

A Promise: A Celebration of Keeping Dreams Alive Through Dance and Theater

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A thesis

submitted in partial fulfillment of

the requirements for the degree of

Master of Fine Arts

University of Washington

2026

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Program authorized to offer degree:

School of Drama

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Abstract

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Dreams are fragile. However, that does not stop people from chasing after them. What if, halfway through the chase, you realize there are so many dominating forces, internal and external, that steer you away from your dreams? Do you let the dreams die or find alternatives? What does it take to keep going? *A Promise: A Celebration of Keeping Dreams Alive Through Dance and Theater* asks the audience to investigate, from the moment their dreams first formed, how their relationships to their dreams have changed, how far they have come, and how far they are willing to pursue. At the same time, this performance also pays tribute to the people who have supported us along this harsh journey to our dreams.

Sebastian Wang

Graduate Thesis – A Celebration of Keeping Dreams Alive Through Dance and Theater

Jeffrey Fracé

June 8th, 2026

From the moment I entered the Professional Actor Training program [PATP] at the University of Washington, I have had many first times. I had my first Suzuki training, my first clown class, my first Integrated Alexander Technique class, and my first dance class. I performed in my first radio show, played live music on stage, taught undergraduate students, and devised a show from scratch. And none of these first times would have been possible had I not stayed stubborn since I was seven years old and overcame one obstacle after another to pursue my dream of acting. As the time came for my solo show, I wanted to achieve two goals: to pay tribute to that stubborn 7-year-old me and the people who supported me on my acting journey, and attempt a more challenging first time: integrating dance into my performance.

The overarching story of my solo show is me going after my dreams of acting, being discouraged to the brink of giving up, and regaining the courage to keep going. This story is my life's journey from when I was seven years old. How could I deliver a story that spans 20 years without feeling like the story drags or becomes too wordy? In musicals, when the characters are feeling so much that speaking can no longer capture the full scope of their emotions, they sing. The songs can reveal how much time has passed, the internal conflicts, things the character wants to say but does not, and so much more. Similarly, what if I convey the hesitation, turmoil,

fear, shame, and the push-and-pull between chasing after my dreams and playing it “safe” through dance?

Therefore, I decided that each moment would have a corresponding dance. But first, I needed something to represent my dreams physically so that I could establish a relationship with my body. To find what could represent my dream, I began with what images and feelings come to mind when I think about acting. I asked myself, “When I achieve my dreams, how would I feel?” I replied, “I would feel glorious.” Then what else feels glorious? The image of a crown came to my mind. I thought about many other metaphors, such as gold, stars, or trophies. But something about the crown resonated with me.

A crown is something one wears. It draws attention; it is something exclusive because not everyone can easily wear a crown. The saying, “heavy is the crown,” signifies a sense of huge responsibility. But a crown has its downsides. It is not practical or functional for daily use; it puts one under the spotlight and the judgments of other people; it is almost unattainable for people who were not born into the family of kings and queens. All these downsides started to sound too similar to what my dad told me when I finally mustered up the courage to tell him that I wanted to pursue acting full-time – “How are you going to make a living?” “This isn’t practical.” “Do you want to sell your body?” “You are putting yourself out there to be judged.” “We’re not rich people. We can’t support you.” “How are you going to support your family?” “What are you going to contribute to society?” “Who do you think you are to make it?”

Selecting the crown as the object that represents my dream helped me pick out the objects that would represent alternative routes to acting. I chose boots to represent careers that were simple but practical, such as an accountant or an office job; I chose a jacket to represent careers

that chase after money or power, such as the law, politics, or IT. The fourth clothing piece is a cape. To me, a cape has the power to hide. It covers the body. I saw this representing the careers that I could have pursued to cover up my lost dreams.

My inspiration for these items came from my observation of my father. He was a talented and hard-working engineer, teacher, and administrator, but he was never recognized or compensated for what he was worth. He would work overtime and take on extra tasks because he was the only person who could accomplish them. But he stayed in his position at the bottom of the food chain. People around him rose up the ranks or received better compensation because they knew people in powerful positions, or because they could drink more and talk more smoothly at business dinners. I asked my father whether he liked his job. He said no. I inquired what his dreams were. He said his dream was to become a martial artist or to practice Chinese medicine, but he knew those careers didn't have stable incomes or had very low incomes. Therefore, he chose to work in the Railroad Bureau.

