

MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS

Screenplay By

BEAU WILLIMON

INT. FOTHERINGHAY CASTLE - CORRIDOR - DAY

1.

CLOSE on a CANDLE, its base ringed by dripped wax. It's perched on the sill of a small window, bathed in grayish, early morning light.

A SNUFFER enters the frame and extinguishes the flame.

We PULL BACK to see the MAIDSERVANT who has just put out the candle, moving onto the next candle in the long corridor, snuffing it out as well. And onto the next when she HEARS...

The ECHO of footfalls and clanking swords. As THREE MEN round the corner she steps back, head bowed, making room for them.

Walking briskly toward us are THOMAS ANDREWS (Sheriff of Northamptonshire) flanked by two Earls - SHREWSBURY and KENT. They pass by the Maidservant without acknowledging her. She watches them go as they round another corner.

Andrews and his men arrive at a small door. A GUARD awaits them. Upon their arrival the Guard fetches a set of keys from his belt...

EXT. FOTHERINGHAY CASTLE - DAY

Establishing - a foreboding, turreted castle rising from the marshland of an adjacent river, surrounded by a moat. We hear the UNLOCKING OF A BOLT as we CUT TO--

INT. FOTHERINGHAY CASTLE - PRIVY CHAMBER - DAY

MARY STUART - Queen of Scots, Dowager Queen of France.

But we see her from BEHIND - her back to us. And this is where we shall stay for now. Seeing events as she does, following from just a few feet to the rear.

She is on her knees in prayer, joined by her CHAMBERMAIDS and an OLDER MARY SETON (the younger version of whom we shall introduce soon), facing a small window which overlooks the landscape we just saw. As the heavy door pivots open, revealing Andrews, she remains in prayer, her back to him.

He bows his head, then, with solemnity and respect--

ANDREWS

It's time.

Mary stands, as do her Servants. She's wearing a long, black satin gown. A white cap and laced veil against which her dark, auburn hair is lustrous. It's her hair that we're drawn to - since we've yet to see her face.

She goes to a side table and retrieves two carefully chosen items, an ivory crucifix in one hand, a Latin prayer book in the other.

Meanwhile one of the Maidservants loops a string of rosary beads with a golden cross to a girdle at her waist. Another fastens a gold chain around her neck, from which hangs a medallion bearing the image of Christ as the Lamb of God.

EXT. FOTHERINGHAY CASTLE - COURTYARD - DAY

From behind. Mary is being led across by the Earls and Guards. She pauses to look up at the sky. The last time she will feel the sun directly on her face.

ANDREWS (O.S.)

Your grace.

She resumes following her escort, who have paused for her.

EXT. HAMPTON COURT - COURTYARD - DAY

QUEEN ELIZABETH - from behind - walking alone, slowly, as if in a daze. She looks up at the sky, then lowers her head. She begins to sob. We can't see her tears, but we can see her body shaking.

CECIL (O.S.)

Your grace.

We shift focus to WILLIAM CECIL on the far side of the courtyard. He is her most trusted advisor on the Privy Council - a persuasive, manipulative man who understands the realpolitik of power and wields it well. From behind him, we see Elizabeth quickly dry her tears.

INT. FOTHERINGHAY CASTLE - LARGE CORRIDOR - DAY

We're above and behind as Mary strides through a large set of doors, her Ladies, Andrews and Guards in tow.

Down the hall a little SERVANT GIRL peeks around the corner to get a glimpse. The MAIDSERVANT from the first scene grabs her by the wrist and pulls her out of view.

Mary rounds the corner, taking us to--

INT. FOTHERINGHAY CASTLE - GREAT HALL - DAY

A vast room filled with a hundred SPECTATORS. At the far end of the room is a WOODEN STAGE.

The crowd parts. She heads directly for the stage, mounts the steps to the platform where two MEN stand waiting for her.

Still behind her, from over her shoulder, we can see the crowd staring up, a hundred solemn faces - the KNIGHTS and GENTLEMEN OF NORTHAMPTONSHIRE. There is a low murmuring as a number of men speak in hushed tones to each other.

It's worth noting that this crowd is ALL MEN. The only women in attendance are Old Seton and Mary's two Ladies.

Mary's back and the POV beyond fills the frame, but off-screen we hear three KNOCKS of a cane on the wooden platform to call the room to attention. A slight, barely noticeable flinch from each knock as the room silences.

The Clerk of Elizabeth's Privy Council, ROBERT BEALE - reads aloud off-screen. We only hear his voice--

BEALE (O.S.)

By order of our sovereign
Elizabeth, Queen of England, Wales
and Ireland, Overlord of Scotland,
certified by her Privy Council and
Parliament, Mary Stuart is
condemned to death this day, the
eighth of February, the year of our
Lord one thousand five hundred
eighty-seven...

During which we CUT from face to face of Nobles in the audience, all staring up at Mary in morbid fascination and anxiousness. We are in Mary's POV now.

INT. HAMPTON COURT - PRIVY COUNCIL CHAMBER - DAY

On Elizabeth's back as a Guard opens the chamber door. The COUNCIL stands and bows as she takes her seat. With a slight gesture she instructs them to sit. Cecil steps forward.

CECIL

For your fellow Princes on the
continent - that they might know...

He places a letter before her. She glances over it. An ATTENDANT brings her a quill and ink. She looks back up.

ELIZABETH

We will not ask God's forgiveness
for that which is just.

INT. FOTHERINGHAY CASTLE - GREAT HALL - DAY

We are still behind Mary. She stands. Two Earls remove her outer garment - the black satin - revealing a crimson garment beneath. The colour of martyrdom. A collective gasp.

We CUT TO Noblemen in the midst of the crowd, gazing at her with disgust. One whispers to the other--

MILDMAY

She thinks herself a martyr.

KNIGHTLEY

Wretched woman.

BACK TO Mary. She turns to the Executioner - BULL. We remain on her back. Bull bows his head in supplication--

BULL

I plead your forgiveness.

MARY

I forgive you with all my heart.
You shall make an end of all my
troubles.

Bull gestures to a cushion before her in front of the block. As Mary kneels down she begins to recite a psalm in Latin--

MARY (CONT'D)

*Salve, Regina, Mater misericordiæ,
vita, dulcedo, et spes nostra,
salve.
Ad te clamamus exsules filii Hevæ,
In te Domino confido...*

As she repeats the prayer the camera COMES AROUND to face Mary for the FIRST TIME.

As we do, we hear a SURGE of surf on a shore, and once we land upon her face, we are no longer in Fotheringhay Castle...

It is 27 YEARS PRIOR and we are at--

EXT. SCOTTISH COAST - DAY

Mary kneeling on the sand in prayer. The water is surging up, soaking her dress. She shivers from the cold but continues her prayer.

The moment has the same solemnity as the execution sequence, but the daylight and anticipation and Mary's youth also charge it with the excitement and danger of a new beginning.

As the surf retreats she leans down and kisses the sand - the first time she's touched Scottish soil since she was a girl.

Behind her we can see her ship anchored in the distance. Several rowboats have been pulled up onto the shore - trunks and other goods being unloaded by sailors.

A distressed look on Mary's ashen face while she's still bent down, her face inches above the sand. She retches. Four women quickly come to her aid.

They are the "Four Marys" - BEATON, SETON, FLEMING and LIVINGSTON - Mary's ladies-in-waiting and closest friends. We hear concerned chatter among them as they attend to their mistress.

MARY

C'est fini.

(It's passed.)

--which silences them. Mary cups her hand in the salt water and brings it up to her mouth to wash her face clean. Seton hands her a handkerchief. Mary dries her face then stands.

Horses are making their way onto the shore. On BOTHWELL - A Scottish Lord and the Queen's Champion. He has the hardened bearing of a soldier accented by the flash of an adventurer.

He looks down the shore and sees figures in the distance - PEASANTS cockle-picking. Near them is a small wagon with a Clydesdale pony.

EXT. SCOTTISH COAST - DAY

We're further down the shore with the PEASANT FAMILY now: They include an OLDER MAN, TWO TEENAGE SONS and a LITTLE GIRL - his daughter.

Bothwell is paying the OLDER MAN several coins as GUARDS are emptying the wagon of cockles, dumping them on a pile in the sand. Mary is nearby on foot beside her horse.

Mary looks at the old Peasant. A hard, poor life is evidenced by the deep wrinkles in his face, a mouth turned inward by lost teeth.

Then she looks to his DAUGHTER - in a dirty muddy burlap frock - who does not bow. She's only five years old, the same age Mary was when she fled to France.

CUT TO the Nobleman helping the Four Marys into the peasant wagon. Livingston holds a handkerchief to her nose, put off by the fishy smell. The other three seem no less disgusted.

BACK TO Mary as Bothwell helps her onto her horse. Legs astride, not side saddle. Once atop, she looks regal. Bothwell mounts his horse and leads the small entourage forward.

The little girl runs to keep up with it. Her father yells out to her but she ignores him, running alongside Mary's horse.

Mary and the little girl lock eyes. She sees a curious and defiant fire in the girl's expression which aligns with her own curious and defiant flame.

Mary smiles at the girl. She smiles back, then stops. Mary turns her eyes forward again, as if staring into her future.

Bothwell turns to her, in French--

BOTHWELL

*Tout cela correspond à vos
souvenirs?*

(Is it how you remember it?)

MARY

Je m'en souviens à peine.

(I scarcely remember it at all.)

INT. HAMPTON COURT - LONG GALLERY - DAY

In stark contrast to the rawness of the Scottish countryside, we're in an opulent, formal chamber. RANDOLPH - the English Ambassador to Scotland - stands before Elizabeth. Cecil is off to her side. Dudley is to the other side, along with two other LORDS. Elizabeth's ladies sit on stools and pillows near her feet.

RANDOLPH

Her protector is Lord Bothwell, an
able soldier.

CECIL

So she comes readied for war.

RANDOLPH

She may well depart once married.
But I cannot profess to know her
purpose.

ELIZABETH

What says her brother?

RANDOLPH

Moray is only her half-brother,
Madam. I believe his allegiance is
fully with us.

ELIZABETH

What proof?

RANDOLPH

He pledges to protect the Church of
Scotland.

CECIL

And yet he has no power to make
such a pledge if he is no longer
Regent.

RANDOLPH
The Nobles respect him.

CECIL
But can he control her?

DUDLEY
(directed at Cecil)
If she is like our Queen, she does
not yield to a bridle.

Giggles from the Ladies. Even Elizabeth is amused.

CECIL
So says our Master of the Horse.

More giggles from the ladies. Cecil doubles down--

CECIL (CONT'D)
(to Dudley)
By bridle do you speak of
mounts...?

Dudley stiffens. This is a touchy subject to bring up in a public setting, but Cecil will not allow himself to be challenged by an inferior Lord. Then triples down--

CECIL (CONT'D)
...or do you speak of matrimony?

Elizabeth holds up her hand to silence everyone. Cecil has gone far enough. He gives her a slight nod. She waits a beat for solemnity to return, then--

ELIZABETH
(to Randolph)
You may tell Scotland that we wish
to love the Stuarts as our kin, but
they should love us in return.

CECIL
Madam - if I may speak...

All eyes on Cecil.

CECIL (CONT'D)
While she is on this island, she
must bow to you, not to Rome. Our
Catholics must know that a papist
will never again sit on the English
throne.

ELIZABETH
She has offered to recognise my
rightful claim.

CECIL

Only if you make her heir. We owe her no such consolation.

ELIZABETH

What would you suggest?

CECIL

(to Randolph)

Is it fair to say that Moray would rather remain Regent?

RANDOLPH

His discomfort would imply so.

CECIL

(back to Elizabeth)

Let his discomfort feed hers. Kill her hope. And hopeless she may return to the comfort of the continent.

Cecil switches tones.

CECIL (CONT'D)

Of course, if you should offer love, perhaps your love will sway her. But I do not know what mortal would choose a Prince's love over a Prince's crown.

It's enough to convince her. She turns to Randolph--

ELIZABETH

Speak to her brother. Make our demands clear.

RANDOLPH

Recognition without recompense.

ELIZABETH

However you choose to convey it.

RANDOLPH

Aye, Madam - I shall go at once.

During which Cecil shoots Dudley a look. This is how you bridle a Queen.

EXT. HOLYROOD - EVENING

CLOSE on the EARL OF MORAY, Regent of Scotland and Mary's half-brother. He is atop a small bridge with windows on either side as he watches Mary's entourage approach beneath. The castle itself looms above them all.

We can see a flurry of activity in the courtyard beyond him - SERVANTS darting through the courtyard in preparation for the Queen's arrival, hurriedly lighting torches. On his face we see tenseness. He'd rather none of this were happening.

Moray leaves the window to go and greet his sister.

TIME CUT to the Courtyard. TIGHT on Mary's outstretched hand. Then Moray's face enters the frame and lightly kisses it.

We PULL BACK to see Moray kneeling before her, removing his sword as he does so.

MARY

Mon frère...

(My brother)

He stands and she embraces him. Bothwell watches from several yards away. He and Moray lock eyes - mutual distrust - as Moray and Mary embrace.

INT. HOLYROOD - HALLS - EVENING

Mary, Moray and the Four Marys make their way through corridors and a series of chambers, some half-furnished and being decorated for the Queen, others still bare. Everything feels a bit ad hoc and rushed. The servants bow as Mary passes. She soaks it in during the following exchange with Moray - only vaguely familiar. On the whole she might as well be laying eyes upon these rooms for the first time.

MORAY

You must be tired.

MARY

I am quite well.

MORAY

Supper is being prepared. We can have it brought to your chamber if you like.

MARY

Yes, thank you.

A beat. Moray considers his next question, then asks it casually, though it's far from a casual question--

MORAY

How long will you be staying?

MARY

At Holyrood?

MORAY

In Scotland.

She answers him just as casually, though like the question itself, there's nothing casual about it's substance.

MARY

(with a smile)

Are you already planning my departure?

MORAY

Of course not. We've long awaited your return.

Moray turns to a servant - KATE, elderly - who has been trailing behind them.

MORAY (CONT'D)

Kate will show you to your chambers.

KATE

This way, Madam.

As Kate leads Mary and her Ladies down an adjacent hall, Moray's smile fades. He turns to Bothwell.

MORAY

Do you intend to stay as well?

BOTHWELL

I swore an oath to the Queen's mother to protect her.

MORAY

She is well protected here.

BOTHWELL

I shall uphold my oath just the same.

MORAY

And what reward does your loyalty command?

BOTHWELL

I am driven by duty, not ambition.

A scoffing and dismissive half-smirk from Moray. He doesn't buy it for a moment.

INT. HOLYROOD - QUEEN'S CHAMBER - NIGHT

The room is lit by several candles, but still dim. It's completely empty. Mary looks around, taking in the bareness.

KATE

We are having a bed brought from town.

Mary points to a wall, addressing the Servant--

MARY
My mother's was here?

KATE
Yes, Madam.

And with this the Servant's voice breaks. She can't stop a tear from rolling down her cheek.

KATE (CONT'D)
My apologies...

Mary goes to her--

MARY
What is it?

KATE
Her Majesty was too young to recall...
(puts a palm to her chest)
...but I was your wet nurse. You're so beautiful. Like your mother.

Mary offers her a warm, compassionate smile.

KATE (CONT'D)
(embarrassed, to escape--)
With permission - I will make certain the bed.

Mary nods. Kate exits the chamber. Mary turns to the Four Marys, who are trying to hide their mortification at the gloomy environs.

MARY
A dire vrai, ce n'est pas une autre France.
(It is no France.)

She offers this as humour, and the Four Marys force a laugh, but it's not very convincing. Then quite seriously--

MARY (CONT'D)
Mais notre devoir n'est plus à la France. C'est ici qu'il nous amène.
(But our duty is no longer to France. It is here.)

The Four Marys stop smiling. It's a solemn reminder that their lives are forever changed.

INT. HOLYROOD - RECEIVING ROOM - DAY

Mary is seated while an ARTIST paints a miniature portrait of her. The Four Marys are overseeing ATTENDANTS who are in the process of hanging tapestries on the walls. Mary is beginning to make the place her own. Moray is with her.

MORAY
Emperor Ferdinand looks to wed one of his sons...

MARY

Are we to bow to the Hapsburgs?

MORAY

They are a good family. Quite powerful.

MARY

And would require me to leave Scotland.

MORAY

A small price for such a favorable union.

She turns to him--

MARY

Favorable for whom?

They lock eyes for a moment. On Moray, clenching his jaw. Mary notices something on the far side of the room beyond Moray. Stands--

MARY (CONT'D)

Higher.

And we see she's referring to one of the tapestries being hung on the wall. The Attendants raise it a foot.

MARY (CONT'D)

This one.

Mary watches as the ATTENDANTS climb down from their ladders and move the tapestry over to the new wall. As they place the ladders, they raise the tapestry--

MARY (CONT'D)

Yes. Thank you.
(to Moray)
Better - is it not?

MORAY

(stifling his annoyance)
I know nothing of these matters.

She takes his hand. Warmly--

MARY

You have done us a great service as ward over this realm. We would be wise to follow your example. Let us dispense with marriage for now and talk of governance. Those are matters which you know far better than myself.

He forces a smile.

MORAY

I appreciate your confidence in me.

She glances back up at the tapestry, decisive.

MARY

Yes. Hang it here.

She heads back over to sit before the Artist.

MARY (CONT'D)

Continue.

ARTIST

Chin higher.

We are TIGHT on the Artist's POV as she tilts her chin up.

We CUT FROM this visage of her face to--

INT. HAMPTON COURT - QUEENS CHAMBER - DAY

Her portrait. A small one. Held in the light by BESS OF HARDWICK, Elizabeth's lady in waiting.

ELIZABETH (O.S.)

What do you see Bess?

We PULL BACK. Elizabeth is studying the miniature along with Bess as the other ladies in waiting make final adjustments to Elizabeth's appearance - placing rings on fingers, powdering her face--

BESS

Charming. Fair - if the painter does not lie. Arrogant, perhaps. I do not like the look of her.

(beat)

And you?

ELIZABETH

Young. Clever.

(beat)

Confident.

Looks down at her hand as a Lady places a ring upon it.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

She would have no trouble securing a husband, even without her throne.

BESS

Nor would you, Madam.

Elizabeth turns to her, eyes flashing--

BESS (CONT'D)
 Forgive me...

INT. HAMPTON COURT - LONG GALLERY - DAY

COURTIERS are crammed into the room, waiting for Elizabeth to emerge. This is one of the few times of the day that they have direct access to the Queen. It's all about jockeying for position, being seen and seeing others.

Among those in court are the EARL OF LENNOX and his handsome 17 year-old son, HENRY DARNLEY, straining to get a prime spot near the door to the Queen's chambers.

As Lennox tries to edge his way forward--

LENNOX
 (to Darnley)
 Come. Closer.

We SHIFT TO right by the door to the Queen's chambers where we find Cecil and Dudley. They have a prime position because they will escort her to the privy council chamber. They speak in low tones so as not to be overheard.

