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ELIZABETH I

by

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PROLOGUE:

1. EXT. GARDENS. HATFIELD HALL. DAY.

We are under the waters of a pond, filled with fish. Big, golden carp move sluggishly through water and weed, in a glitter of sunlight. Then we hear CHILDISH LAUGHTER. A little HAND suddenly PLUNGES among the fish, sending them skuttering in a flash of fins.

ANOTHER ANGLE:

Now we see the two little CHILDREN. A pretty, red-haired GIRL and a handsome little BOY of the same age, both dressed in fine silk clothes. ELIZABETH and ROBERT DUDLEY laugh together in childish glee.

2. INT. HATFIELD HALL. DAY.

From a window, a small, plain YOUNG WOMAN of seventeen watches them. She is dressed in velvet, and wears a crucifix on a golden chain around her neck.

A GOVERNESS appears.

GOVERNESS

Lady Mary. Why are you not looking after the Princess?

MARY, Elizabeth's older sister, looks round at her, flushing angrily.

MARY

She is not a Princess. I am!

The Governess moves forward sternly.

GOVERNESS

My Lady, you will do as you are told. Or the King will hear of it!

Mary's eyes blaze. But then she turns, and walks out.

3. EXT. GARDENS. DAY.

Elizabeth sees Mary come out. She stops playing. Mary stands sullen and silent, staring at her.

An awkward moment.

3. CONTINUED:

Elizabeth tries to smile.

ELIZABETH

Sister. This is my friend, Master
Dudley.

Mary says nothing, stares stonily. The smile fades.

ELIZABETH

Don't be cross with me, Mary.
I never asked you to serve me.

Mary looks away.

CUT TO:

4. INT. HALL. EVENING.

Sudden excitement - a flurry of activity. A VOICE
CALLING OUT:

VOICE

The King! The King is here!

Elizabeth rushes to the window.

5. EXT. COURTYARD - EVENING

With torches flaring, a party of FIFTY HORSEMEN ride
into the courtyard, bearing the Royal Standard, dressed
in crimson and gold liveries.

6. INT. HALL - EVENING

The Governess makes hurried adjustments to Elizabeth's
hair and dress, the little girl pale with both
excitement and anxiety, twisting her hands together.

The door opens and SIR WILLIAM CECIL walks in. He
bows low before the Royal Princess.

CECIL

Your Grace. The King would like
to see you.

Mary steps out of the shadows.

6. CONTINUED:

MARY

Will he not see me also?

Cecil looks at her.

CECIL

No, Lady Mary. He does not wish to see you.

MARY

But he is my father! Why won't he see me?

Cecil doesn't reply, moves back to the door. Elizabeth gives her sister a quick, sympathetic look - then hurries after him. Mary shrieks after them:

MARY

Her mother ~~is a~~ whore!

BANG! The door shuts.

7. INT. GREAT HALL - EVENING

Elizabeth is ushered in. A great fire is burning and crackling. The chamber is filled with Courtiers in their flaming livery, and with laughter - the great booming laugh of the King, hidden from view.

Half-afraid, the little GIRL keeps her eyes to the floor, as some of the Courtiers turn towards her. A sudden hush.

Trembling, Elizabeth makes a deep curtsey, her eyes still downcast.

ELIZABETH

Your Majesty...

A long beat.

HENRY VIII

Come here!

She moves slowly towards him. As she raises her eyes a little, they are dazzled by his presence, the bright yellow of his clothes, glittering with a thousand jewels. She does not see his face.

7. CONTINUED:

She kneels before him. His hand comes out towards her, massive beside hers, covered with rings set with magnificent stones. She kisses it.

HENRY VIII

Let me see thy face, child.

He cups his hand around her chin, and lifts her face up, and stares at it.

HENRY VIII

You are pretty enough.

(a beat)

But what a pity you were not a boy!

We are CLOSE on her face.

Then TITLES:

ELIZABETH I

Her face fades away.

A slow DRUM BEAT.

These words appear on the screen:

IN THE YEAR 1536, WHILE SHE WAS STILL A CHILD, ELIZABETH'S MOTHER, ANNE BOLEYN, WAS BEHEADED FOR ADULTERY. ELIZABETH WAS DECLARED A BASTARD.

UNABLE TO OBTAIN A DIVORCE, HER FATHER, KING HENRY VIII, HAD BROKEN WITH ROME. HENRY WAS SUCCEEDED ON THE THRONE BY HIS SICKLY SON, EDWARD, WHO DIED SOON AFTERWARDS, AND THEN, FOR A FEW DAYS, BY THE UNFORTUNATE LADY JANE GREY.

IN 1553, HER SISTER MARY BECAME QUEEN. MARY, A CATHOLIC, WAS DETERMINED TO RESTORE THE CATHOLIC FAITH TO ENGLAND, AND MARRIED THE SPANISH KING, PHILIP II.

IN 1554, A PROTESTANT REBELLION BROKE OUT AGAINST HER, LED BY SIR THOMAS WYATT. THE REBELLION WAS DEFEATED.

CONTINUED:

ROTTING CORPSES HUNG FROM GIBBETS
ALL OVER LONDON, AND WYATT WAS SENT
TO THE TOWER.

ELIZABETH, WHO HAD BEEN BROUGHT UP
A PROTESTANT, WAS ACCUSED OF SUPPORTING
THE REBELLION - AND ARRESTED!

FADE IN:

8. EXT. RIVER THAMES - LONDON - NIGHT - 1554

It is dark and raining. There is a heavy swell on the river tonight - and then the NOISE of plashing oars, the flickering lights of torches reflected on the dark waters.

A BARGE comes into view...

9. EXT. BARGE - NIGHT

The OARSMEN sweat at their labours. SOLDIERS crouch on the deck, crossbows ready, scanning the shore and dark waters, as if afraid of ambush. The rain falls, torchlight red on sweaty faces...

10. INT. CABIN - BARGE - NIGHT

Sheltered from the rain, Elizabeth. She wears a plain white dress and no cloak. She is 18 now, tall, red-haired, beautiful.

Sitting with her in the cramped cabin, her attendant and oldest friend, KATE ASHLEY - and her captor, the EARL OF ARUNDEL.

They are silent, listening to the sound of the oars, the creaking of the timbers. But Kate looks frightened.

VOICE
(from deck)
My Lord! The Tower!

Arundel walks out. Elizabeth glances at Kate.

10. CONTINUED:

ELIZABETH
(quietly)
Like a lamb to the slaughter.

Kate has to bite back her tears. Elizabeth follows Arundel on deck.

11. EXT. DECK - NIGHT

The massive, grey, forbidding shape of the Tower of London looms up before them through the rain and darkness.

Elizabeth stares at it, trying to control her emotions. She SHIVERS.

ARUNDEL
Madam, you're cold!

He tries to put a cloak around her shoulders. Almost scornfully, she pushes it away.

Slowly beating oars, to the soft cries of the Boatman, the barge steers towards Traitor's Gate - a gaping mouth in the Tower wall. As it passes beneath the iron grating, Elizabeth glances up; the torchlight briefly, garishly illuminates the SEVERED HEADS of five of Wyatt's rebels, fixed upon spikes.

12. EXT. TOWER - NIGHT

Shipping oars, the boat docks against the landing steps. Waiting at the top of them, lit by more torches, are serried ranks of GUARDSMEN in blood-red uniforms, as well as the Lieutenant of the Tower, SIR JOHN BRYDGES, and the Constable of the Tower, SIR JOHN GAGE, a zealous Catholic.

Arundel clambers ashore, climbs the steps to Brydges and Gage.

ARUNDEL
Gentlemen, I bring you the Lady Elizabeth, safely delivered into your hands.

12. CONTINUED:

Brydges bows.

BRYDGES

My Lord.

They look down at Elizabeth, who has remained standing on deck, gazing fearfully at the gloomy portals. Then she steps ashore and looks up at them.

ELIZABETH

(raising her voice)

I come ashore as true a subject,
being prisoner, as ever landed
at these steps!

She walks slowly, regally, up the steps, trying to hide her fear from them - followed by Kate, who cannot hide hers. At the top, Elizabeth stops again, looks round at the ranks of Soldiers.

ELIZABETH

I never thought to come here a
prisoner, and as you are my
witnesses, I come as no traitor
but as true a woman to the Queen's
Majesty as any woman now living!

Hearing her words, several of the Soldiers in the front rank fall to their knees.

SOLDIER

(calling out)

God preserve your Grace!

Gage, angrily, STRIKES the Soldier across the face, and almost physically starts to pull the others to their feet.

GAGE

Stand up! In the name of the
Queen - get off your knees!

Elizabeth watches, horrified. Gage signals to her.

GAGE

(brusquely)

This way, Madam!

A beat. Then Elizabeth shakes her head.

ELIZABETH

No.

12. CONTINUED:

GAGE
You will come!

Elizabeth shakes her head again.

ELIZABETH
No!

And in front of his eyes, she sits down on the wet stones. Gage fumes. Then Brydges, a more kindly man, steps forward.

BRYDGES
(gently)
Madam, you are best to come out of the rain. You cannot sit here. It is not seemly.

ELIZABETH
I would rather sit here than go with you to a worse place. God knows what you mean to do to me.

Brydges doesn't know what to do. Then suddenly Kate bursts into tears. Elizabeth looks over at her reprovingly - then gets back to her feet.

ELIZABETH
What's this, Kate? I need your strength and support now - not your weakness. I am innocent. Thank God, no-one has any cause to weep for me.

And moving forward with great dignity, she allows herself to be taken away.

13. INT. TOWER - NIGHT

Torches flicker against the bare stone walls of the narrow corridor as Elizabeth is escorted under guard to a room in the Bell Tower.

Brydges unlocks and opens the heavy wooden door, then steps back to allow Elizabeth and Kate to enter a small, vaulted chamber. There are rushes on the floor, a log fire burning in the huge fireplace and three narrow windows in the thick walls.

13. CONTINUED:

Brydges bows.

BRYDGES

Madam.

Then clangs the great door shut, and locks it again.

ARUNDEL

(quietly)

Be careful how you deal with her,
my lords. She is still the King's
daughter and, should fortune be
otherwise, may yet be Queen. Then
we shall all be answerable.

There are murmurs of assent. But Gage looks at him
coldly.

GAGE

It is you who should be careful,
Lord Arundel, for those who speak
kindly of the Queen's enemies do
condemn themselves!

Arundel looks at him.

14. INT. CHAMBER - TOWER - DAY

In a large, wood-panelled chamber, with Guards at the
doors, Elizabeth sits alone, facing three of Mary's
Privy Councillors: the EARLS OF ARUNDEL AND SUSSEX,
and the Lord Chancellor, BISHOP STEPHEN GARDINER,
another Catholic - crusty, old and vicious.

GARDINER

You deny that you were in
communication with the traitor
Wyatt?

ELIZABETH

Yes.

Sussex picks up several letters from the table.

SUSSEX

But these are letters from Wyatt,
addressed to you, pledging his
allegiance to you.

Elizabeth is visibly shaken by the sight of the letters.

14. CONTINUED:

ELIZABETH

He - may have sent me letters...
but I never received them.

Sussex smiles a little, grimly.

SUSSEX

In the letters he asks you to
move to your castle at
Donnington, for your own
safety.

(beat)

Which is precisely what you
did!

Elizabeth falters a moment, stumbles over her words.

ELIZABETH

I did not - go there. I am not -
I am not sure that I...

(tries to recover)

Am I not free to visit my own
houses when I choose?

GARDINER

You knew of the conspiracy, Madam.
You were party to it. It is
plain enough.

ELIZABETH

No.

GARDINER

(pressing home)

You despise the Queen and the
Catholic faith.

ELIZABETH

That is not true. You know
I attend Mass. I -

GARDINER

You pretend! But in your heart -

ELIZABETH

The Queen cannot think that I
despise her! She is my sister.
If she would only agree to see
me, she would see that these are
only evil and false reports.

14. CONTINUED:

GARDINER

(coldly)

Her Majesty will not see you.
She will not read your letters.
She has set her face against you,
because you are a traitor.

A beat. Gardiner leans forward.

GARDINER

Confess. And the Queen will
be merciful.

A beat. Elizabeth shakes her head. Furious, Gardiner
bangs his scrawny fist on the table.

GARDINER

You WILL confess, Madam. Make
no doubt of it. You WILL!

Elizabeth stares back at him.

15. EXT. COUNCIL CHAMBER - WHITEHALL PALACE - DAY

Crowded with Courtiers. They talk together excitedly,
many of them speaking Spanish.

They stop abruptly as Queen Mary appears. Now in her
mid-thirties, small and flabby, her hair scraped
back, with few remaining teeth, she already looks
prematurely aged.

The Courtiers bow. Mary enters the Council Chamber.

16. INT. COUNCIL CHAMBER - DAY

Her forty or so COUNCILLORS rise as she enters, and takes
the chair of state. Many are dressed severely, in black,
in the subdued colours of the Catholic court. As
well as Gardiner, Arundel and Sussex, we see for the
first time the young, fat and pompous DUKE OF NORFOLK.

Mary looks over at Gardiner.

MARY

My lord Bishop. You have examined
the Lady Elizabeth, in this matter
of conspiracy. What advice do you
make?

16. CONTINUED:

GARDINER

For the security of the realm,
she ought to die. As long as
she remains alive, there will
always be plots to raise her
to the throne.

There are loud murmurs of assent. Mary nods, and looks
pleased.

MARY

Arundel?

ARUNDEL

Your Majesty - we all believe
her to be guilty, but...there
still lacks proof. We cannot
be sure of a verdict at trial.

GARDINER

(angrily)

There is no need of a trial!
Parliament can simply find
her guilty of treason!

SUSSEX

Alas, my Lord, we cannot rely
on Parliament. It contains too
many secret Protestants. And
the Lady Elizabeth remains popular
among the London rabble.

Some uproar. Norfolk raises his voice.

NORFOLK

I care nothing for the rabble -
nor Parliament! Must a man take
instruction from his dog?

MARY

My sister was born of that whore
Anne Boleyn. She was born a
bastard. She will never rule
England.

(to Gardiner)

If there is some way, my lord
Bishop, to find proof, to gain
admission of her treachery, you
would do this realm a great service.

Gardiner bows.

17. INT. TOWER - NIGHT

Gage leads Elizabeth under armed escort down a flight of dark, dank stairs, with only torches to light the way.

ELIZABETH

Where are you taking me?

GAGE

To see your friend.

ELIZABETH

What - friend?

GAGE

Why, your friend Sir Thomas Wyatt, of course!

At the bottom, Gage opens a door, and ushers Elizabeth inside.

18. INT. TORTURE CHAMBER - NIGHT

A fire burns. The room is filled with instruments of torture.

WYATT, a young man, is fastened to the rack. He moans in pain. Elizabeth is horrified.

Gage smiles, and nods to the TORTURER. Slowly, the rack is tightened. At first Wyatt fights against the pain, his sinews bulging - then he starts to scream.

Elizabeth cannot look.

ELIZABETH

For the love of God!

Gage allows the Torturer to continue a moment, then gives another signal for it to be stopped. Wyatt's body shudders uncontrollably.

GAGE

(to Elizabeth)

Confess your part in it - and his agony will be over.

Elizabeth looks at him, then back at Wyatt.

18. CONTINUED:

GAGE

Confess!

ELIZABETH

No!

Gage gives the signal. The rack is winched tighter. Wyatt starts to scream again, horribly. Elizabeth covers her ears and shuts her eyes - trying to shut out the horror. Wyatt SCREAMS...

CUT TO:

19. INT. CELL - DAY

Elizabeth enters the small and filthy cell, the door banging shut behind her.

On the other side of the door, Gage applies his eye to the spy-hole.

Wyatt, his beard and hair matted and filthy, his skin covered with lacerations, stares at her.

ELIZABETH

(softly)

Sir Thomas...

He makes no response. She moves closer, seeing as she does so that his finger nails have been ripped off. She shudders.

WYATT

(whispers)

Come closer.

She moves close to him. Wyatt speaks in a hoarse whisper.

WYATT

Listen to me. You mustn't confess.
You must say nothing. Do you
understand?...

A beat. Elizabeth nods.

WYATT

They have no proof, unless you
give it them. And you must
survive. Otherwise we Protestants
have no hope, and all my
suffering has been for nothing.

19. CONTINUED:

He shudders with pain, the lacerations livid on his body.

WYATT

Don't deny me that!

He stares at her. There are tears in her eyes. She shakes her head.

WYATT

And when you are Queen, remember this: trust no-one! No-one! Keep your enemies close - but fear your friends more than your enemies, for they can do you more harm. And fear him most who most loves you, for he will always betray you in the end.

