(*smiles*) If I were your fate, would you have climbed the mountain, looking for me?

**ALENA:**

Good point. Thanks anyway. (*approaches Fate #3*) Are you my fate?

**FATE #3:**

I should say not!

**ALENA:**

(*approaches Fate #4*) Are you my fate?

[FATE #4 circles ALENA then stares at her intently.]

**FATE #4:**

What if I were?

**ALENA:**

Then I would say, "It's nice to meet you."

**FATE #4:**

IS it nice to meet me?

**ALENA:**

Well yes. I mean, sort of. I mean. Well—

**FATE #4:**

You're wasting my time. *(turns to leave)*

**ALENA:**

*(to audience)* There's something about this one. I have a feeling she's the one. *(to Fate #4)* Wait! *(uncovers the cloth from the basket)* Would you like some baklava? *(holds out a piece of baklava)*

**FATE #4:**

*(sticks her head forward)* I may be your Fate, but I'm not falling for that old trick!

**ALENA:**

*(to audience)* Aha, so she IS my fate! *(to Fate #4)* Super thin crust...!

**FATE #4**

*(spins around, then sticks her head forward again)* I said NO!

[FATE #4 knocks the baklava out of ALENA's outstretched hand.]

**ALENA:**

*(takes another piece from the basket)* Soaked in HONEY.

**FATE #4:**

Did you even hear me?

**ALENA:**

With WALNUTS and ALMONDS.

**FATE #4:**

*(loudly and with mouth outstretched)* I don't care if it if were made of AMBROSIA (pronounce: am-BROH-jah)! There's NO way in the world I would...

[ALENA quickly stuffs a piece of the bread into FATE #4's open mouth. This is pretend- be careful!]



**FATE #4:**

*(closes her mouth and chews on the bread)* Hmm. Not bad! Not bad at all. Love a buttery crust.  
*(sticks out her hand for more)*

[ALENA breaks another piece of baklava and hands it to FATE #4.]

**FATE #4:**

*(chews more)* We just don't get real baklava up here in the mountains.

**ALENA:**

It's the best ever, isn't it?

**FATE #4:**

Let's not get carried away. But it's not bad. And you know what?

**ALENA:**

What?

**FATE #4:**

I may have something for you, too. *(reaches into pocket and hands Alena a ball of thread)*

**ALENA:**

What's this?

**FATE #4:**

Tell me you've never seen a ball of thread.

**ALENA:**

Of course I have. Am I to spin something with it?

**FATE #4:**

You're to SELL it. The thread is SILK. You sell for its exact weight in gold.

**ALENA:**

*(doubtfully)* All right. I'll sell it. For its exact weight in gold.

**FATE #4:**

The girl has ears.

**ALENA:**

Uh. *(pauses)* Thanks for the ball of thread.

**FATE #4:**

SILK thread.

**ALENA:**

Of course! The ball of silk thread. Well, I'll be on my way now.

[ALENA turns to leave, but before she does she turns back to give FATE #4 the flower from the QUEEN.]

**ALENA:**

Here. For you.

[ALENA starts to walk away again.]

**FATE #4:**

*(clears throat)* Ahem!

**ALENA:**

*(turns)* Yes?

**FATE #4:**

A FLOWER? Seriously?

**ALENA:**

Oh, right. *(hands Fate #4 the basket with all of the baklava)*

**FATE #4:**

That's more like it.

**ALENA:**

Well, it was nice meeting you.

**FATE #4:**

Had its moments. *(turns around and takes a bite direct from the loaf)*

[FATE #4 exits. ALENA moves to the center of the stage.]

## Scene 4 – A village street

[**Stage set:** The same as in Scene 2.]

[ALENA has entered the center section of the stage from the mountain range area. She stops and takes the ball of silk thread out of her pocket.]

**ALENA:**

I'm not sure if everything happened the way it was supposed to. But it has to be a good thing to get a gift from one's Fate. Right?

[QUEEN enters. As they nears each other, QUEEN pretends to trip, but ALENA catches her.]

**QUEEN:**

Thank you. This blasted robe makes it so hard to see where I'm walking. (*recognizes Alena*) My dear! I remember you! Tell me, did you make it up to the mountain? Did you find your Fate?

**ALENA:**

I did!

**QUEEN:**

Excellent! What happened?

