

SHAKESPEARE'S QUEEN

INT. THE EARL OF DERBY'S MANOR, HALLWAY.

An oil painting in a gilded frame. Its dark background is broken up by thick strokes of reds and golds. It's dappled in natural light.

EXT. THE EARL OF DERBY'S ESTATE. MORNING.

A grandiose Tudor house is set within beautiful grounds. The fields directly in front of it are spread with tall white flowers, cut through by a river. There is a subdued hum of people.

Beyond the flowers is a long, winding carriageway.

EXT. PRESCOT ROAD. CONT.

A slow carriage bumps and bounces along a path, surrounded by greenery.

The carriage is a glossy black, shining in the sun.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. THE EARL OF DERBY'S MANOR, HALLWAY. CONT.

The black of the painting is broken by a depiction of a long silk dress. Spilling down the front of the dress are chains of jewels and pearls.

EXT. PRESCOT ROAD. CONT.

The wheels of the carriage crush the gravel they roll over.

INT. THE EARL OF DERBY'S MANOR, STAIRCASE. CONT.

MAIDS and FOOTMEN are busy up and down the stairs, carrying arrangements of rosemary and roses, or luggage. They're frantic with preparation.

All these feet ascend the stairs and cross a landing, passing a pair of closed curtains. Three pairs of expensive shoes peep out from beneath.

The traffic up and down the stairs lulls. Tentatively, a foot steps out from behind a curtain. Then all the feet run down the stairs.

INT. THE EARL OF DERBY'S MANOR, HALLWAY. CONT.

The top of the painting reveals a pale young face, stern features and an elaborate swathe of orange hair.

A white glove grabs the gilded frame beside the face. The painting is lifted off the wall.

EXT. THE EARL OF DERBY'S ESTATE. CONT.

The three pairs of feet are running through the white flowers of the grounds. THREE YOUNG WOMEN are panting as they run.

EXT. PRESCOT ROAD. CONT.

Two sets of horses' hooves trot along the path. The same tall white flowers sway at the side of the road.

INT. THE EARL OF DERBY'S MANOR, HALLWAY. CONT.

PERKINS (50s), a footman wearing white gloves, is just lowering the painting to the ground. He leans it against the wall it was just hanging from and steps away.

It is a massive portrait of a younger Queen Elizabeth I. Leaning on the wall beside it is an almost identical portrait. In this one, Queen Elizabeth is much older, around 50.

A man comes to stand in front of both paintings, looking at the difference between them.

EXT. THE EARL OF DERBY'S ESTATE. CONT.

There are three dents in the white flowers on the riverbank, and giggles in the air.

From above, set within the flowers, ANNE (18) and her two younger sisters, ELIZABETH (16) and FRANCES (12) are visible. They are all in white dresses, lying on their backs with their heads together in the centre. The world is slowly spinning around them.

Frances, just a little girl, holds a flower to her nose and inhales, before sneezing violently. Her whole appearance is slightly messy.

Elizabeth, the middle sister, has a rough handful of flowers that she is using to swat viciously at anything nearby.

As she swats, she hums the wedding march to herself. Her hair is elaborate and her dress is more expensive than her sisters'.

Anne, the oldest sister, has several of the flowers, and is threading them together into a long chain. Only in her late teens, her head in the clouds, always wearing a wide smile.

The sun rising over the roof of the house moves a shadow down Elizabeth's arm. She watches it and smiles.

ELIZABETH

How the maids will panic when they
find the bride missing!

She throws her sisters a sidelong glance.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

...And the bridesmaids too, I
suppose.

ANNE

You're not a bride until your
wedding day, Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH

Neither of you are brides at all!

Elizabeth crawls over to the river bank and smooths her hair in its reflection. She admires herself.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

And I will be Lady Hastings in less
than a month.

Frances snorts, but Elizabeth ignores her, glorying instead in her own reflection.

FRANCES

I wonder who'll tell father that
we're missing.

ELIZABETH

The new girl- they always sacrifice
the new girl.

FRANCES

And that way, there's always a new
girl to sacrifice.

Elizabeth and Frances laugh. Frances rolls her head to see why Anne is so quiet.

FRANCES (CONT'D)
Are you worried about father
finding out, Annie? You always get
in the most trouble.

ELIZABETH
Only because she's his favourite!

Anne rolls her eyes.

ANNE
Nobody's going to bother father
this morning. He's too busy staring
at-

INT. THE EARL OF DERBY'S MANOR, HALLWAY. CONT.

The man comparing the paintings is their father, LORD
STRANGE.

His shrewd eyes take in the wrinkles on Queen Elizabeth's
face, only visible in the newest painting.

ANNE (O.S.)
- the wicked witch.

Perkins picks up the new painting and strains to hang it in
the same place as the last one.

LORD STRANGE
Do you ever think, Perkins, about
whose will be the next face to
grace that wall?

After a struggle, the portrait is hung, wonky. Perkins steps
back to consider it.

PERKINS
No m'lord. Such a thought'd be
treasonous.

LORD STRANGE
Is it treasonous to watch time
wrinkle our childless Queen?

PERKINS
I'd wager it be treasonous to
imagine your own face in its place.

For a moment, Lord Strange's face is unknowable, staring at
the back of Perkins' head.

Perkins straightens the painting perfectly in one movement.

Lord Strange throws back his head and guffaws.

EXT. THE ENTRANCE TO THE EARL OF DERBY'S MANOR. CONT.

Lord Strange's laughter can be heard outside the manor's huge front door, where maids are decorating the entrance with flowers, or scrubbing the stone steps, and gardeners are shaping garish 'love heart' topiaries.

Some of the maids turn their heads to the sound of approaching horses.

The black carriage is trundling up to the long driveway.

EXT. THE EARL OF DERBY'S ESTATE. CONT.

From the field of flowers, a view of the front of the house shows the maids heading inside and footmen appearing to greet the approaching visitors.

Anne sits up in the grass, watching the carriage draw up to the front of the house.

Elizabeth sits up beside her.

ELIZABETH

Do you suppose that's my first guest?

FRANCES (O.C.)

Perhaps it's Lord Hastings, come to say he won't have such a noisy wife!

ELIZABETH

Frances!

FRANCES

(sarcastically)

Elizabeth!

Frances sits up and sticks out her tongue. Elizabeth grabs it between her fingers and a momentary childish fight breaks out between them.

ANNE

With any luck it's the fairy Queen, come to grant our wishes.

Anne returns her attention back to her flowers. A butterfly has landed on one.

ANNE (CONT'D)

Well hello, Madame Butterfly! To what do I owe this unexpected pleasure?

Elizabeth has gone back to watching the carriage. She strains her eyes to see who is getting out, but to no avail.

In temper, she swats her handful of flowers, unwittingly hitting Anne's butterfly and crushing it into the grass.

Anne cries out.

INT. THE EARL OF DERBY'S MANOR, HALLWAY. CONT.

The three white dresses amongst the flowers are smudges through thick glass window panes. Lord Strange obscures them as he passes.

He's walking down a long hallway, decorated for his daughter's wedding, passing portrait after portrait as he does. In each of the portraits, a regal looking ancestor.

Lord Strange reaches a heavy wooden door. He swings it open...

INT. THE EARL OF DERBY'S MANOR, STAIRCASE. CONT.

...and sweeps onto the landing of a wide staircase.

From below, Lord Strange cuts an intimidating figure, looking down at the manor's entrance, where somebody looks back up at him.

Lord Strange smiles down at his guest.

LORD STRANGE

You must be William! And just in time!

WILLIAM (20s) is a neatly dressed, serious looking man with an arm full of books. His knowledge is a mask he wears to hide his insecurity. He looks up at Lord Strange with confusion.

The front door swings open to let in some maids behind William and through it, a scuffle of dresses are visible in the field- Anne and Elizabeth are standing, in all-out war.

WILLIAM

Does somebody require an emergency education?

INT. THE EARL OF DERBY'S MANOR, LORD STRANGE'S STUDY. CONT.

The study is tastefully furnished with floor to ceiling bookshelves, paintings, a wooden desk and leather chairs.

Lord Strange sits behind the desk, opposite William, who looks tiny in a large armchair.

WILLIAM

Even when I was a schoolmaster, I was only equipped to teach young men! Surely your daughter is already versed in activities befitting her sex.

This amuses Lord Strange.

LORD STRANGE

I'm sure our Queen would be dismayed to know her favourite playwright would have her keep to embroidery and dance.

WILLIAM

The Queen must be equipped to rule our country! Your daughter must only be equipped to-

Lord Strange stands abruptly and William shrinks back.

He cowers as Lord Strange rounds the desk, but he passes William and goes to face a tapestry hung from the wall.

He pores over the tapestry, his fingertips tracing out the embroidery. William comes to stand beside him.

The tapestry is a large family tree. Lord Strange's hands find Anne's name, then his own name, and then his great, great grandmother... Mary Tudor.

LORD STRANGE

King Henry himself named our line.

WILLIAM (O.S.)

Would not this make you heir?

Lord Strange laughs.

LORD STRANGE

I will be dead long before our Queen.

(BEAT)

But I have heirs and she does not.

William's eyes fall to Anne's place on the tapestry.

LORD STRANGE (CONT'D)

The Privy Council will gather here
for my second eldest's wedding in
one month. They will assess Anne's
suitability then. You're here to
build a Queen.

Lord Strange holds out a hand for William to shake. William
gawks at it.

LORD STRANGE (CONT'D)

Come, man, will you teach a
gentlewoman for a month if the
future of your country depends on
it?!

William's hand takes Lord Strange's. They shake.