After I picked the objects that represented my dream and the alternative paths, the next step was to figure out a storyline. I was a big fan of mirroring. I wanted to tell a secondary story in my solo show that mirrors what was happening in the main plot. Since my solo show was a tribute to the 7-year-old me, I wanted to speak directly to my 7-year-old self. Therefore, I imagined two characterizations of myself that I would embody: the 7-year-old me [Seba 7] and the grown-up me [Seba 26].

I created a world where every child must spend the rest of their lives going after a signature piece of clothing, mirroring how people in the real world often spend their whole life chasing after their dreams or what they believe to be their calling. As Seba 7 tried on the

examples of clothing, it was like my younger self trying to determine what I wanted to do in my life.

The moment Seba 7 put on the crown mirrored the very first moment I fell in love with acting. When I was a little kid, I was so afraid to talk to strangers that I would hide behind my parents' backs whenever I met their colleagues. Wanting me to be bolder, more confident, and more masculine, they signed me up for acting lessons. Month after month, I went to the classes. I spoke more clearly; I became comfortable speaking to people. I did not love acting, nor did I hate it. I simply accomplished what my parents wanted me to do – to be more confident in front of others. Then everything changed during the end-of-year presentation when I narrated a story:

A mother fox and her cub were walking in the forest before dawn. As the carefree fox cub skipped and ran, one of his legs was caught in a hunter's trap. The mother ran over to the cub as quickly as she could. Just as the mother fox got to her cub's side, one of her legs was caught in another trap. Now the dawn is arriving, and the sound of the hunter and his dog can be heard in the distance. The mother fox looked at her cub in the eyes and told him that she was going to chew off his caught leg so that he could be free. So, she did. She closed her eyes, bearing through the cry of her cub and freed the fox cub. The cub wanted to free the mother fox, but he was too young and weak. The sound of the hunter and his dog is getting louder and louder. The mother fox finally decided to push her cub away with all her strength and told him to run as fast as he could.

As I got to the part where the mother fox was pushing her cub away, I started crying. I didn't know why. I just felt the mother fox's desperation, love, and pain all at the same time. I had never been a mother, but that did not matter in that moment. Every cell in my body wanted the

fox cub to live. I knew, as the mother fox, that I would die. But the fox cub would live, and that is worth everything, even my life.

I was only 7 years old, and at that moment, I had never felt more alive. Ever since then, I kept chasing what I felt on that little stage in front of my acting classroom. I realized how amazing it felt standing on the stage and seeing people listen to me and be affected by what I do or say. I wanted to spend as much time as I could doing exactly that.

Therefore, in my solo show, as soon as Seba 7 put on the crown, both versions of myself were captured by it, just like the moment of me telling that story of the mother fox and her cub. As a result, both versions of me had to chase after the crown at the same time. Before stepping into the “real world” to go after the signature piece, Seba 7 was afraid. Seba 26 decided to tell him a story about courage, determination, and support. The story was about a boy that lived in a village where every boy and girl must go on a journey to chase after a star. The protagonist chose the hardest star to go after despite people’s advice to pick an easier star. On the way to the star, he was pushed to the brink of despair and was ready to give up. But he remembered the promise he made to his family and best friend back home that he would keep going because he was never alone, for he carried his family and his best friend in his heart. The end of that story was intentionally left unfinished because the actual ending will be revealed at the end of the show.

In this first moment came the first dance. I wanted to create an atmosphere where, at the moment the crown was put on Seba 7, everything changed. For a moment, everything I had ever wanted was right in front of me. I wanted the music to be dream-like. It symbolized the excitement and the absolute hope I had at seven years old. Then, as I started to go after my dreams, reality and hardships slowly set in. I picked “Twinkle Twinkle Little Star – Minor Epic

Version” by Roc Nardin because it started with a slow melody of the classic “Twinkle Twinkle Little Star” in a major key with children’s playful and happy voices in the background, full of wonder, hope, and a slight naivete. There were pauses in between, which allowed me to add in quick moments of dialogue. Halfway through the beginning major melody, dark chords were added underneath, foreshadowing the obstacles ahead.