DUDLEY
 She will not accept my hand.

CECIL
 You cannot be certain.

DUDLEY
 I know because I know her heart.
 The moment I betray it with
 ambition, I lose her heart.

CECIL
 Would you rather she lose her
 crown?

DUDLEY
 You exaggerate.

CECIL
 (growing impatient)
 How much blood has been spilled in
 Rome's name? If a Catholic Queen
 bears a child before our own, have
 no doubt that blood will spill
 again. Muster your courage and save
 us from her reticence.

DUDLEY
 What you claim I lack in courage,
 you lack in reason, sir. She will
 not have me.

CECIL

Nor would I have a commoner be king
of England if we were not desperate
for an heir. But we must mould the
clay before us.

DUDLEY

(insulted)

I am no commoner.

CECIL

Nor are you noble.

INT. HAMPTON COURT - QUEENS CHAMBER - DAY

Bess adjusts Elizabeth's hair. Elizabeth holds out her hand and an attendant places a hand mirror in it. Elizabeth holds up the mirror and looks at her own reflection.

We RACK FOCUS from the mirror to the portrait of Mary in the background so that her blurred reflection and the portrait are side by side in the frame. Elizabeth lets her gaze linger on the portrait for a moment, we RACK FOCUS back to the mirror as she looks at her face once again, then turns and presents herself to her ladies. With a matter-of-fact, discerning eye.

BESS

Aye.

INT. HAMPTON COURT - LONG GALLERY - DAY

We are with Cecil and Dudley again--

DUDLEY

You should bring it up with her directly.

CECIL

I have, many times.

DUDLEY

Then there is your answer.

CECIL

On all other matters she follows my counsel. I have her trust, but you have her affections. However much it pains me, I am not above admitting you wield a power I do not. You can succeed where I--

But before he can finish the sentence, the doors to the Queen's Chamber open, revealing Elizabeth.

The COURTIERS bow as they part to form a diagonal path across the room. Elizabeth turns to Cecil and Dudley.

ELIZABETH

(to Cecil)

Good morning, William.

CECIL

Madam.

She turns to Dudley, and saying it with far more warmth--

ELIZABETH

Robert.

DUDLEY
(as warmly)
Resplendent.

Elizabeth smiles.

ELIZABETH

Would you?

He holds out his arm. She loops hers within his. They begin to walk along the path, Cecil falling in closely behind them with Bess and the Ladies.

A bit of jostling among the Courtiers to be closest to the path. It's not unseemly - they are Nobles and need to maintain their dignity - but it's noticeable.

As Elizabeth walks, she nods to some, ignores others. Lennox presses forward, Darnley following. As Elizabeth approaches, Lennox makes a show of a deep bow, but it goes intentionally unnoticed by Elizabeth.

Lennox tries to recover by appealing to Cecil once Elizabeth has passed, stepping out in front of him. He keeps his volume low so as not to be overheard--

LENNOX

My Lord - I would ask our mistress to beseech Queen Mary that I be allowed to return to Scotland as Earl of our ancestral--

CECIL

(the gall, full volume)
This is not the place.

LENNOX

(insistent)
It would be wise to have a Catholic servant there. My influence would--

CECIL

It is your influence which emboldened papists here.

This is said loud enough for the entire room to turn its attention to Cecil and Lennox, which is what Cecil wants. Even Elizabeth turns and looks back. Lennox is red with embarrassment. Cecil and Dudley continue on. Lennox looks around and sees all eyes staring at him.

Elizabeth exits the room and the crowd begins to dissolve. In low tones to his father--

DARNLEY

You humiliate yourself.

Without hesitation Lennox turns and slaps his son hard across the face. Darnley reels, stunned. Lennox heads for the exit. Now it is Darnley whom the remaining Courtiers are staring at.

INT. HOLYROOD - COUNCIL CHAMBER - DAY

TIGHT on a young Italian Man - RIZZIO - playing the Renaissance Violin with accompaniment. He is comely, and a talented musician.

The chamber is still in the process of being decorated - far more modest in its architecture and furnishings than what we saw in Hampton Court, but still brighter and more luxurious than when we first saw the castle.

The Four Marys are staring at Rizzio with admiration, even perhaps a bit of lust. He smiles at Livingston, who looks at her feet while blushing. The other Marys giggle, drawing attention from some of the NOBLES who are waiting in a line to kiss Mary's hand.

Among those passing by is MAITLAND - a high-ranking Noble, diplomatic and innocuous on the surface, but a snake within. He and Fleming lock eyes - an instant attraction.

Moray introduces the guests to Mary as they come before her--

MORAY
William Maitland of Lethington,
Secretary of State.

Maitland turns his attention back to Mary. Kneels down and kisses her hand.

Next up is KNOX - a Protestant Cleric, severely dressed with an even more severe manner.

MORAY (CONT'D)
John Knox, Church of Scotland.

As Knox bends down to kiss Mary's hand, Rizzio screeches his bow across the strings of his renaissance violin - a comic sound. Knox turns back to Rizzio with disgust. The Four Marys giggle, and Mary herself cannot help but smile.

RIZZIO
A loose string.

Although this thin excuse does nothing to placate Knox. Moray veers things back to business--

MORAY
Let us begin.

The Lords sit down on chairs in a semi-circle around the throne. Once they are settled, Mary addresses them in French.

MARY
*Il est certain que beaucoup d'entre
vous ne vous alliez qu'à regret à
une Reine Française et Catholique.*
(MORE)

MARY (CONT'D)

(We are certain many of you are ill
at ease aligning yourself with a
French and Catholic Queen...)

Some of the other Lords look askance at each other in
reaction to her speaking a non-native language.

MARY (CONT'D)

(she abruptly switches to
Scots)

But your Queen is in Scotland now.

She pauses, letting her use of Scots sink in. Then--

MARY (CONT'D)

When my beloved François passed to
God, I could have married any
number of suitors. Portugal.
Denmark. Sweden. Many others. The
Hapsburgs offered their sons.

(beat)

I declined them all.

On Moray. He'd much prefer she be married off.

MARY (CONT'D)

Just as I would not have an
uncertain fate imposed upon myself,
I will not impose an uncertain fate
upon my subjects.

(beat)

They remain free to worship however
they so choose, Catholic or
Protestant.

A look of surprise from the assembled Lords. This is not what
they were expecting.

INT. HAMPTON COURT - PRIVY COUNCIL CHAMBER - DAY

Elizabeth is at the head of the table. Cecil speaks on behalf
of his fellow Counsellors, which include Dudley and Randolph.

CECIL

Her pronouncements mean nothing.
Whom she marries speaks louder than
any edict from the throne.

ELIZABETH

(to Randolph)

What say'st our Ambassador?

RANDOLPH
She feigns disinterest, Madam...

INT. HAMPTON COURT - PRIVY COUNCIL CHAMBER - DAY

Randolph - in stiff formality - concludes his report.

RANDOLPH

She is formidable, Madam.

On Elizabeth - she grimaces at this assessment of her rival.

INT. HOLYROOD - COUNCIL CHAMBER - DAY

Mary before her Lords, as before.

MARY

Pastor, you look displeased with our tolerance?

A general nervousness flutters among the Lords, not least of all with Moray, but Knox is not the least bit intimidated.

KNOX

Any realm that is ruled by the Pope is not tolerant, Madam. It is enslaved--

MARY

Stand when I address you.

Knox makes a show of standing slowly, resolutely and saying the following words with equally slow resolve.

KNOX

There is one true God. And therefore one true religion.

MARY

Such rhetoric incites revolt.

KNOX

If a Prince strays from God's will, it is not in doubt that they may be resisted. And in your case, as with all women: their sight is but blindness; their strength, weakness; their counsel, foolishness; their judgment, frenzy. Are we to abide a papist and a woman both?

Mary is stunned, but gathers herself to have the last, if shaky, word--

MARY

Well then, I perceive that my subjects shall obey you, and not me. And shall do what they like, and not what I command. And so must I be subject to them, and not they to me.

Unwavering, and unmoved--

KNOX

May I sit, Madam?

MARY

No. You may remove yourself from this council and my court.

A gasp of unease from the other Lords. Knox, with all the pride he can muster--

KNOX

My council is among the faithful
disciples I serve. We have as
little need of this court as it has
of us. I pray for your soul, Madam.

Knox slowly makes for the door, milking his exit.

INT. HOLYROOD - HALLWAY - DAY

Mary walks briskly with Moray. She can no longer contain her
rage - face flushed, speaking as briskly as she walks--

MORAY

I beg you to reconsider. He has the
trust of the people.

MARY

Did I not give deference to his
faith?

MORAY

Yes. But we must be delicate.
Allegiance does not happen by
proclama--

She stops and turns to him, her rage frothing--

MARY

And where is his delicacy? That he
should speak to a monarch so? Would
he challenge Elizabeth thus?

MORAY

With what cause? He would welcome a
Protestant Queen. Which is
precisely why we must not push him
into her arms. Show him love.

MARY

You are wise, brother. There are
times for wisdom. And there are
times for love. But there are also
times for strength.

She continues on. Off Moray, swallowing his frustration.

INT. SCOTTISH CHURCH - DAY

A sparse, undecorated place of worship, clearly Protestant.
Knox stands at a pulpit, delivering a sermon. The front rows
are filled with nobility, including Maitland, who is sitting
in the first row, listening with great interest.

As the rows progress toward the back they are populated with MERCHANTS and PEASANTS. It's a packed room, and some of the peasants are forced to stand in the rear by the open door to the street. This is part religious fervor, part retribution at having been removed from court--

KNOX

(with force)

We have a scourge upon our land.
'Tis worse than pestilence or
famine. 'Tis worse than the Roman
pagans or Egyptian pharaohs. 'Tis a
woman with a crown who only
pretends to worship Christ when in
truth she kneels before the Pope.
We will not bow as she does.

Murmurs of approval from the congregation. Knox's charismatic forcefulness picks up steam--

KNOX (CONT'D)

We do not pray to false idols. We
do not take instruction from Rome.
We resist those who would tempt us
with indulgences. Deny those who
worship luxury. Respect not those
who flaunt their excesses...

INT. HOLYROOD - QUEEN'S CHAMBER - NIGHT

The Four Marys are helping Mary undress. The room is now well-appointed with furniture and tapestries.

KNOX (V.O.)

...who whore themselves to wealth
and the degradations of the flesh.

Mary taps Fleming's cheek with her finger.

MARY

Alors, ici?
(What about here?)

The girls are laughing. Fleming blushing.

MARY (CONT'D)

(taps Flemings' nose)
Ici?
(Here?)

FLEMING

(through her laughter)
Non.
(No.)

Mary puts a finger to Fleming's lips.

MARY

Il vous a embrassé ici?
(Has he kissed you here?)

FLEMING

(sheepishly)
Une fois...
(Once...)

The others gasp, titillated.

FLEMING (CONT'D)

...Sans aller plus loin.
(...But no further.)

MARY

(turning to Beaton)
Et vous alors? Ils embrassent comment, les Anglais?
(What about you? How well do the English kiss?)

BEATON

(smiling, embarrassed)
Madame...

Mary turns on a dime, suddenly serious.

MARY

What matters have you discussed with the Ambassador between your kisses?

A chill between them all. The undressing has halted.

BEATON

Même s'il y a de l'amitié entre lui et moi--
(We are friendly, but I--)

MARY

(to Fleming)
Or you - with my Secretary of State.

FLEMING

Madame - vous savez que nous--
(Madam - you know we--)

MARY

In Scots.

FLEMING

Our loyalty is to you alone.

Mary warms, thawing the chill--

MARY

I jest. I know you love me.

But was she jesting? They resume undressing her.

MARY (CONT'D)

Just be wary of these men. Their
love is not the same as their
respect.

The Mary's remove layer upon layer, down to her smock. After several beats--

FLEMING

Might I ask - since we have not
known it ourselves...
(gathers the courage)
What is it like...?

Less ashamed to complete the question than Fleming to ask--

MARY

To have a man?

INT. HAMPTON COURT - QUEEN'S CHAMBER - NIGHT

Atop the bed with drapes drawn for privacy. Elizabeth with Dudley. Her sleeves have been removed. The farthingale beneath her dress bulges up as they sit side by side.

Dudley gently pushes the smock sleeve up Elizabeth's forearm, revealing the skin of her wrist. He brings it to his mouth and kisses the underside. Elizabeth closes her eyes, shaking from the touch. Lips on skin is forbidden and thrilling.

MARY (V.O.)

I have only lain with François...

INT. HOLYROOD - QUEEN'S CHAMBER - NIGHT

Mary with the Marys. They're still undressing her--

MARY

He shook terribly from fright. As
did I. The poor boy did his best...

INTERCUT WITH SCENE 35--

INT. HOLYROOD - BANQUET HALL - NIGHT

MUSIC rises from a DANCE. Two hands, palms flat to each other
- a man and woman's...

MARY (V.O.)

...but it was over before it began.

BACK TO Mary in her bedchamber with the Marys--

FLEMING

So you never...

MARY

No. We tried but once.

BACK TO the Banquet Hall - TIGHT on Mary's glowing face, flushed from the thrill of a man's touch--

MARY (V.O.)

Yet I found myself...stirred, a wanting like none other...

We PULL BACK to see that she's dancing with Bothwell--

MARY (V.O.)

Not so much for him...

Then gliding to another Nobleman, then another, her face warmed by the music and hundreds of candles that fill the room. As she whisks between the men--

MARY (V.O.)

...but for the thing itself...the touch...skin upon skin.

INT. HAMPTON COURT - QUEEN'S CHAMBER - NIGHT

The MUSIC from the DANCE continues as--

Dudley is kissing Elizabeth's nape, beginning to unloosen her corset, but Elizabeth pulls away.

Dudley reluctantly lets go of the strings. Takes Elizabeth's hand and brings it between his legs.

DUDLEY

Do you feel my passion?

ELIZABETH

Quiet Robert.

The music slows to something more elegaic and sparse as she withdraws Dudley's hand. Disappointment on his face. Silence.

We POP to Bess and the Ladies in Waiting outside the drapes, tilting towards the drapes to see if they can overhear the whispers within.

INT. HOLYROOD - QUEEN'S CHAMBER - NIGHT

The Marys are rapt, gathered around Mary as she sits on the foot stool of her bed, now down to her smock.

MARY

I should like to marry again. To know what it means to have a man fully. But...

And we see her shift from reverie to cold prudence--

MARY (CONT'D)

...not if I am owned.

The music STOPS. A beat. Mary stands.

MARY (CONT'D)

Shall we sleep?

SETON

You're early...

Following Seton's gaze, Mary looks down. Sees a splotch of blood seeped through at her groin.

BEATON

I'll get a fresh cloth.

As Beaton gets up we TIME CUT TO--

Mary surrounded by the Marys. Beaton with a swaddle in hand. Seton with a basin and damp cloth.

LIVINGSTON

Levez les bras.
(Lift your arms.)

Mary lifts her arms, the three remaining Marys avert their eyes as they begin to raise her smock above Mary's head, for no mortal is allowed to see a sovereign nude.

CUT TO TIGHT on Mary's bare legs beneath the groin. We see a trickle of blood running down the length of her thigh to the knee. Seton washes the blood away with the damp cloth.

CUT TO TIGHT on the basin as Seton wrings the cloth, blood clouding the water within.

INT. HAMPTON COURT - QUEEN'S CHAMBER - NIGHT

TIGHT on two hands barely touching on white linen - their pinky fingers grazing one another--

DUDLEY (O.S.)

Do not ask this of me.

ELIZABETH (O.S.)

If you wed her she is ours.

We PULL BACK to see Elizabeth and Dudley laying side by side, still fully clothed. They talk low so as not to be heard.

DUDLEY
And what of us?

ELIZABETH
What us?

DUDLEY
You, Elizabeth. And I, your Robert.

ELIZABETH
One of those is a Prince. The other
is...

She does not finish. He waits, then--

DUDLEY
Is what?

ELIZABETH
Is merely my Robert.

DUDLEY
(with a hint of
bitterness)
Merely.

ELIZABETH
With Mary you too become a Prince.

DUDLEY
If I am Noble enough to marry one
Queen, I am noble enough for
another.

Dudley moves in - Elizabeth withdraws.

DUDLEY (CONT'D)
Elizabeth... I know it cannot be.
(repeating himself)
I know it cannot be.

ELIZABETH
England is not Scotland.

INT. HOLYROOD - ANTE ROOM - DAY

Rizzio is escorted into the room by an Attendant, a DOG
circling at him, barking loudly. He holds his lute high as
the dog leaps up, nipping at it.

It's late Autumn. Rain pelts the windows. They approach Mary
and her four ladies seated on the ground before the fire - an
indoor picnic with a sumptuous lunch.

MARY
Worry not. She's harmless...

Mary whistles. The DOG runs over to her. Mary feeds her a piece of meat from her plate. She pets the dog affectionately as she devours the meat.

RIZZIO
You requested music, your Majesty?

MARY
What accent is that?

RIZZIO
Italian.

MARY
How is your command of French?

With spirit, he launches into a popular Arbeau chanson--

RIZZIO
*Belle qui tiens ma vie
Captive dans tes yeux,
Qui m'as l'âme ravie
D'un sourire gracieux...*

Mary and the others clap with approval. Rizzio bows.

MARY
Is your hand as good as your
French?

RIZZIO
(puzzled)
My hand, Madam?

MARY
I must make love to a woman, and I
would have a man's hand to help me.
One who is loyal like my friend
here.

--she says as she runs her hand through the dog's fur.

TIME CUT to TIGHT ON Rizzio's hand writing with a quill on parchment. We see the words in French that we hear--

MARY (CONT'D)
Madame, ma bonne cousine...
(Madam, my good cousin...)

We switch to English for the sake of clarity. And see Rizzio seated at a small table writing, Mary plucking grapes from a bundle while she reclines on a rug, dictating the letter--

MARY (CONT'D)
We are two sisters bound by
womanhood, two Princes on the same
island, and ruling side by side
must do with affection...

RIZZIO
"In harmony" perhaps.

MARY

Yes. I like that.

EXT. HOLYROOD - COLONNADE - DUSK

Mary walks along the colonnade as we see flakes of snow floating down into the court. The Four Marys & Rizzio are with Mary's dogs, that are playing in the snow in the middle of the courtyard.

MARY (V.O.)
 ...ruling side by side we must do
 so in harmony. Not through a treaty
 drafted by men lesser than
 ourselves, but respecting each
 other's rightful claims granted by
 God...

She places her palm out and lets a flake fall on it--

MARY (V.O.)
 As the first snow falls to the
 North...

EXT. HAMPTON COURT - DAY

TIGHT on the HOOVES of a HORSE walking through a fresh blanket of snow as it continues to fall, leaving hoofprints--

MARY (V.O.)
 ...it is the same snow that will
 fall at your feet.

CUT TO from ABOVE as the riderless horse is being led to the entrance by a GROOM, snow covering the ground.