WILLIAM

A gentlewoman to a Queen.

The door bursts open. Anne stumbles over the threshold,
panting, muddy, a chain of flowers around her neck, grass in
her hair.

Lord Strange and William both turn to look at her. William
takes the sight of her in, horrified.

ANNE

Father...

(panting)

Lizabeth crushed my butterfly
friend...

(panting)

And now she blames me, and says I
will be cursed!

Anne begins to catch her breath and adjusts her dress
unceremoniously.

ANNE (CONT'D)

Tell her it isn't so!

As Anne pulls the twigs out of her hair, Elizabeth and
Frances burst into the office behind her. They push her out
of the way and both begin to talk at once.

ELIZABETH
 Whatever she's saying, it
 isn't true! She's just
 jealous that I am a bride
 before she! She snuck out
 this morning and she's always
 trying to get me in trouble!

FRANCES
 Annie and Elizabeth made me
 sneak out, I never even
 wanted to and I tried to get
 them to stop fighting, but
 they wouldn't. None of this
 is my fault!

Elizabeth and Frances exhaust themselves and fall silent.

Lord Strange and William are just watching them. Lord Strange looks mortified.

ELIZABETH
 Who's he? Is he expecting to come
 to my wedding?

LORD STRANGE
 William, these are my daughters.
 Elizabeth...

Elizabeth has her arms crossed.

LORD STRANGE (CONT'D)
 Frances...

Frances curtseys overeagerly and nearly falls over.

LORD STRANGE (CONT'D)
 And my eldest, Anne.

William turns his full attention to Anne. She's nursing the crushed butterfly in her hands, but she bobs her head respectfully. She isn't paying him much attention.

LORD STRANGE (CONT'D)
 Anne, this is Master William
 Shakespeare. He'll tutor you until
 your sister's wedding, give you a
 brain fit for a Queen.

Anne meets William's eyes. One end of the flower-chain falls from round her neck and swings awkwardly.

INT. THE EARL OF DERBY'S MANOR, LIBRARY. THE NEXT DAY.

William is sitting at a desk in a dark corner, beside a bookshelf.

The desk has stacks of books piled neatly on it.

He's scribbling on parchment, pages and pages already filled beside him.

A shadow falls over him and he looks up. Anne is standing at the desk beside him. He continues to write.

WILLIAM
You're late.

ANNE
What are you writing?

WILLIAM
I'm writing a play.

ANNE
Do you have many interesting characters? I love stories with monsters in them, and wizards and fairies and...

William sighs and puts down his quill. He looks at Anne, and he does not look impressed.

WILLIAM
I have a single month to make you fit for the throne. We have no time for stupid daydreams. There is no magic as there is no time for lateness.
(pause)
Now sit down.

Anne sits.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
My play is a history, so that's where we'll begin. Now, of course you'll know all about the...

William's speech turns into indistinct sound as Anne zones out. They are shrouded in shadow.

Over William's shoulder, shafts of sunlight break through the windows and light up the shelves of books. It looks bright and beautiful, and warm. Anne can picture herself outside in the sunshine, lying in the grass, leaves falling around her...

WILLIAM (O.C.) (CONT'D)
Anne. Anne?

Instantly, Anne is ripped from the grass and the sunshine and the bubbling river.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
Anne!

William is sitting opposite her again, glaring at her.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

What is more interesting than your
own ancestors?

ANNE

I hoped we might sit outside.

WILLIAM

Absolutely not! How am I to teach
you to be a better adult when you
are still a child?

Anne's lip quivers and her eyes fill up and William looks
down at his books. He instantly regrets shouting.

There is silence between them.

ANNE

When I am warm in the sun I am
cheered and I concentrate!

When William looks at her, she has drawn herself up to her
full height and is resolute. She looks like her father.

WILLIAM

We can sit by the window-

Anne's face lights up.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

-but I won't indulge you any more
than that.

They both stand. William scoops up some armfuls of books and
Anne follows suit.

They walk across the library, in the direction of the table
by the window, and are obscured for a moment by a bookcase.

EXT. THE EARL OF DERBY'S ESTATE. DAYS LATER.

When the darkness of the bookcase breaks, William and Anne
are still walking as though they never stopped. But now they
are outside, and walking towards a tree.

They sit formally at the foot of the tree, still stony faced.

WILLIAM

So to begin your history lesson,
start by telling me who preceded
Henry III.

ANNE
Henry III?

Anne looks lost.

WILLIAM
Come on, Anne, from yesterday's
lessons.

ANNE
I- I mean he was- he must have been-

William makes an exasperated noise.

ANNE (CONT'D)
I don't know! I couldn't care!

Anne throws up her hands dramatically. When she looks down,
William is handing her a very old, very brown book.

She takes it and opens it. She begins to read.

William is watching her with a smile.

ANNE (CONT'D)
What?

WILLIAM
Have you none of your wild dreams
to tell me about today? No regal
fairies in the woodland?

Anne grins and sets down the book. It lies forgotten.

ANNE
Last night's dream was fantastical,
William. There was a donkey headed
man, and oh, he was such a fool...

You can almost see the cogs going round in William's mind.

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INT. THE EARL OF DERBY'S MANOR, WILLIAM'S ROOM. LATER.

A small room, simply decorated. A fire burns in the grate.
The sun is setting outside the window. William sits at a desk
beside it, scribbling at the parchment on his desk.

His desk is littered with even more papers, a drink and a
plate of leftovers.

The fire throws William's shadow against the wall as he flicks through page after page, scratching things out and scribbling other things in their places.

Over his shoulder, his doodlings are visible. A drawing of a donkey headed man.

Through the window behind him, the field of white flowers is visible, and beyond that, the tree by the stream. Something is beneath it.

EXT. THE EARL OF DERBY'S ESTATE. CONT.

Through the window, and closer to the tree, it becomes clear that it's Anne under the tree.

She's sitting beneath it, highly focused on the book William gave her earlier. She's muttering the names of Kings and Queens to herself.

Time begins to move at hyper-speed. The sun sets and rises again, but as it does, the green foliage of the tree begins to brown.

When time slows again, it is early in the day, and the tree's branches are covered in a sea of brown.

A single leaf breaks away and flutters down to the earth below, landing beside Anne.

Anne is still sitting at the base of the tree with a book, but this time she isn't focusing on it. Instead, she is in an animated conversation with William, who sits opposite her with his own book.

ANNE

-but I'm still struggling to find meaning in Dido's death.

WILLIAM

Death and love rarely make sense-
this is how Virgil captures reality. Here-

William takes Anne's book and flicks through the pages until he gets to another point and stops.

He leans over to show the page to Anne.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

This is another good example.

Anne takes the book and they both go back to reading. For a few moments, the noise of the stream, the turning of pages and the occasional birdsong is all that can be heard.

Another leaf drifts past Anne's face from the tree above her and catches her attention. She watches it fall and thinks.

ANNE

The love the Greeks wrote about was not so different from the love of fairy stories.

WILLIAM

No different at all.

Anne looks up at the windows of the house. Through one, Elizabeth is visible, sitting on the window-ledge and brushing out her hair.

ANNE

How wonderful it must be, to experience love in reality.

William looks up at her sharply.

WILLIAM

Such a thing does not exist.

ANNE

How can you say that, when you see my sister's happiness?

WILLIAM

Your sister is happy to have food in her belly and a comfortable home assured!

ANNE

Perhaps, but hers is a marriage for riches. Why did you marry- that must have been for lov-

WILLIAM

Enough! Love is a cosmic joke, the only thing more foolish than all your magic and talking beasts.

Anne picks up her book and keeps her eyes fixed on the page. William hasn't snapped at her like that for a while. It hurt.

William sighs and softens.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
I'm here to teach you to be a happy
adult, yes?

Anne nods.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
Then you must trust me. Give up on
childish dreams of love. They will
only bring you sadness.

With that, William closes his book and stands.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
I'll see you for our lesson
tomorrow.

ANNE
I would be most grateful, sir.

William pats Anne's shoulder affectionately and walks away
from the tree.

His feet pass by its trunk.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. THE EARL OF DERBY'S MANOR, STAIRCASE. CONT.

A pair of feet pause at the door to Lord Strange's study.
There's muffled talking coming from inside.

INT. THE EARL OF DERBY'S MANOR, LORD STRANGE'S STUDY. CONT.

Lord Strange is sitting at his desk, his head in his hands.
The man opposite him is well-manicured, but his clothes are
dark and nondescript. He has a scarf around his neck, which
has recently been obscuring his face. He's flushed with the
passion of what he's been saying.

LORD STRANGE
I don't know why you've come back
here, Richard.

RICHARD HESKETH
To help my friend take his rightful
place!

LORD STRANGE
I can take such a place without
resorting to-

A floorboard outside the study door creaks and both men jump. Lord Strange lowers his voice to a whisper.

LORD STRANGE (CONT'D)
-without resorting to murder.

RICHARD HESKETH
There has already been talk of her ignoring your claim. If you don't act now, you risk...

INT. THE EARL OF DERBY'S MANOR, STAIRCASE. CONT.

The owner of the feet outside Lord Strange's study door have heard enough. They walk away.

BLACK.

INT. ANNE'S BEDROOM. THE AFTERNOON BEFORE THE WEDDING.

Midday sunshine hits Anne's smiling face.

FRANCES (O.C.)
Annie? Anne?

Anne opens her eyes.

She's sitting on the window-ledge of her bedroom. Through the window behind her, the field, once full of white flowers, is empty.

Anne's bedroom is bright and clean, several fine dresses draped over the end of her bed. The furniture is in fashionable Elizabethan style, with gorgeously embroidered soft furnishings and a grand fireplace at one end.

