

WILL YOU WALK WITH ME?
an original screenplay by
Erin Albus

Contact:
Erin Albus
erin.r.albus@gmail.com

Fade In:

EXT. FIELD - DAY

A YOUNG GIRL, 12, walks through a field with a bag on her shoulder and a determined look on her face. The grass is long and brushes against her thighs as she walks.

Woman (V.O.)

Now that you are twelve, you must
learn the truth.

PRIEST (V.O.)

Omelas is a place of joy. Who are we
to question our gifts?

The Girl does not react and keeps walking.

INT. GIRL'S ROOM - DAY

The Girl walks around her room, getting ready for the day. She walks to her dresser and picks up a small bracelet to put on.

She looks in the mirror.

She gives a large smile.

MOTHER O.S.

Hurry! You're going to be late!
The Church is a long walk away.

The Girl looks at the door and skips over.

EXT. STREETS OF OMELAS - DAY

The Girl walks down the street. Around her is a CROWD OF CHILDREN, 12. Everyone is smiling and talking happily. They all walk toward the looming Church of Omelas in the distance.

The Girl meets up with her FRIEND, 12. The Girl gives her Friend a large smile and links arms with her.

They continue down the street with all of the Children.
There is no bickering as the children TALK AMONGST
THEMSELVES.

GIRL

What do you think they want to
show us?

FRIEND

I'm sure it's something wonderful!

Both of them giggle.

GIRL

Maybe we'll all get to be in the
parade this year!

Her Friend squeals excitedly.

FRIEND

Oh, that would be such an honor!

They arrive at a set of steps that lead down further into
the city.

The GIRL, with her friend behind her, walks down the steps

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. CHURCH OF OMELAS - DAY

The Girl, with SEVERAL OTHER CHILDREN, 12, walk down the steps
of an old building. At the bottom, there is a closed door.

THE PRIEST, 60s, ushers them forward.

PRIEST

Please, children, be quiet and gather
around.

When the children are quiet, he opens the door. No one enters.

A CHILD, age unknown (7-10), sickly decrepit, and malnourished,
slowly turns toward the open door. It crawls toward the
Children

The Girl stares in shock.

CHILD

Please, I promise I'll be good!

The Child repeats the line over and over.

The Children MURMUR QUESTIONS M.O.S.

The Girl, unhearing, continues staring at the Child.

PRIEST

(as if underwater)

Omelas is a place of joy. Who are we
to question our gifts?

The Girl stands frozen, watching the Child. In its water, there are bits of bread and *something* floating in it. She stares at its bowl of food on the ground. It looks like mush, barely even edible.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. GIRL'S HOUSE - DAY

The Girl stares at the bowl on the table. She eats breakfast with her MOTHER and FATHER, both in their 40s. She stares at the breakfast on her spoon.

MOTHER

(Cheerily)

How did you sleep, sweetie?

The Girl continues staring at the bowl.

Her Mother's face drops for a second before she smiles again.

MOTHER

(to Father)

She hasn't spoken in three days.

FATHER

(uninterested)

It happens. The children need to
process what they've learned.

MOTHER
(struggling to not sound
angry)

Not like this. Not this long. I
only ever knew one person who
refused to speak. My bro-

FATHER
(cuts her off)

You know we don't speak of him. He
left.

MOTHER

That's why I am. He didn't speak
for days before he left.

FATHER
(sighs)

It'll be fine. Plenty of children
go quiet.

There is a long pause.

The girl picks up her plate and leaves the table. Her
Mother watches her leave. She tries to smile, tries to be
happy, but fails. She just looks at where the Girl
disappears.

MOTHER

Not the ones who stay.

EXT. OMELAS MARKETPLACE - DAY.

The marketplace bustles with activity.

The PEOPLE in the street LAUGH AND SING; everyone is
smiling.

The Girl walks down the street with her Friend.

FRIEND

Are you excited for the parade?

GIRL
(frowning)

I suppose.

FRIEND

I'm playing the flute. The mayor contacted me last night. He said that only two other children our age have ever walked in the parade. I admit, I'm nervous though. I haven't practiced in so long.

They stop at a vendor and the Friend grabs a piece of fruit from the stand. She does not exchange money, only gives the vendor a large smile, which is returned.

The Girl follows, trailing slightly behind.

GIRL

I'm sure you'll do great.

FRIEND

I hope so. It's a great honor to celebrate the greatness of Omelas.

The Girl opens her mouth a few times, but no words come out. The Friend, for the first time, lets her smile fall. Her lips purse as she looks at the Girl.

FRIEND

You're still upset.

GIRL

Aren't you?

FRIEND
(visibly confused)

Why should I be?

GIRL

The Child-

The Friend stops in the middle of the street abruptly and turns to the Girl. The flow of people is not impeded; they just continue to walk around them.

FRIEND
(sharply)

We aren't supposed to speak of it.

GIRL

But how can you ignore it?

FRIEND

Because I don't question our gifts.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

The Girl walks through the field. After a moment, she stops and turns to look at something unseen over her shoulder.

Her shoulders sag sadly.

She looks determined.

EXT. STREETS OF OMELAS - DAY

The Streets of Omelas are filled with People. The parade travels down the middle of the street. The Friend passes by, playing THE FLUTE.

The Friend does not see the Girl.

The Girl stands behind the rest of the people, watching with quiet disdain.