MARY (V.O.)
 From the same heaven above, in
 service of the same Lord...

INT. HAMPTON COURT - DAY

TIGHT on the flat blade of a knife scraping along a length of coloured paper, the paper curling as it does--

MARY (V.O.)
 ...And when the same spring flowers
 for us both...

PULL back to see Elizabeth placing the curled paper into an intricate quilling design of flowers on a painted board.

MARY (V.O.)

I hope we might meet in person,
that I might embrace you...

We TRACK UP to on Elizabeth's face, warmed by the fire.

MARY (V.O.)
 ...and we might resolve our
 destinies...

INT. HAMPTON COURT - QUEEN'S CHAMBER - DAY

Elizabeth is pacing, dictating a letter to a nearby SCRIBE--

ELIZABETH
 We would delight in holding our
 sister's hand in ours. Already its
 warmth can be felt with your
 words...

A knock on the door. She looks over--

EXT. HAMPTON COURT - DAY

Elizabeth comes outside to the front entrance, where Dudley and Randolph are already sitting atop their respective horses, ready to depart on a journey, GROOMS nearby.

ELIZABETH (V.O.)
 Let us settle on a meeting place
 before the summer brings
 discomfort.

During the following, Elizabeth approaches Dudley. He looks forlorn. Takes his hand in hers and kisses it.

ELIZABETH (V.O.)
 Let our nations cherish each other
 as we would - two Kingdoms united.

He opens his hand to find one of her quilled flowers within it. It makes departing that much more difficult. She offers him a bittersweet smile.

ELIZABETH (V.O.)
 Meanwhile accept this portrait as a
 sign of thanks for yours...

But Dudley does not return the smile. He cannot hide his unhappiness at being charged with this mission.

ELIZABETH (V.O.)
 And please accept this suitor who
 presents both his love and mine.

As he begins to ride away, Elizabeth turns to watch him go, and as the camera comes around on her we CUT TO--

INT. HOLYROOD - COUNCIL CHAMBER - DAY

Dudley presents the portrait of Elizabeth to Mary. Randolph is in attendance, as are Moray and Maitland. Mary is delighted to receive the gift - beaming with excitement.

ELIZABETH (V.O.)
 ...The Earl of Leicester - Lord
 Robert Dudley.

Mary looks up from the portrait to address Randolph--

MARY
 Do you think it might stand with my
 honour to marry my sister's
 subject?

RANDOLPH
 (glancing to Dudley)
 It is true that an Earl is not a
 Prince...

We POP to Dudley, who looks miserable, then back to Randolph--

RANDOLPH (CONT'D)
 Surely there can be no greater
 honour than to match yourself with
 a Nobleman by whom you inherit such
 a kingdom as England.

Moray perks up at this, as does Mary.

MARY
 I have such inheritance by blood,
 regardless of who I marry or do not
 marry.

A provocation. Moray is anxious. Randolph remains cool.

MARY (CONT'D)
 (to Dudley)
 We must discuss succession before
 marriage, not the other way around.

Randolph grits his teeth. This meeting is a failure for him.

MARY (CONT'D)
 We hope we do not vex the Earl.

DUDLEY
 Not in the least, Madam. I am
 grateful for your honesty.

MARY
 Were I not a prince, I could not
 hope for a finer and more handsome
 man than you.

DUDLEY
 You save me from disgrace.

Off Mary's look--

DUDLEY (CONT'D)

I would be no more than a wretch
compared to the beauty you possess.

Mary laughs. With a flirtatious smirk--

MARY

We see why our cousin is so fond of
the Earl.

Then, on a dime, all business--

MARY (CONT'D)

(to Randolph)

I shall respect Elizabeth's crown
as soon as she names me its
successor.

RANDOLPH

The issue of succession is a--

MARY

For two years now we have dallied
when the compromise could not be
clearer. Elizabeth need merely
agree to it.

RANDOLPH

Madam - my Queen will not be
pleased by your rebuff of the Earl
and your persistence regarding--

MARY

If she has any concerns about this proposal she may express them to me directly. Plans proceed for us to meet next month?

RANDOLPH

Aye, Madam. In York.

MARY

Very well. We shall accomplish far more without envoys between us.

A slight to Randolph, and we can read it in his eyes. She turns to Dudley again. Holding up the portrait of Elizabeth--

MARY (CONT'D)

(back to Dudley)

How like is it unto your mistress's face?

INT. HAMPTON COURT - QUEEN'S CHAMBER - DAY

Elizabeth is in bed. She looks pale and sickly. Bess wipes her forehead with a damp rag as Cecil addresses her. Randolph and Dudley are with him.

CECIL

You must not meet with her, Madam. False affections are one matter, but giving her audience is--

ELIZABETH

What makes you think our affections false?

Elizabeth's voice is feeble from illness.

CECIL

Affections aside, she remains obstinate.

(glances to Dudley)

And rebuffs your chosen one.

ELIZABETH

What sayst thou, Robert?

DUDLEY

(falling in line)

I agree with Cecil's counsel.

RANDOLPH

We are all agreed Madam.

Elizabeth looks grim. Dudley gives a glance to Cecil, indicating that perhaps they should go and let him handle this.

CECIL

Rest well, Madam.

He and Randolph exit. Dudley remains. Sits down on the edge of the bed and takes her hand and kisses it.

ELIZABETH

You shouldn't.

DUDLEY

I survived it as a boy.

ELIZABETH

And if I should not survive?

DUDLEY

You will.

ELIZABETH

And even so - if my face is
scarred, will you still love me?

DUDLEY

I would love you if you turned into
a fish.

Elizabeth starts to chuckle. Dudley brings his hands to the sides of his neck to mimic a fish. She laughs more, painfully. Then her brow furrows. Vulnerable--

ELIZABETH

Is she as beautiful as I hear told?

EXT. SCOTTISH COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

TIGHT on Mary's face, windswept and vigorous, as she rides through the lush, late spring countryside. Her entire entourage is on the move. We see her taking in the beauty of the land, a smile on her face as she basks in the sun.

The spell is broken by--

BOTHWELL

Halt.

The entire party comes to a stop. Mary looks ahead and sees a contingent of three horsemen galloping toward them from down the road. Two appear to be soldier escorts. Bothwell races ahead with four horseman of the Royal Guard to intercept.

As Bothwell's contingent nears the foreigners they come to a stop. From Mary's POV we can barely make out that one of them is Randolph.

EXT. SCOTTISH COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

The Royal entourage is in the background. Mary walks through a field of grass and wildflowers at some distance, Randolph next to her, Moray and Maitland several steps behind.

MARY

Could her Council not wait until
her return?

RANDOLPH

Their business was urgent, Madam.
The Huguenots sent an envoy.

MARY

(concerned)

And she receives them?

RANDOLPH

England wishes no more bloodshed.
Being from France you must
understand.

MARY

You may tell my sister that we pray
for swift peace, that we may meet
soon.

RANDOLPH

I will tell her at once.

MARY

Stay with us the night back at
Holyrood. I'm certain Mistress
Beaton would welcome your company.

Randolph blushes at the insinuation..

RANDOLPH

Thank you, Madam.

TIME CUT TO--

Mary walking with Moray and Maitland toward the carriage as
the entire entourage is being turned around for the journey
back. Three of her ladies - Seton, Livingston and Fleming are
close behind. Beaton is a bit farther back, walking with
Randolph as he leads his horse on foot.

MAITLAND

She hides behind her Council.

MARY

You do not think she postpones...

MORAY

I think she has no intention to
meet until you recognise her
legitimacy.

MARY

(sinking in)

A false promise then.

MAITLAND

Retaliation perhaps, for refusing
the treaty.

MARY

For refusing Dudley.

Off Maitland's look.

MARY (CONT'D)

This is a matter of the heart, not
the state. They don't mix well.

She glances back at Beaton and Randolph. They are smiling and
happy. Then turns to the ladies.

MARY (CONT'D)

Wouldn't you say, Mistress Fleming?

FLEMING

Pardon me, Madam?

MARY

(gesturing to Maitland)
I speak of the state...
(gesturing to Fleming)
...and of the heart.

FLEMING

I am afraid I don't understand...

MAITLAND

(bristling)
Your mistress mocks our affections.

MARY

Not so. They sometimes have
value...

As she returns to her horse she steals one more glance at
Beaton and Randolph.

EXT. HOLYROOD - SECLUDED AREA - NIGHT

Randolph and Beaton are in the shadows - groping, kissing, rough and lustful. After several moments of this, Beaton squirms loose.

BEATON

It's late. I must attend to my
mistress.

He tries to kiss her again but she holds him off.

BEATON (CONT'D)

Think of your wife.

He sighs. Just as she pulls away he grabs her wrist--

RANDOLPH

Nothing we spoke of...

BEATON

Of course not.

With a smile she leans forward and gives him one last kiss. He lets go. She walks off. As she rounds the corner to a new corridor she picks up pace, walking more and more briskly.

INT. HOLYROOD - QUEEN'S CHAMBER - NIGHT

Beaton enters, breathless. Mary is being undressed by the three other Marys.

BEATON
The pox, Madam.

Off their looks--

BEATON (CONT'D)
There is no envoy. She has the pox.

On Mary. This changes everything.

MARY
How grave?

BEATON
Quite grave.

MARY
(to Beaton)
Go rouse my brother.

As Beaton exits, to the other three--

MARY (CONT'D)
Back on with it.

They hasten to re-dress her. Mary's thoughts are swirling. Several beats as she traverses exhilaration to doubt--

MARY (CONT'D)
Do you think me sinful?

SETON
How so?

MARY
My excitement.

LIVINGSTON
C'est Dieu qui la rend malade.
(It is God who makes her ill.)

MARY
(in French, to herself)
Oui, c'est Dieu.
(Yes, God.)
(in English)
He has his plan...

INT. HOLYROOD - QUEEN'S CHAMBER - NIGHT

TIGHT on Rizzio as he transcribes with the scratch of a quill against parchment. Moray looking over his shoulder. The room is lit by only candles, giving it a conspiratorial feel.

MARY (O.S.)

It will please you to know that I
have warmed to the prospect of
wedding Lord Dudley. We shall do
so...

Rizzio dips his quill in the ink. We PULL BACK to see Mary dictating the letter--

MARY (CONT'D)

...upon one condition.

She waits for Rizzio to catch up, then--

MARY (CONT'D)

While we wish you a long and
healthy life, and that no injury or
illness befall you, we shall only
do you the favour of betrothing
your special friend...

Rizzio is writing furiously. Once again Mary waits for him to catch up. She stands and goes over to Rizzio so that she may look over his shoulder as Moray and Maitland are doing--

MARY (CONT'D)

...once you name us heir.

INT. HAMPTON COURT - QUEEN'S CHAMBER - DAY

Elizabeth is covered now with small pox boils. She is attended to by Bess as two other ladies keep vigil as she reads the letter from Mary.

ELIZABETH

(in a whisper, to herself)
She knows...

BESS

Madam...?

Leaping to another thought, this one fueled by jealousy--

ELIZABETH

My "special friend"...she taunts
us.

Her gut is churning; she's half delirious from her illness--

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
 She wants him as her own. My
 Robert. My crown...

PRELAP the clashing of fencing sabers as we CUT TO--

INT. HAMPTON COURT - LONG GALLERY - DAY

A number of NOBLES are stripped down to their undershirts, fencing in pairs down the length of the gallery as others look on. In one pair is Dudley. In another is Darnley. The door flings open, revealing Elizabeth.

The fencers cease. Everyone stares at her - surprised to see their Queen enter unannounced and in such a sorry state.

ELIZABETH
 Out.

The Nobles begin to disperse, the fencers setting down their foils as they go. Some are stealing glances at Elizabeth as they exit, particularly Darnley. Dudley approaches her, concerned--

She hands him the letter. He begins to read. Looks up at her.

He lifts her veil so he can see her better. She looks stricken, on the verge of tears. Her eyes say "You must not leave me."

DUDLEY
 I am yours. Forever yours.

ELIZABETH
 But how? Am I to refuse her what I myself suggested.

Her tears begin to fall. Dudley embraces her to console her. She would normally feel embarrassed by such an outward sign of emotion, but not in his arms. After a beat, in a whisper--

DUDLEY
 There is a way to right this...

She looks to him - expectant, hopeful--

DUDLEY (CONT'D)
 The boy, who was fencing nearest to the door.

ELIZABETH
 I took no notice.

DUDLEY
Darnley, son of Lennox...

INT. HOLYROOD - QUEEN'S CHAMBER - DAY

TIGHT on Mary, two hands covering her eyes. Giggles in the background. She's smiling. We PULL BACK to see that Beaton is covering her eyes from behind.

FLEMING
Now.

Beaton removes her hands. We CUT TO Mary's POV: Fleming and Livingston are holding one of Mary's dresses up to Rizzio, fanning out the hem, Seton holding the blouse up to his chest.

Rizzio begins to twirl as if dancing the masque with effeminate physicality, the three women keeping the dress and blouse against him as he does, singing in a falsetto. Mary laughs as do the other women.

MARY
You look exquisite, Mademoiselle.

Rizzio curtsies, with a feminine voice--

RIZZIO
Is it a sin that I feel more a
sister to you than a brother?

The smiles of the women fade. Rizzio instantly backtracks.

RIZZIO (CONT'D)
(standing)
Forgive me. I forget myself in your
company.

But Mary wants to relieve him of his shame.

MARY
Be whoever you wish with us. You
make for a lovely sister.
(to the ladies)
Doesn't she?

The other ladies nod, feeling free to smile once again. We can sense Rizzio appreciates their acceptance. A knock at the door. The ladies instantly pull the dress away from Rizzio.

MARY (CONT'D)
Enter.

The door opens, revealing Moray and an Attendant. He glances to Rizzio warily, then to Mary--

MORAY
We have visitors.

He hands Mary a letter from Elizabeth. She reads over it quickly - looks up at him, puzzled.

MARY
They are Stuarts...

MORAY
Aye.

INT. HOLYROOD - COUNCIL CHAMBER - DAY

As an ATTENDANT shows Darnley and Lennox in, sotto voce--

LENNOX
I shall talk. You say nothing.

DARNLEY
Not even to--

LENNOX
Silence.

The Attendant steps aside. What Lennox and Darnley see are Mary and the Four Marys on common stools. They are all dressed similarly, Mary no different than the others. Moray and Maitland are to the side.

MORAY
The 4th Earl of Lennox...

Lennox bows.

MORAY (CONT'D)
His son Henry, Lord Darnley.

Darnley bows. Lennox expects the Queen to say something, but he cannot tell which of the five women is Mary. He looks to Moray and Maitland for assistance. They are statues. He looks to the Attendant, who says nothing. It's an embarrassing position to be in. But neither offers guidance. He looks back to the Ladies.

LENNOX
Forgive me - I do not know my
Queen's visage.

He gets no help from anyone. Lennox looks helplessly from one Lady to the next.

He laughs nervously, both flummoxed and insulted. But Darnley is amused, and more than game to play. He walks forward brazenly.

DARNLEY

Let me, father.

As he speaks he circles the women slowly, considering them. His charisma is electric, amplified by how closely he orbits, almost brushing up against the women, his proximity and the chance of physical contact so acute it's thrilling. He speaks slowly, confidently - his voice intoxicating - we see the womens' chests rising and falling, titillated. Darnley continues to circle them...

DARNLEY (CONT'D)

I give you verse, unsheathing my
quick wit...to see which among you
it quickens.

Giggles from the ladies. Moray and Maitland remain icy cold.

DARNLEY (CONT'D)

But should I fail to choose
correctly...

As he comes around the front of them again, he places his hand on his chest, feigning sorrow--

DARNLEY (CONT'D)

Tis my soul that will be sickened.

They smile at his performance, thoroughly charmed.

DARNLEY (CONT'D)

For shame returning to my native
land...Only to be deprived of
kissing...

Now he stops and kneels before Seton...

But at the last moment he turns to Mary, takes her hand--

DARNLEY (CONT'D)

...my Queen's perfect hand.

He bends forward and gives her hand a tender kiss. The other Marys clap with approval. Darnley rises and bows.

MARY

How did you know?

DARNLEY

You held your breath when I was
about to err.

EXT. HOLYROOD - COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

Mary and Darnley walking alone, the Four Marys trailing in the distance--

DARNLEY

The request was ours and she was kind enough to grant us passage. Here we can worship as we choose.

MARY

I doubt tis faith that brings you. Rather the lands your father seeks. Or even the throne.

DARNLEY

The throne?

MARY

Why would Elizabeth grant you passports if she did not intend you as a suitor? And by laying suit to me does not the House of Lennox lay suit to all of Scotland?

Darnley chuckles. Mary is offended. She stops, turns to him.

MARY (CONT'D)

I amuse you.

DARNLEY

Aye.

(A beat)

Madam - you must not be Elizabeth.

MARY

How so?

DARNLEY

The woman lives in fright - always suspecting intrigue, always fearful of revolt.

MARY

Her fears are wise. We both have Nobles who would have us deposed.

Darnley takes the scolding without showing an ounce of regret. The opposite. He smiles back at her.

DARNLEY

Have I vexed you?

Mary self-consciously brings her fingers to her cheek and turns away. Darnley places a hand on her face and turns her towards him. It's an incredibly bold gesture.

MARY

You dare touch a sovereign without
her permission?

Though she says this, she makes no effort to remove his hand.

DARNLEY

I can speak for neither my father
nor Elizabeth. Only for myself.

He moves his hand so that his palm rests on her cheek.

DARNLEY (CONT'D)

And speaking for myself, you have a
loyal subject in your Henry, who
would rather worship at your feet
than at a Catholic mass.

He leans in to kiss her on the lips. She turns her head away just before his lips reach hers. Continues walking, her chest heaving from the close encounter.

Darnley begins to follow, several steps behind.

DARNLEY (CONT'D)

I shall keep walking with you then,
until you object.

Mary keeps walking, unsure how to answer, a swirl of emotion. Darnley catches up. Offers his arm. She takes it. And they continue to walk in silence - Mary's vigilant mind battling with the longing in her body.

We hear the sound of lute strings being plucked and CUT TO--

INT. HOLYROOD - STAIRWELL/HALLWAY - NIGHT

Seton leads Darnley up a spiral staircase by candlelight. As they reach the top of the stairs she pauses, seeing shadows. Gestures for Darnley to stop. Blows out her candle.

Two Nobles pass in the hallway, not seeing Seton and Darnley in the shadows of the stairwell. Once they have passed, she gestures for Darnley to follow, and they continue on.

INT. HOLYROOD - QUEEN'S CHAMBER - NIGHT

Rizzio plucking the strings casually. The Marys (minus Seton) are attending to Mary, powdering her face, combing her hair, dabbing her wrists and neck with oils. Rizzio looks on as he plays, a smile of appreciation at her beauty.

Mary's eyes shine with anticipation and anxiety. The Marys step away to have a look at their labors. Rizzio - continuing to play--

RIZZIO
You glow, Madam.