Elizabeth stares back at him.

20. INT. ELIZABETH'S ROOM - TOWER - DAY

The NOISE of a vast crowd on Tower Hill.

Kate stands in one of the window's, looking out.

Now the noise INCREASES.

KATE

They are bringing him out.

Elizabeth herself moves to the window - gazes out.

From her POV:

About 200 yards away, the huge crowd has gathered around the scaffold. Still more people swarm up the hill to witness the execution.

A procession, led by Gardiner and Gage, moves towards the scaffold. Wyatt is so weak he has to be assisted to walk. Sections of the crowd react by hissing and shouting at Gardiner, Gage and the Soldiers, and pelting them with rotten cabbages.

More Soldiers, their weapons drawn, try to force the hostile crowd back.

21. EXT. SCAFFOLD - DAY

Wyatt is helped up the steps. Already seated on the platform, an invited audience of Catholic nobles and prelates, including Arundel, Sussex and Norfolk, who looks around distainfully at the heaving mass of common people.

The hooded EXECUTIONER waits by the block. A PRIEST intones, a CHOIR BOY swings a bowl on incense. Still the crowd bays.

Wyatt, making one final effort of will, moves forward unaided to address the multitude, who fall SILENT.

WYATT

I am happy to die this day. I have no care for myself, mortal sinner that I am. But before I go to a Better Place, I pray you, good people of London, to hear my confession.

Gardiner glances anxiously at Gage. Wyatt raises his voice.

WYATT

With my last breath I confess before Almighty God that the Lady Elizabeth had no part in this. She is innocent...

The Crowd turn and look over towards the Tower. People begin cheering and waving their hats. Gardiner, furious, gets to his feet and shouts out:

GARDINER

The prisoner is a traitor - and a liar! He condemns himself from his own mouth...

But his words are lost in the swelling NOISE from the mob - who jeer, hiss and taunt him. Others SCREAMING out: "VIVAT ELIZABETH" and "GOD SAVE PRINCESS ELIZABETH... GOD SAVE OUR ELIZABETH!"

CUT TO:

22. INT. ELIZABETH'S ROOM - TOWER - DAY

Kate looks over at her.

KATE

Your Grace. Listen! They are shouting for you.

Elizabeth, watching, digs her nails into the palm of her hand.

22. CONTINUED:

A DRUM BEAT sounds.

CUT TO:

23. EXT. SCAFFOLD - DAY

The drums quieten the crowd. Gardiner makes a furious signal. To prevent him saying more, Wyatt's head is abruptly forced down upon the block.

The EXECUTIONER kneels before him.

WYATT

I forgive you gladly.

The Priest mutters in Latin. The Executioner raises his axe. Arundel closes his eyes and crosses himself. Sussex leans forward with excited eyes.

WYATT

Executioner, strike home!

The heavy AXE falls, thumping into bone and block. A great GROAN goes up from the crowd - but then there are boos, growing LOUDER, and agitation on the platform at the botched job.

Gardiner signals again to the Executioner.

GARDINER

Strike again!

He raises the bloody axe.

Kate, unable to bear it, puts her hands over her face and turns away - but Elizabeth still watches.

The axe BANGS again into the block, splintering wood, soaked in blood. A crescendo of NOISE from the crowd - boos, hisses, shouts.

GARDINER

Again!

A third time the axe falls, cleaving Wyatt's head from his body. A fountain of blood spurts across the sawdust....

CUT TO:

24. INT. ELIZABETH'S ROOM - TOWER - DAY

Elizabeth watches the Executioner hold aloft the severed head, while all around is mayhem, the departing dignitaries showered afresh with rotten vegetables, the Soldiers forcing through a passage.

ELIZABETH

(quietly)

There dies a brave man - but
not a wise one.

FADE TO BLACK.

25. INT. ELIZABETH'S ROOM - NIGHT

Darkness - just the glowing embers of the fire.
Elizabeth and Kate asleep on straw pallets.

Then the NOISE of footsteps in the corridor outside, the jingle of keys.

They wake - as the door is opened and a torch thrust inside, illuminating the faces of Gage and two MEN in armour.

ELIZABETH

You have come for me?

GAGE

Yes, Madam.

26. EXT. TOWER - NIGHT

Elizabeth is hustled unceremoniously down the stairs and into the courtyard, where a carriage is waiting, surrounded by HORSEMEN in armour and blue liveries.

The scene looks threatening. Elizabeth instinctively draws back, looks at Gage.

ELIZABETH

Tonight I think to die.

Gage's face is expressionless. Then Elizabeth is pushed into the carriage. The horses are whipped up and the carriage and its convoy clatter under the gate and out of the Tower.

27. INT. CARRIAGE - NIGHT

Seated opposite Elizabeth is a man, wrapped in a fur collar, his face lost in shadow. Elizabeth stares at him.

ELIZABETH

Who are you?

MAN

Sir Henry Bedingfield, Madam.

ELIZABETH

You have orders to kill me?

BEDINGFIELD

No, Madam.

ELIZABETH

Yes! I know it. Tell me the truth!

BEDINGFIELD

(after a beat)

I am ordered to take you to my house at Woodstock, where you will be kept under house arrest.

(beat)

I have no other orders.

Elizabeth stares at him.

28. EXT. LONDON STREETS - NIGHT

The carriage and its convoy of horsemen pass through the dark streets. There is a red glow in the sky.

As they enter a square, they are slowed by the presence of a large crowd. In the centre of the crowd, three FIGURES, two MEN and a WOMAN, have been tied to stakes. The logs piled around their feet are on fire. Soldiers keep the crowds back, while a BISHOP in full regalia officiates.

BISHOP

By order of her Gracious Majesty, Queen Mary, we are here to witness the burning of these heretics, who have denied the authority of the one true Catholic Church...

20.
28. CONTINUED:

From inside the carriage, Elizabeth watches the terrible scene, appalled. Bedingfield crosses himself.

Outside, the crowd surges angrily forward as the martyrs writhe in the flames. Some call out words of encouragement..."God give you strength and patience....God bless you, Master Ridley!"

There are screams of horror as the flames leap and crackle, the martyrs' clothing all ablaze, their bodies like torches...

People fall to their knees, weeping at the sight.

Inside the carriage, Elizabeth looks across at Bedingfield.

ELIZABETH

And all this done in the name
of religion? God help us!

Bedingfield makes no response, as the carriage moves away, leaving the burning figures.

29. EXT. WOODSTOCK MANOR - DAY

An old and rather decrepit house. Now there are GUARDS on the gates, and stationed all around the property.

Elizabeth, alone, dressed plainly, wanders through the gardens - the old rose garden with its ancient red walls.

She stops by a pond and looks down. In the water, golden carp move sluggishly - and she HEARS the childish laughter from so long ago.

30. EXT. WOODSTOCK MANOR - EVENING

A MAN on horseback, dressed all in black, is escorted by Guards to the house.

As he dismounts outside it, we recognize Sir William Cecil, Henry VIII's old advisor.

He is led into the house.

31. INT. WOODSTOCK MANOR - EVENING

Cecil is interviewed by Bedingfield, with Guards around.

BEDINGFIELD

Tell us, what business you have
with the prisoner?

CECIL

I am engaged as her surveyor
of property, and the supervision
of her estates. You will find
all my letters patent are in
order.

Bedingfield looks doubtfully at the official papers
before him.

CECIL

None of my Lady's properties
have been forfeited. They still
require decisions to be made -
land usage, tillage, rents,
domestic arrangements, furnishings,
the planting of...

Bedingfield waves his hand.

BEDINGFIELD

Yes, yes, Sir William. I am not
so ignorant of household affairs.

CECIL

Than I may see her?

A beat. Then Bedingfield signals to one of the Guard's.
They search Cecil for papers, but find nothing, shake
their heads.

BEDINGFIELD

Very well. You may see her,
for a little.

32. INT. ROOMS. MANOR - EVENING

A Guard unlocks the door to Elizabeth's rooms, and
allows Cecil to enter.

The locks the door after him, and applies his eye
to the spy-hole.

32. CONTINUED:

Elizabeth looks up from her reading - and sees Cecil with some astonishment, as well as pleasure.

ELIZABETH
Sir William!

Cecil puts a warning finger to his lips, as he bows. Then draws her away from the door, sitting close beside her.

CECIL
(whispering)
I came because it was imperative to acquaint you with some news. The Queen is very ill.

ELIZABETH
How ill?

CECIL
She has a tumour of the stomach. At first, she thought she was with child. She even had the bells rung...but now she knows the truth.

ELIZABETH
Will she die?

CECIL
Yes, and not before too long. But you are are still not out of danger. The burnings go on. She is determined to prosecute us Protestants to the end.

ELIZABETH
But if she dies without heir?

CECIL
Yes. You will inherit the throne, according to your father's will. There is nothing they can do to prevent that - so long as you remain alive.

Elizabeth looks at him. Cecil glances back at the door, then draws even closer to her, whispering.

32. CONTINUED:

CECIL

But now listen to me, child.
The Catholics fear you. Norfolk,
especially, believes you will
turn upon them, when you are
Queen. For your own safety you
must do nothing to prosecute or
alarm them. Keep Norfolk, Sussex,
Arundel and some other Catholics
in Council. Do nothing to drive
them into the arms of others.

The Guard bangs on the door. Cecil looks round, shouts
out:

CECIL

One moment more, I pray you.

ELIZABETH

(whispering)

Which others?

CECIL

(whispering)

The Spanish and the French. They
too have reason to dislike a
Protestant Princess upon the throne
of England. The French would prefer
your cousin, Mary of Scots, since
she is Catholic. You must play
them carefully.

He looks at her. She nods. More banging at the door.

CECIL

(shouting out)

I am done, sir. You need not
bang!

He rises.

CECIL

I must leave you.

(kisses her hand)

God bless you, Madam, and
keep you safe.

He goes out.

33. INT. ELIZABETH'S BEDROOM - WOODSTOCK MANOR - NIGHT

Elizabeth, alone, in the darkness, scratches something onto the window pane with a diamond ring.

She picks up a candle and holds it up to the window, so we see the message she has scratched onto the glass:

Much suspected, by me
Nothing proved can be,
Quoth Elizabeth, prisoner.

She blows out the candle.

34. INT. HAMPTON COURT PALACE - NIGHT

Elizabeth is escorted under guard to the Queen's chambers. She is shown in. The room seems empty. All around the walls are icons, crucifixes, Sacred Hearts...

Then some draperies part and Queen Mary moves slowly, ghost-like towards her. She looks visibly sick, with sunken cheeks and bulging eyes, shrunken and thin.

Elizabeth kneels before her.

ELIZABETH
I am Your Majesty's humble
servant. Your Majesty is
most gracious to receive me...

Mary cuts her short.

MARY
Why will you not confess your
crimes against me?

A beat. Elizabeth gets to her feet.

ELIZABETH
If I had committed any, I
would not look for mercy.

MARY
(angry)
I suppose you think I was
wrong to punish you?

ELIZABETH
I would not say so to you -
even if it was true.

34. CONTINUED:

Mary's eyes blaze at this forthrightness.

MARY

Do you say it to others?

Elizabeth lowers her eyes.

ELIZABETH

I am Your Majesty's true subject -
and will always remain so, as
long as life endures.

Mary stares at her.

MARY

Who's life? You think I am
dying? Is that it? Are you
ready to rejoice?

ELIZABETH

How could I rejoice? You
are my sister.

MARY

You are no sister to me! When
I look at you I see nothing of
the King in you - only that
whore, your mother. Do not
"sister" me.

ELIZABETH

No, Your Majesty.

Mary almost collapses on the side of the bed - holds
her side in pain, breathless, fingering her rosary.

MARY

If only I had conceived. If only
I had born a child - then I need
never have thought or spoke to
you again. You have been the thorn
in my flesh, the bile in my throat.

(looks at her)

I hate you. Do you understand?
I hate you with all my heart.

A beat. Elizabeth looks at the dying woman, who
suddenly signals.

34. CONTINUED:

MARY

Come here!

Elizabeth moves over. Suddenly, with grotesque energy, Mary seizes her wrist and forces her to kneel beside her, almost making Elizabeth cry out in pain.

Mary puts her face close to Elizabeth's - a mask of horror.

MARY

You will promise me something.
When I am gone, you will do
everything in your power to
uphold the Catholic faith. I
have not burned so many to
see God's work undone by you!
(twists her arm tighter)
Promise me! Promise me! Or
God help me, I will burn you
too, and warm my hands on the
flames. PROMISE ME!

A beat. Elizabeth looks into her eyes.

ELIZABETH

Your Majesty knows that I
will always obey the will
of God.

Mary stares at her - then is weak again, her grip relaxing. She waves Elizabeth away. Elizabeth curtsey's, starts to leave.

MARY

I see you are a consummate actress!
You promise nothing!
(a beat)
You will remain under arrest,
until some proof is found of
your guilt!

35. EXT. WOODSTOCK MANOR - DAY

A mist over the fields. Through the mist come five COURTIERS, their horses splashed with mud, as if they have been riding hard.

35. CONTINUED:

They stop, ask something of a Guard. He points them down into the fields.

They ride on. A great oak tree, the symbol of England, looms out of the mist. They can see a FIGURE seated on a bench beneath it.

ANOTHER ANGLE:

We see Elizabeth sat upon the bench, reading the Bible. Seeing the Horsemen approach she puts it down, and with some apprehension gets to her feet.

The Horsemen come to a halt. They have serious, solemn faces. The eldest dismounts, removes his hat.

COURTIER

The Queen is dead.

He gets to his knees.

COURTIER

Long live Your Majesty.

It takes a moment to sink in. Then tears, of joy and relief, well into Elizabeth's eyes, and she sinks to her own knees on the grass, unable to master her emotions, or even to speak. Then:

ELIZABETH

This is the doing of the Lord.
And it is marvellous to us.

We start to HEAR the loud peaking of bells and the frenzied acclamations of a great crowd.

36. EXT. WESTMINSTER ABBEY - DAY

The streets are thronged with jubilant people. The Abbey's bells clamour. Elizabeth is carried through the cheering crowds on a litter beneath a velvet-draped canopy, carried by four Knights and attended by the Yeomen of the Guard in uniforms of scarlet, silver and gold.

36. CONTINUED:

The ordinary people of London press all around her, cheering wildly and enthusiastically - and Elizabeth responds to them with obvious and genuine pleasure, waving and smiling.

VOICES

God save and maintain thee...

ELIZABETH

God a'Mercy, good people.
God thank you all.

VOICE

Remember old King Harry the
Eighth!

Elizabeth nods, smiles and laughs.

The litter is set down before the doors. The LORD MAJOR, the MASTERS of the city livery companies, in their splendid robes of office, bow and kiss her hand.

Then Bishop Gardiner also approaches. He tries to kiss her hand- but Elizabeth snatches it away. She turns from him in disgust.

37. INT. ABBEY - DAY

A truly awe-inspiring spectacle of pomp and ceremony. The organ plays, the drums beat, and the CHOIR sings a magnificent Te Deum.

Elizabeth, wearing the royal robe of Crimson Velvet trimmed with Ermine, her long red velvet train carried by Kate Ashley, now Mistress of the Robes - moves slowly forward to her anointment beneath hundreds of burning tapers and lamps.

She is proceeded by the BISHOP OF CARLISLE and other CHURCHMEN, by STANDARD BEARERS and MEMBERS OF THE NOBILITY carrying the regalia - the four great swords, the Sceptre with the Cross, the Golden Spurs, the Rod with the Dove, the Orb and Chalice.

The Duke of Norfolk walks before her carrying the great Sword of State.

37. CONTINUED:

As she moves past the ranks of Peers and Peeresses in their ermine and glittering finery - she looks suddenly very young and very nervous.

She sits upon the chair of state before the high altar. The Bishop of Carlisle turns to the East, South, West and North sides of the Abbey, each time proclaiming:

BISHOP OF CARLISLE
I do proclaim you Elizabeth,
Queen of England.

Trumpets sound after each Recognition, and the people on the side at which the Proclamation is made signify their recognition and joy by loud acclamations of:

PEOPLE
God Save Queen Elizabeth!

After the last trumpet sound, the Bishop takes the Bible over to the Chair of State.

BISHOP OF CARLISLE
You will now take the oath.

Elizabeth puts her hand on the Bible. It trembles slightly.

ELIZABETH
I swear before Almighty God to
uphold the laws, defend the Church,
to use justice, discretion and
mercy in my judgements - so help
me God.

Then Elizabeth kneels before the High Alter, and is anointed in Holy Oil by the Bishop, who touches it to her feet, hands, breast and head.