**ALENA:**

She accepted my baklava. Then she gave me this ball of silk thread. She said I need to sell it for its weight in gold. (*shows Queen the ball of thread*)

**QUEEN:**

She gave you a ball of silk thread! My dear, that is a VERY good sign. Your luck is sure to change from now on.

**ALENA:**

You really think so?

**QUEEN:**

Indubitably (pronounce: in-DOO-bit-ah-blee)! Tell me child, what is your name?

**ALENA:**

Alena, Your Majesty. I live at the cottage beyond the corn field. (*points*) Or at least I used to, before I had to leave home. Because of my ill fate. (*perks up*) But I bet I can finally go back home now!

**QUEEN:**

Off with you, then!

**ALENA:**

Goodbye, Your Majesty. (*curtsies*)

[ALENA exits, rushing home. SUITOR #3 enters.]

**SUITOR #3**

(*bows*) Your Majesty.

**QUEEN:**

Young man.

**SUITOR #3:**

If I may, who was that young lady? There's something about her. I wish I could meet her.

**QUEEN:**

Why can't you?

**SUITOR #3:**

I just don't know what I would say to a maiden like that.

**QUEEN:**

Here's a thought. I happen to know she has a ball of silk thread she's looking to sell.

**SUITOR #3:**

Is that right? My sister is getting married next week. She said she needed silk thread to finish her dress!

**QUEEN:**

Well then! It sounds like you know what to say to the maiden.

**SUITOR #3:**

I do! And do you happen to know the maiden's name?

**QUEEN:**

Yes. Her name's Alena.

**SUITOR #3:**

Alena, what a beautiful name! (*like a knight, charging off on a horse*) I am coming, Alena!

[SUITOR #3 exits. QUEEN exits.]

## Scene 5 – The widow's cottage

[Scene set: Same as in Scene 1, but with a table and only two chairs. WIDOW is sitting at the table.]

[ALENA enters from the far end of the stage wing.]

**ALENA:**  
Mother?

**WIDOW:**  
Alena! My darling!!

[They hug.]

**WIDOW:**  
You're back for a visit? How wonderful!

**ALENA:**  
Actually, I was hoping I could move back in.

**WIDOW:**  
Oh, my daughter, nothing would make me happier! But what about... you know. What about your-

**ALENA:**  
My fate? I think it's about to change, Mama.

**WIDOW:**  
*(with her hands on Alena's face)* Ah! I wish it were true.

**ALENA:**  
It is, Mama. I changed it. I changed my fate!

**WIDOW:**  
If only that was possible!

**ALENA:**  
I didn't believe it at first. But I met a wonderful Queen and she told me how. I had to travel to the mountains, and give my Fate a gift.

**WIDOW:**  
Ah! You were a Greek bearing gifts.

**ALENA:**

I suppose. But I think it worked. Because she gave me a gift, too.

**WIDOW:**

My head is spinning! Come my darling, sit and eat!

[They sit at the table, and WIDOW offers the tray of food to ALENA.]

**ALENA:**

It's been a long time, Mama, since I've had your olive bread. (*takes a slice and looks around*) Where are Helena and Cassandra?

**WIDOW:**

They both got married to fine young men. It happened so quickly! Right after you left. They wanted so much for you to be at their weddings, Alena. But...

**ALENA:**

It's all right. I understand. I'm just glad they're happy.

**WIDOW:**

And now you can be, too! That is, I mean... (*worried*) My dear, how can you be sure it worked? That you did change your fate?

**ALENA:**

Well—

[A knocking sound at the door. Can be made from offstage.]

**WIDOW:**

(*to Alena*) I'll be right back. I'm expecting the tailor.

[WIDOW opens the door. SUITOR #3 is standing there.]

**WIDOW:**

Oh!

**SUITOR #3:**

I get the impression you were expecting someone else.

**WIDOW:**

Oh terribly sorry. I didn't mean to be rude. Please, do come in.

[SUITOR #3 enters into the house.]

**WIDOW:**

And you're here for—?

**SUITOR #3:**

Is this where I can find Alena?

**WIDOW:**

As a matter of fact, she just came home. (*gestures to Alena*)

[ALENA stands up.]

**SUITOR #3:**

(*clears throat*) I am looking to buy a ball of silk thread. I heard you have one for sale?

**ALENA:**

You heard correctly. But it will cost its weight in gold for you to buy it.