The door cracks. Frances' head pops around it, looking around the room until she spots Anne and squeals. Her head disappears again, but then the door bursts open.

Frances looks ridiculous with her hair knotted up in rags. She bumbles in and flops onto Anne's bed, hanging upside down off its edge.

FRANCES (CONT'D)
Why isn't your hair done?
(pause)
Tell me you're coming, Anne, I can't deal with Lizabeth alone all day.

Anne turns her smile to Frances and makes room on the window-ledge. She stretches out a hand, an invitation for Anne to join her.

Frances rolls off the bed.

Frances squishes in beside Anne and pushes herself under Anne's arm. They sit huddled together.

ANNE

I have to come. Father's counting on me.

FRANCES

This wedding's more important to father than it is to any of us.

They both go quiet to listen as screeches echo through the house- as they get louder they are clearly from Elizabeth.

A maid runs past Anne's open bedroom door, crying. A gown is launched after her.

ELIZABETH (O.C.)

This is last year's fashion! I hate it! I hate it!

Elizabeth storms into view, growling under her breath. She pauses in the doorway and looks in at her sisters.

They look back at her.

Elizabeth growls and slams Anne's bedroom door.

Anne and Frances laugh at her.

ANNE

This wedding is important to nobody more than Lizabeth.

FRANCES

If only it made her happy...

The sisters pull apart but remain close to each other, faces inches away from each other against the back drop of the window and the sunset beyond it.

ANNE

I've been reliably informed that happiness is overrated.

She pauses and looks down at Frances. She plays with the curls around her face.

ANNE (CONT'D)
Don't ever lose your happiness,
Frances.

Their intense moment is broken when Frances stands abruptly. She crosses the room and opens the trunk at the foot of Anne's bed.

FRANCES
Let's find some hair rags- you need
to get ready!

Anne groans. Frances pushes the dresses off the end of the bed and they crumple to a heap on the floor.

Anne panics and gets up quickly. She tries to scoop up the dresses, but Frances is already pulling more dresses out of the trunk and piling them onto the others.

ANNE
Frances, wait!

FRANCES
Why do you keep all your hair ties
at the bottom? What if you need
them?

Another dress drops past Anne's ear, onto the pile. She pushes past it and heads for her dressing table, where her hair rags are laid out neatly.

Frances is ignoring her, busy making a mess.

Anne holds up the rags.

ANNE
Frances!

Frances looks up at her, sheepish.

FRANCES
Maybe if your things were a little
more neatly organised, I wouldn't
have-

ANNE
Shhhh.

Anne nods her head to the floor beneath them and both girls go very still.

The sound of a man shouting floats up through the floorboards.

ANNE (CONT'D)

What do you think he's shouting
about?

Frances and Anne look at each other for a long moment, then both scrabble to push the rug back and press their ears to the floor. The shouting continues.

From Anne's pov, her sister looks comical, her face squished against the floor and her features distorted. Anne has done it more gracefully, her hand cupped to listen.

FRANCES

You're not going to hear anything
like that.

ANNE

Well, can you hear anything?

Frances straightens up in defeat.

The shouting sounds again. Through the rug. Through the floorboards. Through the timbers. Through the ceiling plaster...

INT. LORD STRANGE'S STUDY. CONT.

... and sounding clearly in the study below.

LORD STRANGE

I will not have you jeopardize
everything I've been working for!

He's almost spitting, leaning over his desk towards the occupant of the armchair.

The person in the armchair stands, it's RICHARD HESKETH.

RICHARD HESKETH

And what's that? Showing off your
family at a wedding? Your own
mother is banned from court, my
lord!

LORD STRANGE

Out! I'll have no more to do with
your murderous schemes.

Richard Hesketh is silent.

LORD STRANGE (CONT'D)

Out!

Lord Strange sinks back into his chair and breathes heavily. Then he pulls out a fresh piece of parchment and a quill.

The study door shuts with a low bang.

INT. THE CHURCH. THE MORNING OF THE WEDDING.

The bang of the study door melds into the banging of Frances' fan on a pillar of the church. Frances is fanning herself vigorously and is in everybody's way.

Elizabeth, who is standing beside her in a large and detailed gown, is having her space invaded and is getting very annoyed. When Frances elbows her, it's the final straw.

ELIZABETH

Have a care, you ninny!

FRANCES

Perhaps if you hadn't worn such a large gown, there'd be room for us all!

Beside her bickering sisters, Anne stands stoic. She looks every part the 'proper lady'.

They are standing at the front of the congregation. Elizabeth has her bouquet in hand.

Lord Strange and William are standing a row behind them, and the church is packed full of people in their best. All eyes are on the sisters and there's some judgmental whispering going around at the sight of the bickering.

Across the aisle, HENRY HASTINGS (20s), the groom, is waiting. Henry looks silly, but not unkind. He's had his hair done in a strange curled style.

He steps forwards to the altar and looks expectantly at Anne. While Elizabeth bickers with Frances, it's not hard to see why he's mistaken the newly graceful Anne as his bride.

Henry reaches out a hand towards Anne.

Anne realises his mistake and is mortified. She saves his embarrassment, shoving Elizabeth in front of herself at the last second.

Before Henry can stop himself, he grabs Elizabeth's hand.

Elizabeth freezes in the middle of arguing with Frances to look up at Henry. He smiles back at her.

They walk up to the altar together and it's as if nobody else is in the room.

EXT. THE EARL OF DERBY'S ESTATE. TWO HOURS LATER.

Wedding guests crowd the entrance to the manor, making their way inside, past the love heart topiaries.

Up the steps, the three sisters stand, thanking people for their attendance. Each time somebody new greets them, they bob into a curtsy in unison.

With fixed smiles on their faces, Anne, Elizabeth and Frances use the gaps between each curtsy to talk to each other.

ELIZABETH

Are we to curtsy to every
pretentious fool for twenty miles?

FRANCES

I didn't realise we'd be expected
to curtsy to you, too.

ELIZABETH

Oh, Frances... I won't miss you at
all.

Elizabeth uses her most recent curtsy to stamp on Frances' foot. Frances yelps.

ANNE

What a shame, we'll feel your loss
so keenly.

Elizabeth snorts, straight into the face of the most recent person to approach them, who looks affronted.

WILLIAM (O.S.)

Who taught you such strength of
diplomacy, my lady?

Anne whips around. William is standing inconspicuously beside her, the slightest smile on his face.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

It's high time you proved me to be
an excellent tutor.

ANNE

Then we had better go inside!

Anne links William's arm and they head inside. Frances watches her sister's escape mournfully.

INT. THE EARL OF DERBY'S MANOR, STAIRCASE. CONT.

The swarm of guests don't pay much attention to Anne and William, who are walking slowly around the staircase.

The entrance hall has been heavily decorated with flowers and banners.

The hum of people is enough that Anne and William can talk without being disturbed.

WILLIAM

Was your journey back comfortable?
No fairy ambushes? Magic curses?

William pats Anne's hand.

ANNE

I thought my fantasies were
childish stupidity.

They walk towards the entrance to the banquet hall in silence for a moment.

WILLIAM

A life of only fact would dull the
mind, I think.

ANNE

But it only takes a dream to make
it sharp again.

Slowly, the room around them changes.

INT. THE EARL OF DERBY'S MANOR, BANQUET HALL. CONT.

The banquet hall is a huge, warmly lit space. A spectacular feast is spread out across a long wooden table, and beyond it, people dance.

Anne and William are a bit out of place in this room of noise and smell and real life.

WILLIAM

As you have been working so hard in
all my lessons, it should be
nothing for you to tell me who you
need to impress in this room.

ANNE

Nothing would make me happier.

They pause in one corner of the room and look out at the crowd. Anne surveys each guest. Then she leans in to William's ear.

ANNE (CONT'D)

That group of men at the far end of the dining table.

There is a small congregation of older men at the end of the dining table, beside a huge suckling pig.

They're chatting and laughing loudly, a distinct group apart from the rest of the guests. One short, handsome man with a square jaw. One tall, very fat man draped in red velvet robes. One old bald man with a very long beard and tiny spectacles.

The short handsome man drinks from a goblet, listening intently to the other men.

ANNE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

That's Sir Francis Walsingham, her majesty's spymaster.

(pause)

He may as well have taken Mary Stuart's head himself...

The fat man in red velvet guffaws next to FRANCIS WALSHINGHAM. He has a turkey leg in his hand, and he tears strips off it with his teeth, talking with his mouth full.

ANNE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

...and that's William Cecil, the Lord Burghley. If the Queen coughs, he knows it.

WILLIAM (O.S.)

And the other?

The old bald man is calm, speaking softly. He pushes his spectacles up the bridge of his nose.

ANNE (O.S.)

As if I wouldn't know John Dee. The Queen's most trusted a-

Anne cuts off as her view is cut off by a looming figure. She looks up just as the figure sinks into a low bow, taking her hand with a little bit of force.

LORD CASTLEHAVEN

Can I be of any assistance, my lady?

He presses a kiss to Anne's hand and she pulls it back. He stands up from his bow.

LORD CASTLEHAVEN (30s) is an oily, quivering man. His eyes dart around Anne, taking her in.

ANNE
I don't believe we've been
introduced.

LORD CASTLEHAVEN
I'm introducing us. Mervyn Touchet,
second Earl of Castlehaven. And you
are?

He glances from Anne to William for a moment, but goes back to Anne.

Over Lord Castlehaven's shoulder, the three men Anne and William had been watching are collecting their food and drink and preparing to move.

Anne can't miss her chance to impress them.