TIME CUT to Seton knocking on the door from the outside to make those within aware of their arrival.

Seton and Darnley enter. The Marys curtsy and promptly exit. Rizzio stays. Mary is not in sight.

TIME CUT to Rizzio helping Darnley remove his collar, his sleeves and his doublet, so that he is only wearing his undershirt and breeches. Then Rizzio gestures to the bed--

DARNLEY
You remain?

RIZZIO
The Queen scarcely knows your grace.

Rizzio picks up his lute, nearby.

RIZZIO (CONT'D)
But I shall play, and hear nothing.

Darnley circuits the bed to the other side, where the drapes are drawn open. Mary sits atop the bed, knees beneath her, looking resplendent.

Rizzio perches himself on a stool and begins to pluck the lute once more, his fingers matching the music that has continued to play throughout the sequence thus far.

We CUT BACK to the far side of the bed. Darnley is still taking in Mary's beauty.

MARY
(nodding to a side table)
There is wine if you desire it.

Darnley fetches the bottle and pours a goblet. As he does--

MARY (CONT'D)
When I refused you. I wish...

She averts her eyes. She does not want to admit it. Glances at the goblet of wine.

MARY (CONT'D)

May I have some?

He holds out the goblet. She reaches for it. But when her hand wraps around it, he places his other hand on hers. Caresses her fingers with his. An intake of air from Mary.

He slides her hand over the goblets rim, dipping her fingers within. Then brings her fingers to his lips and glosses them wet with the sherry. Her mouth is parted, her breath quickening. His hand still on her wrist, he gently pulls her forward.

She closes her eyes and places her mouth on his. Then moves the tip of her tongue along the length of his lips, savouring the wine on the tender flesh.

He runs his hand through the hair at the nape of her neck and pulls her closer still, so that now her lips are fully pressed against his.

TIME CUTS as we see kissing grow more passionate. Mary is giving into a hunger she hasn't indulged before - except with François, who wasn't up to the task. There's a ferocity to her desire, increasingly confident and instinctual.

We see her run her hand along his leg, then between his thighs. When it finds its mark she pulls back.

DARNLEY

What's wrong?

MARY

Do you not...desire me?

Darnley doesn't waste a moment.

DARNLEY

Lie back.

He gently lays her back. Kisses her collar bone, then her chest. Makes his way down to the folds of her dress. Pushing them up along her bare legs.

She starts to retreat, grabbing his head by the hair and pulling him up.

MARY

We cannot...

DARNLEY

We won't. I promise you. This is not that.

She's confused - not sure what he means.

DARNLEY (CONT'D)

Have faith in me. Do you have
faith?

She's unsure but she wants to trust him. The fearless side of her takes over. She nods.

Darnley lowers himself again, his mouth against the thin fabric of her gown wrought between her thighs.

We CUT TO TIGHT on her face as she gasps, his mouth alighting her through the gown, an intense sensation beyond which any she thought possible, and she is utterly lost in it. We CUT TO--

her hand clawing at the sheets
her teeth clenched as she sucks in air
her torso twisting
her eyes widening
her back arching
her face as she convulses, gasping

As her body shivers - the after shocks still rippling through her, Darnley slides up beside her.

MARY

Do you need to...?

DARNLEY

No. Don't worry about me.

He gets up and pours two goblets. Walks around to the other side of the bed where Rizzio is still plucking. Sets one goblet down for Rizzio. They lock eyes.

Then Darnley heads back around and sits down in a chair. Takes a sip as he looks over to Mary, who is now on her side, her back to him.

On Mary, heart pounding, slipping into reverie, but also trying to process what just occurred.

INT. HAMPTON COURT - PRIVY COUNCIL CHAMBER - DAY

Elizabeth at the head of the table, her counsellors assembled. She has recovered from her small pox, but she still looks pale and thin, and right now she is on the defensive. Cecil and Dudley are in attendance.

CECIL

Without a treaty signed, this union
strengthens her claim.

ELIZABETH

You need not condescend. We are
well informed.

CECIL
 Forgive us. We merely seek to
 protect your crown.

EXT. SCOTTISH COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

Mary rides on horseback, flanked by Moray and Maitland and a small party of Nobles and Guards in tow. They are on a day-trip to Arthur's Seat.

MAITLAND
 You cannot wed him, Madam.

MARY
 I do not wed him blindly. He has
 promised no ambition.

MAITLAND
 He understands that he would only
 be your consort? Not a King
 outright?

MARY
 He does.

MAITLAND
 I find it difficult to believe that
 any man would settle for as much.

We INTERCUT between these two scenes--

INT. HAMPTON COURT - PRIVY COUNCIL CHAMBER

RANDOLPH
 Two Catholics wed. Two Stuarts,
 Madam...

CECIL
 He has a claim of his own, even
 without betrothal. Together they
 make a union of two claims.

ELIZABETH
 She has chosen an Englishman, as
 I asked. What recourse do I have?

CECIL
 Implore her to marry Lord Dudley.
 He was your first choice.

Elizabeth looks to Dudley, who looks back sympathetically.

EXT. SCOTTISH COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

MARY

Dudley is her puppet. He offers no advantage.

MAITLAND

Unless she promises to make you heir.

MARY

(blood up)

Where is this promise? That has failed to appear these past four years?

INT. HAMPTON COURT - PRIVY COUNCIL CHAMBER

ELIZABETH

I will not offer my Lord if it means naming her successor.

RANDOLPH

She will not accept him otherwise.

ELIZABETH

Then let her refuse him.

CECIL

On succession I agree. But Darnley imperils us more.

EXT. SCOTTISH COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

MORAY

He would provoke revolt among our Nobles.

MARY

(a sharp blow)

Do you command so little respect that you could not discourage them?

INT. HAMPTON COURT - PRIVY COUNCIL CHAMBER

CECIL

We must not delay. You must forbid this marriage.

On Elizabeth, pondering this. Then she abruptly stands. The Councillors follow suit. She exits without another word. Cecil turns to Dudley with venom on his tongue.

CECIL (CONT'D)

What chaos you have brought to us.

EXT. ARTHUR'S SEAT - DAY

Mary and the others are nearing the crest. On Darnley galloping fast on his horse past the other Nobles.

He whirls around on his horse as he gets to Mary, cantering and stepping his horse sideways before her.

Moray and Maitland eye him with the same contempt with which Cecil beheld Dudley.

DARNLEY
(pointing ahead)
Is that the top?

MAITLAND
Aye.

As he turns his horse to trot ahead--

MORAY
No subject should ride before his
Queen.

Darnley glances back. It's a barbed comment, reminding him that would he marry the Queen he is still but a subject. Mary dispels any conflict by trotting ahead of Darnley.

MARY
Would he?

DARNLEY
Though he would.

Mary starts to pick up speed. Darnley accepts the challenge, keeping near, just a neck behind her. And now the two are galloping up the crest, a thunder of hooves between their two horses.

CUT TO Mary and Darnley alone atop their horses at the crest of Arthur's Seat. Edinburgh and the countryside beyond stretches out before them.

DARNLEY (CONT'D)
How it must feel...to rule all that
is within your sight.

MARY
I am but its servant.

Darnley looks to her, not quite understanding. She continues to gaze out at the view beneath. He looks back out. A beat, and now she turns to him.

MARY (CONT'D)
Are you prepared to be its servant?

Looking back at her, eyes ablaze. Does she mean what he thinks she means?

DARNLEY

It is right for the man to ask.

MARY

Then ask.

He takes her hand and brings it to his mouth, softly...

DARNLEY

Before God...

Kisses her hand lightly...

DARNLEY (CONT'D)

Before all of Scotland...

He leans in, whispers in her ear...

DARNLEY (CONT'D)

Before all the world...

He kisses the side of her neck. The touch of his lips sends a jolt through her--

MARY

Yes.

Into her ear again--

DARNLEY

You will be my Queen?

MARY

Yes.

DARNLEY

And I your King?

MARY

Yes.

And whispering into her ear--

DARNLEY

Your master.

She pulls back and looks him in the eye. A slight correction, but smiling--

MARY

My husband.

He laughs - giddy, joyful, not necessarily absorbing the correction for what it was.

She laughs in return, squeezes his hand. They both turn and once again gaze out upon the view together.

INT. HOLYROOD - COUNCIL CHAMBER - DAY

Randolph stands before Mary, Moray and Maitland are present.

RANDOLPH

They are English subjects, Madam.
If my Queen orders their return,
they must.

MARY

She asked that I marry an English
Nobleman. And now she deprives me?

RANDOLPH

Her wish is that you should not
marry this particular noble.

MARY

You may tell your mistress I shall
do so, with or without her
blessing.

RANDOLPH

Madam - before you act rashly,
please consider--

MARY

It is enough my own Lords treat me
as though I'm but a girl...

On Moray, about to step forward, but Maitland holds him back.

MARY (CONT'D)

I will not be treated as such by
Elizabeth. I will be the woman she
is not. I shall produce an heir,
unlike her barren self.

Randolph is stunned silent and paralyzed.

MARY (CONT'D)

(to an Attendant)
Prepare the Ambassador's horse.

Randolph bows and makes for his exit. As he passes Beaton she averts her eyes so as not to make contact with his. As soon as he is gone, Moray steps forward, incensed.

MORAY

(temper flaring)
Reckless child.
(MORE)

MORAY (CONT'D)

I have worked too long and too hard
with too much bloodshed to secure
peace in our land. Do not let your
cursèd passion rule you.

MARY
 (calm and cold)
 Tis your voice raised, sir. And you
 would lower it in my presence.

Moray has reached the breaking point, but he lowers his voice
 - speaking slowly and purposefully.

MORAY
 If my counsel no longer has value,
 then I am obliged to withdraw from
 court.

MARY
 If you must.

Whether he is bluffing or not, she has called it. And from
 the resoluteness in her eyes, both we and Moray know she is
 not bluffing in response.

INT. HAMPTON COURT - ROOFTOP - DAY

A cold day. Both Elizabeth and Cecil are bundled up. Grey,
 discomfoting skies.

CECIL (O.S.)
 You have neither husband nor
 children. And you approach an age
 whereupon you cannot bear them...

Elizabeth looks out to the horizon, despondent.

CECIL (CONT'D)
 You must confront the truth, Madam.
 Displeasing as it may be.

In a softer tone, more as a friend than a councillor--

CECIL (CONT'D)
 I have confronted that truth.

She turns to him, surprised by the admission. Also softly--

ELIZABETH
 You understand that I cannot.

CECIL
 Will not. And I accept it. Do I
 understand...?

CECIL (CONT'D)
 No more than I understand God.

ELIZABETH
 It is my choice. God would have a
 woman be a wife and mother.

Observational, not accusatory--

CECIL
So you defy his will.

ELIZABETH
No - I choose to be a man.

Off his look. He still fails to fathom her--

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
As children dream in their sleep
after apples and in the morning,
when they awake and find not the
apples, they weep. Such a man as I
might marry, finding himself
disappointed, would not stop at
weeping.

CECIL
(finishing her thought)
He would conspire.

ELIZABETH
No Prince's revenues be so great
that they are able to satisfy the
insatiable cupidity of men.

CECIL
This I understand.

ELIZABETH
Which is why you are the closest
thing I shall ever have to a wife.

He laughs at this. It's a tender, intimate moment.

CECIL
I shan't mention your proposal to
Lord Dudley.

She laughs at this in return.

ELIZABETH
Come and take my hand.

He comes over and takes her hand. It doesn't feel romantic.
It feels fraternal.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
I would be lost without you.

And now it's he who looks out to the horizon.

CECIL
My father despised my first wife.
Her name was Mary...

ELIZABETH

There are no shortage of those.

CECIL

(chuckles)

Indeed not.

ELIZABETH

Despised her why?

CECIL

I married her for love.

(beat)

It was foolish. She had no wealth or influence. But I adored her. And when she died - it left me...

He shakes his head, not wanting to complete the memory. But in his eyes we can see the devastation her death wrought. Elizabeth squeezes his hand. He forces the thought out of his mind. His familiar coolness returns.

CECIL (CONT'D)

This world is a brutal place. It has no patience for such foolishness.

(turns to her)

We men must be wiser, mustn't we?

ELIZABETH

Tell me what to do.

CECIL

We must make civil war in Scotland.

Elizabeth ponders this, brow furrowed, eyes darkening. Their affection has shifted back into realpolitik. Elizabeth removes her hand from Cecil's.

ELIZABETH

You would have me depose a sister monarch?

CECIL

It is either civil war there. Or civil war here.

ON Elizabeth, weary. But a cold resolution comes over her. Cecil has seen this look before. It's what he hoped for.

ELIZABETH

I want to know nothing of it.

CECIL

The arrangements shall be mine alone.

On Elizabeth's face as we hear the sound of BAG PIPES...

INT. HOLYROOD - BANQUET HALL - NIGHT

TIGHT on Mary's hand - three royal marriage rings upon it - DARNLEY'S hand enters frame, similarly ringed. Mary places her hand on his. Drums strike up the dance.

Pull back to reveal MARY and DARNLEY standing alone in the centre of the hall hand on hand. The wedding banquet is over, the tables are pushed back and the wedding guests stand around the hall watching.

EXT. SCOTTISH COUNTRYSIDE - SHORE - DAY

A fishing trawler is being dragged on the shore, its goods covered in burlap to shield them from the rain. Nearby on a rise are the silhouettes of half a dozen hooded men on horseback. They begin to gallop down toward the wagons.

INT. HOLYROOD - BANQUET HALL - NIGHT

The wedding dance continues and Mary and Darnley are joined by BETON, SETON & LIVINGSTON and their dance partners.

FLEMING encourages MAITLAND to join the dance but he resists. MARY notices MAITLAND. Other nobles decline to dance and look on disapprovingly.

Mary remains regal despite the lack of enthusiasm, although we can sense it bothers her. Darnley, is less able to hide his displeasure.

INT. HOLYROOD - BANQUET HALL - NIGHT

DARNLEY downs his drink in one gulp and gestures to his servant to refill his goblet.

EXT. SCOTTISH COUNTRYSIDE - SHORE - DAY

One of the six horseman pulls back the burlap covering boat. We see nothing but hay until the Wagon Driver pushes it aside and reveals a cache of pikes, swords, crossbows and muskets. We also see a small trunk. The Nobleman opens it. The trunk is full of gold and silver coins. One of the other men steps forward to take a closer look. And within the hood we see that it is Lord Moray.

INT. HOLYROOD - BANQUET HALL - NIGHT

Thirty Male Guests dance in lines with military precision. It's quite formal choreography. But a very drunk Darnley inserts himself into the dance, sloppy and grinning. He is trying to get the dancers to bow to him, the king.

The Dancers attempt to continue, but it's difficult to navigate around him. On Mary, embarrassed by her husband. She looks over to Rizzio, who is strumming his lute. Something should be done.

Rizzio takes the cue. He strolls toward Darnley, still strumming, in a half-walk, half-dance - circles Darnley as though it's all part of the choreography, then brings his arms around Darnley from behind, placing the lute at his chest, as though his arms are Darnley's arms. Everyone laughs. It's a comedic and graceful way to get Darnley out of the way. He spins Darnley as he's strumming, walking him off to the side, almost as if all of it were planned.

EXT. SALT MARSH - DAY

As the drums continue over the pipes we see foot soldiers marching in a column.

INT. HOLYROOD - BANQUET HALL - NIGHT

On Mary watching something. We CUT TO her POV:

It's Darnley and Rizzio off to the side of the room, Darnley on Rizzio's lap, drunkenly letting him play the lute, laughing and plucking the strings himself.

BACK ON Mary, perturbed by both Darnley's drunkenness and Rizzio's familiarity with him.

EXT. SALT MARSH - OUTDOOR MASS - DAY

A continuation of Scene 78. The column of rebel soldiers passes by Knox, Moray with him. Knox is giving blessings as they march past him, palm raised, mouthing "Bless you" and "In service of the Lord."

INT. HOLYROOD - DARNLEY'S CHAMBER - DAY

TIGHT on Darnley's face. He is passed out on his bed. A hand SLAPS his face.

And with the slap the pipes and drums stop.

Darnley opens his eyes, squinting. Sees Mary standing before him. We see that Rizzio lays in the bed next to Darnley. Rizzio is stirring now. Is horrified to see Mary.

MARY
(to Darnley)
Rise and prepare yourself.

As Darnley sits up he sees Bothwell in the door. Is surprised to see him in his Royal Chamber.

DARNLEY
Be gone.

But Bothwell doesn't budge.

MARY
(turns to Bothwell)
He is in your care.

EXT. HOLYROOD - THE COURTYARD (UPPER) - DAY

An OFFICER is showing her how to load and cock a pistol. He aims it at the wall and fires. With a loud BANG and puff of smoke the lead ball leaves a small crater in the plastered facade. He turns back to Mary.

MARY
Now I shall try.

He hands her the pistol, bag of gunpowder and a lead ball. As she prepares the pistol for it's next shot, Rizzio - now dressed - emerges from within and approaches her. Livingston intercepts him to prevent him getting to Mary.

LIVINGSTON
Rentre! Tu n'es pas digne de son regard.
(Go back inside. You are not worthy of her eyes).

RIZZIO
Please...

LIVINGSTON
Non. Misérable! Canaille!
(No. You wretch. You dog).
(to the Guards)
Battez-le comme un chien s'il s'approche encore plus.
(He should be beaten like a dog if he draws nearer).

But he tries anyway.

RIZZIO

A word - a moment...

Several Guards step forward to block him. Mary, witnessing all of this as she loads the pistol, finally speaks up--

MARY

Let him approach.

The Guards step aside. Rizzio approaches her sheepishly. Then falls to his knees in front of her.

RIZZIO

(in a whisper)

To have betrayed you in this way -
I have no excuse - And I beg...I
beg that...

She keeps her voice low as well. With some gentleness--

MARY

Stand.

He does.

MARY (CONT'D)
You have not betrayed your nature.

He is anguished by her kindness.

MARY (CONT'D)
I cannot fault you for succumbing
to his charms as I did.
(beat)
But we must be more careful now.

He nods, grateful for her mercy. She raises the pistol and aims at the wall. She pulls the trigger and BANG...

On which we CUT TO--

EXT. MARY'S CAMP - DAY

Mary rides at the vanguard. She is fitted with armour and a steel cap on her head, pistol in a saddle holster. Bothwell is similarly armoured and armed.

Darnley rides a few yards behind them, wearing a gilded breastplate, looking pale and weary.

Mary looks vibrant and at ease. She seems in her element, on the move, the head of an army 10,000 soldiers strong.

BOTHWELL
Moray is marching southwest, toward
Dumfries.

MARY
The English can easily supply them
there...

BOTHWELL
If we make good time we could cut
them off before they reach the
gates. Or we fortify here and
prepare for a siege, blocking the
road south.

MARY
What would you have us do?

BOTHWELL
Meet them and end this now.