**SUITOR #3:**

Strange terms. But that's all right. Let's weigh it.

[SCALE pops head in from side of stage]

**SCALE:**

That's my cue!

[SCALE enters with pans and step stools. (See **Performance Notes** on how to make these.)]

**SCALE:**

Just need a second to set up here.

**NARRATOR:**

Take your time.

[ALL watch and wait as SCALE sets up. (See **Performance Notes** on how to set up).]

**SCALE:**

Okay. (*with arms out holding pans*) All set!

**NARRATOR:**

So Alena placed the ball of thread on the scale.

[SCALE tips a bit. (See **Performance Notes**).]

**SCALE:**

Oooh, heavy!

**NARRATOR:**

The visitor reached into his pocket and took out a handful of gold coins. He began placing them one by one onto the other end of the scale.

[SUITOR #3 places gold coins on the scale. The gold coins are large yellow paper cut-outs and have no weight, so the balance of the scale doesn't change.]

**NARRATOR:**

But nothing happened.

**SCALE:**

Not so heavy.

**SUITOR #3:**

Hmm. Seems it will need more gold coins. *(reaches into pocket for more yellow coins and put those on the scale)*

**NARRATOR:**

No amount of gold would make the scale balance.

**SUITOR #3:**

I keep adding more gold, but it never seems to be enough.

**ALENA:**

I've never seen anything like it. Certainly it should have been more than enough for this one ball of thread. Even if it IS silk.

**SCALE:**

Yeah, I don't know what to tell you. It's not cutting it.

**SUITOR #3:**

Wait a minute. I have an idea.



[SUITOR #3 removes the gold coins from the scale and steps onto the scale himself.  
(See **Performance Notes** for how the scale will “even up” once SUITOR #3 steps on it).]

**SCALE:**

There we go!

**ALENA:**

Why, the scale is perfectly even now! Who would have thought?

[They laugh.]

**SCALE:**

Glad I could help! *(to SUITOR #3)* Um. If you don't mind...

**SUITOR 3#:**

Oh. Right.

[SUITOR #3 steps off stool and grabs the ball of thread. SCALE gathers props and exits.]

**ALENA:**

I guess *you* were the perfect match for the ball of thread!

**SUITOR #3:**

I guess so. And maybe I'm the perfect match for you too? *(takes Alena's hand)* Alena, I have a feeling about this. Do you feel it, too? Will you marry me?

[ALENA and SUITOR #3 clasp hands.]

**ALENA:**

Yes, I do. I will! *(to audience)* Now I KNOW my fate has changed.

**WIDOW:**

Let's celebrate! With baklava, fresh from the oven.

**ALENA:**

*(to Suitor #3)* I think our fate is to celebrate with some of my mother's baklava.

**SUITOR #3:**

Smells like destiny to me!

[NARRATOR enters.]

[CASSANDRA and HELENA enter with a veil. They place veil on ALENA. ALL celebrate in background while NARRATOR speaks.]

**NARRATOR:**

So Alena and the young man were married. The whole family was there to see her happy ending.

[ALL exit, happy. CYBILL enters.]

**CYBILL:**

*(hands on her sides)* Wait a minute. She went off and changed her Fate? Folks can do that? *(Narrator shrugs, "I guess so")* Well my goodness if you don't learn something every day. *(looks around)* Um, did I hear "baklava"?

[NARRATOR points to where everyone exited. CYBILL nods thanks to NARRATOR, and rushes offstage to the same direction.]

**NARRATOR:**

Thus our story "The Girl Who Changed Her Fate" ends. And if someday you need to find your own, may you be able to change yours, too.

[If you have a curtain, close it now. If you do not, fade the lights. If you have no stage lights, all actors come on stage and bow to the audience.]



## Performance Notes for The Girl Who Changed Her Fate

### THREE WAYS THAT STUDENTS AND TEACHERS CAN UTILIZE THIS PLAY

1. Students can read the play aloud while sitting in the classroom. Ask the readers to skip all bracketed stage directions. You may prefer to rotate your actors to give all students a chance to read the speaking parts.
2. Students can perform the play in the classroom. Clear an area that can be used as the stage. Have the audience sit on the floor in front of the stage. Students in the play can make simple costumes and/or sets as described below. When the scene change, the characters "on stage" simply walk to the back of the room where they wait until their next appearance "on stage."
3. Students can perform the play on stage. Refer to the production notes that follow. Ask the actors to enter from the back of the room and move through the audience as they approach the stage.