ANNE
I am sorry, sir. You must excuse
me.

With that, Anne pushes past Lord Castlehaven and is gone after the three men. William follows her quickly. He pointedly avoids eye contact with Lord Castlehaven. He might even be afraid.

Lord Castlehaven remains frozen to the spot, the fixed smile twisting his face. GILES BROADWAY (20s), his page, approaches him from behind.

Giles is a young man, with a highly styled beard and clothes that subtly match Lord Castlehaven's.

GILES
My Lord?

Lord Castlehaven moves slightly to face Giles. Giles touches his arm.

They both look to Anne, who is drawing smiles from the Queen's Advisors.

LORD CASTLEHAVEN
Find out what you can about that
girl. We must have her.

Giles nods and slips away into the crowd.

Lord Castlehaven's hand clenches into a fist. Beyond it, Anne laughs obliviously.

Lord Strange approaches Anne and the Queen's Advisors. Their conversation lulls as they move to welcome him.

LORD BURGHEY

Well, my Lord, you've a challenge ahead if you hope to approach us with great conversation. I've met none so witty as your daughter!

Anne curtsays slightly. Lord Burghley guffaws again.

JOHN DEE

Where have you been hiding this intelligent young lady?

LORD STRANGE

Alas, we wanted to wait until her sixteenth birthday before she was allowed to socialize.

There's an awkward silence. John Dee turns to Anne, looking at her over his spectacles.

JOHN DEE

But my dear, did you not say you were eighteen?

Lord Strange flushes, but Anne doesn't miss a beat. She touches her father's shoulder, ignoring his slight jump of shock, and flashes John Dee a smile.

ANNE

Father is forever confusing me with my sister, the bride. She is just sixteen.

John Dee, Lord Burghley and Sir Francis see Elizabeth beyond Anne. She is mightily drunk, her hair bedraggled, and throwing some sort of tantrum. Her comparison with Anne is dubious and, beyond their notice, she is obscured by Giles, who is standing inconspicuously nearby.

Attention shifts back to Anne and Lord Strange.

LORD BURGHEY

Your local church is beautiful. Do you often give it patronage?

LORD STRANGE

Yes, our family have visited that church for generations, I-

Perkins appears between Lord Strange and Anne.

PERKINS
I'm pained to interrupt ye. I
require m'lord's immediate
attention.

Lord Strange and Perkins lean out of the conversation. Giles
is in the background, but they don't notice him listening in.

PERKINS (CONT'D)
An unexpected guest for you. I've
asked him to leave, but he
persists.

LORD STRANGE
Who, Perkins?

PERKINS
A Richard Hesketh, m'lord.

Lord Strange is suddenly white as a sheet.

LORD STRANGE
Get rid of him!

Perkins bows and leaves for the Manor's Entrance.

INT. THE EARL OF DERBY'S MANOR, STAIRCASE. MINUTES LATER.

Lord Castlehaven stands outside the entrance to the banquet
hall, alone.

A group of ladies pass him to enter the hall and he smiles at
them. They respond by giving him a wide berth. They enter the
hall as Giles exits it, and approaches Lord Castlehaven.

LORD CASTLEHAVEN
Well?

GILES
She's the daughter of Lord Strange.
A pawn in his play for the crown.

Lord Castlehaven is crestfallen.

LORD CASTLEHAVEN
A princess would be beyond our
reach.

GILES
It just so happens, an embarrassing
guest waits just beyond the doors.

Lord Castlehaven thinks. Then he smiles.

LORD CASTLEHAVEN
Waits outside? Why, this is a
celebration! He must be allowed in!

Just then, Perkins walks out towards the Manor's entrance.
Lord Castlehaven shoves Giles in his direction. Giles gives
chase.

GILES
Good sir! There is a matter that
requires your immediate attention
on the staircase!

Perkins pauses. He hardly notices as Lord Castlehaven passes
him.

PERKINS
The staircase?

INT. THE EARL OF DERBY'S MANOR, BANQUET HALL. MINUTES LATER.

Anne, Lord Strange, Lord Burghley, John Dee and Sir Francis
are all still in conversation. Dancing couples swirl around
them.

Anne and John Dee are talking in a private aside. The other
three men almost drown them out with their loud chatter.

JOHN DEE
I am glad to have met you this
evening Anne. You so remind me of
her majesty's young, curious self.

ANNE
I'm honoured, sir. Speaking to you
of the stars and destinies has
truly been-

Anne is cut off by a crashing.

Richard Hesketh is drunk in the middle of the room, having
just smashed his cup of ale on the floor. Space clears around
him and he sways.

From the doorway, Giles and the Lord Castlehaven watch.

Anne makes eye contact with Lord Castlehaven briefly. He
grins.

RICHARD HESKETH
Do you not bow for your true King?

He gestures to Lord Strange. All eyes are suddenly on him.

RICHARD HESKETH (CONT'D)
Your Catholic King!

A gasp goes around the room. RICHARD bows to Lord Strange, who looks desperately around himself for help. Lord Burghley and Sir Francis are already whispering to each other and moving away.

Before he can say more, Richard Hesketh is bundled out of the room by several footmen.

Lord Strange turns to Lord Burghley and Sir Francis, but they are already leaving. They ignore him coldly as the rest of the room watches on.

John Dee smiles sadly at Anne.

JOHN DEE
I'm afraid it's time I left, too. A shame.

The Queen's three advisors leave together, and with them, the room quickly drains of people. Before long, the servants are the largest presence in the room, clearing plates.

Lord Castlehaven and Giles are amongst the few that remain, but they don't interact with anybody but each other.

EXT. THE MANOR MAIN ENTRANCE. HOURS LATER.

From the outside, the manor is a huge collection of windows, row on row. So many are still bright with life.

Through one window, slightly ajar, Anne lies on her bed while Frances stands in front of her, miming something with a piece of silk.

ANNE
A tree!
(beat)
A horse!

Frances pulls an irritated face at Anne, but keeps miming.

ANNE (CONT'D)
A pig- no, a loveseat!
(beat)
A fireplace.

Frustrated, Frances throws the silk down.

FRANCES

A swing, of course! Oh Anne, you
take a turn!

The next window along is also open, and William's bed is still empty.

He sits at his desk, scribbling away. Something is troubling him though, and after a few moments he slumps in his chair.

He's watching a moth flutter around the candle on his desk, getting closer and closer...

Until William reaches out and cups it in his hands.

He walks over to the window and sets it free. It sets off towards the moon.

The window below William's is the brightest.

Inside is Lord Strange's study. The Lord sits closest to the window, his back to it, at his desk. On the other side of the desk, Lord Castlehaven is speaking to him, drink in his hand.

Lord Strange hands Lord Castlehaven a quill.

As Lord Castlehaven begins to write, Lord Strange, who is still saying something, stands up. Fanning himself with his hand, he turns around and opens the study window a crack. His face is full of worries.

LORD STRANGE

-is a marriage bond absolutely
necessary?

Lord Castlehaven signs the paper at the bottom.

He stands, rounding Lord Strange's desk and pausing for a moment at Lord Strange's chair. He thinks better of sitting in it. Instead, he hands the LORD the document.

LORD CASTLEHAVEN

I think only of swiftly restoring
your reputation, of course.

The concern melts from Lord Strange's face.

They bow their heads to one another before Lord Castlehaven leaves the study.

Lord Strange leans towards the open window and takes a deep breath. Then he snaps the window shut.

He picks up a chamber-stick candle and carries it to the door, where he exits.

Lord Strange leans his head back through, towards the last remaining light in the room. He blows it out.

BLACK.

Birds tweet, there's a rush of water somewhere nearby...

EXT. THE EARL OF DERBY'S ESTATE. THE NEXT MORNING.

The branches of the tree are still leafless, but not entirely bare. Anne sits up in them, her head back and her eyes closed. Little droplets of rain splash on her cheeks.

There is the noise of somebody approaching. She opens one eye.

ELIZABETH (O.C.)
Father's sent for you. He wants to
see you in his study.

Anne groans under her breath.

Elizabeth is looking up at her sister in the tree, her arms folded, squinting.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
Post haste!

She turns on her heel and marches off back towards the house.

Stretching, Anne sits up. She begins to clamber down the tree.

INT. LORD STRANGE'S STUDY. MINUTES LATER.

The door to the study opens and Anne enters.

Lord Strange is sitting behind his desk, watching her. Lord Castlehaven stands behind him, emanating smugness.

Anne approaches the desk. As she gets closer, she eyes Lord Castlehaven, who looks like her father's puppeteer.

Anne steps in front of the guest chair, and is about to lower herself into it.

LORD STRANGE
Do not sit until you are asked.

Coldness seeps through in Lord Strange's voice and Anne freezes.

LORD STRANGE (CONT'D)
I see now where your manners
embarrassed us last night.

This catches Anne's attention. She straightens up, confused.

ANNE
I don't think the embarrassment was
mine, sir.

She maintains eye contact with Lord Strange and sits down purposefully.

Lord Strange ignores her.

LORD STRANGE
Thankfully I have salvaged the
situation.

Anne is trying to understand what's going on. The more she hears, the more wary she's becoming of Lord Castlehaven's presence.

Lord Strange catches her looking.

LORD STRANGE (CONT'D)
You met Lord Castlehaven at the
celebrations, did you not?

This makes Anne scoff involuntarily.

ANNE
Hardly- I mean I...

Lord Strange is glowering at her.

ANNE (CONT'D)
Father, whats-?

LORD STRANGE
A respectable marriage is exactly
what we need right now and-

ANNE
A marriage? What are you saying?

LORD STRANGE
-and a serendipitous offer has been
made.