BISHOP OF CARLISLE
Elizabeth, anointed of God...
In the name of the Father, Son
and the Holy Ghost...

The great peers of the realm - the Duke of Norfolk, the Earls of Arundel, Derby, Sussex and Pembroke move forward and help Elizabeth put on the mantle of silk and gold. Then they bodily lift her onto the throne and stand round her, holding their own

37. CONTINUED:

coronets just above their heads.

Trumpets sound again. A ring is placed on the fourth finger of her right hand.

BISHOP OF CARLISLE

With this Coronation Ring, you
are henceforth wedded to your
people. And with the Orb and
Sceptre, all the power of
Majesty is conferred upon you.
Stand fast and hold firm.

Elizabeth is handed the Orb and Sceptre. Then the Bishop lifts up the great Imperial Crown, its jewels glinting and gleaming in the light.

The crown is placed upon Elizabeth's head. At the same moment the great Peers place their coronets upon their own heads. A gigantic exhalation of NOISE fills the huge Abbey. From outside comes the ROAR and CRASH of CANNONS, fired in celebration.

Inside, the trumpets sound and the drums beat and the organ plays. And all the people shout, crying out aloud:

PEOPLE

God Save Queen Elizabeth.
Long Live Queen Elizabeth.
May the Queen live for ever!

Elizabeth, seated upon the throne and wearing her crown, a young woman on the point of destiny, looks down upon her people.

38. INT. WESTMINSTER HALL - EVENING

A great banquet for over eight hundred GUESTS is taking place, to celebrate the coronation.

Elizabeth sits alone at a table set beneath the great window.

Music signals the arrival of the food. Two GENTLEMEN arrive first, one carrying a rod as a sign of his authority, the other with a table-cloth. They advance to the high table, kneeling three times, and then spread the cloth, kneel once more before moving away.

38. CONTINUED:

Two more GENTLEMEN follow, kneeling similarly, to put on the table the plate, the bread and the salt cellar. Next, an UNMARRIED WOMAN wearing white silk, who rubs the bread and salt over the plate, and a MARRIED WOMAN carrying a knife, both kneeling the required number of times.

And now, to the accompaniment of drums and trumpets, the YEOMEN OF THE GUARD enter. They have removed their hats as a sign of respect (to the food) and carry in the twenty four dishes which make up the main course. Each member of the Guard receives from the Married Woman a slice or mouthful of the dish they carry, to check for poison.

Several NOBLES then place a selection of dishes before Elizabeth. The whole assembly watches as she chooses one, picks up a small morsel of food with her fingers, and eats it.

She nods - and this is the signal for the feast to begin. There is an eruption of noise - laughter and music.

Elizabeth, still alone, surveys the room.

From her POV:

She sees the handsome men and beautiful women of her court, many laughing together flirtatiously, or whispering.

Then, for a moment, her gaze falls upon a strikingly handsome YOUNG MAN, tall, with dark, saturnine good looks: LORD ROBERT DUDLEY, the Master Dudley of her childhood.

Dudley, though obviously the centre of attention for several beautiful young women, looks back at Elizabeth - and with a smile raises his glass to her. She smiles at him in return, and flushes slightly...an exchange not lost on Cecil, sitting nearby.

Then Elizabeth shifts her gaze again. She watches as several of her Nobles approach a party in Spanish dress. She sees Arundel and Sussex, among others, kiss the hand of the Spanish Ambassador, ALVARO DE LA QUADRA.

38. CONTINUED:

At a rival table, other Nobles, including Sussex, approach and kiss the hand of the French Ambassador, LE FOIX.

Then, suddenly, the great doors of the chamber CRASH open and a KNIGHT IN ARMOUR, mounted on a huge charger, rides into the hall. The music stops and there are gasps of amazement.

The Knight rides between the tables, a medieval apparition, up to the top table, where he stops, draws his sword in salute.

KNIGHT

My Lady. I pledge thee my troth.

Elizabeth smiles and acknowledges him with a nod of her head, whereupon the Knight wheels about and rides back into the centre of the hall.

Removing his heavy gauntlet he FLINGS it to the floor.

KNIGHT

(aloud)

I am Sir Edward Dymoke, the Queen's Champion. I will fight any man who dare question her right to the throne.

There is silence. Le Foix smiles. The Knight raises his sword.

KNIGHT

Long live Queen Elizabeth!

And rides out again.

The music and laughter resumes.

CECIL

I fear she will need more than a medieval knight to protect her throne.

39. INT. QUEEN'S BEDCHAMBER - WHITEHALL PALACE - NIGHT

The sound of LAUGHTER.

The door of a great closet is pulled open - revealing row upon row of beautiful dresses.

Elizabeth and Kate gasp.

39. CONTINUED:

ELIZABETH

Lord a'mercy!

She rifles excitedly through them - brocade and ruffs and velvets, inlaid with jewels. Kate throws open the doors of another closet - and laughs, revealing row upon row of even more fabulous gowns.

Elizabeth seizes handfulls of them, throwing them onto the bed.

ELIZABETH

Quickly!

Kate helps her out of the dress she is wearing. She holds others up in front of her, admiring them in the mirror.

KATE

You are Queen! It hardly seems possible, Lizzie.

A beat. Suddenly self-conscious, she corrects herself.

KATE

I mean - Your Majesty.

Elizabeth looks at her - then laughs again, and pinches her cheek.

She looks back in the mirror - and FREEZES. Seeing the sombre figure of Cecil in the reflection, standing behind her.

She turns, embarrassed, holding the dress up in front of her to conceal her underclothes.

ELIZABETH

Sir William...

Cecil, expressionless, bows.

CECIL

I came to remind Your Majesty of the Council meeting tomorrow.

ELIZABETH

Yes. I had not forgot.

Cecil produces a piece of paper.

39. CONTINUED:

CECIL

I have drawn up a list of appointments - with Your Majesty's permission.

ELIZABETH

Thank you, Sir William. I will look at them.

Cecil puts the paper down on the table, prepares to leave.

ELIZABETH

Sir William!

CECIL

Yes, Madam.

ELIZABETH

May I...Am I permitted to add a name...to the list?

CECIL

(with a frown)
Your Majesty may do as you please. You are Queen.

A beat. Then he bows stiffly, and withdraws.

A beat. Elizabeth and Kate look at one another - then burst out laughing.

40. INT. COUNCIL CHAMBER - WHITEHALL PALACE - DAY

Elizabeth sits on the chair of state before the Council. She wears a plain dress, and appears a little nervous.

ELIZABETH

Members of the Council. You are the Sovereign's eyes and ears, and I make you this promise - that I mean to direct all my actions by your good advice and counsel.

There are murmurs of approval.

ELIZABETH

Lately, my lords, this kingdom has suffered much from the diverse opinions upon religion. I have no wish to continue its suffering, nor to impose any one religion upon the people.

40. CONTINUED:

Norfolk glances at Sussex.

ELIZABETH

I have no desire to make a window
into men's souls. I do not care
if a man be Protestant or Catholic -
I care only that he be loyal.

She looks round at them.

ELIZABETH

I make the following appointments
to Council: Sir William Cecil -
Secretary of State.

Cecil bows.

ELIZABETH

You served my father. Now I trust
you will serve me the same. I
have this judgement of you - that
you will not be corrupted by any
manner of gift, that you will be
faithful to the state, and give me
that counsel you think best, without
respect of my private will.

CECIL

Your Majesty.

ELIZABETH

I keep also in Council - the
Duke of Norfolk, Earl Marshal.

NORFOLK

Majesty -

ELIZABETH

The Earls of Derby, Sussex and
Arundel. Lord Admiral Clinton,
Lord William Howard, Sir Nicholas
Bacon, and Sir Francis Walsingham...

Like the others, Walsingham steps forward and bows. He
is lean and swarthy, with dark, hard, glittering eyes.

ELIZABETH

I make one new appointment. Lord
Robert Dudley, Master of Horse.

Dudley steps forward, smiles. She holds his gaze a
moment. He bows.

40. CONTINUED:

DUDLEY

Your Majesty.

Elizabeth recovers herself quickly, rises to her feet.

ELIZABETH

My lords, that is all. The Council meets again in a month's time, at Hampton Court.

She leaves the room with Cecil, the rest bowing deeply.

The other Councillors begin to follow her out, but Norfolk, Sussex and Arundel linger, whispering.

NORFOLK

She had no business to elevate Lord Robert. His father was that traitor Northumberland. He comes from a tribe of traitors.

ARUNDEL

I think they knew each other as children, Your Grace, which is the cause of it.

SUSSEX

(sarcastic)

I knew my dog when I was a child. But I would not have appointed him to Council!

40A. INT. PRIVATE ROOM - PALACE - DAY

Elizabeth with Cecil and another man, ARMAGIL WAAD.

CECIL

Since Your Majesty has trusted me to counsel you, let me do so. You have inherited a parlous state, as this gentleman will explain.

WAAD

(small, fussy)

Madam, the truth is your Treasury is empty. And there is the question of a huge debt of more than £266, 000, part of which is owed to foreign creditors, and charged with a biting interest.

40A. CONTINUED:

ELIZABETH

What does that mean?

WAAD

Simply - without some strict economy and new revenues, England will soon be bankrupt and ruined.

CECIL

There is worse.

ELIZABETH

How could there be worse?

CECIL

The Pope has declared you illegitimate, and made it known that it is the duty of all Catholic nations to overthrow you. The French are already promoting the claims of your cousin, Mary of Scots. Even now her mother-in-law, Mary of Guise, rules Scotland with a French army. At any time they could decide to march upon us.

WAAD

Nor could we afford to wage war against them. The navy is run down. There is no standing army, and we are bare of munitions. There is not one fortress left in England which could withstand a single shot.

A long beat. Elizabeth looks at Cecil.

ELIZABETH

(sombre)

I thank you for your counsel.

(a beat)

What then is your advice?

CECIL

You must make a permanent alliance with either France or Spain. Without such an alliance with one, we must surely be swallowed by the other.

Elizabeth looks at him.

41. EXT. PRESENCE CHAMBER - WHITEHALL PALACE - DAY

The rooms outside the Presence Chamber are crowded with Petitioners - people of every kind and degree, hopin for an audience with the Queen.

They are not meek - but push and shove to get nearer the door, arguing with and cajoling a few harrassed-looking Officials, sometimes in different languages.

The doors are guarded by Soldiers with gilt battle-axes.

The CHAMBERLAIN of the Palace leads the Spanish Ambassador, Alvaro de la Quadra, and his Secretary, MENDOZA, through this throng of people, shouting at them to make way.

42. INT. PRESENCE CHAMBER - DAY

Alvaro is announced:

CHAMBERLAIN

His Excellency, Bishop Alvaro
de la Quadra, Ambassador of Spain.

Alvaro and Mendoza enter. The room is hung with rich tapestry and the floor is strewn with hay.

Elizabeth sits before a huge Holbein portrait of Henry VIII, with Cecil and others of her gentlemen in attendance, including Waad.

Alvaro, a proud Spaniard, bows stiffly.

ELIZABETH

My lord Bishop.

ALVARO

His Catholic Majesty Philip of
Spain sends you his brotherly
love, and this token of his
good will towards Your Majesty.

Mendoza comes forward, and shows Elizabeth the gift: a crucifix, made of diamonds, studded with jewels. A pointed gift. Waad takes it from him, looking at it with interest.

ELIZABETH

We thank him for his gift,
and his love.

42. CONTINUED:

ALVARO

His Majesty expresses the hope that the Queen of England will renew the alliance between our countries - so necessary to the peace of Europe.

ELIZABETH

(glances at Cecil)
You may tell the King that we offer him nothing but friendship.

ALVARO

In furtherance of that alliance, he also, as a friend, offers you his hand in marriage.

A beat. Elizabeth is clearly taken off-guard. There's a long, awkward silence. Cecil begins to look uncomfortable.

ELIZABETH

He - he was married to my sister.
Her bed is but cold.

ALVARO

His Majesty is aware that his proposal might touch upon your feelings, as it does upon his. He is no longer a young man. But he is prepared to sacrifice himself, in the interests of peace.

ELIZABETH

I -

CECIL

(interrupting smoothly)
Her Majesty wishes to say that she is profoundly moved by your King's generosity and self-sacrifice, and will consider his proposal most carefully.

There's a beat. Cecil makes a discreet gesture - and the doors are opened again, signalling the end of the audience. Alvaro and Mendoza bow again, and withdraw.

The doors are closed. Elizabeth slumps forward in her seat.

42. CONTINUED:

ELIZABETH

Would you have me sleep
with an old man who slept
with my sister?

CECIL

Madam, believe me, in
marriage, and the production
of an heir, lies your only
known and likely surety, at
home and abroad.

(a beat)

But perhaps Your Majesty will
find the proposal of the French
more to your liking. Tomorrow
you will have an audience with
Monsieur Le Foix.

43. INT. PRESENCE CHAMBER - DAY

Le Foix leans forward, and kisses Elizabeth's hand. Still
holding it, he looks up into her face.

LE FOIX

They told me you were beautiful.
But I find it is not so. You
are more than beautiful. You
are incomparable.

Elizabeth seems to warm readily to this easy flattery.

ELIZABETH

(with a smile)

You are most gracious, Your
Excellency.

LE FOIX

(stepping back)

King Henry of Anjou sends you
his warmest congratulations on
your accession - and begs you
to accept these few triffling
tokens of his love.

He gives a signal. Several French courtiers step
forward, revealing several exquisite dresses and
magnificent pieces of jewellery. Waad's eyes light
up; he almost rubs his hands together.

Elizabeth smiles.

43. CONTINUED:

ELIZABETH

We are touched by your King's generosity, and we thank him.

LE FOIX

His Majesty also anticipates that there may now be a ...difference, in the relationship between our countries. England and France have many interests in common.

CECIL

Her Majesty wishes to tell you that it is her fervent hope, also, to make a better alliance with your great King.

LE FOIX

I am most gratified to hear it.

(a beat)

In that regard, my King wishes to remember his brother to you. The Duke of Anjou is a young man of the greatest virtue. A warrior and a poet.

(sotto voce - to Elizabeth)

He is also very handsome.

He smiles.

CECIL

Her Majesty will consider your proposal most carefully. It is unfortunate, however, that at this time the King's mother, Mary of Guise, chooses to garrison Scotland with French troops.

LE FOIX

(equally smooth)

What is Scotland to you, my lord? A rough and barbarous realm, filled with savages, which our troops are only there to pacify.

(looks at Elizabeth)

You would not deny, Madam, that your cousin, Mary of Scots, is the rightful Sovereign of that poor country?

ELIZABETH

No. I would not wish to deny it.

43. CONTINUED:

LE FOIX

And as she is your cousin, she
can mean no harm to you. The
Queen Mother is only safeguarding
it in her absence. No more than
that.

And he smiles again.

43A. INT. TREASURER'S ROOM - PALACE - NIGHT

Waad examines the French gifts, itemizing and valuing
them, making enteries into a ledger.

He picks up a piece of magnificent jewellery, studies
it carefully through a glass.

WAAD

One - enamel broach, with clasp.
Inset with five large, good pearls,
and diverse small pearls. A gold
filigree...

He writes as he talks aloud. Then hears a noise, sees
Elizabeth watching him.

ELIZABETH

How do you find our French
gifts, Mr Waad?

WAAD

Most valuable, Your Majesty.
Indeed, most valuable.

ELIZABETH

(after a beat)

Will they pay off the national
debt?

And she smiles. Waad looks disconcerted.

44. EXT. PALACE - NIGHT

A HORSEMAN rides fast into the courtyard, his horse
sweating and lathered. As Servants run forward with
burning torches, the man jumps from his horse.

MESSENGER

I have news for the Secretary.

They hurry him inside.

45. INT. CECIL'S CHAMBERS - NIGHT

Cecil, got out of bed and in his night-things, with the messenger.

MESSENGER

Should we tell the Queen?

A beat. Cecil leans back, laces his fingers together, then shakes his head.

CECIL

Not yet. There is no need to tell her all our business. It can wait till the next Council.

46. INT. COURT - NIGHT

Elizabeth moves through the court, accompanied by her MAIDS OF HONOUR - six exquisitely beautiful young women, as well as Kate Ashley.

The Court is like a beehive - the pulsing centre of power, of political and social life for hundreds of courtiers and ladies, nobles and their servants.

In this world, fashion is everything. The men quite as gorgeously-attired as the women, with clothes that flatter and accentuate their bodies, and all the unmarried women bare-breasted. After the constraints of Mary's court, there is a new sense of freedom and licence.