DARNLEY
Why give chase? Let them starve
behind the walls of Dumfries.

BOTHWELL

If we lose sight, they could flank us. I want to flank them first. There's a bridge they must use to cross Annan.

MARY

How far?

BOTHWELL

Two days. But I can get us there in one.

MARY

Give the order.

Bothwell turns his horse around and begins riding down the line, shouting the order for a quickstep. The entire column begins to pick up speed, the foot soldiers marching more briskly. Mary wheels her horse around to follow Bothwell down the line.

DARNLEY

Why give chase? Let them come to us.

MARY

Are you afraid Henry?

DARNLEY

No...

MARY

Good. Because our swords are not just for show.

And she yanks on the reins, trotting down the line. Off Darnley, emasculated and alienated.

TIME CUT to Mary on foot, leading her horse by the reins, walking side by side with the common foot soldiers. As they walk briskly past her they each lower their heads out of respect. Three YOUNG SOLDIERS walk past. They look no older than 16. They're shy when she addresses them.

MARY (CONT'D)

Whence come you?

URIE CAMPBELL

The Highlands, Madam. These two from Inverness. I'm from Thurso.

MARY

Fishermen?

URIE CAMPBELL

Aye.

MARY

I am sorry we have only mutton.

Two of the boys smile shyly at this. The third (HECTOR MACLEAN), just smiles at seeing the other two laugh.

JAMES MACDONALD

We are happy to have anything to eat, Madam.

MARY

Catholic?

JAMES MACDONALD

(nervously)

No, Madam.

She looks to Urie. He shakes his head.

MARY

(to Hector)

And you?

URIE CAMPBELL

He don't know Scots, Madam. Only Gaelic.

MARY

Tell him I'm grateful for his service.

URIE CAMPBELL

Tha a' bhanrigh taingeil airson do sheirbheis.

HECTOR MACLEAN

Tha e moiteil a bhi na shearbhant don bhan righ agus tha e deonach basachadh air a son.

URIE CAMPBELL

He says he's proud to serve his Queen. And to give his life if he must.

MARY

Tell him: If any of us should die today, we all go to the same heaven.

URIE CAMPBELL

Ma bhasaicheas duine againn an diugh, theid sinn dhan aon Neamh!

Hector smiles at her and makes the sign of the cross. On Mary, grateful and inspired by the show of loyalty as they continue walking onward.

EXT. COPSE OF TREES - DAY

It's getting late in the afternoon now. We hear the steady beat of a REBEL DRUMMER giving tempo to the march. An impatient Moray berates his men.

From a mound covered in twisted pine, we see the men trudge along a curved track. Ahead of them is a bridge, which fords a fast-flowing river. Moray and his men are on its West Bank. This, unbeknownst to Moray, is MARY's point of view.

The air is heavy with midges. The soldiers are fatigued lugging expensive, heavy muskets and weaponry: Cecil's supplies. Moray rides up and down the line, driving the troops forward. Frustrated, he commands the Rebel Drummer to pick up the tempo.

MORAY

Double it.

The Rebel Drummer switches to a quick-step beat. The men start to pick up their feet. Again we see the track from above, where the road curves away from us at each end. MORAY spots an oncoming obstruction heading towards the bridge from the East Bank of the river: a herd of Highland Cattle and four DROVERS.

MORAY (CONT'D)
 (to the Rebel Drummer)
 Halt.

The Rebel Drummer performs a flourish and stops drumming. The troops halt. Moray and MORAY'S SECOND ride forward to prevent the cattle from blocking the bridge.

MORAY (CONT'D)
 Stand aside. We must pass.

The four Drovers ignore his shouts and, as Moray and Moray's Second reach the East Bank, the cattle flow around them, blocking the bridge and stranding Moray and Moray's Second on the East Bank.

As the herd of cattle flow across the bridge, the first of three loud, slow drumbeats is heard. At the first beat, the Rebel Army stutter forward. Mistaking the drumbeat for his Rebel Drummer--

MORAY (CONT'D)
 Halt I say!

But the drum beat comes from JAMES MACDONALD, Mary's drummer, who stands by MARY above the track.

With the second, slow drumbeat, the Rebel Drummer looks around. It's not him. Where is it coming from? He panics, throwing off his drum to aid his retreat. The panic is beginning to spread. What's going on? This is an ambush.

The third beat coincides with an order from Moray's Second--

MORAY'S SECOND
 Form up! Form up--

Mid-shout, he is unhorsed by a DROVER, who swings at him with his droving stick. Mary's men fall from above. It is a Highland charge. Deadly, simple, they stream down the hill from where MARY commands them, driving Moray's men into the river. Moray's men try to mount their heavy muskets and take aim but the Mary's men are upon them.

URIE CAMPBELL and HECTOR MACLEAN charge down the hill, Urie spots a musket take aim at Hector and pushes him out of the way, they both slip down the slope, avoiding the musket fire, find their feet and charge onwards.

Moray's men are hit hard from Mary's side and driven into the river. Escaping to the East Bank, they are met by more of Mary's men, who have lain in wait, anticipating the men in the river.

Marooned on the bridge, in the midst of Highland cattle, Moray looks from side to side of the bridge and sees his soldiers and their heavy equipment being lost and slaughtered in the river.

He sees his precious guns and powder floating and MORAY tries to hack his way out of the cattle, attempting to get back to his side.

Seeing Moray slashing his way through the Highland cattle, Bothwell leaves Mary's side. Moray arrives back at the West Bank, just to find his army deserting up the road away from him. He is confronted by Bothwell, charging down the track towards Moray. As Bothwell streams through the retreating soldiers, he dispatches three men, slicing through them.

Moray panics, his trembling hands trying to load his gun. Back to Bothwell riding him down. In his panic Moray drops his gun, Bothwell is seconds from him. Just before impact, Mary raises her hand. A bugle gives Bothwell the instruction to halt. Bothwell pulls up, nose to nose with Moray. Moray sees Mary on her mound, realising that she has masterminded the whole ambush. He looks back to Bothwell, who backs away, ushering Moray down the track to his retreat.

In the river, we see Moray's drum floating towards us as his men flee. Moray rears his horse with one last look to Mary, then gallops away in flight with his men.

On Mary. She does not need to slaughter her brother or give chase. She has accomplished what she needs to.

INT. SCOTTISH COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

Mary rides triumphantly at the head of her column, glowing from her victory. Down the line, Soldier #3 leads a Gaelic chant. A rough and lovely song of praise. The whole troop joins in. Mary glances over at Darnley, who is waving back, accepting their affirmation.

INT. HOLYROOD - QUEEN'S CHAMBER - NIGHT

Mary is being undressed by the Four Marys. They're almost finished when there is a knock at the door. It opens, revealing Darnley. He's visibly inebriated.

DARNLEY

You summoned?

Mary nods to the Four Marys, who quickly exit. They close the door behind them.

MARY

How much have you had?

DARNLEY

Celebrating our victory, my love.

She goes to him - all business - and begins to unbutton the fly on his breeches.

DARNLEY (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

She slides her hand in and begins to stroke him. He pulls away. She places a hand on his chest. Gently--

MARY

Close your eyes.

He does. She continues to stroke.

MARY (CONT'D)

You're almost there.

DARNLEY

I can't...I've had too much to drink...

MARY
Think of Rizzio.

He opens his eyes, furious. Slaps her hard in the face. She reels, placing a hand to her cheek. He gets up and grabs her by the wrist. Pulls her over to the bed and bends her over, pressing her face down into the sheets.

While he's holding her down he begins to jerk himself, to get himself hard enough. Mary does not struggle. She wants a child, whatever she must endure to produce one.

Sufficiently hard, Darnley pushes up Mary's gown and begins to forcibly take her from behind. Mary winces. It's painful. It's degrading. But she knows it will be over soon.

And it is - in less than 30 seconds. Darnley grunts with his climax, then stumbles out of the room.

On Mary, trying to hold back tears. It was awful, but she achieved what she wanted to. She climbs onto the bed and lays down on her back. Pulls her knees up to her chest.

A few moments later the Four Marys re-enter. They see from Mary's position that the deed is done.

MARY (CONT'D)
Pray for me.

The Four Marys kneel around the bed and lower their heads in prayer. During which we begin to hear a PRIEST'S voice from the high Latin mass...

PRIEST (V.O.)
*Incensum istud a te benedictum,
ascendat ad te...*

INT. HOLYROOD - CHAPEL - DAY

TIGHT on the Priest swinging an incense thurible--

PRIEST
*...Domine, et descendat super nos
misericordia tua...*

The Latin continues as we watch the coloured light through the stained glass windows traverse the floor in time-lapse.

CUT TO TIGHT on the thurible as it swings.

CUT TO TIGHT through a clear pane in the window, we watch a flower bloom in time-lapse.

CUT TO Darnley kneeling before the altar as the Priest conducts the mass.

PRIEST (CONT'D)
*Accendat in nobis Dominus ignem sui
 amoris, et flamma aeternae
 caritatis. Amen.*

DARNLEY
 Amen.

The Priest hands the thurible to an ALTAR BOY. Turns to Darnley.

PRIEST
 Shall I wait for her Majesty before
 I celebrate communion?

Darnley looks behind him. The rest of the chapel is empty. Abruptly he stands up and heads for the exit.

INT. HOLYROOD - QUEEN'S CHAMBER - DAY

Tight on Mary's face as we hear Darnley pounding on the door. From outside we hear--

DARNLEY (O.S.)
 We must speak, Mary.

The pounding does not stop. We PULL BACK to see her laying on the bed beneath the covers. Rizzio is sitting by her side, holding her hand. She's trying to ignore the pounding but it won't stop. She turns to Rizzio--

MARY
 Let him in.

Rizzio goes the door. Undoes the bolt and opens it. Darnley is surprised to see him.

DARNLEY
 What are you...?

MARY
 Come, Henry.

He brushes past Rizzio and goes to the bed. Rizzio and the ladies exit.

DARNLEY
 You would have David here and bar
 your husband?

Mary closes her eyes. She doesn't want to be dealing with this. Darnley goes over to the seat where Rizzio was sitting. A gentler tack, with a much softer tone.

DARNLEY (CONT'D)

I was at mass. I wished you at my side.

MARY

You shouldn't be attending Catholic service. It insults our Lords.

DARNLEY

When I am annointed they will afford me the same respect as you.

Mary does not respond. Darnley gets anxious.

DARNLEY (CONT'D)

You promised.

She still stays nothing. He pulls back the covers and places his hand on her stomach. She's clearly showing - now five months pregnant.

DARNLEY (CONT'D)

Would you have his father be nothing but a consort?

MARY

We know not if it's a he.

Darnley cannot check his temper any longer--

DARNLEY

I am more than a sire to a mare.

MARY

Please, I am tired...

DARNLEY

Do you love me?

Mary doesn't respond.

DARNLEY (CONT'D)

Do you love me?

MARY

You are a Stuart. That matters more than love.

We see fury in his eyes. But he needs her, so he has to dampen his rage.

DARNLEY

Yes, you are tired and know not what you say.

INT. HOLYROOD - BANQUET HALL - NIGHT

Darnley sits at the head table, an empty seat next to him, dejected. The other guests are talking amongst themselves. Then a hush. Heads swiveling. Everyone stands and turns to the main door.

Mary's ladies stand behind her. She looks resplendent. A warm smile, her face glowing with forthcoming motherhood. Her dress is equally stunning. There is no effort to hide the bump in her belly.

As she makes her way to the head table the guests murmur to each other, presumably about her pregnancy.

She takes her place at Darnley's side but remains standing to address the guests. With infectious charm--

MARY

If you have wondered where your Queen was these past few months, now there are no secrets. The whisperings can end. Spring comes bearing fruit.

Laughter and applause among the guests.

MARY (CONT'D)

My husband and I give thanks.

She takes Darnley's hand and smiles. He forces a smile in return. This is all for show.

MARY (CONT'D)

With heaven's blessing we bring another Stuart into this world, heir to Scotland...and to England.

The addition of "England" is provocative. People begin to applaud, although some are too jolted to do so.

We pop to Randolph, who turns to Maitland with shock.

MAITLAND

She speaks for herself.

RANDOLPH

Do her councilors fail to advise her?

MAITLAND

We advise her endlessly, sir. Not that she heeds us.

RANDOLPH

You must do better.

MAITLAND

Better than your own Queen's
council?

Maitland has a point. More reflectively--

RANDOLPH

How did the world come to this?

MAITLAND

Wise men servicing the whims of
women?

RANDOLPH

Aye...

They look back toward Mary as the applause dies down.
Darnley helps Mary into her chair, almost as if he's a
servant. He glances to his father, Lennox.

EXT. HAMPTON COURT - STABLES - DAY

Elizabeth stares at a mare on the ground, a newborn foal
laying beside her. A STABLE HAND is stroking the foal.

STABLE HAND

He'll make a fine stallion.

ELIZABETH

May I?

STABLE HAND

Of course, Madam.

Elizabeth kneels down and pets the foal. It attempts to lift
its head but is still weak. A smile on Elizabeth's face.

INT. HAMPTON COURT - STABLES - DAY

Cecil and Elizabeth walking.

CECIL

It is a clear provocation. She knew
well Lord Randolph would report.

ELIZABETH

What would you have us do? Go to
war over some reckless words?

CECIL

Not us - her brother. He hopes to
raise a second army. If we assist
him...

ELIZABETH
 (firmly)
 As we did his first?

CECIL
 (gingerly)
 I shall not fail you twice.

Which is the closest he comes to an apology. She does not reply. Then calmly, but insistent--

CECIL (CONT'D)
 Madam, we cannot let her name your successor. She has no right.

ELIZABETH
 When I am dead and she is dead and you are dead, it matters not what names we said or did not say. The world will decide for itself.

Cecil looks puzzled and disturbed. He cannot decipher her meaning, but he doesn't like the tone of it--

CECIL
 Now is not the time to soften...

But Elizabeth is distracted by the sound of braying. She stops to look at the mare and the foal in the distance with the Stable Hand. The foal is already on its feet, if wobbly.

ELIZABETH
 It's a fine day, isn't it?

She tilts her face to the sun. Cecil is perplexed. She begins to walk toward the mare and foal.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
 I shall see you inside.

Cecil watches her go for a few moments, perplexed, then turns and walks toward the palace.

Elizabeth nears the horses, then stops, watching the foal suckle from its mother. She squints from the sun and raises a hand to shield her eyes. Notices her own shadow. Looks down at it. Turns so that the shadow is in profile. Lowers her arms and pulls the front hem of her dress so that the shadow shows a bulge where her stomach is. Considers this silhouette for a moment, then drops the dress.

She smooths the fabric flat.

INT. HOLYROOD - QUEEN'S CHAMBER - NIGHT

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Mary is in a basin, receiving a bath. She is wearing a bathing gown in the water, as is custom.

The Four Marys attend to her, wiping her neck and arms with damp cloths. Her belly rises just above the waterline like a dome.

LIVINGSTON

Vous lui donnerez quel prénom, si c'est une fille?

(What will you name her, if it's a girl?)

BEATON

Elizabeth.

The women laugh.

MARY

Margaret, I think - after my grandmother. To remind her that she is as much Tudor as Stuart.

(beat)

She is also Henry's grandmother.

FLEMING

Will you name it after him, if it's a boy?

MARY

I think not. He shares the same name as Elizabeth's father.

LIVINGSTON

Vous lui donnerez peut-être le prénom de votre propre père?

(Perhaps you name him after your own.)

MARY

(trying it out)

James...

She lets the name echo in her head. She likes it. Then--

MARY (CONT'D)

Oh - Look...he likes it too...

The women look at the dome of her belly poking above the water. There are small ripples across the surface from the baby kicking. All five women stare in fascination.

PRELAP: The sound of HOOVES as we go TIGHT on the ripples.

INT. CARLISLE, ENGLAND - INN - PRIVATE ROOM - NIGHT

The room is small and cramped. A cot, a simple desk and chair and no more. Moray, only in his shirt, looks out a window at something below, although we're on him instead of what he sees.

He proceeds to put on his doublet to make himself more presentable as we hear footfalls coming up rickety stairs. A knock at the door. Moray opens it a crack to verify who it is, then lets the visitor enter. It's a man in a hooded cloak. He pulls out a chair for the man, who removes his hood, revealing Lennox.

LENNOX

Elizabeth could not do better?

Moray ignores the slight. Sits down on the edge of the cot. Lennox sits across.

LENNOX (CONT'D)

We too know what it is to be exiled.

MORAY

(straight to business)
Your letter said you had a proposal.

LENNOX

Have you burned it, as I asked?

Moray reaches over to the desk and picks up a small plate covered with ashes--

MORAY

Once Mary bears a child...

Dumps into the ground at Lennox's feet.

MORAY (CONT'D)

There is no need for your son.

As Lennox brushes some of the stray ash off his stockings--

LENNOX

An infant cannot grant you pardon.

LENNOX (CONT'D)

It is right that you should return from exile. And it is right that my son should be King.

Lennox looks back up - meets Moray's eye with frosty shrewdness--

LENNOX (CONT'D)

As King he would do what is right...

INT. HOLYROOD - DARNLEY'S CHAMBER - NIGHT

Maitland and Lennox address Darnley, who is staring into his fireplace at the flames, drinking from a goblet.

MAITLAND

David Rizzio. He is a liability to your rightful place as King.

Darnley fetches a carafe to refill his goblet.

LENNOX

Enough. These are serious matters.

Darnley sets down the goblet, turns to Maitland.

DARNLEY

Is it Bothwell who spreads these rumours?

LENNOX

Your sins are well known in court. You have done little to hide them.

DARNLEY

I have...when I drink...I do not know what I do...

MAITLAND

(pivoting, gingerly)

Let us not dwell on that. We speak of Rizzio's relations with your wife.

DARNLEY

With Mary...? You are mistaken.

MAITLAND

Does he not spend more time with the Queen than your grace? Why else would she make a common minstrel her private secretary?

DARNLEY

It cannot be.

LENNOX

(impatient)

What matter if it be true?

DARNLEY

I am not a cuckold.

LENNOX

Would you rather the honest truth be told? That you are a sodomite?

Darnley pales at the accusation. Lennox goes in for the kill, his impatience giving force to his voice--

LENNOX (CONT'D)

We must erase your sins, and either you are the adulterer or it is she.

Maitland picks up a quill and holds it out to Darnley.

MAITLAND

The other Lords have signed.

Darnley takes the quill and dips it in the inkwell, then bends over a parchment on the writing desk.

INT. HOLYROOD - BACK STAIRWELL - NIGHT

The Conspirators head single file up the spiral stairs to the Queen's Chamber, Darnley and Lennox amongst them. Lennox looks sure of himself. Darnley looks hesitant.

INT. HOLYROOD - QUEEN'S CHAMBER - NIGHT

Mary, Rizzio, Seton and Fleming are playing cards in the small dining closet attached to the main room.

TIGHT on the table as Rizzio lays down a jack of clubs.