ANNE

Him?

LORD STRANGE

The arrangements have been made.
You will marry him next week.

Anne bursts out of her seat with frustration.

ANNE

But that is not what I want!

LORD STRANGE

This has nothing to do with what
you want, you stupid little girl!

ANNE

How can you decide my life for me
when you don't know the first thing
about it?

She pushes past the chair and runs, knocking it over as she
does. She leaves the room.

Lord Strange watches her go, but doesn't chase her.

Lord Castlehaven smiles.

LORD CASTLEHAVEN

What a spirited young woman.

EXT. THE MANOR MAIN ENTRANCE. MOMENTS LATER.

Anne runs through the courtyard and under the arch, wiping
away tears.

Elizabeth and Frances- who are eavesdropping by the doorway
to Lord Strange's study- try to stop her. She shoves past
them and keeps going.

EXT. THE EARL OF DERBY'S ESTATE. CONT.

Anne runs down the path that surrounds the front of the
building, the field of dried up dead flowers rustling behind
her.

She rounds the corner of her home.

A large set of stables come into view. Anne doesn't stop. She
runs straight inside.

INT. THE STABLES. CONT.

Rain patters on the roof. Anne is curled up in the hay where she has flung herself. Face down, she screams into the hay, fighting it with her hands and feet.

After a while she stops struggling and just sobs.

A hand reaches down and strokes her hair.

Then William awkwardly plonks down beside her.

WILLIAM

Better married to a rich man than a poor one.

ANNE

I don't want to be married at all!
I don't want to leave, to leave you.

Anne looks up at William and he smiles sadly down at her and cups her cheek.

WILLIAM

This is what I trained you for.

William wipes away a tear.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

You're an adult now. Time to put childish things away.

Gently pushing William's hand away, Anne pulls herself up and sits beside him, knees under her chin. The two of them cut silhouettes against the barn wall.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

In any case, you're not leaving me.
I'm leaving you. Tomorrow morning.

He scrabbles to stand.

ANNE

Why?

WILLIAM

Your teaching is finished. This was always the plan.

He brushes the hay off the front of his tunic, then hold out a hand to Anne.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
Come on, I need to pack up.

She takes his hand.

INT. THE EARL OF DERBY'S MANOR, WILLIAM'S ROOM. LATER.

On the other side of the open window, William's room looks vastly different than before. The fireplace is empty and the door is jammed open with a wad of papers.

There is nothing adorning the room. Instead it is dotted with open trunks and luggage.

Books and clothes cover the bed. William is attempting to pack them, slowly. Occasionally he picks up a single book, inspects it and places it deliberately into the trunk beside him.

Across the room, beside the desk, Anne is inspecting William's writing. There's a book beside it.

William picks up the book from beside Anne, who is so engrossed in his writing that she jumps. He holds out the book to her.

The cover reads "GRIMM'S FAIRY STORIES"

Anne just looks at it. She's struggling with something.

WILLIAM
Thank you for letting me use it. I
loved it almost as much as you do.

Something about what William says resolves Anne.

ANNE
No. It's yours, William.

She puts the script down on the desk. William's hand holding the book falters.

ANNE (CONT'D)
It's time I did without childish
magic. And it's time you had more.

Anne walks for the door, but pauses half way.

ANNE (CONT'D)
Your writing is beautiful.

And with that, she's gone.

William watches after her, her book still in his hands.

INT. THE EARL OF DERBY'S MANOR, STAIRCASE. CONT.

Anne is walking down the stairs, engrossed in her thoughts. She doesn't notice as she passes Giles, but he notices her.

He keeps going up the staircase, in the direction she came from...

INT. THE EARL OF DERBY'S MANOR, WILLIAM'S ROOM. CONT.

...and straight into William's room.

William has gone back to packing books. He jumps when he hears the door close and looks up to see Giles watching him.

Giles has a broad, disconcerting smile on his face.

GILES

Leaving without saying goodbye?

Giles takes a few steps into the room until he's standing over William.

William's hand trembles where it rests on his trunk of books.

WILLIAM

I'm sorry, I don't believe we've met...

He tries to close the trunk and stand, but Giles raises a foot and stands on William's hand, crushing it between the sole of his shoe and the lid of the trunk.

GILES

You and I both know that's not true, Willy!

William's eyes are watering with the effort of not crying out in pain. He won't make eye contact with Giles.

GILES (CONT'D)

How are your little theatre-friends?

This makes William even more desperate not to look at Giles, and Giles laughs.

The door of William's quarters opens suddenly as a STEWARD knocks on the other side and lets himself in.

He steps into the room with one hand covering his eyes.

Giles quickly removes his foot from William's hand.

STEWARD

William, I do hope you're dressed,
I'm to call you down for di...

Uncovering his eyes, the STEWARD glances around the room and sees William's guest.

STEWARD (CONT'D)

Ah, Giles, was it? How, erm,
fortuitous.

From the door, William and Giles look awkward, locked in an aggressive stance together, both heads turned to look at the STEWARD.

Giles straightens up and fixes his clothes. Over his shoulder, William flashes pleading eyes at the STEWARD.

The corner of the STEWARD's mouth twitches.

GILES

Well? What do you want?

STEWARD

You're both expected downstairs for
dinner, sir.

GILES

Well escort us down then, man!

The STEWARD holds his tongue and gestures for the two other men to leave the room before him.

William makes the first move to leave, but freezes when Giles cuts in front of him.

They both leave the room. On his way past the STEWARD, William pauses.

WILLIAM

Thank you.

The STEWARD claps him on the shoulder and smiles. William returns a shaky smile.

The room is empty, and the STEWARD casts a sweeping glance over the room before exiting and shutting the door behind himself.

Then the room is quiet, with a patch of light on the floor boards from the window.

Slowly, it creeps across them.

Church bells are ringing.

INT. THE CHURCH. A WEEK LATER.

The bells are loud inside the church which is almost empty. Lord Strange and Frances stand on one side of the church, Giles on the other.

In front of the altar, Anne and Lord Castlehaven face each other.

Lord Castlehaven is dressed up in incredibly fine, intricate clothes.

Anne is wearing what she always wears.

The clergyman, REVEREND CLARKE stands between them, solemn and elderly.

REVEREND CLARKE

Do you take this woman to be your
lawfully wedded wife, in sickness
and in health, as long as you both
shall live?

Lord Castlehaven doesn't look at Anne as he puts the ring on her finger, only grinning at Reverend Clarke.

LORD CASTLEHAVEN

I do!

Reverend Clarke blinks a little in offense at Lord Castlehaven's enthusiasm. But he turns to Anne.

REVEREND CLARKE

Do you take this man to be your
lawfully wedded husband, in
sickness and in health, as long as
you both shall live?

ANNE

I do.

Anne's voice is strained. There's a crease between her brows. Her head sinks.

Lord Strange is watching her. His face is softened since he last saw her. It's like he's seeing her sadness for the first time.

REVEREND CLARKE

I now pronounce you man and wife.
You may kiss the-

Lord Castlehaven has already started walking back down the aisle towards the door. Giles is close behind him. He turns at the doors to glance back at Anne.

LORD CASTLEHAVEN

Well, come on!

Her head still hanging, Anne drags her feet in her new husband's wake.

Lord Strange is still watching after her. From beside him, Frances puts a hand on his arm comfortingly.

EXT. THE CHURCH ENTRANCE. CONT.

The sun hits Anne's face as she steps out of the church, from darkness into light. Her features seem to clear of some of their worry.

She turns back to Frances, who is exiting behind her with Lord Strange.

ANNE

I imagine you're hungry after all that, aren't you Frances? Did you ask cook what she's preparing for our return?

Frances opens her mouth to speak but-

LORD CASTLEHAVEN (O.C.)

Return? What return?

ANNE

The wedding breakfast.
(beat)
It's tradition.

All the worries have come rushing back into Anne's face.

LORD CASTLEHAVEN

There's no time from that, we're leaving direct from here.

Giles is leaning into the road, looking down it.

GILES

The carriage is almost here!

ANNE

But my things!

LORD CASTLEHAVEN

They can send that after us. Well,
hadn't you better say your
goodbyes?

No sooner does Anne turn to face her father and sister than Lord Strange clasps her hands in his and drops his voice to a whisper, his eyes swimming with tears.

LORD STRANGE

I've been the most foolish of men.

They pull in close to one another.

LORD STRANGE (CONT'D)

I should never have blamed you. I
should never have agreed to this.

ANNE

It is done now.

LORD STRANGE

No. I will release you from this,
Annie. I'll find a way.

He lets go of her hands.

LORD STRANGE (CONT'D)

Forgive me.

Anne can't really look at her father. She leaves him aghast and steps to face her sister.

Anne and Frances study each others' faces for a long moment. They're quite alike. Then Anne pulls her sister into a tight hug. Frances breaks down into sobs on Anne's shoulder.

Anne rubs Frances' back and rocks her side to side. Behind them, the carriage draws to a stop and the door is swung open.

LORD CASTLEHAVEN

Wife! Quickly!

Anne pulls away from Frances, who's crying is only getting worse. Frances tries to cling on.

Lord Castlehaven is standing on the steps of the carriage.

Lord Strange approaches his daughters and grips Frances' shoulders.

LORD STRANGE
M'lord! I would speak with you
before you depart!

Without a word, Lord Castlehaven strides from the carriage and towards Lord Strange, passing Anne on the way.

LORD CASTLEHAVEN
I told you to get in the carriage.
Go!

INT. THE INSIDE OF THE CARRIAGE. CONT.

Anne makes her way to the carriage and clambers inside. Giles is already there.