Elizabeth notices a handsome young MAN, in doublet and hose, whispering with a young lady.

ELIZABETH

Who is that?

KATE

Christopher Marlowe, Madam.
A poet.

ELIZABETH

(after a beat)

I know nothing of his poetry -
but he has nice legs!

Kate suppresses a giggle, as does Elizabeth herself.

They move through the glittering, candle and lamp-lit galleries. People bow and curtsy.

They enter another gallery where music is playing, and courtiers and ladies dancing a stately pavane.

Elizabeth signals for the dancing to continue, and

46. CONTINUED:

watches. She notices Dudley among the dancers - and sees too his easy familiarity with his pretty partner, how they flirt with their eyes.

The dance finishes. She signals to him.

ELIZABETH

Lord Robert.

Dudley bows.

DUDLEY

Your Majesty.

ELIZABETH

You have smut on your face.

DUDLEY

Do I?

ELIZABETH

Let me wipe it off for you.

She moves close, pretends to wipe his face with her sleeve, whispers in his ear:

ELIZABETH

If you dance with her again,
I'll have you sent to the
Tower.

She looks serious. Then she laughs, looks round.

ELIZABETH

Let them play a volta!

The musicians strike up again, but this time not the slow and stately pavane, but the wild and fast volta, in which the men throw their partners into the air as high as they can, then catch them and spin them giddily.

Everyone steps back to allow Elizabeth and Dudley to dance alone. There are gasps of amazement as he throws her high into the air, and then applause for how easily and gracefully he catches her again. Elizabeth is in her element, her face flushed with

46. CONTINUED:

pleasure.

LE FOIX

CECIL
(to Walsingham)

She is too prone to pleasure.
What a pity for England she
should be ruled by a giddy
young woman.

WALSINGHAM

You give her no chance of success?

CECIL

If she will marry, then perhaps.
If not...she will not last a
year.

Walsingham looks at him.

CUT TO:

LE FOIX
(to Sussex)

You think she will marry?

SUSSEX

Of course she will marry. She
is a woman. They are good for
nothing else.

A beat. He smiles.

SUSSEX

And virginity is like your French
pears: withered, and stale to the taste.

LE FOIX

Then, my lord, the only question
that remains is - who will she
marry?

They look over, see Dudley throw Elizabeth into the
air again, and catch her in his arms.

47. INT. COUNCIL CHAMBER - HAMPTON COURT PALACE - DAY

Elizabeth takes her seat before the Council.

ELIZABETH

What business, my lords?

Cecil moves forward.

47. CONTINUED:

CECIL

Your Majesty - we have grave news from Scotland. Mary of Guise has increased the French garrison at Leith by 4,000 men. There can be no doubt now, of her warlike intentions.

There are murmurs of assent from the others. Elizabeth, taken by surprise, looks visibly discomforted.

ELIZABETH

Can we not send emissaries to Scotland, to discover the truth of it?

CECIL

Alas, it is too late for that. Had we known of this earlier, we could have done what you suggest. But now the situation is too grave.

A beat. Elizabeth looks at him.

ELIZABETH

What is your counsel?

CECIL

To make all haste to muster an army to march north, and overcome the garrison.

ELIZABETH

Will that not be expensive? Did you not already tell me that my Treasury was empty?

Seated at the back of the hall, Waad nods vigorously.

CECIL

Your Majesty must not think of small things like housekeeping, when the state itself is in danger.

ELIZABETH

You are sure we are in danger - from 4,000 French troops?

DERBY

They could be reinforced from France at any moment, Madam.

47. CONTINUED:

Elizabeth pauses, looks round at them all.

ELIZABETH
Do you all say this?
Norfolk?

NORFOLK
(pompous)
I do. There has never been a
better time or occasion to
abate the French pride!

ELIZABETH
Arundel?...Sussex?...Clinton?

They all nod.

ELIZABETH
Dudley?

He nods.

ELIZABETH
Even you?...And Walsingham.
What say you? Is there no
other way?

WALSINGHAM
I say a prince should be slow
to take action, and should
watch that he does not come
to be afraid of his own shadow.

CECIL
(hotly)
You are not in the majority!
The rest of us say that we
act now, or have cause to
repent at our leisure.

A long beat.

ELIZABETH
I do not like wars. Wars have
uncertain outcomes.

CECIL
Forgive me, Madam, but you say
that because you are a woman.
You have tender feelings. But
now is not the time for weakness.
We must have war.

47. CONTINUED:

The others give voice to their assent. Elizabeth looks at them, uncertainty in her eyes, then rises.

ELIZABETH

Then it is war.

She sweeps from the room.

As the others follow, Waad hurries after Cecil, deeply agitated, tugging at his cloak.

WAAD

Sir William!...Sir William!

CECIL

Not now, Mr Waad. Not now!

And he strides on, leaving Waad looking deeply unhappy.

A CANNON BOOMS!

48. EXT. LEITH CASTLE - DAY

This word appears on the screen:

SCOTLAND

An English army is laying seige to the castle, dug into their trenches, their cannons firing at one place in the wall, trying to create a breach. An encampment of tents stretches out behind the front lines, the Lion of England fluttering from its flagpoles.

It is raining, churning the fields and trenches to mud. Soldiers sick of some disease are carried from the trenches on planks, and their bodies thrown on an ever-burning bonfire. Horsemen ride across the lines, and closer to the fort, checking on the movements of the French defenders. The Fleur de Lise flutters from the castle ramparts. Snipers fire their muskets at the horsemen.

Behind the lines, too, we see the open air kitchens in which the food is being prepared. Butchers cleave the joints from dead horses and hang the flesh over roasting fires. Dozens of troops are assembling scaling ladders from cut-down trees, dragged over the fields by men and horses.

Norfolk, the Earl Marshal, with two great wolfhounds beside him, and surrounded by his Staff, studies the results of the cannon fire through a spy glass.

48. CONTINUED:

Dudley and his small surveillance party gallop back from the front lines.

NORFOLK

Well! What news?

DUDLEY

There is no breach. The castle stands firm. We must have more reinforcements, else we fail.

NORFOLK

(angry)

We shall not fail, Lord Robert - unless you show yourself a coward. We need no reinforcement.

DUDLEY

(angry)

The men die of disease. They are not fit to fight. Look for yourself!

NORFOLK

God damn you! What I see are a few Frenchmen and their whores. I will have no more delay.

(calls out)

Engineer!

The ENGINEER hurries forward.

ENGINEER

Your Grace.

NORFOLK

How long before we breach the wall?

ENGINEER

It is difficult to say.

Norfolk looks at him in a fury.

NORFOLK

Then let me make it simple.
If there is not a breach
made there - (points to the wall)
- I shall make one here!

And he jabs at the man's head.

48. CONTINUED:

ENGINEER
Yes, Your Grace.

49. EXT. CAMP - NIGHT

A hundred fires burn smokily. The silhouettes of men and horses against the night sky.

The cannons BOOM again, firing into the darkness.

An order is BARKED out. A FLARE is fired into the sky - and by its brilliant light, we see baskets being lowered from the ramparts and a huddled group of FIGURES at the base of the wall, filling them with food and water.

Ranks of English Archers fire their crossbows - their steel bolts whistling, piercing those who are trying to break the seige.

The light GOES OUT.

In the darkness we HEAR the groans and calls of the dying men.

50. EXT. CASTLE - DAWN

A grey dawn. A bustle in the camp. Soldiers hurry forward with the scaling ladders, others forming into line.

The cannons BOOM and BOOM again. Norfolk watches.

Suddenly, a huge chunk of masonry falls crashing from the walls. There are CHEERS from the English. The cannons ROAR again - more masonry falls, a hole appears.

Norfolk stands in his saddle, draws his sword and points it forward.

NORFOLK
Into the breach! FORWARD!

Drums and pipes play - as the English start their slow, dignified march, in column, towards the walls, carrying their scaling ladders.

50. CONTINUED:

Closer now - and within range. The air is suddenly filled with crossbow bolts, musket fire and French cannon fire. The first ranks fall. English Archers return the fire, sending volleys of arrows into the castle.

The English Soldiers with their scaling ladders start to run forward, towards the walls. Wave upon wave, urged on by Dudley in the thick of it.

The whistling of iron bolts through the air, the screams of the wounded.

Dudley leads the charge against the breach, where the French defenders stand several rows deep, firing murderous volleys at the advancing English, cutting them down.

But elsewhere, the English soldiers reach the walls and throw up the scaling ladders, their Captains screaming at them to climb.

A pall of smoke hangs over the scene, from musket and cannon shot.

Lines of soldiers begin to climb the ladders - those up first picked off by crossbow bolts.

But we see a soldier managing to reach the top of the ladder - only to see that it is six feet short of the ramparts. For a moment he stares up in absolute horror. Looks down - there is nowhere to go - a long line of soldiers behind him.

THWACK - a bolt pierces his head, he falls from the ladder.

On every other ladder it is the same. There must be almost a hundred ladders in close proximity up against the walls, all filled with soldiers, and all too short to reach the ramparts.

CUT TO:

51. INT. CASTLE - DAY

Now we are on the French side. The defenders look down at the hapless English - and suddenly start to laugh. We see the vats of boiling water and oil which they are ready to throw down.

51. CONTINUED:

SOLDIER
(in French)
Let the whores do it!

Screams of laughter as the camp whores are hustled onto the battlements, to watch, and sometimes help, as the boiling water and oil is poured down over the English soldiers.

Screaming in agony, they drop from the ladders, pulling each other down, smashing into the earth with a cracking of heads and bones.

Heaps and heaps of bodies litter the foot of the wall, the dead and the dying. The French and the whores laugh. Some of the whores lift their skirts, put their asses over the edge of the wall, and piss streams onto the dying soldiers below, screaming down insults.

CUT TO:

52. EXT. CASTLE - DAY

Norfolk watches the terrible scenes, appalled, unable to act.

CAPTAIN
(screaming at Norfolk)
Sir! Your orders, sir!
Your orders!

Norfolk tries to speak, and can't - is overwhelmed. Suddenly he wheels his horse about, and starts to ride away from the battlefield. His staff stream away after him...

CUT TO:

Dudley, in the thick of the fighting before the breach, where pikes and swords are being used in close combat, and the dead are everywhere.

SOLDIER
Sir!

Dudley looks round. The soldier points to the fleeing figures of Norfolk and his staff. The rest of the English army is already disintegrating, leaving the field in disarray. Their own position is now hopeless.

51. CONTINUED:

DUDLEY
(screaming out)
Fall back! Fall back!

He waves his sword in the air. The attackers, those that are left, start to fall back - the whole English army now streaming away across the muddy fields.

CUT TO:

52. INT. CASTLE - DAY

MARY OF GUISE now herself appears on the battlements, dressed in armour, to the acclaim of her soldiers. She looks out over the fleeing, and defeated English.

MARY OF GUISE
(in French)
Soldiers! This day we have won
a great victory. God in his
Glory has helped us to defeat
the English heretics, and all
Heaven rejoices with us.

She raises her sword, shouts out:

MARY OF GUISE
Vive Le Roi Francais!
Vive la France!

The French soldiers raise their swords and banners, and scream back her words.

53. INT. PRESENCE CHAMBER - WHITEHALL PALACE - DAY

Elizabeth with Cecil. She is visibly angry.

ELIZABETH
We must have war, you said!
Well, now we have had war -
and at what cost! Five thousand
of my soldiers dead!

CECIL
It is but a reversal, Madam, not
a defeat. Norfolk has asked for
more reinforcements.

53. CONTINUED:

ELIZABETH

And how much more will that cost? And with what certainty of success? Or do you intend sending an entire army to subdue a single garrison?

CECIL

We have no other choice.

ELIZABETH

Of course we have a choice! We will make peace!

CECIL

And be humiliated?! Is Your Majesty quite serious?

ELIZABETH

Humiliated? My God! Have we not been humiliated enough already? I will not waste another life on this adventure. You will go yourself to Scotland, tonight, and make what terms you can with Mary of Guise.

CECIL

(outraged)

You would have me crawl on my knees before that French whore?

ELIZABETH

(screaming at him)

God's blood! If you will not do as I command, Sir William, I will make you a head shorter!

(a beat)

Now will you go to Scotland - or not?

A beat. Cecil tries to control himself.

CECIL

I will do as Your Majesty commands.

She nods. Dismisses him with a wave of her hand. Cecil bows, and quits the chamber.

54. EXT. PRESENCE CHAMBER - DAY

The ante rooms are, as usual, crowded with Petitioners. Cecil comes out, sees Walsingham.

CECIL

(hissing out)

Tell me! How am I to deal
with this bastard, pissing
kitchen woman?

He stalks off in a fury. Walsingham smiles slightly. Then the doors open again and Elizabeth herself emerges. Many of the petitioners crowd forward, falling to their knees, pleading with her to hear them.

There is chaos. And suddenly, in the midst of it, with a sharp cry, a MAN lunges forward from the crowd, brandishing a knife.

Someone screams. The man is almost upon her when two of the Guards fall upon him, and wrestle him to the ground.

GUARD

Traitor!

They subdue him with difficulty. Walsingham walks over, searches in his clothing, and yanks a chain from around his neck. He holds it up for Elizabeth to see. On the end of the chain is a silver crucifix.

WALSINGHAM

A Catholic!

He makes a signal, and the man is dragged off. Elizabeth, though shocked, has remained composed.

WALSINGHAM

Be no more alarmed, Madam. The
danger is past.

ELIZABETH

I am not alarmed. My life has
taught me to bear with a better
mind such events, than is common
to my sex - yea, with a better
heart, perhaps, than is some men.

And she walks gracefully away.

WE FADE TO BLACK.

55. EXT. COUNTRY ROADS - DAY

The Queen's Progress! Moving slowly along a rutted track which passes for a road, we see carriages and hundreds of carts, loaded down with baggage.

It seems like the whole court is on the move. The Queen's carriage pulled by six white horses and protected by Yeomen of the Guard.

The carts, some pulled by oxen, lumber at snail's pace across the landscape, continually breaking-down or getting stuck among the ruts.

One of the carts, whipped on by its driver, suddenly keels over, spilling its contents of provisions into the road. Cursing roundly, a gang of servants try to right the cart, and gather up the provisions.

The procession passes through a small hamlet. The people of the hamlet - poor farmers, their wives and children - emerge shyly from their hovels to watch.

Elizabeth waves to them from her carriage. Catching sight of her, an OLD WOMAN shakes her head in disbelief.

OLD WOMAN

Oh, Lord! The Queen is a woman!

Which makes Elizabeth laugh out loud.

Another COUNTRYMAN shouts out to the Coachman:

COUNTRYMAN

Stay thy cart, good fellow,
that I may speak to the Queen.

The carriage stops. The man comes forward.

ELIZABETH

What would you say to me?

COUNTRYMAN

(embarrassed suddenly)
Nothing, Your Majesty. Only -
if you would let me kiss your
hand...

A beat. Some of the Courtiers look on disapprovingly. But, smiling, Elizabeth takes off her glove and stretches out her hand for him to kiss.

55. CONTINUED:

After kissing it the countryman beams with simple, toothless pleasure, deeply moved.

COUNTRYMAN
God bless you, Ma'am.

Elizabeth is also deeply moved - looks over at the small, shy crowd of people.

ELIZABETH
Good people. Be ye assured that I will be as good unto you as ever queen was to her people. Persuade yourselves that for the safety and quietness of you all, I will not spare, if need be, to spend my own blood. God thank you all.

The poor people smile, the children wave - as the Queen's carriage continues on its way.

56. INT. CARRIAGE EVENING

Darkness is falling. The carriage jolts and judders along the rough road. Kate is gazing out of the window.

KATE
Madam, look! There's Kenilworth!

Elizabeth looks out.

From her POV:

In the distance is Kenilworth Castle, the home of Lord Robert Dudley. It is blazing with light, for candles have been lit in every one of its hundreds of windows, so that it can be seen for miles around, like a blazing beacon.

It is as if Dudley has lit a great torch for her.

Elizabeth, staring from the window, smiles.

56A. EXT. KENILWORTH CASTLE - EVENING

One of the most beautiful and romantic castles in England. And now Dudley has decided to make it a place of enchantment and magic.

As the royal party makes its way towards the blazing castle, they approach the lake which surrounds it.

Suddenly, in the darkness, fireworks are set off - with blazes of burning darts flying too and fro, beams of stars coruscant, streams and hails of fiery sparks, lightnings on water and on land, and tunderbölts of such tempest and noise that the waters surge and the castle itself seems to shake...

56B. INT. CARRIAGE - EVENING

Elizabeth and her Ladies look on, entranced and excited by this wondrous spectacle.