### COSTUMES

- NARRATOR — Perhaps nice shirt and slacks and/or a nice skirt and blouse, or a nice dress.
- WIDOW — Solid black or black-patterned skirt with a dark colored long-sleeve top. A dark colored apron and a dark-colored fabric or bandana worn as a headscarf.
- CASSANDRA — A light blue dress with a white shawl or cardigan or a light blue skirt with a white blouse. A dark-colored fabric or bandana worn as a headscarf.



- **HELENA** — A light red dress with a tan shawl or cardigan or a light red skirt with a tan blouse. A dark-colored fabric or bandana worn as a headscarf.
- **ALENA** — A dark blue dress with a gray shawl or cardigan or a dark blue skirt with a gray blouse. A dark-colored fabric or bandana worn as a headscarf.
- **CYBIL** — Brown or tan patterned dress or skirt with a solid blouse. A black shawl or long cardigan and a dark-colored fabric or bandana worn as a headscarf.
- **SUITORS** — Black pants with a white button-up shirt and black vest. Each Suitor can have a different colored sash, perhaps one that matches their respective bride. Each wears a black fez. To make a fez, you will need black card stock.

Measure the actor's head. Cut the pieces of cardstock, lengthwise, into strips about 6 inches wide and staple them together to form one long strip of paper that is a few inches longer than measurement of the actor's head. Bring the edges of the strip together so that the top of the hat is a little smaller than the base and staple at the top and bottom.

Trace the open circle at the top of the hat onto another piece of black cardstock. Cut out the circle and tape to the top of the hat.

Optional: Tape a tassel to the top of the fez.



- **BAKER** — Black pants, a white shirt, a white full-length apron and a chef hat. To make a chef hat you will need white tissue paper, white cardstock, a stapler and scissors.

Cut two pieces of cardstock, lengthwise, into strips 3 inches wide and staple them together to form one long strip of paper. The strip of paper should now be approximately 18 to 20 inches long. Take a sheet of tissue paper and slowly bunch it along the top edge of the card stock, taping it to the strip as you go.

When you get to the end of your first piece of tissue paper, bend the long strip of card stock into a circle and staple the ends together at the top and bottom.



Continue to bunch up the tissue paper, taping it to the inside of the card stock circle until you have made it all the way around. Affix a few pieces of tape inside the hat to hold any gaps in the tissue paper together.



- **SEAMSTRESS** — A solid-colored skirt and long sleeved shirt and a white half apron. A dark-colored fabric or bandana worn as a headscarf.
- **QUEEN** — A nice dark red dress tied at the waist with a gold-colored rope or sash and a long piece of dark fabric to be work as a long robe. The robe can be pinned onto the back of the dress or can be worn draped over the shoulders like a shawl, but hanging low and flowing. A crown or a gold-colored headband. Optional: Gold-colored jewelry.
- **FATES** — Long, flowing dresses of pale colors tied at the waist with sashes. Or solid white pants and shirts with flowy pale-colored fabric draped around the shoulders and tied at the waist with sashes.
- **SCALE** — All black and holding scale parts (see prop notes for Scene 5).



## PROPS

### Scene 1

- A tray on the table with: 4 cloth napkins, a plastic or cardboard knife, cheese, figs, and Baklava. Food can be real or made from paper.
- A basket with a loaf of bread for WIDOW. Bread can be real or made out of paper.
- A vase, on the table.
- Red flowers- can be real or fake.
- A broom.
- A brush.
- A bag for ALENA.
- A basket of food for WIDOW to hand to ALENA. (The same basket that WIDOW carried in).
- A gold colored necklace for SUITOR #1 to give to CASSANDRA.
- A silver colored talisman for SUITOR #2 to give to HELENA.

### Scene 2

- A bouquet of flowers for QUEEN to hold. One must be loose for QUEEN to drop. This is the same one she gives to ALENA.

### Scene 3

- Basket for ALENA (same one that WIDOW gave her in Scene 1).
- Baklava (can be the same used in Scene 1).
- A ball of thread.
- Flower for ALENA to give to FATE (same one that QUEEN gave to ALENA).