Anne looks back at Lord Castlehaven and Lord Strange, who are standing apart from Frances, talking.

GILES (O.C.)
I was surprised not to see your
jumpy little tutor here. Run away
fast, did he?

Anne looks at Giles. He's unreadable.

ANNE
What are you talking about?

GILES
He's never told you? I thought you
were bosom friends!

ANNE
Told me what?

The carriage door swings open again, and Lord Castlehaven's legs swing inside, his torso still stretched outside.

LORD CASTLEHAVEN (O.S.)
Ride on!

As the carriage begins to move, Lord Castlehaven pulls his whole body into the carriage and sits opposite Anne. He immediately turns to look at Giles.

LORD CASTLEHAVEN (CONT'D)
I've never been so glad to leave a
place in my life!

Giles is smirking at Anne, who turns to watch her family fade into the distance out of the window.

Frances chases after the carriage, still crying, but she can't keep up with it for long. She stops, pained and panting, and then she's gone.

EXT. THE ROADS TO CASTLEHAVEN'S HALL. CONT.

The buildings of Anne's hometown turn to hedges, the landscape flattens out into fields.

The world rushes by.

The sky grows darker and darker until...

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. CASTLEHAVEN'S HALL, ENTRANCE. HOURS LATER.

Anne awakes with a start, still leaning against the carriage window. She's alone.

Out of the window, Castlehaven's Hall looms.

It's clearly been a different building in years gone by, with some older towers and masonry still visible. It's intertwined though, with large, gaudy, modern Elizabethan architecture. A badly proportioned front entrance throws the driveway into shadow, although, the dark figures of Lord Castlehaven and Giles are still visible walking up the front steps.

Anne gets out of the carriage and follows them.

INT. CASTLEHAVEN'S HALL, ENTRANCE HALL. CONT.

Anne steps cautiously inside, trying to take in every detail of her new home.

Servants flock to Giles and Lord Castlehaven, but nobody pays much attention to her.

Anne watches them.

Lord Castlehaven is grabbing the faces of servants, looking deep into their eyes and stroking their cheeks with his thumbs. The whole group of people are standing uncomfortably close together, putting their hands on him as if to check that he's real.

One butler, MATTHESON, looks past Lord Castlehaven and meets her eyes.

MATTHESON

You've brought us a gift, sir?

Lord Castlehaven chuckles and hushes Mattheson, going as far as to press a finger to the butler's lips.

LORD CASTLEHAVEN

Is dinner prepared?

ANNE

I would greatly appreciate some,
sir.

Giles is finding something very funny. He and Lord Castlehaven push past the gaggle of servants, striding across the entrance hall. Giles walks straight through a door at the other end of the room, but Lord Castlehaven stops to instruct the maid guarding the door.

He gestures to Anne.

LORD CASTLEHAVEN

Have somebody fix her hair
immediately. And give her no rich
foods, a portly wife is the last
thing I need.

With that, Lord Castlehaven sweeps out of the room.

Anne cuts a lonely figure as the servants quickly dissipate, and she stands alone in front of the open doors.

The maid looks at her unkindly.

MAID

The top of the tallest tower in the
north wing. I'll send somebody up
to... help you.

With that, Anne is totally alone.

She wanders slowly towards a door and steps through.

INT. CASTLEHAVEN'S HALL, NORTH WING STAIRCASE. MOMENTS LATER.

Anne is slowly making her way up the stairs. Once or twice she stumbles slightly.

She turns a corner and sees an open door.

INT. CASTLEHAVEN'S MANOR, A BEDROOM. CONT.

From the outside, Anne peers into the room beyond the door.

It's beautifully decorated with oak and velvets, with huge windows displaying a beautiful view of the night sky, and a thick glass bottle of whisky on the desk. A fire crackles in the grate.

Anne enters tentatively and crosses to the windows.

From the grounds below, she cuts a distant figure, barely recognisable as a person.

Anne looks out at all the servants below, bristling at the return of their master.

When a horse and carriage speeds up to the entrance, she leans slightly against the glass to watch it. It pulls to a halt, and a man that looks like her father gets out. Until he turns around, looks nothing like Anne's father, and hands a box to one of the footmen. He gets back into the carriage and it pulls away.

Nobody is coming to rescue Anne.

She turns back to face the deck and fixes her gaze on the soft looking bed.

There is nothing but the crackling of the fire as Anne approaches the bed and tests it with one hand.

Anne slides her cloak from her shoulders and is about to let it drop to the floor.

MATTHESON (O.C.)
If you think these are your
quarters, girl, you're sadly
mistaken.

Anne spins around. Mattheson is standing close behind her, shocking her.

MATTHESON (CONT'D)
Let's go. There's a long night
ahead of us all.

INT. CASTLEHAVEN'S BANQUET HALL. SIMULTANEOUS.

Empty dishes are crammed onto a small, intimate table.

The Lord Castlehaven and Giles sit at either side, full glasses of wine in their hands.

GILES

Do you think we should perhaps
postpone the sport for tomorrow? It
will soon be night, after all.

LORD CASTLEHAVEN

We'll postpone nothing. We'll have
what we're owed, while it's still
fresh.

Lord Castlehaven takes his napkin and wipes his face roughly
before throwing the dirty cloth down onto his plate.

They sip their wine.

GILES

This evening, then.

INT. ANNE'S CHAMBERS. EVENING.

Anne runs her fingers across the diamond pane leadlight
windows. They look like an elaborate cage.

She blows at one of the heavy curtains and a cloud of dust
blooms from it.

She turns around to look at the sparsely decorated room. It
really does look like a prison cell, round because it's in a
turret, a heavy wooden bathtub beside a bare fireplace, a
thick wooden door. The walls and the floor are stone. The
only place to sit in the room is the bed.

Anne perches on the edge of the bed.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. THE EARL OF DERBY'S MANOR, BANQUET HALL. SIMULTANEOUSLY.

Lord Strange takes a seat at his dining table.

He looks down the length of the table at all the empty seats.

Beyond the last chair, the door cracks open and Lord Burghley
slides through, eyeing the room around him. It takes him a
long time to reach the seat opposite Lord Strange. He pauses
before he pulls out the chair.

LORD BURGHEY

Only if you tell me everything will
you prove your innocence.

LORD STRANGE
Everything.

Lord Burghley pulls out his chair and sits down.

INT. ANNE'S CHAMBERS. SIMULTANEOUS.

Anne is still sitting, her eyes closed. Just... breathing.

A MAID bustles into the room behind her, but we can only see, we don't hear it.

The maid pulls Anne to her feet, and Anne's eyes pop open, but everything is still silent. She follows the line of the woman's motions, lifting her hands above her head, wriggling out of her skirts.

The whole time the maid is in her face, talking to her, but Anne doesn't hear a word.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. UNKNOWN.

Feet in elaborate green satin shoes. Walking. Who knows who they belong to or where they're going, until-

PERKINS (O.C.)
Whaddaye think you're doing here?

INT. THE EARL OF DERBY'S ESTATE. CONT.

By lamplight, in the courtyard of Lord Strange's manor, Perkins is incensed by somebody. Over his shoulder are the windows of the banquet hall, the back of Lord Strange's head visible through one.

He's looking at Richard Hesketh, who looks like a rabbit caught in the headlights.

RICHARD HESKETH
I mean only to help his lordship,
you must know that.

PERKINS
Get out of my sight before I 'ave
your head!

Richard Hesketh hesitates in uncertainty.

PERKINS (CONT'D)
Be gone with you!

It doesn't take another word for HESKETH to bolt, off into the night.

A footman scuttles out to meet Perkins as he turns to re-enter the manor. They walk together.

FOOTMAN
What did he want?

PERKINS
I've not the foggiest, but we'll likely know soon enough.

INT. THE EARL OF DERBY'S MANOR, BANQUET HALL. SIMULTANEOUS.

Lord Strange and Lord Burghley are now both comfortable in their seats and with each other.

LORD STRANGE
I always intended to turn Hesketh in to you, you see? I am no man's pawn, no matter how hard they might try to use me.

LORD BURGHELEY
I know enough of your principles to believe you. You have been wronged, and with your help, Hesketh can be found.

The doors open and a series of staff enter, carrying platters and trays decked out with food.

The dishes are set onto the table carefully, seasoned, arranged, finishing details added.

INT. ANNE'S CHAMBERS. SIMULTANEOUS.

Just as the dishes were primped and plumped, Anne is being prepared. She still hears nothing of the noise around her.

The maid trusses her into a corset, pushing one foot into her back to pull it tight. Anne's eyes bulge in her skull, her face goes red...

...until it is powdered white with makeup, clouding the air around her. She coughs on it, but there's no sound.

And then she's standing, middle of the room and the maid is in her face like before, talking like before, and Anne can't hear a thing but it's starting to come into focus.

From silence to muffled sounds to talking.

MAID

Can you hear me pet? It's time for
your dress to go on.

Anne's snapped out of her daze.

ANNE

My dress?

She looks across to the mirror.

A woman, heavily made up, wildly styled hair in her underwear stares back. Anne barely recognises herself.

When she looks back, it's as though several minutes have passed and the maid is holding a bright green dress.

INT. ANNE'S CHAMBERS. HALF AN HOUR LATER.

From the doorway, the room sharply contrasts the way it looked before. Except Anne. Anne has stayed the same.

The maid might be gone, and Anne is now wearing the arsenic green dress, but she's still standing in the dead centre of the room. She's turned to face the door, confused.

Lord Castlehaven is watching her from the doorway. He's wearing the green satin shoes. Considering her. Giles steps out from behind him.

Anne takes a step back.