As Seba 7 and Seba 26 started their journey to the crown, the song shifted to a minor key, and a full orchestra joined in. It felt like the atmosphere changed from a quiet night under the stars to the windy desert where the strong wind blows up sand, and you could barely take one step forward. The huge change in tone worked well for the story because the path to the crown was treacherous and dangerous.

The harsh conditions of the journey alone could not deter Seba 7 and Seba 26. There must be something stronger. I wanted to highlight the voices that discouraged and hurt me to the point of giving up. Thinking back on my own life, I found that these voices could be divided into two categories: the ones that were telling me how I was not enough and what I should have done instead, and the ones that reasoned with me about how impractical my dream was. The first category of voices often felt aggressive and dominating, so I decided to use Statues in Suzuki to create this dominating figure. On the other hand, the second category of voices often felt like planting seeds. They didn’t tell me what I should’ve done or how idiotic I was; instead, they planted seeds of doubt in my head that slowly grew stronger until all I could think about was what if they were right. So, for the second category of voices, I channeled the archetype of Lucifer. This figure is charming and alluring, but just when you think he is here to help you, he steals your soul.

After the two figures said their pieces, Seba 26 started to waver. He felt afraid to keep chasing after the crown because of the doubts, fears, and shame that the two voices planted into my head, while Seba 7 fearlessly pulled him forward. I found the song, “Code Duello” by Power-Haus and Sergiu-Dan Muresan. The music started with the strings playing a beautiful melody while the electric kick drum on the first beat felt dark and ominous, signaling the doubts, fears, and shame starting to bubble up. Then the strings continued with the electric guitar playing a steady chord underneath, getting louder and louder, symbolizing the taking over of the fear. As more instruments joined in, suddenly many sounds and rhythms were mingled together, representing the different forces battling: the shame of disappointing my parents, the fear of the unknown, and the doubts of whether I had made the right choice. The melody produced by the first group of strings remained present in the music with the exception during the middle part of the song; This melody represented Seba 7. For the first half of the song, Seba 26 tried to fight the voices together with Seba 7. During the moment when that melody dropped off, the voices started to win and took over Seba 26, and he decided to turn away. When the melody came back, Seba 7 was trying to pull Seba 26 back towards the path to the crown, while Seba 26 was resisting Seba 7. And this push and pull became so exhausting that they eventually took Seba 26 to the ground, marking the end of this dance sequence.

The initial exploration divided this dance into three big beats: wavering, turning back, and resisting. During the wavering beat, Seba 26 tried different ways to push forward closer to the crown. In dance, I explored different ways to advance. How could I turn a limited amount of distance into an infinite amount to symbolize that the journey to this dream of mine is far and difficult? As Seba 26, I followed a curved path to create a longer distance. Then, I imagined pushing through strong winds. As I got closer, the wind blew me back and onto the ground. I

then got up from the ground on all fours and advanced like I was surrounded by mud until the wind and the waves swooped me up and swirled me around far upstage to the ground. After multiple tries and failures, my will was shaken. I started listening to the voices in my head instead of fighting them.

During the second beat, turning back, I looked at all the alternative options presented to me – the boots, the jacket, and the cape and decided to step away from going after the crown. As I started walking towards one of the three alternatives, I imagined that Seba 7 was pulling me back towards the crown. But what's the point? At this point, I had determined that he was a nobody who had foolishly been chasing his naïve dreams. What I should have done instead is to choose something more practical and play it safe, but Seba 7 was so stubborn that he grabbed onto my hand, my legs, my shoulders, and my head. Every time he grabbed onto a part of my body and pulled me back, I would manage to escape from the grasp until Seba 7 finally mustered all his strength and dragged me far back towards the crown. As I pushed Seba 7 away, the force was so strong that I fell back and flipped over to the ground. All this struggle had been so exhausting that I could not stand back up again.