Now, moving towards them, across the lake, to the sound of trumpets, they see a floating island, blazing with torches, on which sits a WOMAN in white, holding aloft a gleaming sword, to represent the Lady of the Lake.

56C. EXT. BRIDGE - LAKE - EVENING

On the bridge over the lake are seven pairs of columns hung with gifts for Elizabeth, in the way offerings were made to a classical goddess. There are plates of fish with fresh grass over them as protection, wheat, grapes and other kinds of fruit, armour hanging from ragged staffs (Dudley's family crest), and two trees hung with harps, lutes, viols, recorders and flutes.

56D. INT. OTHER CARRIAGE - EVENING

In a carriage that follows the Queen's, Waad stares open-mouthed at this display of magnificence and wealth, scribbling into his book.

WAAD

Two trees, upon which were hanging harps, lutes, viols...and sundry exquisite instruments...

56E. EXT. GATE - EVENING

Having crossed the bridge, the Queen is greeted by an enormous tall PORTER standing at the gate and, up above him on the battlements, what appear to be giants - in reality, eight-foot tall pasteboard figures who appear to be blowing trumpets - in reality, eight-foot tall pasteboard figures who appear to be blowing trumpets, while real trumpeters, crouching behind them, blow a fanfare of welcome.

At the same moment, a DWARF, scrambling up the tower, stops the hands of the great clock - indicating that Elizabeth has entered a timeless and magical world.

56F. EXT. CASTLE - NIGHT

Elizabeth steps from the carriage, to be greeted by Dudley and fifty of his courtiers, dressed in his livery.

Dudley kneels on the ground before her.

Elizabeth smiles, offers him her hand. He kisses it. She raises him gently.

ELIZABETH

My Lord.

DUDLEY

Your Majesty.

Their eyes are tight on each other.

57. INT. BANQUET HALL - CASTLE - NIGHT

A glass banquet. Everything on the tables - plates, salt cellars, cutlery, serving bowls, candlesticks - everything is made of glass, a symbol of ostentatious wealth.

Also on the tables are huge sculptures made entirely out of sugar!

Overhead, the hall is hung with banners bearing Dudley's arms of the Ragged Staff. Musicians play in the gallery.

The Court is entertained by an Italian ACROBAT who twists his body into seemingly impossible shapes.

57. CONTINUED:

Dudley and Elizabeth, though surrounded by hundreds of people, seem to have eyes only for each other.

But Waad, more scrupulous, is impressed only by the glassware, lifting up his bowl to study the maker's name beneath, and scribbling hastily into his book.

WAAD

One glass bowl. Green. Made of Venetian glass...

The Acrobat finishes his routine, to applause.

DUDLEY

(to Elizabeth)

With your forgiveness, Madam,
I have another gift for you.

ELIZABETH

I may always forgive a gift, my Lord.

Dudley signals. A servant brings the Queen a parcel wrapped in silk. She opens it - revealing a beautiful, ornate fan. Opening the fan out, she sees inside it the painted design of the ragged staff.

ELIZABETH

How cunning of you. Every time
I use it, I will be forced to
think of you.

Dudley smiles, acknowledging it.

DUDLEY

Shall we hunt tomorrow?

ELIZABETH

On one condition: that you
let me ride the most spirited
horse in your stables.

DUDLEY

Your Majesty should consider
the dangers of mounting such
a mettlesome beast.

57. CONTINUED:

ELIZABETH

My Lord. I thought you knew.
Those are the animals I like
the best.

There eyes tight on each other.

58. EXT. FIELDS AND WOODS - DAY

The hunt! With bugles blowing, the hunt streams across
the fields, following the hounds.

Elizabeth and Dudley ride fast before the others.
Elizabeth wears a dress more suited to the audience
chamber than the hunting field - but she is a
magnificent horsewoman, and fearless.

Dudley, a crossbow slung across his back, is also
in his element. They make a perfect pair, the
gaudy Courtiers trailing in their wake.

59. INT. COUNCIL CHAMBER - WHITEHALL PALACE - DAY

The members of Elizabeth's Council wait for her to
arrive. Instead, Cecil arrives alone.

CECIL

My Lords. Her Majesty will not
be attending Council. She prefers
to go hunting - with Lord Robert.

The others look at each other, scandalized.

NORFOLK

She should no better how to look
after her realm - and how to treat
me! I am not the Queen's dog, to
be brought from my kennel and
then sent back again!

Norfolk stalks out.

SUSSEX

While the Queen dallies with
Lord Robert, we are left here
to rot.

He goes out also.

59. CONTINUED:

DERBY

This fiddling woman troubles me
out of measure! If I had served
any prince in Christendom, I
had not been so ill-used!

He leaves. Walsingham looks at Cecil.

WALSINGHAM

If the Queen needs a quarry,
I think she had better hunt
at court!

Cecil looks at him.

60. EXT. WOODS - DAY

Through the trees, we have a fleeting glimpse of
the Stag, skittering away in full flight.

And then the hounds, baying at its heels, and
the hunters closing in, galloping between the
trees.

The Stag is tiring now, the hounds almost upon it.

DUDLEY

(crying out)
We have him!

The Stag at bay - the frenzied yelping of the hounds.
It lowers its antlers, in a last effort to drive them
away.

Dudley unslings his crossbow, aims - and fires. The
bolt pierces the animal's flank. It staggers - and falls.

The Master of Hounds drives the dogs away, as the courtiers
gather round for the kill. Dudley and Elizabeth dismount,
and approach the stricken animal, its flank rising and
falling.

DUDLEY

He is a handsome beast, my lady.

He takes out his hunting knife. Then offers it to
Elizabeth.

60. CONTINUED:

DUDLEY
Will you kill him with your
own hand?

A beat. Their eyes tight on each other. Then Elizabeth takes the knife and, with both hands, drives it downwards.

61. EXT. GLADE - EVENING

The remains of the Stag, roasting on a spit. The courtiers eat some distance away, leaving Elizabeth and Dudley alone.

ELIZABETH
Robert - may I ask you
something?

DUDLEY
If it pleases you.

A beat. She looks at him.

ELIZABETH
Should I marry France - or
Spain?

He looks at her.

DUDLEY
Must you marry?

ELIZABETH
Sir William tells me so.
He tells me the whole security
of the realm depends upon it.

A long beat.

DUDLEY
Must you marry a foreigner?

A beat. She smiles a little.

ELIZABETH
No. I would only marry a
man I could love.

A beat. Dudley doesn't reply. She smiles again.

61. CONTINUED:

ELIZABETH

They tell me the Duke of Anjou
is very young.

Dudley laughs.

DUDLEY

All the better for you, then!

62. INT. PRESENCE CHAMBER - WHITEHALL PALACE - DAY

Elizabeth with Cecil.

CECIL

Your Majesty must make some
decision - France, or Spain!

A long beat. Elizabeth seems distracted, playing with
the fan on her lap. She opens it - sees the symbol
of the ragged staff.

CECIL

For the love of God, Madam, let
not the cure of your diseased
estate hang any longer in deliberation.
The patience of Princes is not
infinite. If you will not choose
one or the other, then you will
lose both.

Elizabeth still seems distracted, not hearing.

CECIL

What is your decision?

A beat. Then Elizabeth snaps the fan shut, looks at
him.

ELIZABETH

Invite the Duke of Anjou. We will
see him in the flesh. I can make
no decision until I see with my
own eyes the man I am to sleep with.

62. EXT. STEPS - WHITEHALL PALACE - DAY

On the steps leading down to the river Thames,
Elizabeth and her court await the arrival of the
Duke. Elizabeth in a plain red dress (as if to
emphasize her Protestantism), with little jewellery.

62. CONTINUED:

She waits under a canopy, flanked by her great lords, all in their finery..

Courtiers and soldiers line the sides of the steps, which are carpeted.

They watch, as the Duke's gilded barge approaches.

As it docks, Trumpeters sound a fanfare of welcome.

Le Foix, looking very pleased with himself, steps ashore - followed by the DUKE OF ANJOU himself.

The Duke is very small, and his face is badly pock-marked. But he is dressed like a peacock, and by no means unaware of his own importance.

He walks rapidly up the steps to Elizabeth - and kisses her on the mouth (in the English fashion!). Then he stares at her.

ANJOU

I have waited for this moment
beyond endurance. Le Foix was
right. You are a goddess!

Elizabeth, too surprised to respond, stares down at his heavily pock-marked face.

SUSSEX

(a sneering aside - to Norfolk)
No wonder they christened him
"Hercules"!

But Norfolk is not amused.

NORFOLK

We must make sure that he does
not interfere with our plans.

Sussex looks at him.

63. INT. DUDLEY'S BEDCHAMBER - WHITEHALL PALACE - NIGHT

Dudley lies in bed asleep. There is a rustle of draperies - and then a female hand wakes him.

63. CONTINUED:

He looks up - and sees Kate Ashley, holding a lighted taper.

KATE
She wants to see you.

64. INT. PASSAGEWAY - PALACE - NIGHT

Dudley following - hurriedly dressed - through a back passage in the palace.

Kate opens a secret door, steps back to let Dudley enter.

KATE
Go on!

He goes inside. Kate closes the door behind him.

65. INT. QUEEN'S BEDCHAMBER - NIGHT

Candles gleaming. Elizabeth lies in bed, her long hair loose over the pillows. She stares at him.

DUDLEY
Madam.

Looks at her.

ELIZABETH
Come to bed, my Lord.

She smiles a little. Dudley takes her into his arms.

66. EXT. DOOR - QUEEN'S BEDCHAMBER - NIGHT

Kate and two of the other Ladies in Waiting listen at the door.

They can hear Elizabeth's sighs and quick gasps of pleasure - the creaking of the bedsprings.

The look on their faces is as if they are witnesses to a religious wounding.

67. INT. QUEEN'S BEDCHAMBER - NIGHT

Elizabeth and Dudley make love.

Elizabeth stuffs the corner of a pillow into her mouth, to stifle a cry of pleasure.

A beat. Then Dudley rolls away from her.

A long beat. Elizabeth turns her head towards him, traces his face with her fingers softly.

ELIZABETH
(whispers)
Be true to me.

He looks back into her eyes.

DUDLEY
Always. Now and beyond time.
I am yours.

She smiles, and leans down to kiss him.

68. EXT. WHITEHALL - DAY

We are VERY CLOSE on a KNIGHT IN ARMOUR as he rides full tilt alongside a wooden barrier, his lance held before him, his shield, the red plumes on his helmet fluttering, his face hidden behind a visor.

He is almost a blur of colour and sound - the drumming of hooves and clanking of armour, the rushing, shimmering air.

(CONT'D)

68. CONTINUED:

In a split second, another lance spears towards him, strikes the armour on his chest with such force that it lifts him bodily from the saddle and he crashed violently to the ground, which shakes with the impact.

Now there are CRIES and EXULTATIONS - a huge ROAR of sound.

And we PULL BACK upon a truly extraordinary sight. A tournament is being held in honour of the Duke of Anjou. But the tilt yard is not in a field, but down the middle of a street, with buildings all around it.

But it is the spectacle which is so astonishing - as if, at a stroke, we had been transported back to medieval times. The street has been dressed with banners in the most vivid blues and reds. French flags fly at one end, English flags at the other, for this is a contest between the champions of both countries.

Huge crowds are thronged around the tiltyard - but there is nothing static about the scene. All is movement - the prancing and buckling of the horses, the costumed boys who scutter this way and that, throwing down sawdust, turning soersaults to amuse the crowd, running alongside the charging horses.

A bear being paraded on a leashe.

The fallen FRENCH KNIGHT is picked up groggily and helped away - and Sir Edward Dymoke, as victor, raises his visor, saluting the Queen and then the crowd.

Elizabeth sits on a raised platform below a canopy of gold, wearing a veil sprinkled with Fleur de Lise. Next to her is the Duke of Anjou, in almost feminine finery. On the other side, Ambassador Le Foix, visibly enjoying his new status.

Seated behind them, Cecil, Derby, Walsingham, Arundel, Sussex, Norfolk - other great lords - and the Spanish Ambassador, Alvaro, with his Secretary Mendoza.

Le Foix leans over to Elizabeth.

68. CONTINUED:

LE FOIX

Your Majesty grows more beautiful every day. I can hardly bear to look at you - you burn my eyes like the sun.

Elizabeth smiles graciously.

LE FOIX

(sotto voce)

The Duke is passionate about you. He neither sleeps, nor eats. I have never known any man to be so...frantic with passion.

Elizabeth glances at the Duke who seems, on the contrary, much more interested in the contest.

As Heralds with trumpets announce the next two Knights to enter the list, the French Knight from his side, the English from his. A PAGE hands the English Knight his shield - and on it we see Dudley's insignia of the Ragged Staff.

LE FOIX

That is Lord Robert Dudley, is it not? Your horse master!

ELIZABETH

Yes...

She tries to keep a tremble out of her voice. She watches Dudley approach the list, and take his lance. She is apprehensive about him, twists her hands together - but out of the corner of her eye catches Le Foix watching her carefully. (Does he know something?)

She controls herself, her face now an impassive mask.

The Crowd's excitement mounts. The two Knights salute the platform, pull down their visors - and at a signal spur on their horses.

Faster and faster, the boom of the hooves, the lances wavering, straightening...

Elizabeth staring, trying to still her beating heart.

Closer and closer.

68. CONTINUED:

Then, CRACK - Dudley's lance strikes the French Knight's shield, jerking him backwards, the horse careering wildly from the list.

There are huge cheers from the partisan crowd. Le Foix glances at Elizabeth's face - sees not a flicker of emotion!

Dudley parades victorious in front of the platform, much to Norfolk's obvious chagrin.

Abruptly, Anjou turns to Elizabeth.

ANJOU

I cannot wait for the wedding.

A beat.

ELIZABETH

Really, my Lord?

ANJOU

How many children do you want?

ELIZABETH

I had not thought.

A beat. Then he leans over again.

ANJOU

You have beautiful hands.

ELIZABETH

Thank you, my Lord.

He racks his brains.

ANJOU

I have dreamed of the moment
we're naked together and I
can caress your thighs and
quinnny. You'd like me to do
that - no?

Elizabeth is more amused than appalled. She glances at Le Foix - who smiles, as if to say, "I told you he was frantic about you!"

68. CONTINUED:

ELIZABETH

I have no doubt I should enjoy
it, my Lord.

(beat)

And yet I am a religious
person.

ANJOU

Oh, me too, me too. Of
course. We must sort that
out.

He smiles, looks away. Le Foix leans over.

LE FOIX

The religious question is not
insuperable. So long as the
Duke can worship in private,
who else will know? You can
tell everyone else he's
converted!

He gives a sly smile.

Cecil leans over, and whispers something into Elizabeth's
ear. It discomforts her and she looks back at him
questioningly. But Cecil nods.

A long beat. Then Elizabeth takes a ring from her finger
and, in full public view, slips it onto Anjou's finger.
Le Foix is exultant.

LE FOIX

Ma foi! Then it is settled!

But some of the crowd begin to boo and hiss, in obviously
hostile reaction.

Elizabeth looks up - and sees Dudley staring at her. Then
he turns on his heels and walks off.

Alvaro's face has turned to stone. He looks over at
Norfolk. Norfolk leans forward, and whispers into his
ear.

Anjou himself seems oblivious of the hostile reaction,
since he has taken out a little handkerchief and is
waving it at the silent crowd.

69. INT. DUDLEY'S BEDCHAMBER - NIGHT

Dudley lies on his bed, still fully clothed.

The door creaks softly - and then naked feet walk across his chamber.

Elizabeth appears beside him, wearing only a thin gown. He stares at her.

ELIZABETH

(softly)

I had to do it.

(a beat)

It meant nothing.

Dudley still stares at her, saying nothing.

Slowly, Elizabeth shrugs the loose gown from her shoulders, so it falls, and she is naked in the candlelight.

ELIZABETH

(softly)

Dear heart, how like you this?

Dudley reaches up, and pulls her down towards him, crushing her in his arms.

We HEAR the soft, sibilant cries of a BOATMAN:

"WEIALALA LEIA
WALLALA LEALALA..."

DISSOLVE THROUGH TO:

70. EXT. RIVER THAMES - MIDSUMMER NIGHT

Lights gleam on the water - there is a pageant tonight. Boats glide on the Thames, the splash of oars and silken laughter, the music of the lute floats on the warm night air.

Elizabeth's boat, the stern is formed, a gilded shell, red and gold. Red sails on the water.

She lies back on velvet cushions like Cleopatra, the brisk swell, the fluttering sails.