Their eyes take her in.

INT. THE EARL OF DERBY'S MANOR, BANQUET HALL. SIMULTANEOUS.

Lord Strange and Lord Burghley are giving their food a similar look.

Pies, and fruit and mussels and bread, beautiful displays, steaming hot.

LORD BURGHELEY

I must say, this is quite a spread.

Lord Strange already grins, grabbing what he wants and piling it onto his plate.

INT. ANNE'S CHAMBERS. SIMULTANEOUS.

Lord Castlehaven grabs Anne's wrist and pulls her towards the bed.

Giles is still standing in the doorway. Anne doesn't know where to look. She's becoming increasingly frantic.

ANNE
I'm just dressed- have we not
somewhere to be?

Lord Castlehaven just keeps pulling Anne towards the bed. She pulls back and starts to struggle.

ANNE (CONT'D)
No- release my arm!

He releases her arm and grabs her neck instead.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. THE EARL OF DERBY'S MANOR, BANQUET HALL. CONT.

Lord Strange and Lord Burghley are eating.

Their mouths tearing strips off chicken, bites out of pastry, grease, saliva, the chewing noises are unbearably loud. It's savage, violent.

INT. ANNE'S CHAMBERS. SIMULTANEOUS.

Lord Castlehaven is pushing Anne back towards the bed, standing over her, flecks of spit dripping from his mouth onto her face, making her flinch.

He looks back, grinning, at Giles, who advances into the room.

INT. THE EARL OF DERBY'S MANOR, BANQUET HALL. SIMULTANEOUS.

Lord Strange stops mid-chew. His eyes grow wide. His forehead slams straight into his plate.

INT. THE EARL OF DERBY'S MANOR, STAIRCASE. MINUTES LATER.

Servants are rushing Lord Strange up the stairs, carrying him.

He's white as a sheet, turning green.

INT. THE EARL OF DERBY'S MANOR, LORD STRANGE'S CHAMBER. CONT.

Lord Strange's head slams onto his pillow. He's choking.

INT. ANNE'S CHAMBERS. SIMULTANEOUS.

Anne's head slams onto her pillow. Lord Castlehaven is choking her.

He moves to push down her shoulders as Giles pushes up her skirts.

INT. THE HALLWAY OUTSIDE ANNE'S CHAMBERS. CONT.

The thick wooden door to Anne's room is shut. Two servants flank it.

Their expressions remain stoic as her screams echo down the corridor.

BLACK.

INT. ANNE'S CHAMBERS. HOURS LATER.

It's dark, but there's a single candlestick lit beside Anne's bed.

She's still wearing the green dress. She has bruises around her neck.

She's staring straight up at the ceiling, not a shred of emotion on her face. She doesn't blink. She doesn't move.

INT. THE EARL OF DERBY'S MANOR, LORD STRANGE'S CHAMBER. CONT.

Lord Strange's lips are blue. His eyes open, unblinking.

Somebody is crying nearby.

INT. THE SUN INN PUBLIC HOUSE. THE NEXT AFTERNOON.

A noisy inn, packed out and filled with music and laughter. Many of the people drinking are in bright costumes, wearing bad wigs, false noses, make up.

The bar is barely visible beneath the crowd. The barman is frantic, working as fast as he can.

There is a dance down the middle of the room, sloppy and drunken. William and his friend THOMAS dance together at one end, laughing at each other.

They both have drinks in their hands, which are spilling all over the straw covered floor as their feet bounce.

They spin and meet back to each other, close enough to speak for five seconds of every ten.

WILLIAM

Have you missed me, Thomas?

THOMAS

Who are you and what have you done
with my William?

They laugh and spin in time with the other dancers.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

I've never seen you dance before.

WILLIAM

I've never wanted you to see me
dance before!

Another spin. This time they swap spaces with the dance partners beside them.

THOMAS

Is this where you've been this past
month? Dancing lessons.

William doesn't reply, but looks wary. They spin and change places with the next pair down the line.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Well?

WILLIAM

I was teaching a girl to be Queen
but

They spin and swap with another pair. They're only one place from the other end of the line now.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

The Earl of Castlehaven married her
before she got the chance.

THOMAS

What?

Thomas and William spin once more to the end of the line of
dancers. The barman, MR HUTCHINSON, is waiting there for
them.

MR HUTCHINSON

William! Message out back for you.

William takes one look at Thomas' horrified expression.

WILLIAM

On my way.

Mr Hutchinson and William disappear into the crowd.

Thomas just stares after them, the only one of the dancers
not moving. A new partner steps in front of him and takes his
hands, eventually forcing some motion into him.

Thomas gives up his staring, and starts to truly dance again.
He still looks troubled.

EXT. THE SUN INN YARD. EVENING.

The muffled noise from inside the inn is louder for a few
seconds as the door opens.

The yard is quite bare, a few wooden benches by the doors.
There's a small wooden toilet hut in a far corner. Flies buzz
around it.

Mr Hutchinson hauls William into the yard and lowers him down
onto one of the benches. William sways.

MR HUTCHINSON

For goodness' sake, man, sober up.

Reaching into his pocket, Mr Hutchinson pulls out a thin
envelope and thrusts it into William's face.

William barely registers it.

MR HUTCHINSON (CONT'D)

Take it or the fire will.

He thrusts it at William again, who, this time, takes it.

Mr Hutchinson turns back towards the inn.

INT. THE SUN INN PUBLIC HOUSE. CONT.

The dancing and singing continues in the dark pub.

Thomas has escaped the dance and is standing with some other players. They are all talking loudly and animatedly.

He sees a shaft of light break the room from the door to the yard. Mr Hutchinson reenters the room and walks back to the bar.

Thomas keeps watching for William, but he never comes and the door shuts.

One of the other players, ROBERT, is trying to talk to Thomas.

ROBERT

Thomas? What has your attention?

ROBERT glances behind himself, but doesn't know to focus on the door.

THOMAS

You must excuse me.

He brushes through the swathes of drunken players, slowly getting closer to the door to the yard. He reaches the door, waiting for a moment before pushing it.

The door opens and the moonlight is blinding.

EXT. THE SUN INN YARD. CONT.

When the yard comes in to focus, William is sitting on a bench, in silence, his head down.

Thomas slowly walks to sit beside him. He tries to lift his chin to catch his eye, but William won't sit up.

THOMAS

William?

With a jolt, as though he has only just noticed Thomas next to him, William looks up. His face is streaked with tears.

Thomas turns to the letter in William's hand, the writing turned parallel to the floor.

He tries to take it. A hand swings out to stop him.

William has stopped him. He's looking up at Thomas intensely.

WILLIAM

Leave it.

Thomas lets the letter go, but instead he moves his hand to William's knee.

THOMAS

Are the contents so dreadful?

Silence.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Whose correspondence stings you so badly, William?

They sit for a few moments.

The odd bat streaks the darkening sky. Nesting pigeons can be heard.

WILLIAM

It's the Lord I've been working for.

THOMAS

Is he sending some quarrel to you?

William turns to look at Thomas. Thomas continues to watch the skies.

WILLIAM

He's dead.

THOMAS

Then he does well to write you letters.

Both men snort. Thomas finally looks at William.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

What do they need from you, that you're receiving letters in the dead of night?

WILLIAM

His daughter, my student. Nobody wants to be the one to tell her.

THOMAS

So it falls to you.

William stands up.

WILLIAM
So it falls to me.

He looks up into the sky, now night. The bats are gone. The pigeons have stopped. There's only silence.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. CASTLEHAVEN'S HALL, ENTRANCE HALL. DAYS LATER.

William's looking up at the height of the ceiling above him, dim grey light streaming through the windows behind him.

One of the doors nearby cracks open and an eye peers out. He looks at the door and it shuts again. There's some whispering behind it.

Another door opens, and Giles glides through it confidently, his eyes fixed on William and a wide smile on his face.

He walks right up to William and stops.

William leans back, away from him.

GILES
Just can't leave her alone, can
you? Or maybe it's not her you're
after.
(beat)
Is that it, Willy? Didn't get
enough last time.

William takes a deep breath and stops cowering, stops hunching up. He's quite a bit taller than Giles.

WILLIAM
I have an important message for
Lady Anne.

Giles takes a step back.

Then he turns and heads back to the door he came through. When he gets to it, he holds it open and looks expectantly back at William.

GILES
Come and see your precious Queen.

William walks.

INT. CASTLEHAVEN'S BANQUET HALL. MINUTES LATER.

Anne's face is still blank, unchanging. She lifts a teacup to her lips and mimes a sip, but takes nothing in.

She's sitting at a table with Lord Castlehaven, William and Giles. She's looking at none of them.

William is trying to gauge her.

WILLIAM

I must warn you now, I bring awful news.

LORD CASTLEHAVEN

It's not going to improve the longer you wait. Out with it.

William flicks Lord Castlehaven a look, but any rebuttal dies in his throat.

He turns back to Anne.

WILLIAM

Your father has died.

Anne's face doesn't change, but she turns her head slowly to make eye contact with William.

LORD CASTLEHAVEN

Dead? How unfortunate, but not surprising- so many enemies.

WILLIAM

I never suggested he was murdered.

LORD CASTLEHAVEN

He was not old, though, was he?

They fall silent. Lord Castlehaven and Giles are looking at each other, an unspoken communication between them.

The cogs are going round in the Lord Castlehaven's head.

He turns to Anne, suddenly full of warmth.

LORD CASTLEHAVEN (CONT'D)

Your dear young sister!

WILLIAM

She stays on at home, alone.

LORD CASTLEHAVEN
I cannot allow it! A girl, so full
of vigour- as you once were, wife!