Mary lays down a king on top of Rizzio's jack. Takes the trump with a smile. Rizzio shakes his head, smiling too--

RIZZIO

You've been saving that...

MARY

(teasing)

It's the only good card I--

But she's interrupted by the sound of a door bursting open in the main chamber, followed by the sound of boots.

Before she can even rise, Conspirators are pouring into the room. Maitland spies Rizzio in the dining cabinet.

MAITLAND

(to Rizzio)

Come with me, sir.

Mary is standing now. Steps in front of Rizzio as Darnley and Lennox appear in the doorway.

DARNLEY

Stand aside.

MARY

You dare charge into my chamber unannounced and--

LENNOX

(to two Lords)

Now.

And the two Lords lunge with daggers, attempting to reach around Mary to stab Rizzio. The women scream. Mary is shocked at the sight of the weapons.

MARY

I am with child...

Lennox grabs Mary and pushes her toward Darnley.

LENNOX
 (to Darnley)
 Take her.

Darnley seems stunned himself, but pulls her out of the room. Maitland, trying to set her at ease--

MAITLAND
 (to Mary)
 All that is done is the King's own
 deed and action.

He glances at Darnley as he says this. Mary glares at him. The King? Darnley is pale and shaking. This is more than he can take.

Fleming is horrified that her lover has anything to do with this. Moving toward Maitland--

FLEMING
 William - what are you--

MAITLAND
 Do not interfere.

Two Conspirators make their way toward Rizzio. Fleming tries to get in the way of them, but Maitland grabs her by the wrist and yanks her aside. She falls to the ground.

Rizzio cowers, begging for mercy, but the Conspirators yank him out of the room. As he's being dragged across the chamber Mary rushes forward--

MARY
 No...

But one of the Conspirators holds a pistol up to her, cocked at her belly, where her unborn child lies.

Then she hears a moan. Looks over to see the melee by the main door. Conspirators stabbing Rizzio relentlessly.

The Conspirators step aside, revealing a bloodied Rizzio on the ground, his near lifeless eyes still open, labored breaths coming from his riddled chest. He looks to Mary. She wants to go to him, but still has the pistol pointed at her.

MAITLAND
 (to Darnley)
 You must make the final blow.

Darnley is overcome with fear himself, and sickened by the bloody body before him. But he manages to pull out his dagger and take a few steps toward Rizzio before stopping.

LENNOX
 Go on.

DARNLEY

I can't...

Lennox has no more patience for his son's timidity. He grabs Darnley by the wrist and drags him over to Rizzio, then drives Darnley's knife-laden hand into Rizzio to deal the final blow. Darnley lets go of the dagger, horrified. It remains in Rizzio's chest.

On Mary now, breaks into sobs as she sinks to her knees.

EXT. SCOTTISH COUNTRYSIDE - NIGHT

Bothwell gallops away from Edinburgh - alone on his horse, no accompaniment - fleeing for his life. He glances back as he rides, making sure he's not being followed.

INT. HOLYROOD - QUEEN'S CHAMBERS - DAY

Silence except for a swishing sound...

Mary and Darnley sit on opposite sides of the room, still both in shock. Mary's tears are gone, but her eyes are still red, and she's made still by an oppressive numbness.

We CUT TO the source of the swishing sound. Kate is scrubbing the floor where Rizzio's corpse was. A Guard is standing near her, keeping his eyes on Mary.

Kate finishes. Wipes her brow, and exits with the scrub brush and bucket.

Back on Darnley, who glances over at Mary. She seems to be staring beyond the walls into a bleak and uncertain future.

DARNLEY

He beguiled us both, Mary. He brought us both dishonour.

MARY

You are trying to usurp my crown.

Maitland, hearing the hot exchange from the adjacent chamber, looks inside to see what's happening.

DARNLEY

(to Mary, pointing)
Have I not brought you a child?

As much for Maitland's benefit as Darnley's--

MARY

One minute makes not a man. Nor do your stupors, which made you more woman than a man.

This stings Darnley to the core. He stands, mustering all the authority he can.

DARNLEY

Beg forgiveness. For your insult.

MARY

I shall not.

During which an Attendant enters, whispers to Maitland. Maitland turns to Darnley.

MAITLAND

(approaching Darnley)

Bothwell has escaped.

Darnley turns to him, processing. Mary takes note. Darnley turns back to Mary, his fury rising--

DARNLEY

This is your fault. This chaos. You swore obedience to me on the day of our marriage.

MARY

You are a traitor.

(to Maitland)

As are you.

(back to Darnley)

And until I am killed, and forever after, God will see you as such.

MAITLAND

You will not be killed, Madam.

(to Darnley)

Let us go. We have much business.

Lord Moray will arrive soon.

MARY

My brother conspired...?

MAITLAND

Your brother returns to assist your husband.

It's a blow for Mary - the depth of the treachery.

DARNLEY

I want a drink. Where is the...

He looks around for a bottle of something. Heads into the small dining closet. So as not to be heard--

MARY

(to Maitland)

Am I to be imprisoned here alone?

(MORE)

MARY (CONT'D)

Or may I have the company of my gentlewomen?

MAITLAND

You may not, Madam.

MARY

Then at least let my husband remain. Or would you have a drunkard for a King?

A beat. Then Maitland exits, closing the door behind himself. Upon hearing the door close, Darnley re-enters the main bedroom. Seeing Maitland gone--

MARY (CONT'D)

Come Henry. I do not feel well.

She gets up from the chair, then sways, seeming off-balance. Darnley heads over to lend her an arm.

MARY (CONT'D)

Will you forgive my harsh words?

DARNLEY

If you will forgive mine.

MARY

Help me into bed...

She takes his arm as they head to the bed.

EXT. HOLYROOD - COURTYARD - DAY

Moray enters the gate on horseback flanked by two armed GUARDS. Maitland hurriedly approaches as he dismounts. They exchange a few words. Moray walks with brisk urgency toward the entrance, Maitland close behind.

INT. HOLYROOD - QUEEN'S CHAMBER - DAY

Moray and Maitland enter to find Mary on the bed, clutching her stomach, moaning in pain. Darnley is beside her, with the four Marys and Kate.

MORAY

She feigns.

Mary looks over at Moray - surprised to see him...

MARY

Brother...

KATE

We will need to undress her.

MORAY

Come. All of you. She is fine.

KATE

If we do not attend to her now, we may lose the child.

MORAY

(to Darnley)

She feigns.

MARY

(to Moray)

Please...

Mary grips Darnley's arm, gritting her teeth in pain.

MARY (CONT'D)

It is your son.

DARNLEY

(to Kate and Seton)

Do what you must.

(to Moray)

Out.

MORAY

Sir...

DARNLEY

Out I say.

Moray reluctantly exits.

SETON

(to Darnley)

Your grace...

DARNLEY

Yes...of course...

And Darnley exits too. As soon as the door is shut, Mary sits up, completely fine. Moray was right. She feigned. In whispers to the women--

MARY

Who else have they killed?

BEATON

No one. Lord Bothwell has fled.

FLEMING

(distraught)

Madam - had I known...

MARY

It is done.

FLEMING

He said nothing and I am sick with hate. I shall never forgive him or have anything to do with him again.

MARY

Compose yourself. We must be strong now.

Fleming nods. Mary gets up and retrieves a gold, jewel-encrusted cross from her personal altar. Heads to the desk and retrieves a letter opener.

MARY (CONT'D)

(to Fleming)

Let them hear me. As I was.

Fleming begins to moan as Mary was. Meanwhile Mary starts to pry the sapphire loose with the opener.

EXT. HOLYROOD - EVENING

Seton scurries across the courtyard and approaches the Guard standing sentry at the gate.

MAITLAND MAN 1

You may not pass, Madam.

Seton removes a sealed parchment from the folds of her dress and holds it out for the Guard.

SETON

Lord Bothwell.

Seton slips her fingers into her pocket and pulls out the sapphire from the cross. Places it in the Guard's hand. He marvels at it. Seton then gives him the letter.

INT. HOLYROOD - QUEEN'S CHAMBER - NIGHT

Mary and Darnley in bed. She is in her night clothes now, looking spent. Darnley still has his arms wrapped around her. They talk quietly, with their eyes closed, like lovers.

DARNLEY

Are you hungry?

MARY

Not yet.

He grips her tighter, pulling her close. He runs a palm across her belly. A pause. Then--

DARNLEY

They forced me to. I didn't know - not until they arrived. And I was drunk. I believed them. I knew not what I did...

She knows it's an utter lie, but she offers compassion--

MARY

Maitland is very persuasive.

DARNLEY

Yes...

MARY

My brother even more so. You must be careful of them both.

A beat as she lets this settle in, Then--

MARY (CONT'D)

They will take your crown as well as mine.

She lets this sink in for him. Then--

MARY (CONT'D)

We should leave here.

Darnley doesn't answer. Mary presses, gingerly.

MARY (CONT'D)

It's best. For all three of us.

She places her hand on the one he has on her belly.

INT. HOLYROOD - HALLWAY - DAY

Darnley with Maitland, Moray and Lennox.

MORAY

Not before she signs the pardons.

MAITLAND

We are drawing up the papers now.

DARNLEY

We will not wait on secretaries.

MAITLAND

It's important that the people do not accuse those who participated as traitors. They must be pardoned so there is no doubt of their loyalty to the crown.

MORAY

When she signs, then you may go.

DARNLEY

Am I to be told what I may and may not do?

(defiant)

Who are these that give me orders?

(to Maitland)

A mere Lord?

(to Moray)

A bastard half-brother?

(to them both)

Am I not the King to whom you promised fealty before you carried out your violence? This King shall go where he pleases with his wife when it pleases him. Bring the papers to us at Linlithgow. And do not mistake your place again.

And Darnley exits. Moray and Maitland exchange an exasperated glance.

INT. HAMPTON COURT - PRIVY COUNCIL CHAMBER - DAY

The Council is assembled. Among them Cecil and Dudley. Silence. They wait patiently for Elizabeth. It feels as though they have been there for a long while. Eventually Dudley stands up--

INT. HAMPTON COURT - QUEEN'S CHAMBER - DAY

Two Ladies hold up Elizabeth's finished quilling design. Elizabeth examines it, Bess at her side. Elizabeth is not pleased with it. She points to a corner where we see an interplay of leaves and flowers.

ELIZABETH

The flowers are all of one colour.

BESS

(puzzled)

Poppies are red. I know of no other colour that they--

ELIZABETH

In the light they are many colours. Red and others. Nature is more subtle...and confusing...

From Bess's expression we can tell she has no idea what Elizabeth is talking about.

A knock. They all turn. The door opens, revealing Dudley.

DUDLEY

The council is met. News from Scotland.

ELIZABETH

What do you think?

She points to the quilling.

DUDLEY

Lovely.

ELIZABETH

Are the flowers not too plain?

DUDLEY

The news is urgent...

ELIZABETH

(to Dudley, fierce)

What news do I want from Scotland? Bloodshed? Go conspire among yourselves.

Dudley is surprised and shaken by the outburst, but he knows Elizabeth well enough not to press her.

DUDLEY

Very well.

He exits. Elizabeth turns back to Bess and her Ladies, who are as surprised as Dudley was. Regarding the quilling--

ELIZABETH

Burn it. I shall begin again.

The Ladies stand motionless. Not sure if she means it.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Burn it I say.

They take the quilling to the fireplace and lay it within the flames. TIGHT on the carefully constructed flowers charring and uncurling from the heat.

INT. LINLITHGOW PALACE - DAY

Mary, Darnley and their small entourage approach the castle.

INT. LINLITHGOW PALACE - EVENING

Mary and Darnley enter. We see scores of soldiers. Darnley was not expecting this and we can read it on his face. As the two enter, a command is given and the soldiers all turn to stand at attention. Darnley sees Bothwell, fully armored. Turns to Mary...

DARNLEY

(to Mary)

Was this you...?

By now Bothwell has approached with two Guards.

BOTHWELL

(to Darnley)

Your chambers are ready.

Darnley looks back at Mary.

MARY

Do not make them use force.

Darnley's shocked by the betrayal.

INT. HOLYROOD - COUNCIL CHAMBER - DAY

Moray, Maitland, Knox and Lennox are met.

MAITLAND

They have at least five hundred.
More are on the way.

LENNOX

Then we shall raise our own army.

MORAY
 (fatigued)
 There is no appetite for war.

KNOX
 So let us stir an appetite.

MORAY
 When last we raised an army it was
 still but half of hers with
 England's help. Without England we
 will be crushed.

Moray's pessimism surprises them all.

MORAY (CONT'D)
 She has outmanoeuvred us. Now we
 parlay.

INT. LINLITHGOW PALACE - HALLWAY - DAY

Moray and Maitland are being escorted down the hall to the
 Receiving Room by Bothwell and several Guards.

INT. LINLITHGOW PALACE - RECEIVING ROOM - DAY

A very pregnant Mary looks over a document. Bothwell to the
 side. Maitland and Moray glance at each other anxiously as
 she finishes reading, looks up--

MARY
 My husband claims he knew nothing
 of your plot until the day itself.

MORAY
 That is not true. He signed a bond.
 With his own hand.

MAITLAND
 If you wish it destroyed,
 however...

MARY
 Not destroyed.
 (holds up the document)
 We shall sign this pardon as soon
 as you produce the bond.

Maitland looks to Moray. Moray nods. This can be done.

MAITLAND
 Aye, Madam.

EXT. LINLITHGOW PALACE - COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

Mary and Moray walk side by side. There are SOLDIERS camped outside the palace.

MARY

You visited mother and me here,
before we left for France. Do you
remember?

MORAY

Yes. Those were...tumultuous
times...

MARY

Here, in this field - you lifted me
high when I said I wished to be a
bird.

MORAY

(awkward chuckle)
If you say so...

MARY

I understand why you wouldn't
remember a trifling thing like
that. Of what consequence are the
fancies of a little girl.

MORAY

Not all little girls are born to be
Queens.

MARY

I should like you to hold my child
up one day, and make him fly as you
made me.

She looks to him. He isn't sure what to say.

MARY (CONT'D)

He will be born a Prince. And one
day King. I want him to love his
uncle and to be born into a
peaceful land.

MORAY

I wish the same.

MARY

Then will you love your sister as
you would love her child?

He does not answer.

MARY (CONT'D)

For she still loves you, and if it
is a son, she will call him James,
for both his grandfather and his
uncle.

Moray turns, overcome with emotion - a rare event for him.
Mary touches his arm.

MARY (CONT'D)

James...

He turns back to her, swallowing his tears, clenching his jaw
to prevent himself from weeping.

MORAY

I do not deserve your kindness.

She is as moved hearing it, as he is saying it. She takes his
hand and kisses it.

EXT. SCOTTISH COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

WRITING THE LETTER HERSELF Mary rides in the back of a covered wagon with the Four Marys, too pregnant to ride on her own. A few soldiers accompany the wagon. She looks out onto landscape, taking in the stark beauty of her Kingdom. She seems secure - sure of herself - far more so than when she first arrived in Scotland. During which--

MARY (V.O.)

My dearest cousin - we have had our differences and what sorrow it has brought my heart. But before I bring a child into this world...

INT. HAMPTON COURT - QUEEN'S CHAMBER - DAY

TIGHT on a flat blade quilling a strip of paper for a half-finished flower. Unlike before, the flowers are a blend of several coloured papers, giving them a shaded look--

MARY (V.O.)

...I wish to reconcile. I would our child have two mothers...

The hand with the blade suddenly pauses at this, frozen half-curl.

MARY (V.O.)

...a mother who bears him...

We PULL BACK to see it is Elizabeth, listening as Bess reads the letter to her - although it is still Mary's voice we hear.

MARY (V.O.)

...and you, his chosen Godmother...

Elizabeth is visibly moved by this. She sets the blade down.

MARY (V.O.)

No child would be more blessed.

INT. HOLYROOD - SIDE CHAMBER - DAY

Mary squats as she is in labor, as children were birthed in her time. Her hair is matted with sweat, her face flushed from pain. Kate and the Four Marys are at her side.

ELIZABETH (V.O.)

I am told the labor was long, but only with suffering do we know joy. What greater joy than to have ...a son to call your own. Humbly do I accept your invitation to be his Godmother, that I might share in your happiness...

As the bloody infant James is brought forth with one final, painful push from Mary--

ELIZABETH (V.O.)

...What is more, we should return the issue of inheritance now that a new generation is upon us...

INT. HOLYROOD - QUEENS CHAMBER - DAY

James - wiped clean, fast asleep - is being swaddled.

MARY (V.O.)

Your terms are most agreeable, and
delight us greatly. It is only
right that your heirs succeed you
if you marry...

The exhausted but smiling Mary on her bed as the swaddled baby is placed into her arms for the first time.

MARY (V.O.)

...and bear children of your own.

INT. HAMPTON COURT - STABLES - DAY

Elizabeth rides in a circle around the corral, holding the reins of a second horse - the foal (now a pony) - training it to be comfortable with a bridle.

MARY (V.O.)

...And should you not, it is my
son's great honor to rule by your
sublime example.

TIME CUT TO Elizabeth helping to remove the bridle and then petting the horse for having done well.

ELIZABETH (V.O.)

We must meet him soon, that we
might kiss him and show him our
love. And so that both his mothers
might meet, who for too long have
not.

INT. HOLYROOD - QUEEN'S BEDCHAMBER - NIGHT

Mary is seated in the corner, breast-feeding her infant, a warm, glowing maternal smile on her face as she looks down at the suckling child. The Four Marys are present.

A knock at the door. Fleming heads to answer the door as Seton retrieves a linen shawl to cover Mary's breast as the child continues to feed.

Once covered, Mary nods to Fleming, who opens the door, revealing Darnley and Bothwell. Darnley looks meek, and the worse for wear.

DARNLEY
 (re the child)
 May I...?

MARY
 Come.

Darnley goes over. Bothwell averts his eyes so as not to see the Queen in undress.

Darnley looks down on the child. Attempts to stroke his cheek. But as soon as he does, the child begins to cry.

MARY (CONT'D)
 Shhhh.

But the child keeps crying. Beaton comes over. Mary hands the child off to her. Beaton rocks the child back and forth as Mary pulls the shawl over herself.

DARNLEY
 (a weak smile)
 Strong lungs.

Mary, calm and direct--

MARY
 We have procured a house for you.
 Bothwell will see you there.

A beat - Darnley comprehends the implication of her words.

DARNLEY
 You imprison me?

Mary points to a document on her desk.

MARY
 Is this not your name?

Darnley goes over to it. Looks down. He's caught, momentarily frozen. But the inveterate liar that he is, he retorts with--

DARNLEY
 It is forged.

MARY
 Henry...

DARNLEY
 I swear.

MARY
 It is your hand.

DARNLEY

They must have - they must have
plied me with wine. They tricked me
into it. Those scheming devils...

MARY

Stop...

DARNLEY

Or that heretic Knox - possessed me
with some demon that took hold of
my spirit...

BOTHWELL

He is mad...