People pass her by, and they grab at her and drag her into the parade. She pulls her hand away each time.

The smiles on their faces do not drop, but they let her stay.

With each tug of her hand, the Girl grows more resolute.

Her eyes rise to land on the largest building of Omelas, the CHURCH OF OMELAS in the distance, where the Child remains trapped in the darkened room.

Her eyes flutter as she imagines the Child in its room.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CHURCH OF OMELAS - DAY

The Child lays in its small room. It whimpers as it holds itself. The SOUNDS OF THE PARADE can be heard from the room.

CHILD

Mommy, please, let me out! I
promise I'll be good!

It stares at the door from the floor. No one comes to answer its cries. THE MUSIC OF THE PARADE GETS LOUDER. It grows more frantic.

CHILD

(whimpering)

Mommy, please! please let me out!
I'll be good! I promise, mommy.

Slowly, THE SOUND OF THE PARADE drowns out the Child's cries.

EXT. STREETS OF OMELAS - DAY

The Girl's eyes flutter, returning her to reality.

She stands in the same spot, staring at the building. The parade is long over, the streets clear.

The Friend approaches cautiously. She is clutching her flute in her hands.

The Friend follows the Girl's eyes and sees the building. The Friend pales, but she still smiles.

FRIEND

Did you enjoy the parade?

The Girl remains silent.

FRIEND

It was quite nice this year.
Although, it's to be expected. We
had such a prosperous year.

The Girl continues her silence.

FRIEND

(growing desperate)

Maybe next year you'll be asked to
join the parade.

The Girl does not answer, but the response draws out a frown.

The Friend still smiles, but it is strained.

She turns to the building. They stand next to each other and stare up.

FRIEND

You can't let it bring you down.

GIRL

How can you be happy?

FRIEND

It's like the Priest said, "who
are we to question our gifts."

The Girl finally looks away from the church to look at the Friend.

The Friend still smiles, looking at the tall building with admiration.

Now the Friend does not look at the Girl.

GIRL
(quietly)

Are they gifts?

FRIEND

Of course they are.

GIRL

I'm not so sure.

The Girl grabs her Friend's hand.

GIRL

I'm leaving. Come with me.

Her Friend looks horrified. She shakes her hand and leaves.

INT. GIRL'S HOUSE - DAY

The Girl and her Parents sit at the dining table. They sit in silence as they pick at their food.

The Girl puts down her fork.

GIRL

Why did you stay?

Her Father looks up, surprised, but her Mother does not.

MOTHER

My brother didn't. My parents would have lost both of their children if I did.

GIRL

You wanted to leave?

MOTHER

Yes. I desperately wanted to, but I couldn't do that to my parents.

FATHER

(sharply)

We aren't supposed to talk about this. We are blessed with joy in Omelas. We don't mourn those who leave.

Her Mother looks intently at the Girl.

She has a sad smile on her face.

MOTHER

I think about my brother every day.

GIRL

And he left because of the child?

FATHER

Don't—

MOTHER

Yes. When he learned the truth, he left. He didn't want to add to the child's suffering.

Her Father SLAMS his hands on the table, grabs his plate, and leaves the dining room.

INT. GIRL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The Mother tucks the girl into bed, and sits beside her daughter momentarily.

The Girl lays curled in her bed, looking troubled.

MOTHER
(sighs)

The Child is a gift. It takes our
pain and we are left with
happiness. We ignore that gift,
and the child is in pain for no
reason.

GIRL

It's wrong.

MOTHER

It is.

GIRL

What if it dies?

There is a pause as her Mother contemplates what to say.

MOTHER

Then another will take its place.
There have been hundreds of
children in that room since Omelas
was created.

The Girl is shocked. It clearly never crossed her mind that
there were more children.

GIRL

And you can stay? What if I was
chosen to be the child?

MOTHER

Omelas is a place of Joy. It
wouldn't take my child from me.

GIRL

I'm sure its mother thought the same.

MOTHER

You are my happiness.

Beat.

A tear slips from her Mother's eye

MOTHER

I love you. I will always love you.

GIRL

I love you too, Mom.

INT. GIRL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The Girl rushes around her house quietly. She doesn't want to be caught.

She grabs food out of the cupboards and stuffs them into her bag.

She pauses when grabbing a piece of bread. After a second, she wraps it in a napkin and sticks it in her bag as well.

When her bag is almost overflowing, she opens her front door.

She starts to exit, then looks back at the pictures of her family that cover the walls.

She leaves.

INT. CHURCH OF OMELAS - NIGHT

The Girl walks carefully down the steps. Every time a step creaks, she winces.

She reaches the bottom and pauses before the door. Then she pushes it open.

Scrambling can be heard in the dark.

The Girl takes a few steps into the dark room. The Child can be heard SCRAMBLING AROUND.

Slowly, the Girl kneels down and gets her backpack off her back. She rummages in her backpack and pulls out a napkin and a piece of bread.

She unfolds the napkin and neatly places it on the ground next to where the Child's "food" is. Then she places the bread on it.

The Girl stands, grabs her backpack, and leaves.

The Child slowly crawls out of the shadows and takes the piece of bread.

It stares at it for a long while before eating it.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

The Girl walks through the field.

The Girl turns and smiles at her Mother, who walks behind her.

The Mother smiles back and comes to put her arm around the Girl's shoulder protectively.

Omelas shrinks in the distance behind them

FADE OUT:

The end.