70. CONTINUED:

Next to Dudley - laughing softly with him. He feeds her morsels of food, grapes, and wine. She laughs, brushing his hand.

In the distance, white towers, gleaming; carried downstream, the peal of bells.

The lights of other boats, gold and amber, gleaming on the water. Ethereal music. A perfect moment - a moment out of time.

ELIZABETH

Say those lines: "I wonder by
my troth..."

DUDLEY

I wonder by my troth, what thou, and I
Did, till we loved? Were we not weaned till
then,
But sucked on country pleasures, childishy?
Or snorted we in the seven sleepers' den?

'Twas so, but this, all pleasures fancies be.
If ever any beauty I did see,
Which I desired, and got, 'twas but a dream of
thee.

Elizabeth listens, trailing her hand in the water,
smiles at him.

ELIZABETH

Dear Robert...

Their eyes tight on each other.

Then Dudley looks towards the stern, where a group of
FIGURES are collected in shadow, like an image from
Velasquez: Alvaro, Mendoza, Norfolk, Arundel and Sussex.

DUDLEY

(whispers)

What do you say we have some
amusement?

He grins, gets to his feet, signals to Alvaro.

DUDLEY

(calling out)

Your Excellency!

70. CONTINUED:

Alvaro, stiff and formal as ever, walks over - bows to the Queen.

ALVARO
Your Majesty.
(bows curtly to Dudley)
My Lord.

DUDLEY
Tell me: Your Excellency is
also a Bishop, are you not?

ALVARO
I am, my Lord - as you know
very well.

DUDLEY
Then - you are able to perform
the rites of marriage, are you
not?

Alvaro, seeing the look of suppressed excitement in
Dudley's eyes, smells a rat.

ALVARO
What means your Lordship?

Dudley glances at Elizabeth.

DUDLEY
I mean - that, if my Lady should
like it, you could marry us now,
upon this very moment.

The look of horror that crosses Alvaro's face is
almost indescribable.

ALVARO
Marry you?

A beat. Elizabeth and Dudley look at Alvaro's face -
then both of them burst into laughter.

ELIZABETH
Perhaps His Excellency knows
too little English!

70. CONTINUED:

DUDLEY

Then let him marry us in Spanish -
since I know he would prefer
a Spanish marriage!

They burst out laughing again.

ALVARO

Your Majesty doth jest!

A beat. Elizabeth tries to control herself.

ELIZABETH

Yes. I jest...
(laughs)
'Tis a night of madness.

ALVARO

Then you must forgive me,
Madam, since I do not find
it a subject fit for laughter.

He bows again - and rejoins the group at the back of the
boat, leaning towards them to whisper.

71. INT. PRESENCE CHAMBER - WHITEHALL PALACE - DAY

Elizabeth, on the chair of state, facing Cecil, Norfolk
and Sussex.

The Queen is supported by Kate Ashley and two of her
Ladies.

Cecil is coldly furious.

CECIL

Your Majesty should know how
this scandal affects every one
of us, and the realm itself.

ELIZABETH

What scandal, Sir William?

CECIL

You and Lord Robert.

ELIZABETH

What of Lord Robert?

71. CONTINUED:

CECIL

It is said that he visits your chamber at night. It is even rumoured - that you with child by him!

Elizabeth looks shocked, and seems angry.

ELIZABETH

And you give credit to such rumours? Do you not know that I am always surrounded by my ladies of the bedchamber and my maids of honour? Would they not know if such a thing were happening in front of them?

She looks round at Kate, who keeps a straight face.

ELIZABETH

Since my life is so open and I have so many witnesses, I cannot understand how so bad a judgement can have been formed of me. However -

(she stares at them)

- if I should ever want to live an immoral life, I do not know of anyone who could forbid it!

There's a long beat. But Norfolk is not abashed.

NORFOLK

The world knows that Lord Robert is favoured above all others - even above those who stand higher in the realm, and should be kept in higher regard by Your Majesty.

SUSSEX

He has such airs and graces you would almost believe he was already King!

CECIL

He is a schemer.

71. CONTINUED:

ELIZABETH
You are all schemers, Sir
William!

CECIL
Yes, but some of us scheme
on behalf of England.

A long beat. Then Elizabeth rises, looks at him.

ELIZABETH
You forget, I am England.

A long beat.

CECIL
(quietly)
He is also married already.

This time the shock is genuine, and Elizabeth can't disguise it - much to Norfolk and Sussex's evident satisfaction.

ELIZABETH
Is this true?

CECIL
Yes. He is married to a woman
called Amy Ronsart, daughter of
a Norfolk squire. But he keeps her
in secret, in a house in
Oxfordshire, never allowing her
to come to court, or her name
to be mentioned.

Elizabeth just looks back at him.

72. INT. QUEEN'S BEDCHAMBER - NIGHT

Elizabeth and Dudley lie in one another's arms. A long beat. Firelight flickers on their faces.

Elizabeth looks at him a long moment, stroking his face. He smiles at her.

72. CONTINUED:

ELIZABETH
Why did you not tell me?

A beat. His smile fades.

ELIZABETH
I know about your...your
wife. Why did you not tell
me? You promised to be true.

He turns his face away.

DUDLEY
She is nothing to me.

ELIZABETH
She is your wife!

DUDLEY
In name only. Nothing more.
I don't live with her and
hardly see her.

A long beat.

ELIZABETH
Why did you marry her?

DUDLEY
I was young. I had a...
a passion for her, as young
men will, which I mistook for
love. Her father rushed us into
marriage, thinking of his own
advancement. And only then, when
we were married, did I see what
she was. A shrew - filled with
ambition, with no love for me.

A beat. Looks at her.

DUDLEY
What began in lust ended in
lamentation. But I was so
ashamed, both of her and for
myself, that I did not know
what to do. She was no wife to
me. I kept her in a house...
What else could I have done,
with honour?

72. CONTINUED:

ELIZABETH

You could have told me.

DUDLEY

I was afraid. Afraid you would
turn a cold eye upon me, and
all for my blameless and stupid
innocence.

He's crying now, the tears wetting his face.

ELIZABETH

How could I have turned a cold
eye upon the object of my
deepest affections? You did
not trust me.

DUDLEY

(impassioned)

You must not say that! You
know that without you, I
am nothing. A dead man.

A beat. His tears move her. She holds him close, his
head against her breasts - but in her eyes now, a
different look.

73. EXT. CUMNOR HALL - OXFORDSHIRE - DAY

A peaceful, secluded old manor. We see some hens
scratching about the yard, a tethered goat, doves
in the dovecot.

Then the kitchen door opens and three SERVANTS come
out. They cross the yard hurriedly and go out through
the gate.

A beat. Then the door opens again, and a YOUNG MAID slips
out. She glances around apprehensively, then runs
across the grass, as if afraid of her own shadow,
and disappears from sight.

A long beat. All is quiet.

Then two MEN, anonymous in rough jerkins, ride into
the yard, and dismount.

They look around, then go inside.

74. INT. CUMNOR HALL - DAY

They cross the hall quietly. The whole house is still, eery, empty - things lying abandoned where the servants left them.

They start to climb the stairs.

At the top they pause again, listening. Now, faintly, they hear music - someone playing a virginal. They move towards the sound, swords at their side.

75. INT. GALLERY - DAY

At the far end of the gallery, a YOUNG WOMAN is playing the virginal. She continues to play until she sees the mens' shadows on the floor - then she stops, looks up at them.

FIRST MAN

Good morrow, Mistress Amy.

AMY RONSART is a country girl, with golden ringlets, and ruddy cheeks. She gets up.

AMY

Who are you?

They don't reply. Keep walking, menacingly, towards her. She starts to back away.

AMY

Where is my husband? Where is Lord Robert?...What do you want of me?...Who are you?

SECOND MAN

Don't be afraid, Mistress my.. We've come to take you away.

AMY

Away?...Where?...What do you mean?

The First Man moves behind her. She looks around in desperation.

SECOND MAN

To a Better Place.

75. CONTINUED:

He suddenly puts his hands around her throat, and starts to throttle her. She gasps for air and tries to struggle, kicking her legs out grotesquely. The First Man puts his arms around her legs to stop her kicking.

Her neck snaps, and she goes limp.

They drag her along the gallery and to the top of the stairs, then push the limp body down. It crashes to the bottom and lies still.

The Men merely glance at it - at Amy's still-open eyes - as they walk past, and away.

76. INT. WHITEHALL PALACE - DAY

The Court is packed - people whispering in groups. Then there is sudden SILENCE as Dudley enters.

He is dressed in black. Many of the Courtiers ostentatiously turn their backs on him, the Ladies turn away their faces.

Then he comes across Norfolk and Sussex.

NORFOLK

(sneering)

I see you wear mourning,
Lord Robert.

Dudley stops, looks at him.

DUDLEY

Has Your Grace some business
with me?

NORFOLK

None at all.

(a beat)

Since I see how you do
business!

Sussex laughs. Dudley draws his sword.

DUDLEY

You will answer for that!

Six of Norfolk's Men draw theirs.

76. CONTINUED:

Walsingham steps in.

WALSINGHAM

Sirs - this is the Queen's
place! Put away your weapons.

A beat. Reluctantly, Dudley sheathes his sword, and
the others too.

WALSINGHAM

Lord Robert...

He draws him aside.

WALSINGHAM

You would be best advised to
stay away from court a while,
my Lord.

DUDLEY

No. I must see the Queen.

Walsingham shakes his head.

WALSINGHAM

She will not see you.

DUDLEY

But I am innocent! My wife
died of natural causes. She
fell down the stairs. The
doctors have sworn oaths
that the fall broke her neck.

WALSINGHAM

Yes. So I have heard.

(a beat)

Unfortunately, that has not
stopped the poisonous rumours
against you.

DUDLEY

What rumours?

WALSINGHAM

That you - had her murdered!

A beat. Dudley look over - sees Norfolk and Sussex
looking at him, gloatingly.

76. CONTINUED:

DUDLEY

If she was murdered - it was
not done by my order.

Looks at Walsingham.

WALSINGHAM

My Lord, I can believe you...
but you see how it appears.

(a beat)

Take my advice. Go to the
country for a while. In your
absence there will be a formal
enquiry which, in due course,
will doubtless find you innocent.

A beat. Dudley still looks uncertain. Then nods.

DUDLEY

Very well. I shall rely on you.

WALSINGHAM

You may always rely on me, my
Lord.

77. INT. PRESENCE CHAMBER - WHITEHALL PALACE - DAY

CLOSE ON: Elizabeth's face - a stony mask.

LE FOIX

Your Majesty has given the Duke
such hope - such tokens of your
love for him. Now, indeed, he
hopes you will finally announce
the date of your marriage, which
expectation is shared by all of
France.

Elizabeth seems hardly to be listening. Le Foix glances
at Cecil - who nods in encouragement.

LE FOIX

Your Majesty will remember that
you agreed to wait a period of
four months before making up your
mind. It is now past four months.
The Duke would naturally wait upon
Your Majesty for ever, since his
love for you is so immeasurable - but,
we must consider the effects of any
further delay....

76. CONTINUED:

Still Elizabeth makes no response.

LE FOIX

Madam - have you forgot Scotland?
The peace between our two countries
is most fragile. Without this firm
symbol of alliance, alas, I cannot
say what Mary of Guise will decide.
After all, she is the Duke's mother.

Elizabeth looks at him.

ELIZABETH

I have made up my mind.
(a beat)
But you will forgive me if
I wish first to announce my
decision to my own Council.

Le Foix smiles. Bows.

LE FOIX

The Duke will be happy to
wait a few more days, Madam -
to hear the good news!

77. INT. STAIRCASE - PALACE - NIGHT

The Ladies of the Bedchamber, carrying linen and
bedclothes, climb the back stairs, giggling among
themselves.

One of them, LADY LETTICE KNOLLYS, hangs back a
little.

MAN O.S.

Psst!

She glances round, and sees the MAN hiding in an alcove,
his face shrouded in shadow. She waits a moment for the
other women to disappear, then quickly joins him.

Sussex presses her against the wall, covering her
face, her neck and breasts with kisses, fondling her
with rough passion. She moans softly, in his power -
then Sussex suddenly stops.

LETTICE

What is it?

77. CONTINUED:

SUSSEX

I want you do to something
for me.

He leans forward, starts to whisper in her ear.

78. INT. QUEEN'S BEDCHAMBER - NIGHT

The Ladies of the Bedchamber make the Queen's bed
and put away her clothes.

Elizabeth, got ready for bed, sits at her dressing table,
having her hair combed. She takes off her rings, puts
them down - and sees the fan. She picks it up, opens
it, stares for a moment at the image of the Ragged Staff -
then abruptly closes it again.

The Ladies finish their work, curtsy, and leave the
chamber. But Lettice hangs back, still kneeling on
the floor.

ELIZABETH

Lady Knollys?...What is it?
You have something to tell me?

LETTICE

Yes, Madam.

ELIZABETH

Come here.

Lettice gets off her knees, goes shyly to the Queen,
her head still lowered. She is very beautiful.
Elizabeth raises her face with her hand, strokes her
cheek.

ELIZABETH

What is it?
(a beat)
Are you with child?

LETTICE

Oh, no...No, Your Majesty.

ELIZABETH

Thank God for that.
(a beat)
Well, then - what is it?

78. CONTINUED:

LETTICE

It concerns - the Duke of Anjou.

Elizabeth looks surprised.

ELIZABETH

What about him?

A beat. Then Lettice leans forward, and starts to whisper in her ear. Elizabeth looks even more surprised.

79. INT. CORRIDORS - NIGHT

Dimly lit - backstairs. Lettice carries a candle, by its faint light guiding Elizabeth towards Anjou's quarters.

As they get nearer, they start to hear NOISES - deep-voiced male laughter, and a high-pitched, female laugh.

They pause outside the door, listening. Puzzled.

Then Elizabeth opens the door and they go in.

80. INT. ANJOU'S CHAMBERS - NIGHT

Candle-lit. Several YOUNG MEN of the court, very pretty boys, are lounging about, drinking, some in a state of undress.

When they see the Queen they are shell-shocked. They scramble to their feet, trying to adjust their clothing, bowing - their faces going white with fear.

Elizabeth, without a word, moves past them - still hearing the high-pitched female laughter.

Another room. More men, voluptuously caressing. And a single woman, in a glittering dress, like a Queen!

80. CONTINUED:

Seeing the real Queen they fall silent instantly.
The Woman turns...

It's Anjou! His face thick with make-up,, wearing ear-rings,
a necklace, bejewelled...a grotesque sight.

He stares at Elizabeth - and she stares back at him,
both of them unable to believe what they're seeing,
and too shocked for words. Anjou's ruby lips flap
open and shut - but no words come out.

He looks so ridiculous. Elizabeth suddenly starts
to laugh...and laughs so hard that the tears roll
down her cheeks.

81. INT. PRESENCE CHAMBER - DAY

Elizabeth - with Cecil and Walsingham in attendance -
and the Spanish Ambassador, Alvaro de la Quadra, and
Mendoza.

Alvaro looks, for him, rather pleased.

ELIZABETH

I have kept you waiting too
long to give an answer to
your King's proposal of
marriage.

ALVARO

Patience is one of the virtues
of great princes, Your Majesty.

ELIZABETH

I would wish our two countries
to live always together in
amity and alliance.

ALVARO

Just so. Such is also the
desire of my King, who sees
no better way of demonstrating
that than by your marriage.

A long beat. Alvaro waits. Cecil and Walsingham wait -
not knowing what she will say.

81. CONTINUED:

ELIZABETH

You may tell the King that I
am flattered by his proposal,
and know full well his
greatness...

(Alvaro actually smiles)
But I will not marry him.

A beat. It's taken everyone by surprise. The smile
vanishes from Alvaro's face.

ALVARO

Not marry?

ELIZABETH

No, my lord. I shall not
marry him, nor any man.

ALVARO

The King of Spain is not
just a man. He is master
of Europe. He will not
receive your words kindly.

ELIZABETH

I cannot help it. I am
decided.

A beat. Then Alvaro and Mendoza bow.

ALVARO

(coldly)

Madam.

They go out. The doors are closed behind them. Cecil
looks at her.

CECIL

You are now without friends!
God knows, I have tried to
advise you otherwise. You
cannot survive without friends.
England cannot survive without
friends.

81. CONTINUED:

ELIZABETH

Sir William - it seems to me that you would make England nothing but just a part of either France or Spain. I will not do it! I want no King to rule over me, nor any country to rule over mine. I desire more than anything that England should be the equal of such countries, and not live in fear of them.