DARNLEY

(lashing out at Bothwell)
Am I? Am I mad? Yes then, I am mad.
(to Mary)
For I would never with my own free
will--

As he approaches her, desperate--

DARNLEY (CONT'D)

...You must believe me.

But Bothwell steps in between and grabs his arm.

DARNLEY (CONT'D)

Let go, you brute.

But Bothwell does not. He looks to Mary again, almost
childlike--

DARNLEY (CONT'D)

Please...Am I not to see my own
son? Is he not to know his
father...?

MARY

(calmly)
For your child's sake, be contented
with a pardon and your life.
(glances at the child)
You may say good-bye.

Beaton brings the child over to Darnley. Darnley tries to
touch the child's face again, but it only wails louder. The
possibility that this may be the last time he ever sees James
gets to Darnley. He begins to weep. To Mary--

DARNLEY

Forgive me...for the love of God...

MARY

Go now.

DARNLEY

My darling...

She takes the child from Beaton. As she begins to rock him, he stops crying.

DARNLEY (CONT'D)

I beg you...

MARY

(to Bothwell)

Take him.

Bothwell approaches Darnley and takes his arm. But he won't be man-handled again. He wrests his arm away, and with the last bit of dignity he can muster, he exits on his own, Bothwell following.

On Mary - rocking the child in her arms as she watches Darnley and Bothwell exit.

INT. HOLYROOD - COUNCIL CHAMBER - DAY

Mary's assembled Council - including Moray, Maitland and Bothwell - stand when she enters.

TIME CUT to everyone seating, mid-conversation--

MAITLAND

You must divorce him, Madam.

MARY

It is forbidden.

MAITLAND

Not by the Church of Scotland.

MARY

He is the father of my child. I will not do him such an indignity.

BOTHWELL

He threatens flight to England. Should he raise an army there--

MARY

Elizabeth would not welcome him. She is not so foolish as to choose a degenerate over her sister.

INT. ELIZABETH'S COUNCIL - DAY

Elizabeth's council similarly gathered.

CECIL

If you grant her succession then we are rewarding her disobedience.

ELIZABETH

What disobedience? She is not our subject.

RANDOLPH

And yet you would make us hers.

ELIZABETH

(with heat)

What have you produced in all your travels between our kingdoms? Discord. War. Death. And now you have the boldness to doubt my judgment? You had better question yours.

Randolph, chin high, trying to maintain as much dignity as possible--

RANDOLPH

I regret that you perceive me as a failure.

CECIL

(stepping in)

We serve you fully, with all our hearts. Any one of us would gladly die for you. But Mary is our foe, and a Catholic. Is it not within our rights to ask that we never bow to her as we bow before you?

ELIZABETH

She is only your Queen if I should not produce an heir.

CECIL

And will you, Madam? For you have
given us little hope so far.

INT. HOLYROOD - COUNCIL CHAMBER - DAY

MAITLAND

Darnley is cursed. We who have
wronged you on his behalf seek only
to prevent more wrong.

MARY

He is harmless.

BOTHWELL

Not so. When I delivered him to his
lodgings he screamed things most
profane, and spoke of regicide.

MARY

You have commanded armies against armies. Now you fear a single man?

BOTHWELL

I did not claim to fear him.

MARY

Then why advocate divorce?

BOTHWELL

My oath is to defend your safety.

MARY

So you do fear him.

BOTHWELL

No, I...what I meant...

Bothwell grasps for words. Rhetoric is not a strength.

MARY

Just as you vowed to protect me, I vowed loyalty to my husband - however regrettable that vow may be. I owe him neither comfort nor title, but I will not become a lady Henry Eighth, dispensing with husbands as he did wives.

INT. ELIZABETH'S COUNCIL -DAY

ELIZABETH

Despite your every effort she has prevailed. She has proven herself, in fact, far more capable than my own Privy Council.

(sardonically)

Should I die before my time, we could do worse than to place her on the throne of England.

INT. HOLYROOD - COUNCIL CHAMBER - DAY

MARY

...I have brought peace to our land, produced an heir to my throne and arranged succession to my sister's. Our strength is secure.

Her command of the room is total. Then, with a softer tone--

MARY (CONT'D)

Let my husband rave and threaten. We pity his madness, and it is punishment enough.

As Mary stands, the Lords begin to stand and--

INT. HOLYROOD - COUNCIL CHAMBER - DAY

Nobles are exiting the Receiving Hall. Maitland and others are in a small conspiratorial group. As Moray passes--

MAITLAND

Sir, join us...

He ignores them and keeps walking. Maitland is surprised. Bothwell emerges. Maitland turns his attention to Bothwell--

MAITLAND (CONT'D)

My Lord, you argued well in
Council. May we borrow your wisdom
for a moment?

Bothwell is sceptical but intrigued. The circle opens to him.

INT. HOLYROOD - QUEEN'S BEDCHAMBER - EVENING

THREE YEAR OLD JAMES sees something in the ashes of the fireplace and teeters towards it.

INT. PRIVATE HOUSE - CELLAR - NIGHT

The hooded men place the barrels in the center of the cellar, their work lit by a single lantern. One of them opens one of the barrels and scoops a pile of dark powder into his hand. Begins to lay a trail of the powder back toward the door.

INT. DARNLEY'S HOUSE - CELLAR - NIGHT

At the cellar's entrance one of the hooded figures lowers the candle and lights the trail of powder. It begins to burn towards the barrel as the men hastily exit.

INT. HOLYROOD - QUEEN'S BEDCHAMBER - EVENING

THREE YEAR OLD JAMES plays in the ashes of the fireplace.

INT. DARNLEY'S HOUSE - SITTING ROOM - NIGHT

A half-dressed Darnley and a naked YOUNG MAN seated at a table, both drunk. They reach for the bottle at the same time, knocking the bottle off the table and breaking a glass.

INT. HOLYROOD - QUEEN'S BEDCHAMBER - EVENING

JAMES finds a DEAD BIRD in the ashes of the fire grate and reaches towards it.

INT. DARNLEY'S HOUSE - SITTING ROOM - NIGHT

Darnley tries to pick up the glass but cuts himself in the process. Winces in pain. Looks for a piece of cloth to wrap his finger in.

INT. HOLYROOD - QUEEN'S BEDCHAMBER - EVENING

Mary hurries over to James and lifts him up and away from the carrion. Rubs his hands clean with the hem of her dress.

INT. DARNLEY'S HOUSE - SITTING ROOM - NIGHT

Darnley is wrapping his finger with his shirt tail, trying to stem the blood he bends down to pick up the bottle when--

BOOM with a FLASH that fills the screen, an explosion rocks the room. Darnley and the naked YOUNG MAN is hit by the brunt of the explosion. A tapestry is blown from the wall across the room, onto Darnley bending over on the floor.

INT. HOLYROOD - QUEENS CHAMBER - NIGHT

Mary bolts up in bed, awakened from the sound. The Four Marys are stirred awake too. James is standing in his crib, crying.

EXT/INT. DARNLEY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

FLAMES whooshing from the blown out window, engulfing the house.

INT. DARNLEY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

DARNLEY splutters awake in the burning building. He grabs the tapestry and, using it to cover himself, runs from the building.

EXT. DARNLEY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

CUT TO the Hooded figures, watching this from afar.

CUT TO their POV and we see Darnley, stumbling from the house. Wrapped in the smoking tapestry.

CUT TO the Hooded Men walking briskly toward him.

One of the Hooded Men bends down and, using the cord of the smoking tapestry throttles Darnley. His eyes bulge in fear as the life is choked out of him.

INT. HOLYROOD - BANQUET HALL/RECEIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Mary is sitting at one of the tables, cradling James, who is fast asleep. The Four Marys are with her. There are half a dozen Guards in the room.

Bothwell enters. He sits down across from her. Gently--

BOTHWELL
It was Lord Darnley.

Off Mary's puzzled look--

BOTHWELL (CONT'D)
An attempt on his life.

MARY
Is he dead?

Bothwell gives her a sympathetic look which confirms this. Mary breaks into sobs. James wakes up, troubled by his mother's tears. Seton comes over and takes the child from her, who has begun to cry himself.

BOTHWELL
I'll bring you to my estates. It's not safe for you here.

EXT. HOLYROOD - COURTYARD - DAY

The sky gray with pre-dawn light. Mary's final few trunks are being loaded onto a wagon. Mary is kneeling before James, holding his hands to help him stand. Seton awaits on a horse. Bothwell is with them. She's saying good-bye, and it's hard.

MARY
Will you be good?

The child stares blankly at her.

She lifts the child up to Seton. The child looks as though he might cry. Mary takes his foot and shakes it. His would-be tears morph into giggles.

MARY (CONT'D)
Yes - you'll be good.

And she tenderly kisses his foot. Then nods to Seton, trying to remain strong in her farewell. Seton begins to trot out of the gate, accompanied by two SOLDIERS on horseback.

Mary watches them go for a moment, in an impenetrable daze, lost in her thoughts, oblivious to all else. Bothwell places a hand on her shoulder. Then leads her toward her own horse and the wagon where the three other Marys are already seated, cloaks on, ready for the journey.

EXT. DUNBAR CASTLE - EVENING

Mary, Bothwell and the Royal Entourage approach the castle - a gloomy, militaristic seaside edifice.

INT. DUNBAR CASTLE - GUEST CHAMBER - NIGHT

Mary is being undressed by her ladies. They have only removed her outer sleeves when the door opens, revealing Bothwell. He turns away so as not to see her unsleeved arms.

BOTHWELL

Pardon...

The ladies move to re-attach her sleeves but Mary declines--

MARY

No need.

BOTHWELL

May we speak in private?

She nods to the Marys. They file out past Bothwell, still turned from her as he shuts the door behind them.

MARY

You may look. 'Tis only my arms.

He turns to her. He looks nervous. It's unlike him.

BOTHWELL

I know it is smaller than your lodgings in Edinburgh, but I hope it will suffice.

MARY

What brings you?

Bothwell hesitates, then finding his confidence, launches in--

BOTHWELL

The Parliament will ratify a proclamation demanding you wed a Scottish subject now that you are widowed.

MARY

It has only been a day...

BOTHWELL

They meet tomorrow. It is your council's advice that you should marry me.

And now she's beginning to connect the dots--

MARY

My God...What have you done?

Bothwell simply stares at her.

MARY (CONT'D)

No.

BOTHWELL

Madam...

MARY

Leave me. Now.

BOTHWELL

Madam...calm yourself...

He moves toward her. She skirts around him and heads for the door, but he grabs her by the wrist. He pushes her onto the bed and holds her down.

MARY

Murderer.

BOTHWELL

Did I not come to your aid when
your Lords rebelled?

Mary resists.

BOTHWELL (CONT'D)

Refuse and I will not come to your
aid when they rebel again.

MARY

Please...

He lets go. She sits up, overcome with sobs. Bothwell goes to the door and opens it. To the three Marys in the hall--

BOTHWELL

Come.

They enter, bewildered and concerned to see Mary in tears.

BOTHWELL (CONT'D)

Undress your lady.

They look to Mary. She is wiping her tears away now.

TIME CUT TO--

Bothwell grunting over her. Perfunctory. Mary expressionless, trying to block out what is happening.

A POP to the three Marys outside the draped bed, fighting back their own tears as they hear Bothwell within, forcing himself upon their mistress.

EXT. SCOTTISH CHURCH - DAY

Knox stands before his congregation as we saw him earlier in the film. But now the room is doubly packed, people spilling outside and lining the walls. And far more COMMONERS than we saw the first time. Knox is really worked up.

KNOX

The Queen is servant of Satan. She is a fornicator. A whore of Bablyon who defies the sanctity of marriage. What's worse, she has broken the most solemn of commandments: Thou Shalt Not Kill...

We CUT TO the face of the commoners, rapt by the sermon, a bubbling anger in their eyes.

KNOX (CONT'D)

She had her husband killed so she could wed his rival. Would we worship a murderous harlot? Would we kneel before a polecat who bedded an Italian? An agent of Rome? David Rizzio was slain for such adultery, and now Queen Strumpet marries another man whom she bedded out of wedlock. How do we know her son is not a bastard? Our Kingdom has become a disgrace - to God and all the world...

COMMONER

(yelling out)

Death to the whore!

The crowd, whipped into a fervor, yells in approval. Others start chanting "Death to the whore!" We hear their yells and chants continue as--

INT. DUNBAR CASTLE - CHAPEL - DAY

Mary and Bothwell at the altar of the chapel, the Bishop presiding. Maitland and Moray are in attendance.

TIME CUT TO Bothwell placing the rings on Mary's hand. They kneel and the Bishop blesses them both, then begins to pray.

This may be INTERCUT with the scene 154, adding a layer of the priests chanting in the wedding portion.

EXT. HOLYROOD - DAY

KATE scrubs graffiti off the walls of Holyrood.

INT. HAMPTON COURT - QUEEN'S CHAMBER - NIGHT

Elizabeth and Dudley on her bed, the drapes drawn for privacy. They are clothed. Her head is in his lap as he strokes her hair. It's very quiet and intimate.

ELIZABETH

Are we to do nothing as my sister
is deposed?

DUDLEY

She is not your sister. Nor can she
be your successor. Not a woman
whose own subjects call her a
harlot.

ELIZABETH

This is Cecil speaking...

DUDLEY

I speak for myself. Though all your
council agrees.

ELIZABETH

(more to herself than him)
How cruel men are.

DUDLEY

What was that?

She does not respond.

INT. DUNBAR CASTLE - DINING HALL - DAY

Maitland and Moray sit across a table from Mary and Bothwell. There is no food. Only the bare table top and the solemnity of the conversation. Moray hates every moment of this. Bothwell is furious. To Maitland and Moray.

BOTHWELL

You promised that I would be King.

MAITLAND

(coolly)

If your betrothed does abdicate,
you are abdicated also.

BOTHWELL

This was your intention...

MORAY

Events have overtaken all
intentions.

BOTHWELL

Liar! Events. Aye. Events by your
design. Is that not so?

They do not answer.

BOTHWELL (CONT'D)

Speak...Be men and own your
treachery. Did you not deceive me?

While Bothwell is shocked, Mary is not. Looking Moray
straight in the eye.

MARY

As they have done their Queen since
the day she returned.

Moray, ashamed, looks down at his hands.

MARY (CONT'D)

(to Bothwell)

Were you fool enough to trust these
men? Who took up arms against you?

Bothwell looks tortured, having been played.

MAITLAND

You must abdicate, Madam.

She turns back to Maitland.

MAITLAND (CONT'D)

When your son comes of age, he will
assume the throne.

(nodding to Moray)

Until then my Lord will be Regent.

MARY

(to Moray)

Brother?

MORAY

We found Mistress Seton. The boy is
now in our custody at Holyrood.

MARY

You hold my son prisoner?

MORAY

Not prisoner. He is my ward, until
he is old enough to--

MARY

Your namesake, James. Named for
you.

MORAY

I beg your forgiveness.

(beat)

But if you wish him to be King one
day, you must abdicate.

MARY

I will not do it.

MAITLAND

You will, Madam. By force if we must.

MARY

Then I shall meet force with force.

Maitland has reached the end of his patience.

MAITLAND

The people believe you are a traitor and a whore. What army can defeat an entire nation turned against its Queen? They would sooner parade your head on a pike than bow before a harlot. I for one would gladly hold high the pike.

Mary is shocked by his blood-lust. Looks to Moray--

MORAY

(matter-of-factly)

He is right. You cannot raise an army.

MARY

(defiant)

Many times you have said I cannot do what I have done.

MAITLAND

Then we are finished here.

Maitland gets up and heads for the door. Moray remains seated. Maitland turns back, waiting for him. Moray, with true supplication, not wanting further conflict--

MORAY

This is beyond my control. I ask you to reconsider.

MARY

All I have done is try to unify this land.

A glimmer of hope on Moray's face. Is she bending? But Mary only allows her self-doubt to linger for a moment.

MARY (CONT'D)

To relinquish the crown would be against God's will.

MORAY

God will not protect you. But I will protect you as my kin.

More lamentable than defiant--

MARY

I wish that we were kin. But we are no longer so.

Moray nods, disappointed. He understands and cannot fault her. He stands and makes his way towards the door.

Bothwell moves his hand on top of Mary's. She pulls hers away. She cannot be comforted, certainly not by him.

EXT. DUNBAR CASTLE - DUSK

Mary is with the three remaining Marys at the cliff's edge overlooking the ocean. She and Fleming are at the fore, Livingston and Beaton several yards behind. The waves are crashing below. In French--

MARY

Si vous souhaitez fuir, vous et les autres, vous devriez le faire immédiatement. (If you and the others wish to flee, you should do so.)

FLEMING

Notre obligation est à vous. Nous n'en avons pas à nous-mêmes.
(Our duty is to you, not ourselves.)

MARY

Vous avez assez fait. Vous ne me devez pas vos vies.
(You have done enough. You do not owe me your lives.)

FLEMING

Vous ne devriez pas non plus risquer la vôtre.
(Nor should you risk yours.)

MARY

Je n'ai pas le choix.
(I have no choice.)

FLEMING

Mais certes vous avez le choix.
(Of course you do.)
(gesturing to the ocean)
Regardez. La France est si proche, nous pourrions presque la toucher.
(France is so close we could almost touch it.)

MARY

(glancing back)
Prenez Livingston avec vous.
(MORE)

MARY (CONT'D)

*Elle s'est toujours sentie dépaysée
ici. Et Beaton languirait si elle
se trouvait toute seule.*

(Take Livingston. She has never
felt at home here. And Beaton would
not fare well on her own.)

FLEMING

Mais Madame ...
(But Madam...)

MARY

Faites ce que je vous dis.
(Do as I say.)

FLEMING

Les soeurs de se délaissent pas.
(Sisters do not abandon sisters.)

MARY

*Une reine n'a pas de soeurs. Elle
n'a que son pays.*
(A Queen has no sisters. She has
only her country.)

FLEMING

Un pays qui vous a délaissée.
(Which has turned on you.)

And now Fleming gestures to the land instead of the ocean--

FLEMING (CONT'D)

*Vous risquez tout pour ce pays
maudit et execrable?*
(You would risk everything for this
wretched land and its wretched
people?)

MARY

I would.

FLEMING

Le jeu n'en vaut pas la chandelle.
(It is not worth it.)

MARY

*Je ne m'attends pas à votre
compréhension. Il n'y a qu'une
autre reine qui puisse comprendre.*
(I do not expect you to understand.
Only another Queen could.)

FLEMING

*Elle vous a pourtant délaissée,
elle aussi.*
(She too has turned on you.)

MARY

*Et elle pourrait faire pire encore.
Mais je ne vais pas m'enfuir.*
(And may do worse yet. But I will
not flee her.)

Now Mary turns her back on the sea to gaze on the land--

MARY (CONT'D)

Ma vie est ici maintenant.
(My life is here now.)