At the climax, between the second and third dance, was a monologue. This monologue, delivered by Seba 7 to Seba 26, who was now on the ground, exhausted, scared, and frustrated, reflected the many nights when I sat alone in my bedroom with my thoughts. I played out endless scenarios of my future. I saw myself as the best doctor who won a Nobel Prize, playing the piano in Carnegie Hall, or even as the software engineer who developed the next viral app. None of them could compare to the image of me singing, dancing, and acting on a stage or a screen. In this monologue, I talked about how every argument made against my dreams can be used for any alternative path. The most important thing was that my love for my dreams had never

disappeared, no matter how much I tried. In a world of uncertainty, this desire of mine seems to be the most certain. And that should be enough.

After this deliberation from Seba 7 came the final dance. This was a dance that encapsulated the grown-up me gathering myself up and deciding to fully commit to the crown. Starting with music again, I found “Forward Motion” by Solis. The music had a feeling of gathering strength, starting with a faint sound in the background and building gradually. There were two moments of returning to a simple melody until it built up a third time to a full sound and quieted down at the end. I divided this song into five beats: rekindling, first try, gathering strength, break through, and resolve. In the rekindling beat, as the faint music started in the background, Seba 26, having just heard the monologue of Seba 7, looked at the shiny crown that was calling to him and rekindled the flame of determination in his heart. Then, during the beat of the first try, Seba 26 attempted to get back onto his feet. I wanted to signify how hard it was for Seba 26 to get up because he was still a bit afraid and exhausted. I swung my leg from one side to the other and let the momentum bring my body halfway up. Next, I twisted my body to go back down to the floor. Then, I swung my leg again, carrying the momentum of the previous fall, and brought my body up another time. I repeated this movement several times.

This gradual getting up and falling back down went on to the second point of the music, where most of the instruments dropped out. I wanted this quieter moment to represent the last deliberation of Seba 26: seeing the crown, shining in the distance, I remembered the promise I made to the 7-year-old me and why I had left home at 15 for a foreign country with nothing but a dream. As the final build-up began, I used the slow rise from Suzuki training to symbolize the gathering of the inner strength. My eyes were on the crown, while my body slowly rose from the ground at a steady pace as if pushing against heavy weights that were sitting on my shoulders. As

I broke through, I allowed the choreography to be improvisation. The only guidance was one word – “free.” I danced around the stage and kneeled to Seba 7 and gave him a hug. It was to apologize for breaking the promise for even a few seconds and renew the promise that I made to him, that I would keep going after the crown, no matter how hard and scary it gets, because I was never alone. At that moment, I saw Seba 7 not as just myself, but as everyone who had been with me on this journey. The promise itself expanded from the one I made to my younger self in private to one that I made to the whole world out loud, without shame, fear, doubt, or apology.

At the end of the music, I returned to the end of the opening story, confidently saying that the main character in the story kept chasing after the star despite his determination wavering, because he was reminded that he was never alone on this journey and that he made a promise to keep going even when the time was hard, mirroring my own journey. There was the complete structure of my solo show.

While the structure of my show didn’t change much, many details were polished during the week of the tech. The first was the setting of my show. While conversing with my mentor, Cathy Madden, she asked me, “Where are you at the beginning of the play when you are narrating the story to the 7-year-old you?” Initially, I had imagined we were just in a random void, and we would step into the “real world” as we took on the journey to the crown. But this void was so abstract. Even as I was rehearsing the show, I found it was challenging to know where to look or where to sit. Once I decided that instead of a void, the place where I told the story to Seba 7 was my childhood bedroom, everything changed. I could sit on the floor, at the foot of my bed; I could sit on my bed with the dinosaur bed sheet and pillowcases; I could lean on my desk; or I could sit in my chair. Beyond the places where I could use for blocking, the memories were present as well: there was the desk where I spent summers doing homework,

resenting how I couldn't be on stage; there were the books on my bookshelf of poetry, speeches, and articles that I would use to practice my acting; there was the bed where I laid awake at night scheming how I could convince my parents to send me abroad, closer to my dreams. The space suddenly became alive.