CECIL

(in white heat)

Madam - you know so little of the world! This small island can never be the equal of such mighty powers. And you! By standing on your vanity you put yourself at risk, and this realm also. It is certain, Madam, that we shall all rue this day!

He bows, and goes out. Elizabeth looks over at Walsingham, who has remained in the shadows.

ELIZABETH

Will you leave me, too?

WALSINGHAM

No, Madam.

ELIZABETH

I had reason...

Walsingham smiles a little.

WALSINGHAM

I know the truth of that, Madam, you need not tell it me. Your Majesty thinks that if you were married you would be but Queen of England; and now you are both King and Queen.

He knows. It's in their eyes - they both know.

A long beat. Elizabeth paces the room.

81. CONTINUED:

ELIZABETH

Are you my friend, Walsingham?

WALSINGHAM

I am. Since I think it better to be your friend, than your enemy.

ELIZABETH

As my friend, then - I wish you to arrange something for me. A secret meeting.

WALSINGHAM

Secret from whom?

(a beat)

The Secretary of State, for example?

ELIZABETH

Yes. For example.

A beat. Walsingham smiles again. Bows.

WALSINGHAM

Your Majesty.

82. EXT. LONDON DOCKS - NIGHT

Dark; the silhouettes of ships' masts. A carriage moves fast through the streets - unmarked and unescorted.

It moves past a dockland tavern, where whores and sailors spill into the street, laughing and drinking.

Dohs bark. A street call. A whore's skirts lifted, laughing, screeching.

The carriage rattles on.

83. INT. SHIP - NIGHT

Followed by Walsingham and Waad, Elizabeth walks into the ship's small state room - lamps a-glowing. The weathered faces of about twelve SEA CAPTAINS. They bow as she sits among them.

ELIZABETH

My Captains - it makes me happy to be among you, for I think you loyal and steadfast in your attachment to me.

83. CONTINUED:

There are loud murmurs of assent.

ELIZABETH

You are men of the sea. You speak with salty tongues, honest and direct. Let me, then, be honest and direct with you. Spanish shipping controls the world. Spanish ships carry the wealth of its empire, with impunity, from the Indies to the Dutch Lowlands...

Again, murmurs of assent - and obvious frustration.

ELIZABETH

It seems to me a pity that Spain should hoarde to itself all the world's riches - but since we are bound by treaty, I cannot as Queen give you licence to partake of that bounty.

A beat. She looks round at them.

ELIZABETH

But if, perchance, you had opportunity or courage enough to attack some Spanish vessels without permission from me, then I should not think it - an evil occupation.

Waad, standing behind her, suddenly smiles. His face lights up.

CAPTAIN

You would not call it piracy?

ELIZABETH

No. I should rather call it - good enterprise.

Waad nods vigorously.

SECOND CAPTAIN

And whatever we should happen to catch?

ELIZABETH

Would be divided. A quarter for you, the rest for my Treasury.

(a beat)

Is that not fair, Mr Waad?

83. CONTINUED:

WAAD

It is not only fair, Your Majesty,
it is the most beautiful thought
I ever heard!

ELIZABETH

Of course, if the Spanish should
protest, I will say that it was
nothing of my doing. That you
are privateers, and do not obey
my will.

CAPTAIN

And if they want us captured
and punished?

ELIZABETH

Well, then - for the sake of
appearance, I will have you
put in the Tower, for a little
while, and all at my own expense!
There are, I know, several most
comfortable apartments there.

They laugh. Elizabeth smiles, then grows serious again.

ELIZABETH

And with some of that wealth, I
promise, we will begin to build
and furnish a fleet to make
England proud again, and master
of her fate.

A beat. Her eyes glow with inner fire.

ELIZABETH

If you will serve me in this way,
for the glory of England, say
"aye"!

All say "aye" - and nearly raise the roof of the
small state room.

Elizabeth smiles again. Then rises to her feet,
starts to leave.

83. CONTINUED:

ELIZABETH
Good fishing, my brave Captains.

WALSINGHAM
(quietly)
I see you fish too, Madam.
For the souls of men.

84. INT. WHITEHALL PALACE - MORNING

The doors of the great gallery open. Elizabeth walks through. Her six beautiful Maids of Honour are waiting for her. They curtsy.

ELIZABETH
Dance for me.

She sits. The Music Master instructs the Musicians, who begin to play a lively piece of music. The Maids begin to dance before the Queen. She stares at them, as if in a trance.

A courtier appears, bows.

ELIZABETH
What is it?

COURTIER
Your Majesty - Lord Robert
is here. He begs Your Majesty
most humbly for an audience.

A beat. Elizabeth watches the dancers.

ELIZABETH
Tell him to wait.

The courtier bows again, moves away.

Elizabeth watches the beautiful women...

85. INT. CHAMBER - PALACE - DAY

Elizabeth enters - and sees Dudley. He throws himself to his knees.

DUDLEY
Forgive me.

Elizabeth moves over to him, gently lifts him with her hand.

85. CONTINUED:

ELIZABETH

(softly)

My Lord - I should like to.

He stares into her eyes.

DUDLEY

The enquiry has absolved me of
all blame - as I knew it would.
My enemies had sought to destroy
me - but they cannot. I am not
guilty.

ELIZABETH

You seem to have more enemies
than even I, my Lord.

DUDLEY

They are jealous of the affection
between us. Of Your Majesty's
favours. They know I owe nothing
to them, and everything to you.

ELIZABETH

(whispers)

What is it you want, Robert?

DUDLEY

I want what I had before.
Nothing has changed. And
now we are both free.

A long beat. She looks at him.

ELIZABETH

But I am not free.

Dudley looks at her.

DUDLEY

How so?

ELIZABETH

I am already married.

A beat. Then she shows him her hand, with the coronation
ring upon her finger.

ELIZABETH

With this coronation ring, I
was married to my people.

85. CONTINUED:

A beat. Dudley visibly relaxes, smiles.

DUDLEY
Is that all?

Elizabeth's face freezes.

ELIZABETH
All? Do you think it means
nothing to me?
(a beat)
How little you know me,
Robert.

DUDLEY
I know you better than
any man. Or had you forgot?

He reaches up, touches her cheek.

DUDLEY
You are still my Elizabeth.

Coldly, she brushes his hand away. Stares at him.

ELIZABETH
I am not your Elizabeth. I am
no man's Elizabeth. And if
you think to rule here, I will
take a course to see you
forthcoming. I will have but
one mistress, and no master!

She turns away - then pauses at the door, looks back.

ELIZABETH
You are welcome back at court,
my Lord. But you are no longer
welcome in my bed.

She goes out.

86. EXT. CHAMBER - DAY

On the other side of the door, she breaks down
and weeps.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

87. EXT. STEPS - WHITEHALL PALACE - DAY

It is raining. A throng of courtiers on the steps, a waiting barge, decked in royal colours. Elizabeth, followed by Kate and two Ladies in Waiting, walks down the steps towards the boat. The steps are muddy, filled with water. Elizabeth pauses - we see her delicate shoes.

A Courtier steps forward and lays down his beautiful cloak over the patch of water. She smiles at him, and steps over the cloak - and goes aboard.

88. INT. PALACE - DAY

From a high window, Dudley watches the barge move away upstream, the oarsmen pulling at the oars, the royal pennants fluttering in the chill air.

Sussex appears from the shadows.

DUDLEY

Where is she going?

SUSSEX

To visit Sir William. He is ill - or so he says.

(a beat)

You look ill yourself, Lord Robert. You have the colour of disappointment.

Dudley looks at him. Sussex smiles a little.

SUSSEX

It's what comes of trusting a woman. Women are fickle. They are not worth trusting...

(a beat)

You were ambitious. That is no fault in a man. It is natural. But why should ambition end here?

DUDLEY

What mean you, Sussex?

88. CONTINUED:

SUSSEX

(whispering)

I mean only that, with good fortune, and good friends, you who could have been King, might yet still be King.

Dudley looks at him. Sussex smiles again.

89. INT. CECIL'S BEDROOM - BURGHLEY HOUSE - DAY

In a dark and heavily-draped room, lit with candles, Cecil lies in bed, looking genuinely ill, his face ashen.

Whispers and hushed tones. Servants and two DOCTORS attend him. One Doctor makes a small cut in his foot, and allows the blood to drain into a small silver basin. Cecil groans with the pain of it, a servant moping his brow with a cool cloth.

The two Doctors examine the blood in the bowl, sniff it, confer in whispers - then they nod for the Servants to cover Cecil over again, and go out.

Now we see Elizabeth standing in the doorway, watching. The Doctors bow low to her on the way out. Elizabeth moves forward into the room.

Cecil is propped up in bed. A little rouge is smudged onto his cheeks, to give them colour. He bows, tries to regain his dignity.

ELIZABETH

Sir William...

CECIL

Your Majesty should not have come so far to see me.

ELIZABETH

You were angry with me.

CECIL

I was frightened for you.

89. CONTINUED:

She moves round the bed next to him.

ELIZABETH

Frightened?

CECIL

You are not aware of the dangers you face. Of the plots against you. The Spanish and French can afford to pay for men at court. Their priests and spies are buzzing throughout the Kingdom, and Mary of Guise makes fresh, warlike noises. If you will not take my advice, then God help you!

ELIZABETH

I cannot marry. I know there is a strong idea in the world that a woman cannot live unless she is married - but I will not accept it.

CECIL

Listen to me. I know more of the world than you do. I have seen more of it. Marry - or they will kill you. You are only a woman.

ELIZABETH

I may be a woman - but I have the heart of a man. I am my father's daughter, and I am not afraid of anything.

CECIL

That will not save you. I beg you, safeguard yourself. Keep away from public affairs. Do not show yourself.

ELIZABETH

I cannot. I owe my crown to the people. They love me. If I hide myself from them, I would lose their love, which means more to me than all the false loves of Princes and Kings.

89. CONTINUED:

Cecil sighs, shakes his head.

CECIL

Then I can give you no
more advice. I see you
are a woman, after all,
just like my wife.

Elizabeth smiles, touches his cheek.

ELIZABETH

Get well, Sir William. I
am not finished with you
yet. And think on this: how
should you like to be my
Lord Burghley, and not
just plain Sir William?

Cecil looks at her, with some amazement.

90. EXT. BARGE - NIGHT

Rowing towards the White Towers. Elizabeth, wrapped
in a cloak, next to Kate. The Boatsman's cries.
Lights on the water. Torches.

The shape of another craft hovering too, not far away.
Elizabeth looks over. Glint of steel.

At that moment there's a FLASH. A shot rings out.
The ball SMACKS into the woodwork of the boat,
just above Elizabeth's head.

Sudden confusion. Panic - a SHOUT. Elizabeth starts
to get to her feet.

With a CRY a YOUNG SOLDIER throws himself forward,
over her.

SOLDIER

Majesty!

CRACK - another SHOT. The Soldier groans, his body
goes slack, blood trickles from the corner of his
mouth.

90. CONTINUED:

Kate SCREAMS hysterically. Other Soldiers are firing back at the other craft - the whistle of bolts - but already it is swallowed up into the darkness.

Elizabeth cradles the dead Soldier in her arms.

91. INT. DINING HALL - WHITEHALL PALACE - EVENING

Elizabeth sits alone at the top table, the court sat at long tables beneath her.

She watches carefully as members of the Guard test her food for poison.

The dishes are presented to her.

She looks up - sees Le Foix staring at her, avidly.

Shifts her gaze.

Sees Alvaro also gazing at her.

She hesitates over the food, her hand moving from one dish to another. Then she selects something, picks up a morsel of meat...

A beat. She puts it in her mouth...

At this signal, the rest begin to eat. Music starts to play.

Elizabeth whispers to one of the Servant's - who goes to fetch Walsingham.

Walsingham, with a bow, sits beside her.

ELIZABETH

(sotto voce - smiling as she talks)
Find out who conspires against me - the Spanish or the French. Send your spies among them, pretending they are secret Catholics, dissatisfied with my rule. And let them discover which of my Councillors are in their pay.

A beat.

WALSINGHAM

(quietly)
It shall be done.

92. INT. TAVERN - LONDON - NIGHT

Low-life. The place is crowded and noisy. People drunk and gaming.

Christopher Marlowe enters, looks around. Pushes his way through the crowd - finally sees the Spaniard Mendoza and two other Men sat at a table in an alcove.

He makes his way over. Mendoza gestures for him to sit.

MARLOWE

Why do we meet here?

MENDOZA

What better place, my friend,
for an innocent conversation?
You feel safe - and we feel safe.

He smiles, gestures to one of the other Men, who fills a gobblet with wine, passes it to Marlowe.

MENDOZA

(soft)

They tell me you are a
Catholic, Marlowe?

MARLOWE

Yes. I speak to you with
complete honesty, as if I
were about to die, as if I
were before God, I am a
Catholic, Apostolic and
Roman.

Mendoza nods, as if impressed.

MENDOZA

They also tell me you are
unhappy?

MARLOWE

How should I be happy, when the
Holy Father declares it a sin
to serve a heretic, and that
it would be a glorious work
to send her out of the world.

92. CONTINUED:

MENDOZA

You would risk everything
to do that?

MARLOWE

Yes. To save my country from
heresy, and my soul from
perdition. Yes.

A beat. Mendoza pours out more wine, stares at him.

MENDOZA

Do you think we are fools,
Marlowe?

MARLOWE

No!

MENDOZA

Then why do you insult us?
You are Walsingham's creature!

And he throws his wine into Marlowe's face!

Before Marlowe can react, his chair is pulled from
beneath him - he crashes to the floor. The other
Men close in on him, Mendoza shouting:

MENDOZA

Whoremonger! Thief!

Marlowe, trying to scramble to his feet, is caught,
kicked, punched. He doubles over, fumbles for his
dagger...

The Men draw theirs. Marlowe looks around, trapped.

MARLOWE

Englishmen - help me!

But like any public brawl, people move away, not
wanting to be involved.

Marlowe backs away, screams out:

MARLOWE

For the love of God, help me!

In desperation, he makes a sudden break for the door
- is caught, spun around.

92. CONTINUED:

Mendoza's arm thrusts forward, his dagger plunging into Marlowe's eye.

Marlowe SCREAMS...

CUT TO:

93. INT. PRIVATE CHAPEL - NIGHT

A foreign PRIEST performs the Sacrement.

PRIEST
E nomine patris, et filii
e spiritus sanctus...

In this small, Catholic chapel, adorned with images of the Virgin Mary, the Earl of Arundel, his WIFE and their three angelic-looking CHILDREN, kneel to receive the wafer that is the body of Christ, and the wine that is His blood.

The Priest blesses them in Latin.

Then, suddenly, the door of the Chapel crashes open - a Servant runs in.

SERVANT
(agitated)
My Lord!...Quickly! There
are horsemen at the gates!

Panic - and hurry. The Priest is led from the room by Arundel. His wife and children begin to collect up the images of the Virgin and the icons, and hide them away.

His wife removes the alter cloth and blows out the candles, plunging the little chapel into darkness.

94. INT. GREAT HALL - NIGHT

Torches flare. The sound of horses riding up outside, the jingle of spurs and swords.

Arundel gives a signal for the doors to be opened.

20
~~For~~ ARMED MEN stride into the hall.

94. CONTINUED:

ARUNDEL

Who are you?

MAN

My name is Dovedale, my Lord. .
We are Walsingham's men.

ARUNDEL

On what pretext, pray, would
you violate the property of
a peer of this realm?

DOVEDALE

We believe a foreign priest
is hiding here.

Dovedale gestures to his men - they separate, some
going up the stairs, others fanning out into the
other rooms, to begin their search.

95. INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Arundel's family huddle in a corner, the children
clinging to their Mother - as Walsingham's men take
the house apart, ripping down draperies, searching
fireplaces, breaking down doors.

Dovedale looks at Arundel.

DOVEDALE

It would go better with you,
my Lord, if you just told us
where you had hidden him.

ARUNDEL

There is no-one hidden
here!

Dovedale looks at him, then goes on with the search.

96. INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

One man holds a torch, while another rips down a
tapestry, revealing wooden panelling behind. He
taps the panelling with the pommel of his sword -
and, suddenly, part of it sounds hollow.

He searches for a secret catch - can't find one.
Abruptly, he raises his boot and thumps it against
the panelling - which gives way with a splintering

96. CONTINUED:

crack, revealing a small, dark chamber...

They hold a torch over the mouth of the chamber, and by its light see the Priest hiding inside, praying on his knees.

97. EXT. ROSE GARDEN - HAMPTON COURT PALACE - DAY

Elizabeth walks slowly through the beautiful, walled garden, with Walsingham beside her. They are silent for a while, then:

WALSINGHAM

It was the Spanish.