### Scene 4

- Ball of thread (same as in previous scene).

### Scene 5

- Tray (with food. Same as in Scene 1).
- Ball of thread (same as in previous scene).
- Gold coins- can be plastic or made from paper.



- Two step stools for scale. These should be short and sturdy enough that SUITOR #3 can easily step onto one and it will hold his weight. Cover them in gray or black fabric.
- Scale parts for SCALE to hold: Two flat round discs cut from cardboard and painted black which each hang from three pieces of yellow yarn.  
Cut out two cardboard discs, each about a foot in diameter, and paint them black. These will be the pans of the scale. Punch three holes into each disc, along the outer edge, equidistant from each other:

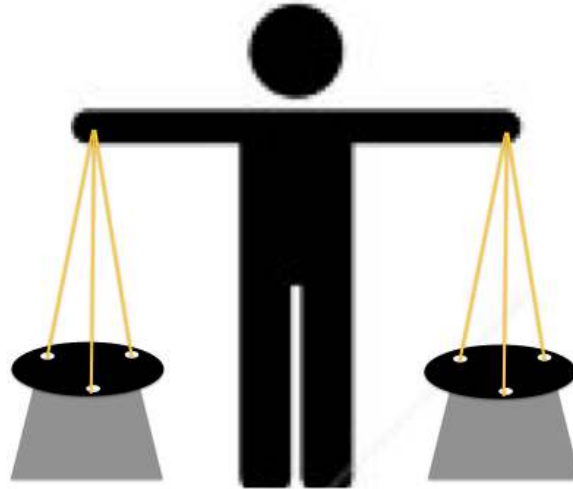


Thread a long piece of yarn (see below for note about length) through each hole and knot on the under side so that the yarn won't slip back through the hole. Tie the other ends of the three pieces together at the top, creating a triangular shape:





Note: The length of the yarn should be the distance from the top of the footstool to the SCALE'S hands, so that when SCALE holds them, the pans hang right at the top of the footstools:



Note: SCALE enters with all of his or her props, carrying the two pans with yarn and the footstools. (He/she can use a small cart to help transport them, or can have a stage hand help bring them out and set up.) The set up can take a minute, as the dialogue allows for an awkward waiting period while the SCALE sets up.

When it comes time for SUITOR #3 to buy the yarn, ALENA will place the yarn on one of the pans. SCALE will lower that pan below the top of the footstool to show the weight of the yarn. SUTIOR #3 will place gold coins on the other pan, which will not move.

When it is time for SUITOR #3 to step on the scale, he will step up on the stepstool under the pan with the gold coins. As he steps up, SCALE will move his arms to even out the pans. Since the pans should now be flush with top of the footstool, it will look like SUITOR #3 is standing in the pan.





## SETS

To make scene transition easy, divide the stage into three sections. If you want to make a backdrop, you can paint it to show the three locations, or you can just rely on set pieces. The three locations are:

- 1) The Widow's Cottage, on one end of the stage.
- 2) The Village Market, in the middle of the stage.
- 3) The top of a mountain range, on the other end of the stage.

- **Scene 1** — The Widow's home. A small table and four chairs are onstage. On the table sits a vase and a tray. On the tray there are 4 cloth napkins, a knife, and food- cheese, figs, and baklava. The food can be real or made from paper. A broom rests against one wall.

There are also three beds on stage. Beds can be represented by blankets and pillows on the floor, or you can use chairs with milk crates. For the latter, use three chairs (one for each daughter) and place a milk crate at the foot of each chair. Cover chairs and milk crates in blankets. The actors can sit up and stretch their feet out, pretending to be sleeping in beds.

- **Scene 2** — The village market. A long table is on stage to represent a market stand. On the table are various goods- food, blankets, scarves, etc. You can cover the table with a white tablecloth and put goods on top. Food can be made from cardboard.

If you want, you can make a sign to hang on the outside of the table that says "Market Stand" or something more specific that describes the goods being sold.

- **Scene 3** — The top of a mountain range. Different sized rocks can be placed around to create the terrain. Rocks can be made of cardboard, cut out and painted. Cardboard rocks can be propped up against milk crates or with a cardboard brace.

Another option is to carve them from Styrofoam, and spray paint them.



- **Scene 4** — The Village Market, same as Scene 2.
- **Scene 5** — The Widow's home, same as Scene 1.