When it came to the dances, much of the choreography followed the beats of the music rigidly. Every time I changed movements, it was on the beat. After I showed my dances to my professor, Jeffrey Fracé, he pointed out that while there was nothing wrong with following the beats, I didn't have to do so all the time. I could also break that pattern. What's more, what was my relationship to the music? What could it mean if I followed the beats for a while and then broke that pattern and moved freely? I started thinking about how my movements could be in conversation with the music instead of just repeating it. For example, in the second dance, there was a moment when Seba 26 weighed his options and decided to turn away from the crown. After the feedback, I realized that the music itself already conveyed the turmoil that was going on inside of me. I didn't need to actively try to show how much I struggled by tossing my body around. I could simply stand there and look at the crown, turn my head, look at the boots, and turn my head again. Not only was it working with the music, but it also created a moment of stillness after several quick movements. This stillness was not a moment of peace, but a moment of internal struggle. Applying the same concept to the final dance, I decided that the moment the grown-up me stood back onto his feet, he was going to break free of the music. In that moment, he moved freely, no longer following the beats on the music. As long as I could hit the mark of the final moment, what happened in between did not need to have a strict structure.

Another adjustment I made to the dance came from one of my cohorts, Yeonshin Kim's feedback. After showing her my piece, she raised the question of miming versus dancing. After

discussion, we defined miming as showing the audience the action; for example, I am pushing through the wind with my two hands in the air. We defined dancing as something that is a metaphor or an abstraction. If the wind is strong and I am trying to push through it, instead of pushing, what could I do to convey the same message? What sensation does the strong wind give? Am I moving a bit slower? Am I off balance more? Am I using more curved motions instead of following straight lines? After our discussion, I decided that throughout the show, my movement would become increasingly abstract.

After these detailed adjustments, it came time for performance. Funny enough, even though my solo show was all about unapologetically chasing after my dreams without fear, shame, or doubts, I felt afraid to put my show in front of the audience. I had many doubts about whether my show was good enough. I worried about whether I would look silly trying to dance for the first time in front of a live audience. I wanted to dance well, but I didn't trust that I would accomplish that. In my life and professional journey, I constantly assessed whether I had earned the title or the right. It took me two years in the MFA program to start calling myself "an actor" in front of people because I felt like I was finally good enough to earn that title, even though I knew wholeheartedly that there was never a set of rules or criteria one must meet to be an "actor." Just like how people want to see a good doctor or hire a good lawyer, when the audience sees me perform, I want to be that good actor who's worth their time and money. That was also how I felt about dancing. I was afraid that since I wasn't a "dancer," I didn't know if I was good enough. The little voice in my head told me, "Who do you think you are to think you're good enough to dance in front of the audience? It's going to be so silly and a waste of time."

However, one of many skills I acquired from this program is to acknowledge my fears and investigate them. The fear of putting on my solo show didn't mean that it was bad. It meant

that I really cared about the show and wanted it to go well. I also realized that I didn't see myself as an actor because I met certain criteria, had been in a set number of shows, or gained certain recognition. It was simply that the moment I decided to be an actor, I was one. If that was the case for acting, why couldn't it be the same way for dance? Even if I looked silly with my first dance performance in front of the audience, this was only the first of many performances. A "good" artist never stops growing and learning. If I were to use this criterion to measure whether I am a "good" actor and dancer, then I would say I was on the right track. Suddenly, my solo show had another meaning – I am owning my art.

During the performance, I found it empowering to take up the stage all by myself. During each performance, when I first came onto the stage, I only felt owning a small space around me. As the show progressed, that little bubble of space would expand. Eventually, when I started my first dance, which was about halfway through the show, I felt like I finally owned the stage. There were moments during the dance when I tried to check on the audience and see what they thought of the dance. But I pulled myself back to the story. It was not the time to assess. Besides the momentary doubts, dancing felt exhilarating. It was wonderful that I expressed everything I needed without using words. It was a magical feeling.