She nods, glances at him, goes on walking.

WALSINGHAM

Letters found upon the Priest, as well as his confessions, reveal the conspiracy against Your Majesty. By large sums of money, and other persuasions of religion, the Spanish have bought the services of several people close to Your Majesty. These people were to arrange by diverse means Your Majesty's assassination, and replace you afterwards with someone more friendly to the Spanish cause.

A beat. Elizabeth stops walking, looks at him.

ELIZABETH

Who are they?

A long beat.

WALSINGHAM

Norfolk...Arundel...Sussex... and Sir John Gage, Constable of the Tower.

ELIZABETH

And any other?

A beat.

WALSINGHAM

Yes, Madam. Lord Robert Dudley.

The shock and pain is visible on her face.

97. CONTINUED:

ELIZABETH
Dudley...Are you certain?

WALSINGHAM
Yes, Madam. There is no
doubt of it.

A long beat.

WALSINGHAM
What are Your Majesty's orders?

A beat.

ELIZABETH
Leave me alone a while. I
need to be alone now.

Walsingham bows - and watches Elizabeth move slowly
away down the path, between the roses.

We start to HEAR the beautiful, ethereal, spiritual
music of WILLIAM BYRD.

98. INT. ROYAL CHAPEL - WHITEHALL PALACE - NIGHT

William Byrd himself plays the organ, accompanying
the young, angelic-looking CHORISTERS whose voices,
in 13-part harmony, soar sublimely into the stillness.

Elizabeth, sat on her own, with members of her court
behind her, listens, enraptured.

But then she hears muffled whispers - and turns sharply.

ELIZABETH
What means this ugly commotion?

The Courtiers, abashed, look at LORD WILLIAM HOWARD,
one of her Councilor's, and a zealous Protestant.

Howard comes forward, bows.

HOWARD
Your Majesty may wish to know
that that gentleman there...
(indicates Byrd)
the composer of this music,
Mr William Byrd, is a secret
Catholic!

98. CONTINUED:

Elizabeth looks back at him angrily.

ELIZABETH

That gentleman has no secrets from me, Lord Howard. He may well be a Catholic - but he is also a genius, and a loyal subject. And you are a zealot and a fool!

Howard stands rebuked, lowers his eyes.

HOWARD

Yes, Your Majesty.

99. INT. WALSINGHAM'S CHAMBERS - NIGHT

Walsingham with Dovedale and three of his other men.

WALSINGHAM

The time is ripe, gentlemen. Take them to your cold hands, and let them feel death from you.

And he kisses Dovedale on the cheeks.

100. INT. PALACE - NIGHT

Half-seen - glimpsed, the silver gleam of swords - Walsingham's men slip like shadows through the passageways and back stairs of the huge palace.

CUT TO:

101. EXT. PALACE - NIGHT

More of his men slip out into the courtyard, mount horses, and ride quickly away.

CUT TO:

102. INT. BEDCHAMBER - PALACE - NIGHT

Sussex and Lettice Knollys make love on the bed, laughing, rolling over.

CUT TO:

103. INT. NORFOLK'S CHAMBER - NIGHT

Norfolk, in Dukely splendour, sleeps in his vast bed, a face mask over his eyes, his two hounds at the foot of his bed, gnawing upon bones.

CUT TO:

104. INT. ROOMS - PALACE - NIGHT

We see Arundel's three little children asleep in the same bed, little toys scattered around.

In the next room, Arundel and his wife sleep, holding each other's hands.

CUT TO:

105. INT. CARRIAGE - NIGHT

Mendoza and Gage. They are laughing together as the carriage rolls through the deserted streets.

CUT TO:

106. INT. EDINBURGH CASTLE - NIGHT

Mary of Guise climbs into bed - tries to stop her Ladies fussing over her, almost pushing them away.

MARY OF GUISE

(in French)

Go! Go!...I am not a child!

The Ladies draw the curtains around her bed, then withdraw. Except for one. She picks up a lighted candle and holds it up in front of the window a moment, as a signal.

Then blows it out, and quietly leaves the room.

CUT TO:

107. INT. ROYAL CHAPEL - NIGHT

Elizabeth is alone now, kneeling before the alter, looking up at a painting of the Crucified Christ...

CUT TO:

108. INT. CORRIDOR - PALACE - NIGHT

Three of Walsingham's men hurry along the corridor - they open Sussex's door with a key - and burst inside.

109. INT. SUSSEX'S BEDCHAMBER - NIGHT

Sussex and Lettice, caught at their romp, freeze - as the three men, their swords drawn, approach the bed.

Sussex stares at them. Lettice whimpers, pulling a sheet over her naked body.

WALSINGHAM'S MAN

Earl of Sussex. By order of the Queen, you are arrested for treason. You will be taken from this place to the Tower, where your fate will be decided.

He picks up a piece of Sussex's glittering clothing from the floor, with the point of his sword.

MAN

Get dressed!

Sussex still stares at them. Then, suddenly, he bursts into tears, sobbing like a frightened child.

CUT TO:

110. EXT. SPANISH EMBASSY - NIGHT

Mendoza's carriage draws up. Mendoza and Gage climb out, walks through the gates.

MAN OS

Mendoza!

110. CONTINUED:

Mendoza looks round in the darkness. As he does so, another man steps out of the shadows behind him and drives a sword through his back, which exits his stomach.

Gage opens his mouth to shout - when a sword pierces his heart.

Both men fall. Mendoza still rolls around on the ground, in his final agony, groaning softly, muttering beseechingly in Spanish.

Another sword thrust silences him.

CUT TO:

111.INT. NORFOLK'S BEDCHAMBER - NIGHT

We see the two hounds. They lie dead at the foot of the bed, their mouths flecked with foam and blood, from the poisoned bones.

Norfolk's face mask is lifted from his eyes with the point of a sword. He wakes - blinking into the torchlight.

He sees five of Walsingham's men round his bed with drawn swords.

NORFOLK

What's this? How dare you enter my chamber?

WALSINGHAM'S MAN

The Duke of Norfolk - you are arrested for treason.

A beat. Norfolk stares at them.

NORFOLK

Treason? Little man, do you know who I am?

MAN

Yes. You are a traitor.

Norfolk rises from his bed in his finery - pompous and vain to the end.

NORFOLK

You will die for that.

MAN

No, Your Grace. You will die for it.

111. CONTINUED:

Norfolk stares at them.

MAN

Now will you come with us
in peace, or must we prick
you a little?

With the point of his sword, he digs Norfolk's stomach. Norfolk's expression changes - as if the truth has finally hit him, punctured some of his pomposity.

He looks down - and sees the two hounds, dead. He moans, falls to his knees, and caresses them.

A beat. He looks up.

NORFOLK

I was the greatest man in
England. Now I am like these
dogs!

CUT TO:

112. INT. BACKSTAIRS - EDINBURGH CASTLE - NIGHT

CLOSE ON: a pair of boots, climbing the stairs.

Reaching a door at the top.

A hand tries it, finds it open.

The boots go inside.

113. INT. MARY OF GUISE'S BEDCHAMBER - NIGHT

Curtains round the bed.

Walsingham's MAN quietly draws back a curtain, and sees Mary of Guise asleep.

He picks up a pillow - then jams it down over her head. She wakes, tries to struggle, but the man presses down tighter, suffocating her.

113. CONTINUED:

Her muffled groans suddenly cease.

The man lifts the pillow. Her face, mouth agape grotesquely, eyes bulging, flops to one side.

She's dead.

CUT TO:

114. INT. ARUNDEL'S CHAMBERS - NIGHT

Arundel leans over his sleeping children, and kisses them each gently on the forehead, without waking them.

As he moves away from the bed, we see the three Walsingham's men who have come to arrest him.

Arundel embraces and kisses his wife, whose face is wet with tears.

ARUNDEL
(whispers)
Take good care of them.

She breaks down, sobs. Arundel looks at the men.

ARUNDEL
I am ready now. Whatever you mean to do to me, is all of my own deserving. I crave pardon of the Almighty for this my last sin, this great, this bloody, this crying and this infectious sin, of offending my sovereign. I did it only for love of my Lady, the Queen of Heaven...

He kisses the crucifix around his neck.

ARUNDEL
Take me hither, you gentlemen of justice.

He is led away.

CUT TO:

115. INT. STAIRS - PALACE - NIGHT

Dudley walks alone up the dark stairs. He is drunk. Half way up, he stops.

Three of Walsingham's men have appeared at the top of the stairs. They draw their swords.

A beat. Dudley stares at them, then suddenly turns, and runs back down the stairs, into the courtyard, the men running down after him.

A fountain splashes in the courtyard, around a pool, in which big golden carp move sluggishly.

Dovedale and five other men, swords drawn, emerge from the shadows, and surround him. There is no escape.

Dovedale puts the point of his sword to Dudley's throat.

DOVEDALE

The Queen knows what you have done, Lord Robert. You had no cause beyond ambition to join with traitors, and those who meant to murder and usurp her. She asks what should be done with you, after such vile ingratitude, for you know well the love she bears for you.

A long beat.

DUDLEY

Kill me - and have done with it.

DOVEDALE

With pleasure, my Lord.

He digs the point of the sword deeper. Then, abruptly, withdraws it, sheathes the weapon. Dudley looks at him.

DUDLEY

What? You will not kill me?

DOVEDALE

No, my Lord. Out of all of them - she spares you. She has no doubt that you will be - loyal from henceforth.

115. CONTINUED:

They start to move away. Then Dovedale turns, and throws something towards Dudley in the darkness.

DOVEDALE

I forgot. Her Majesty returns this to you. She no longer has need of it.

They vanish, their footsteps fading. Dudley stoops down, and picks up the fan.

He sits down by the fountain, and weeps.

116. INT. TOWER OF LONDON - NIGHT

Torches flicker against the bare stone walls of the corridor - as Arundel is escorted under guard to the same room in the Bell Tower.

Brydges unlocks and opens the heavy wooden door, then steps back to allow Arundel to enter.

As he does so, Arundel pauses and looks at Brydges.

ARUNDEL

And so the world comes full circle.

There's a flicker of something which may be sympathy in Brydges kindly eyes. He bows.

BRYDGES

My Lord.

The Arundel enters the room, and Brydges closes the door again, and locks it.

117. INT. QUEEN'S BEDCHAMBER - NIGHT

Elizabeth is attended by her Ladies of the Bedchamber. Lettice Knollys is red-eyed, almost hysterical from weeping. Kate and the rest, visibly, in a state of shock.

Almost numbly, they perform their tasks.

117. CONTINUED:

Elizabeth listens a moment longer to Lettice's weeping, then turns a cold eye upon her.

ELIZABETH

Mistress Knollys. You are fortunate. I should have sent both of you to the Tower! Now leave me!.

Lettice curtsey's, withdraws. Elizabeth turns to her other Ladies, who stand meekly before her.

ELIZABETH

As for you all, from this time henceforth you will never seek to speak to me on public matters. And if any of you should ever wish to marry, you will first ask my permission.

(a beat)

But I would prefer you not to marry, and to remain virgins - as I am.

She makes a gesture, dismissing them. They curtsey, and leave, except for Kate. Elizabeth looks at her.

ELIZABETH

Kate.

KATE

Yes, Madam?

ELIZABETH

Come here, Kate.

Kate moves towards her. Elizabeth puts her arms around her, and hugs-her close.

118. EXT. TOWER OF LONDON - DAY

A YOUNG BOY fishes a rotten tomato out of a barrel.

He pulls back his arm - and throws it!

It splashes over the face of Norfolk. The boy jeers.

118. CONTINUED:

Norfolk's head is set upon a spike over the gate. Next to it are the heads of the other traitors, Sussex and Arundel. Arundel's face, in death, wears a siantly expression.

Then more fruit and rotten eggs are thrown, to more jeers. We see there is quite a crowd outside the Tower, mocking the dead heads.

119. EXT. COURTYARD - WHITEHALL PALACE - DAY

A fine carriage pulls into the courtyard. Servants hurry forward...

Cecil is helped from the carriage. He looks older, more than ever a grey emminence. He leans on a stick to enter the palace.

120. INT. PALACE - DAY

Cecil walks slowly through the Court. It is almost empty - no longer crackling with life.

A few people bow to the old man.

Finally he sees Lord Howard.

CECIL

What has become of this place,
Lord Howard? Where is the
Queen?

HOWARD

We have not seen for a week.
Her Majesty keeps to her
rooms. We are not privy to
her secrets.

Cecil nods, looks at him.

CECIL

She has the power now -
she will do as she pleases!

120. CONTINUED:

Cecil gazes around. .

CECIL

How strange it is - without
Norfolk, poor Arundel...
without that snivelling
Sussex. How strange.

HOWARD

She has rid us of the
Catholics!

Cecil smiles a little.

CECIL

No, my Lord. I think she
has only rid us of the
traitors. It was not so
long ago we were all
Catholics.

Leaning on his stick, he moves slowly away.

121. INT. QUEEN'S BEDCHAMBER - NIGHT

Elizabeth stands before a large mirror. She wears a
simple, thin dress.

Behind her, Kate and the Ladies in Waiting. Candles
slicker.

There is a long moment, as Elizabeth stares at
herself, as if seeing herself for the last time.

She makes a signal. Her hair is unpinned. It
tumbles free over her shoulders.

Her dress is unfastened, and removed. Then her
bodice. She stares at herself naked in the mirror,
tears wet her cheeks.

She gives another signal. The Ladies come forward,
and begin to dress her.

122. INT. WHITEHALL PALACE - DAY

We FOCUS ON - a pair of white velvet slippers. They are encrusted with pearls.

The slippers SHUFFLE along the corridor.

They stop before a pair of doors.

The doors are thrown open, and the CHAMBERLAIN of the Palace moves forward and bangs his staff on the ground.

CHAMBERLAIN

The Queen!

All the court - several hundred people - are gathered in the vast gallery.

They fall to their knees as Elizabeth enters.

We see her from their POV. She is transformed into the icon we know from history. Utterly changed.

The white dress, encrusted with pearls. Silver-white - so it glints and gleams in the lamp and candle-light so brilliantly that it dazzles their eyes as they look, just as the little girl had once been dazzled by her father's Majesty. Her face is whitened unnaturally by lead paste, so it looks more like a porcelain mask. Her hair encrusted with pearls - swathes of pearls, the symbols of virginity, around her neck. Jewels glittering on her dress and fingers.

So beautiful - but barely human. And in their eyes we see the sense of AWE.

She walks slowly over to the kneeling figure of Cecil. She smiles a little, then offers her hand for him to kiss, and gently lifts him with it.

Cecil himself is visibly over-awed.

CECIL

Most gracious Sovereign Lady.

ELIZABETH

My good - Lord Burghley. You are most welcome back to court.

He bows deeply.

122. CONTINUED:

She moves slowly through the court, offering her hand her and there for it to be kissed.

But now we see, like a shadow, the figure of Walsingham behind her, the assurance and embodiment of her new power.

Elizabeth approaches the kneeling Dudley, and stops. He looks up into her mask-like face, searching for familiar signs.

She offers her hand to him - and we see upon it the Coronation Ring. Dudley kisses the ring - looks at her again. Perhaps, for a fleeting moment, some look of infinite sadness fills the eyes behind the mask.

Then it is gone. She moves on.

She turns, faces the court.

ELIZABETH

My Lords - this past year God has both prospered and protected you with good success under my direction. And I nothing doubt that the same maintaining hand will guide you still - and bring you to the ripeness of perfection.

A beat. Then she turns again, away from court - and glides into a passageway, lit by ranks of servants holding aloft burning torches.

She stops before another pair of doors. Then the doors are opened. There is a BLINDING WHITE LIGHT.

A beat. Then Elizabeth, alone, steps out into the light. At once there is a huge NOISE - the noise of a vast crowd of people.

They shout out in fervent acclamation: VIVAT REGINA! GOD SAVE QUEEN ELIZABETH! LONG LIVE QUEEN ELIZABETH! MAY THE QUEEN LIVE FOR EVER!

We do not see this vast crowd, we only hear them. We are CLOSE on Elizabeth's face as she stares out

122. CONTINUED:

at the blinding light, like a great actress who has stepped out onto a stage. The stage of history.

The picture FREEZES.

These words appear on the screen:

ELIZABETH REIGNED FOR A FURTHER
THIRTY FOUR YEARS. SHE NEVER
MARRIED. BY THE TIME OF HER
DEATH, ENGLAND WAS THE RICHEST
AND MOST POWERFUL COUNTRY IN
EUROPE. HER REIGN HAS BEEN
CALLED - "THE GOLDEN AGE".

Finis.