We begin to hear the sound of BAGPIPES--

EXT. HOLYROOD - COURTYARD - DAY

James - five years old now - is running forward, much more able on his feet than when we saw him last. He's darting toward something he sees on the cobblestones. Seton is following him at a leisurely pace several yards behind.

James arrives at his destination and crouches down - it's a musket ball wedged between two cobblestones. He picks it up and stares at it, fascinated. He starts to lick the musket ball. Seton scurries forward.

SETON

No.

She takes the musket ball out of his hand.

JAMES

Francais?

SETON

Balle.

He sees another one. Runs over and picks it up. Then another. Picks that one up too. Seton follows.

As he rounds the corner he sees a PLATOON of troops mustering. A QUARTERMASTER is handing out musket balls to troops from a bucket, which they are placing in pouches. A PIPER plays during all of this.

Seton comes up alongside James, who is staring at the troops with as much fascination as he did the musket ball.

SETON (CONT'D)

Soldat.

JAMES

Soldat.

SETON

Soldiers.

JAMES
What is soldiers?

SETON
They fight.

JAMES
Fight what?

SETON
(with some sadness)
Ta mere.

James looks up at Seton, not fully understanding.

PRELAP: the SOUND of a MASSIVE BATTLE - screams, yells, the clanking and clashing of arms, then CUT TO--

INT. SCOTTISH CHURCH - DAY

KNOX stands before congregation. We see images of Mary and Moray preparing for battle.

KNOX
Oh Lord, hear our prayer, that we may rid this land of this Harlot-Queen and her murderer-husband.

INT. SMALL PRIVATE CHAPEL - DAY

MARY alone at prayer. Bothwell, unnoticed is behind her. He watches her and leaves.

INT. LARGE CHURCH - DAY

MORAY at prayer with his soldiers on the eve of battle. It is a huge and well-armed force.

KNOX V.O
Hear our prayer for those men, who do as God commands them to do...
...not that which seems good in their own eyes.

YOUNG JAMES I has crept into the church and is watching Moray through the soldiers' legs.

KNOX V.O
Our prayers will be heard. But those Catholic traitors who fight with her, speak into the void.

EXT. LANGSIDE - FIELD - DAY

VERY TIGHT on HECTOR - THE HIGHLANDER - the one who Mary spoke to. His entire face fills the screen. We see nothing else. It is streaked with mud and caked blood. He is on his back. Fallen.

We can hear the battle surrounding him on all sides, CLAMORING and FIERCE, but see NOTHING of it, only his face.

He gurgles fresh blood from his mouth. The sound of the battle starts to FADE as we push into his eyes, replaced only by the sound of his strained breathing.

As we push CLOSER we hear his voice, in SCOTTISH GAELIC, struggling to recite "Hail Mary"--

HECTOR

*Fàilte dhut a Mhoire, tha thu lan
de na gràsan...*

We CUT TO his POV - straight up. Nothing but the sky fills the frame--

HECTOR (V.O.)

*Tha an Tighearna maille riut.
Is beannaichte thu am measg nam
mnà...*

CUT TO VERY TIGHT on MARY'S EYES - filled with horror - watching the battle from afar. Only her EYES fill the frame, slowly pulling out to see the despair on her face--

HECTOR (V.O.)

*...agus beannaichte toradh do
bhronn, Iosa.
A Naoimh Mhoire, Mhathair Dhè,
guidh air ar son ne na peacaich...*

CUT BACK TO the SKY, as it fades to BLACK--

...a nis, agus aig uair ar bàis.

And just before it reaches total black, we hear hear the last, shallow breath of the Hector.

EXT. HOLYROOD - COURTYARD - DAY

A CONTINUATION of Scene 161. On James looking at the gate as Moray enters on horseback, flanked by two CALVARYMEN also on horseback. He is muddy from the battle. Sees the troops mustering. All activity stops and they stand at attention as he slowly rides in. To a CAPTAIN overseeing the Quartermaster-

MORAY

Dismiss them.

The Captain stares at him blankly. In anger, mixed with his own shame and fatigue--

MORAY (CONT'D)

Dismiss them! It is done.

There's nothing euphoric about this victory. The Captain immediately forms the troops to march out of the courtyard. During which Moray sees James and Seton. He dismounts and approaches the child as he takes his gloves off. Seton looks concerned.

JAMES

(in French)

Where is maman?

He crouches down to eye-level with James. Places his hand over the child's heart.

MORAY

She is here.

(beat)

And you will make her proud...

Then he lifts the child up - and holding him so he's now at the eye-level of a grown man--

MORAY (CONT'D)

*...for one day you will be King.
And all this will be yours.*

SETON

(to Moray)

Does she live?

EXT. SOLWAY FIRTH - DAY

Pre-dawn light. The FISHERMAN preparing a rowboat for the journey across. Two of Mary's ESCORTS are with her. As the Fisherman sets to unfurling the sail, Mary gazes out across the water at a thin ribbon of land on the horizon--

MARY

England does not look so different
from Scotland.

FISHERMAN

Aye, they are sisters.

She stares into the distance a moment longer, then heads over to the rowboat. The Fisherman and the Escorts help her board.

INT. HAMPTON COURT - SITTING ROOM - DAY

TIGHT on Elizabeth, trying on a wig - bright red. Looking into a hand mirror that Bess is holding up for her.

ELIZABETH

Let us try the other.

One of her Ladies removes the current wig as Bess retrieves the second one and helps Elizabeth put it on. Then holds the mirror up to her again. Elizabeth takes the mirror herself so she can see it from all angles.

CECIL (O.S.)

Madam.

Elizabeth tilts the mirror and in it sees Cecil in the doorway. As Cecil steps into the room so he can face her--

CECIL (CONT'D)

If anyone were to learn of such a
meeting - whether it be the
Scottish Lords or our own here in--

ELIZABETH

I agree that secrecy is vital.
Alas, you have a skill for keeping
such things hidden. So put your
skills to use.

CECIL

Is it guilt, Madam?

Elizabeth turns to him, offended. He has struck a nerve.

CECIL (CONT'D)
 Because a monarch should never feel
 guilt.

ELIZABETH
 (sharply)
 My motive is not your concern. Do
 as I say and make the arrangements.

Cecil is smart enough not to challenge the rebuke. He bows in submission and exits. Elizabeth picks up the mirror and inspects the wig once more.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
 This one I think.

EXT. FOREST COTTAGE - DAY

A small cottage in a clearing surrounded by woods. The Attache is out front, keeping guard. He hears dogs barking in the distance.

INT. FOREST COTTAGE - DAY

Mary is at a small window, looking out.

ATTACHE
 Away from the window, Madam.

Mary steps away from the window and the Attache shuts it. A moment later Bess enters. Eyes Mary for a moment, then turns to the attache.

BESS
 I rode ahead. She'll be here soon.

On Mary, full of anticipation at hearing this. Then Bess whispers something into the attache's ear. He turns to Mary--

ATTACHE
 Come.

He leads her to the rear, hidden by washing hanging from the rafters, out of sight from the front of the room.

ATTACHE (CONT'D)
 Remain here.

EXT. FOREST COTTAGE - DAY

The CAPTAIN helps Elizabeth off her horse. So as to be heard by the rest in the hunting party--

ELIZABETH

I should like some privacy whilst I
rest.

CAPTAIN

Of course, Madam.

Elizabeth makes her way toward the cottage alone.

INT. FOREST COTTAGE - DAY

Elizabeth enters. Looks around the main room and sees Bess and the Attache. He bows.

ATTACHE
Your Majesty.

They silently retreat to another portion of the cottage, leaving Elizabeth alone. She does not move.

BACK TO Mary, leaning forward, tempted to get up and meet her, but remaining where she is as instructed.

BACK TO Elizabeth, her heart is pounding too. She takes several steps forward.

CUT TO Mary as footfalls draw near, floorboards creaking. Then they stop.

Mary listens for a moment, still, should she say something?

CUT BACK TO Elizabeth, frozen. She is building the courage to confront Mary.

BACK TO Mary--

MARY
Cousin...?

And we INTERCUT between the two, in separate spaces, hearing but not seeing each other.

ELIZABETH
(barely audible)
Aye...

Elizabeth swallows her anxiety and steadies herself. Louder--

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
Are you well?

Mary desperately wants to go to her but holds back. She doesn't want to do anything to offend Elizabeth.

MARY
Your voice is not what I expected.

ELIZABETH
What did you expect of it?

MARY
I do not know.

ELIZABETH

*Vous préférez que nous nous
parlions en français?*
(Would you rather we speak French?)

MARY

We are in your country. I shall
speak your language.

She waits for Elizabeth to respond, but she does not. Mary
takes a step closer.

MARY (CONT'D)

How I long to see your face.

But she stops short of revealing herself.

ELIZABETH

No one can know we meet.

MARY

Yes, I have been instructed.

ELIZABETH

If you speak of it to anyone, I
shall deny. And I will regard your
words as treason.

MARY

Am I your subject now?

ELIZABETH

(softer)
No - you are not my subject.
(beat)
But you seek refuge.

MARY

(swallowing pride)
I am grateful for your protection.

They are so close, but still cannot see each other.

MARY (CONT'D)

How did it come to this?

Elizabeth does not have an answer.

MARY (CONT'D)

May I see you, sister?

Elizabeth is frozen. Mary waits, but with no response, steps into the same space as Elizabeth. As she does Elizabeth turns, so her back is to Mary. Elizabeth brings her fingers to the side of her wig, making sure there are no underlaying locks out of place.

ELIZABETH

My eyes are weary from travel.

Mary gazes at Elizabeth's back.

MARY

I should have stayed true to your love. I should have followed your example and never married.

ELIZABETH

But then you would have no son.

MARY

Whom I have not seen these past two years. Whose mother is without a crown. Whose own throne is usurped by his uncle.

Elizabeth still has her back to Mary--

ELIZABETH

You must have faith your brother will keep his word.

MARY

I have no faith in him.
(beat)
I have only faith in you.

On Elizabeth, closing her eyes. She can guess what is to come next, and it is a difficult matter. Mary takes a few steps closer to her--

MARY (CONT'D)

You would let them show the world that a Queen can so easily be forsworn?

No answer from Elizabeth.

MARY (CONT'D)

Answer me, sister.

ELIZABETH

To war with Scotland and betray my own clergy on a Catholic's behalf - no. I cannot. You know I cannot.

MARY

Did you come so far at such great risk only to refuse me?

ELIZABETH

I came because...

But she decides not to finish the sentence. Mary waits, then--

MARY

If you refuse me, say it to my face. Do not force to me beg to your back.

Elizabeth turns and they take each other in for the first time. We see pride and humility on both their faces, anger and love, compassion and antagonism - a kaleidoscope of contradictions. Then, eventually--

MARY (CONT'D)

I will kneel before you if I must.

ELIZABETH

It would make no difference. You are safe here in England. But that is all I can offer.

Mary cannot contain her emotion any longer, her frustration and anger and sorrow and despair rise up.

MARY

I have been abandoned by so many. I am utterly alone.

ELIZABETH

As am I. Alone.

MARY

Then be my sister. Be my boy's Godmother. Together we could conquer all of those who doubt us. Do not play into their hands. Our enmity is precisely what they hope for. I know your heart has more within it than the men who counsel you.

ELIZABETH

I am more man than woman now. The throne has made me so.

(beat)

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
But I have no enmity with you.

MARY
Except to seed rebellion and
deceive me time and time again.

ELIZABETH
You would do well to watch your
words.

MARY
I will not be scolded by my
inferior.

Elizabeth is stunned by the comment.

ELIZABETH
Your inferior...

MARY
I am a Stuart, which gives me
greater claim to England than you
possess.

Elizabeth brings a hand to her wig--

ELIZABETH
I had this made because I wanted to
present the best version of myself.

She takes off the wig and stares at it as--

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
I was jealous. Your beauty. Your
bravery. Your motherhood...

She looks up at Mary--

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
You seemed to surpass me in every
way.
(a beat, then coldly)
But now I see there was no cause
for envy. Your gifts are your
downfall.

She tosses the wig onto the dining table. Mary is shaken, but
tries to maintain her dignity. Chin held high.

MARY

What now, sister?

ELIZABETH

You will still have my protection.
On my terms.

MARY

Until you have me killed.

ELIZABETH

I will do no such thing.

MARY

Wouldn't you? As Henry killed your
mother?

ELIZABETH

I am not my father.

MARY

His blood is your blood.

ELIZABETH

As long as you do not provoke my
enemies, you have nothing to fear.
Your fate is in your own hands.

MARY

If I seek to help your enemies, tis
only because you pushed me to their
arms. And should you murder me,
remember that you murder your
sister...and you murder your Queen.

That is the final straw. Elizabeth goes to the door leading to the kitchen and opens it. Both Bess and the Attache stand. As Elizabeth goes to the door Bess glances over at Mary, who glares back at her, defiant.

EXT. FOREST COTTAGE - DAY

As Elizabeth approaches the hunting party, she forces a smile for show. Everyone starts to mount their horses. Elizabeth, in hushed tones to the CAPTAIN as he lifts her to her saddle--

ELIZABETH

Take her somewhere you can guard
her well.

EXT. HOLYROOD - COURTYARD - DAY

TIGHT on a hand reaching into a small bucket of musket balls, grabbing one and placing it into another's hand. We PULL BACK to see it has been given by a SCOTTISH COLONEL to a YOUNG MAN, only 20-years old. The Young Man places the ball into the barrel of the musket, then pushes it down with a rod.

He lifts the musket to his shoulder and takes aim at a straw target placed on the other side of the courtyard. Pulls the trigger and fires the weapon, hitting his mark.

COLONEL

Very good.

YOUNG MAN

Another.

As the Colonel retrieves another musket ball, an ATTENDANT approaches with a folded parchment.

ATTENDANT

Sir...

The Young Man looks over.

ATTENDANT (CONT'D)

A letter, from England.

EXT. HOLYROOD - COURTYARD - DAY

Alone, the Young Man reads the letter, the expanse of the valley below.

We hear Elizabeth's voice, much older and deeper now--

ELIZABETH (V.O.)

My dear cousin, I write to you of
your mother, whose care you have
entrusted to us these many years...

And now we realise that the young man is James.

We REPRISÉ PORTIONS OF THE FOOTAGE from the beginning of the film - where we only see Mary from behind - but now with Elizabeth's letter overlaid.

INT. FOTHERINGHAY CASTLE - DAY

She is on her knees in prayer, joined by her CHAMBERMAIDS, facing the door.

ELIZABETH (V.O.)
 With an extreme dolor that
 overwhelms my mind for that
 miserable incident which has
 befallen...

The heavy door pivots open, revealing Andrews. He bows his head, then, with solemnity and respect--

ANDREWS
 It's time.

INT. HAMPTON COURT - HALLWAY - DAY

Elizabeth walks toward us, looking the age we saw her last.

ELIZABETH (V.O.)
 I tell you that while I mourn, I
 feel no guilt, for I am innocent...

Elizabeth rounds the corner and we see her appear on the other side, she is 10 years older - more make-up, a brighter wig, her dress more regal--

ELIZABETH (V.O.)
 ...A Prince cannot be guilty for
 what is just. What other answer to
 such plots against my throne...

A double set of doors are opened for her and as we see her pass through she is another 5 years older, more gaunt, her dress even more elaborate and severe--

ELIZABETH (V.O.)
 ...than to respond to treason with
 the punishment that it demands. How
 it ages me to bear such a burden...

Another set of double doors. And this time as she passes through we see her finally at age 54, the year of Mary's execution. She almost looks inhuman - thick make up hiding wrinkles, a fiery wig, massive collar and ornate dress. She has entered the Privy Council Chamber---

ELIZABETH (V.O.)
 ...the figurehead of justice that
 would take away a mother you
 remember not...

EXT. HOLYROOD - COURTYARD - DAY

On James, tears welling in his eyes as he looks out over the valley...

ELIZABETH (V.O.)
 ...Know that when I see her in my
 mind's eye, I see not an aged
 woman...

INT. HAMPTON COURT - PRIVY COUNCIL CHAMBER - DAY

As an aged Cecil places a document before Elizabeth - the warrant for Mary's execution - she stares directly at us, stoic, an old woman lost in a memory--

ELIZABETH (V.O.)
 ...but rather the young,
 resplendent Queen whose portrait I
 first gazed upon five and twenty
 years ago...

INT. FOTHERINGHAY CASTLE - CORRIDOR

Mary approaches the Great Hall as she did at the beginning, but now we are in front of her instead of behind her, and she is the young, resplendent Queen Elizabeth imagines--

ELIZABETH
 No older than when she first set
 foot upon this island...

INT. FOTHERINGHAY CASTLE - GREAT HALL - DAY

The vast room is filled with a hundred spectators. The wooden stage. Soldiers to the side.

The crowd parts to make room for Mary and her procession as they enter. The spectators look upon her with silent awe and fascination as she heads directly for the stage, mounts the steps to the platform where two MASKED MEN stand waiting for her. One of them offers her a small stool on which to sit.

TIME CUT TO--

TIGHT on Mary as The Clerk of Elizabeth's Privy Council,
 ROBERT BEALE - reads the warrant--

BEALE (O.S.)
 By order of our sovereign
 Elizabeth, Queen of England, Wales
 Ireland and Overlord of Scotland,
 certified...

He continues on after the word "Scotland" but his voice fades out as Mary begins to speak, directly to the camera, in a quiet, intimate voice.

MARY

James, my only son, I pray that
with your life you will succeed
where I could not, and for which I
am about to give my life...

We CUT TO Bull - the Executioner - who bows his head in
supplication--

BULL

I plead your forgiveness, Madam.

MARY

I forgive you with all my heart.
For now, I hope, you shall make an
end of all my troubles.

Bull gestures to a cushion before her in front of the block.
Mary kneels and begins to pray, head bowed, eyes closed--

MARY (CONT'D)

*Salve, Regina, Mater misericordiæ,
vita, dulcedo, et spes nostra,
salve.
Ad te clamamus exsules filii Hevæ,
In te Domino confido...*

Her Latin prayer fades as it is replaced by Mary's V.O.

MARY (V.O.)

I shall be watching you from
heaven...

Mary's eyes open as Bull places his hand on Mary's shoulder.

We hear the steady drone of a single bag pipe.

INT. HAMPTON COURT - RECEIVING CHAMBER - DAY

James, in full regal attire, sitting on Elizabeth's throne,
crown atop his head, scepter in hand, staring straight into
the camera--

MARY (V.O.)

As your crown, one day, unites two
Kingdoms.

A flourish of notes from the bag pipe.

INT. FOTHERINGHAY CASTLE - GREAT HALL

Bull gently guides her head to the chopping block.

We are TIGHT on her face as we see the frescoed ceiling
beyond it.

She is trying to keep calm but she is breathing fast now, pulse racing in her final few moments. The axe will fall any second. To us, in a whisper as the pipes play--

MARY

And we shall have peace.

A deep intake of air, the pipes growing even louder. A slow exhale. The briefest flash of calm.

BLACKOUT. SILENCE.