As an artist, it is challenging to look at what I have made and say, "I am satisfied." On the contrary, I could not help but wonder how this piece could be better. The first thing I would do is to spend even more time on the choreography, especially in the second dance. I found that during the first half of the dance, Seba 7 was nowhere to be found, even though I had established that he was with the grown-up me the entire time. As the grown-up me was fighting to stay on the path, why did Seba 7 just stand there and watch, and choose not to intervene until later in the

song? And when Seba 7 intervenes, how could I make it clear this is a different character from what the audience had been observing before?

Another point for me to keep workshopping is the story within the story. In the story told by the grown-up me, I gave away much of what would happen in my solo show. Was it necessary? What other functions did it serve besides satisfying my love for mirroring? I found that, during the performance, the beginning of my solo show was quite word-heavy. I caught myself wondering why I was saying so much, instead of jumping into the dances where the true actions were.

Thirdly, I wanted to give the “villains” more time on the stage. In my current version, those discouraging voices only appeared briefly between the first and second dance. They never resurfaced. If those voices were to mirror real-life discouragements, then they should have come up multiple times. I wonder what it would be if, during the second dance, instead of a purely internal struggle, the dark voices also joined in, pressuring, tricking, and tempting me to give up on the crown. Maybe there could have been another dance dedicated to these voices.

It was easy for me to see the flaws and imperfections in my solo show and list out reasons why it was not satisfactory. But when I looked at what I had accomplished – paying tribute to the 7-year-old me and the people who supported my acting journey; integrating dance into a theater performance for the first time; and writing, producing, directing, choreographing, set and costume designing, and performing an original piece all by myself – I could safely look to the 7-year-old me and say not only did I keep the promise I made, but I can also promise that there is so much more that awaits us.

Script:

A stage, with 4 rehearsal blocks at each Exit. The block where the crown sits is downstage center. Regarding the other 3 blocks, one has a pair of boots, one has a jacket, and another has a cape.

Center stage, a pair of small boots, a small jacket, a small cape, a pair of small boots, and a small crown.

Lights up center stage.

Seba 26 is putting down all the pieces of clothing.

Seb 26

Are you excited? It's a big day!

...

What's wrong! Why do you look so scared?

...

Wanna hear a story?

...

Seb 26

There was a village, where every boy and girl must choose a star to be their destination. They had to leave their room of comfort and go on this journey alone. You see, the interesting thing about stars is that they are always farther than they appear to be. So, if you decide to chase

after one, you may never get there. But that doesn't stop a boy named Otiose. He chose a star called Kunst, a star that people rarely choose, because it is farther than almost any other star.

People who attempted after Kunst often returned without ever getting close, filled with resentment, despair, disappointment, and fear. Because putting the harsh conditions aside, on the way to Kunst, there are dark voices that will shake even the strongest determination. Because of that, some people told Otiose to choose another star, some mocked him for his naivete, and some wished him good luck. Only his mom, dad, and his best friend Amormeus believed in him undoubtedly. They made a promise with Otiose that they will forever have his back and in return, when Otiose is feeling doubts and is about to quit, he will listen to their voices in his heart and keep going, because even if he must go on this journey alone physically, he never is truly alone.

So, Otiose embarked on his journey to Kunst. The path is dark, treacherous, and met with strong resistance. Very quickly, he started hearing voices. Otiose was shaken so much with fear that he wanted to change course to a different star. But he remembered his promise to his parents and Amormeus. He listened to their voices in his heart, "You are never alone. Keep going. We are with you."

Seba 7

So, what happened next?

Seba 26

Well, you'll have to find out some other day. We're running out of time!

...

Now, you need to decide on our signature piece. And choose carefully, what you decide
will be our lifelong pursuit.

...

Sure, you can try on the samples again.

...

Here is the cape.

...

Here are the boots.

...

Here is the jacket.

...

All look very good! So, what do you think?

...

Hmm?

...

Oh, that? That is the sample of the crown.

...

Yeah it definitely is a signature piece we can go after, but it is really hard, especially for
people like us who were not born into a family with crowns. People rarely reach it.

...

Sure! You can try it.

Seb 7 tried the sample crown. Something changes (Slight light shift, music cue – song 1, a brighter more beautiful light, almost dream like.)

...

Wow, you look amazing. Nothing looks quite like that, does it?

...

So, we are going after the crown then!

...

Are you sure?

...

Okay

...

I promise

...

You ready?

...

Better keep up.

*We see Seb 26 steps out of the comfort zone holding the hand of Seb 7's. **Lights on** the blocks. We see the crown, the boots, the cape, and the jacket.*

*Seb 26 starts his journey to the crown. There is strong resistance. **Lights out** on Seb 26 as the music stops.*

Voice 1

Who do you think you are to go for the crown?

Light shift to upstage center. A figure that is dominating

Voice 1

You're not worthy to wear that crown. What audacity to even think about going after the crown? You're weak, naïve, and idealistic. Out of all the people that go after the crown, what makes you think that you'll be the one that gets to wear it? Wake Up!! Pick something that is more of your level!

Light shift to a softer tone. The dominating figure becomes softer, almost seductive. The figure walks downstage to Seb 26 and speaks words into his ears.

Voice 2

Wow, the crown huh? That's some intense stuff. But why? What's wrong with the boots? Boots are practical. You put them on and you can walk a thousand miles. You put on a nice jacket, that will keep you warm and cozy. And a cape, you can use it to cover up your face or body, hiding away the flaws you don't want people to see. But a crown? It doesn't keep you warm, doesn't protect your feet, and you can't hide under it. Instead, you're always in the spotlight. People will see you and judge you. Is that really what you want?

...

And the crown might not even be there when you arrive. Or it might not be what you anticipated at all.

...

Look around you, do you see anyone else? You're all alone on this dark and treacherous road. Do you feel it now, the fear that feels like the crushing waves? Let that fear guide you.

Listen to your fear.

Light shift. Music cue – Song 2. Seb 26 deliberates. He wavers and starts to look at other objects in the room. He starts to walk onto another path. But, Seb 7 keeps pulling him back. This back and forth eventually takes Seb 26 to the floor. Music stops

Seb 26

Stop pulling me back. I don't have what it takes. I'm scared. I don't want to go after the crown anymore.

...

You heard it: Who do we think we are to go after the crown?! So why do you still want the crown? Why must it be the crown? Why not anything else?! WHyyyyyyyy?

...

Seb 7

We don't know!!! We. don't. know. We wish we did. we just know it calls to us. It is all we can think about. It is our dream!! When we put it on, it's a feeling we've never felt anywhere

else. We feel alive. We wish we could feel the same way about anything else. But we don't. The voices are frightening, tempting, and convincing. They may be right that we might never reach the crown, or there might be nothing when we get there. But what if that's the same case everywhere else? If we get to the boots, what if there are no boots, or they are not the boots we want. Then we're just stuck with a pair of boots we dislike. And it would be too late to go after the crown again. The only thing we're certain from the beginning is that our desire for the crown is strong. It has never waned. The closer we get, the more we want it. We want it so bad that it scares us. Isn't that enough evidence that we might be on the right path? You don't have to fight the fear alone, I can help. no matter how dark it gets or how loud those voices become, I am always here with you. We made a promise that we would never stop until we get to the crown.

And I will always keep my promise; will you keep yours?

Music cue – song 3. Seba 26 stops. Much Deliberation. Seba 26 gets up on his feet. More Deliberation. He extends his hand back to Seba 7. They hug. Music becomes soft in the background.

Seba 26

I promise I will never stop until we reach the crown. For me, for you, for US.

The hug gets tighter and tighter until Seb 7 becomes one with Seb 26.

Seba 26 starts on the journey again with a straight path down to the crown.

Music changes. They return to their original position, on the floor.

Seba 7

So, what happened next to Otiose?

Seba 26

He kept going, unwavering no matter how loud the voices became or how strong the fear grew. He has the light of the crown to guide him and the flame in his heart to rely on. He made a

PROMISE.

Lights off everywhere else except for the crown.

Beat

Light off