A massive clatter- Anne has dropped her teacup and it has
smashed in the saucer.

Her head has whipped round, her gaze boring a hole in her
husband's head.

Lord Castlehaven's expression is unchanged. He doesn't even
flicker.

LORD CASTLEHAVEN (CONT'D)
Giles, the Lady has had an
accident. Fetch a cloth.

Giles scuttles out of the room.

William is looking between Anne and Lord Castlehaven.

Then he looks straight at Lord Castlehaven for the first
time.

WILLIAM
I believe they are already making
arrangements for Frances' care. If
you wish to express your
intentions, it should be done
swiftly.

LORD CASTLEHAVEN
I shall pen a letter forthwith.

He stands, repulsed by Anne.

LORD CASTLEHAVEN (CONT'D)
Giles will not be long.

He leaves the room, and Anne immediately grabs William's
arms.

ANNE
She cannot come here, she must not!

WILLIAM
Why, Anne? What is it they have
done to you?

Anne is looking down. William looks down too. Blood is
smeared on his sleeves, on his hands, where Anne has grabbed
him.

William turns over her hands. A shard of pottery protrudes from one palm.

Anne pulls it out.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

Why can't Frances be with you? You need each other!

ANNE (HISSING)

You told me adulthood was facts and figures, unfeeling, numb. Well, adults play games too, and they're painful.

WILLIAM

I taught you everything I could-

ANNE

You taught me lies!
(beat)
She can't be here.

WILLIAM

Please, just tell me why.

ANNE

Because he will hold her down and have her. And then he will let the servants have her, and then there'll be nothing but pain.

The enormity of the truth echoes around them. A thunderclap, and lightning rips through the sky in the windows behind them.

Heavy rain begins to pound the windows.

WILLIAM

Let me take you home.

ANNE

I'm not going anywhere with you.
You knew. Giles told me, you know them. You let them take me.

Anne lets go of William's sleeves and sits down.

Her mask of emotionlessness has cracked.

William stares at the blood on his hands.

WILLIAM

I did not think they would pose any threat- to a woman.

(pause)

My friend, Thomas. I could not expose what they did to him. He'd be hanged for sodomy.

Anne is taking in deep gulps of breath.

William extends his bloody hand across the table towards her.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

This is my fault. I will fix it.

Anne meets his hand with her own. They don't hold hands, merely touch.

ANNE

Don't leave me.

William nods and draws his hand away. Then he's standing, walking.

INT. CASTLEHAVEN'S HALL, ENTRANCE HALL. CONT.

William walks out into the hall and swings open the front doors. He looks out into the thick rain.

Giles approaches him, a smirk on his features.

GILES

You're welcome to stay here.

William turns to face him. He doesn't back away, doesn't cower. He leans into Giles' face and gives him a smile that doesn't meet his eyes.

WILLIAM

It would be my dearest wish.

EXT. CASTLEHAVEN'S ESTATE. CONT.

The grey skies go on for miles, and the grass is soon slick with mud.

In a paddock, several horses graze.

A hoof slips in the mud and to keep itself upright, the horse bites its neighbour.

The bitten horse cries out in pain and meets the perpetrator's jaw with its hind leg.

The first horse crashes into the mud and stays down.

The rain keeps pouring.

EXT. ANNE'S CHAMBERS. CONT.

Anne sits on the floor, as far away from the bed as the room will allow.

She's scratching something into the stone wall beside her.

William creeps in quietly.

Anne doesn't look surprised to see him.

ANNE

Have you spoken to him? He'll leave
Frances be?

William eyes the bed and sits on the floor with her.

WILLIAM

You know that would never work.

Anne leaves whatever she's doing to the wall and pulls her knees into her chest.

ANNE

You would keep your friend's
secret, but you want me to tell
mine?

WILLIAM

This is the only way, you must see.

Anne just laughs.

ANNE

And how would I do that, William?
Just walk out of the front door?

WILLIAM

Why not? I meant what I said
before, let me take you home.

William leans in until his forehead touches Anne's.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

You are only afraid because he
wants you to be.

He sits back down.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
Oh, I brought you something.

He pulls a familiar purple bound book from his pocket. Anne's book of fairy tales.

He doesn't try to hand it to her, he just puts it beside her.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
You were so powerful, Anne. I never
should have taken that from you.

The book sits on the floor, a flash of colour in the bare room.

William stands and walks to the door.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
I'll have my carriage brought to
the entrance at sunrise tomorrow.
Find a way to be in it with me.

The door creaks softly as William leaves. The book is still sitting on the floor. The rain still patters on the windows.

Anne's hand reaches down and strokes the book's cover. Then she flips it open.

BLACK.

EXT. CASTLEHAVEN'S HALL, ENTRANCE. MORNING.

Giles and Lord Castlehaven are visible through a window, in the banquet hall, eating breakfast. Lord Castlehaven is staring out at nothing. Until something catches his attention.

An official looking carriage is coming to a halt outside the hall's entrance.

Lord Castlehaven taps Giles' arm and they both gawp through the glass.

The footmen start loading bags, and when William steps out to help them, Lord Castlehaven rises and leaves the window frame. Giles follows him.

Within moments, they both appear at the open doorway.

INT. CASTLEHAVEN'S HALL, ENTRANCE HALL. CONT.

Lord Castlehaven and Giles watch as William pushes his possessions into the carriage and turns to notice them.

He blanches, and tries to scabble into the carriage.

LORD CASTLEHAVEN
Are you leaving us so soon, sir?

William turns to face them. His eyes are darting around the entrance.

He doesn't get all the way out of the carriage again.

WILLIAM
The rain has cleared. That's all
that was keeping me here.

William's eyes stop darting. They fix behind Lord Castlehaven.

He nods to Lord Castlehaven, unsmiling, then swings into the carriage and out of view. Leaves the carriage door open.

Giles and Lord Castlehaven stare out at the open door for a moment. It still isn't closing.

A rustle behind them catches the attention of both men.

Anne is adjusting her coat and pulling her bag back onto her shoulder, preparing to leave.

LORD CASTLEHAVEN
Take off your coat, wife, you are
to entertain Giles for the morning.

Anne doesn't even look up.

ANNE
No.

LORD CASTLEHAVEN
I'm sorry?

ANNE
As well you might be. But I'm
leaving.

She takes a step towards the carriage and Lord Castlehaven moves to stop her. She squares up to him, unafraid.

He gets in her face.

LORD CASTLEHAVEN

Do you forget who is your lord and master?

ANNE

If only I could.

She tries to step around him but he catches her wrist with one hand and grips it tightly.

Anne turns to face the Lord Castlehaven.

She looks down at where he has grabbed her.

ANNE (CONT'D)

You will let go of me, my lord, or I will tell the world what has happened here.

LORD CASTLEHAVEN

Your family's reputation would never recover from your debauchery. When I tell the Queen-

This time, Anne laughs.

ANNE

Tell her what? That you let your lover violate me?

Lord Castlehaven is going very pale very quickly. He looks around them. Many of the servants have stopped working to watch their exchange.

Anne leans around Lord Castlehaven to address Giles.

ANNE (CONT'D)

No need to send on my things. Burn them.

With that, Anne snatches her wrist from Lord Castlehaven's grip and marches out of the door.

The servants go back to their work in pregnant silence. Behind Lord Castlehaven, Giles turns and goes back into the banquet hall, slamming the doors behind him.

Lord Castlehaven stares after Anne, speechless.

Through the double doors, Anne is climbing into the carriage. She sits down beside William and the FOOTMAN closes the door.

The carriage is pulling away.

Lord Castlehaven steps out into the driveway and watches after the carriage until it's completely out of sight.

INT. THE INSIDE OF THE CARRIAGE. CONT.

The carriage isn't big, so between luggage and William and Anne, it's quite cramped.

The carriage rocks with motion and the world starts to move past the windows again.

WILLIAM
You'll soon be home.

ANNE
Home? No, we must go straight for London.

WILLIAM
Would it not serve you better to see your Justice of the Peace?

ANNE
To report those animals, I know exactly with whom I should speak.

William nods and turns to speak at the window between him and the driver.

EXT. LONDON. DAY.

The Elizabethan city is sprawling with leftover Tudor architecture and thatched rooftops.

Smoke. Noise. Sewage in the streets. The city is overwhelming. The grandest buildings stand at the centre.

INT. HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT, CORRIDOR. SIMULTANEOUS.

The corridor is dark and luxurious, with thick wooden beams and door after door after door.

Anne and William are huddled to one side of the corridor together.

Anne repeatedly tries to approach aristocratically dressed passers-by, but they speed up when they spot her.

Eventually, she stops a young servant, MARY (15).

MARY

My lady?

ANNE

I'm looking for John Dee- do you
know where I might find him?

JOHN DEE (O.C.)

Lady Anne Stanley?

John Dee is just behind Anne. The maid takes her chance and
scurries off down the corridor.

When Anne and William turn to face John Dee, he takes Anne's
hand and kisses it.

JOHN DEE (CONT'D)

It is a surprise to see you. I
heard about your father. My
sincerest condolences.

ANNE

I will convey your sympathies with
my own when I at last arrive home.

JOHN DEE

But first, you have some business
with me?

Anne glances around herself. Nobody is nearby.

ANNE

I do, but it is not something I can
speak comfortably about here.
Perhaps you have a study?

John Dee lets go of her hand.

ANNE (CONT'D)

Please sir, you're my last hope.

JOHN DEE

You had better follow me, my lady.

And then he sets off down the corridor, Anne and William
following behind. Soon they approach one of the many doors,
thick varnished oak.

John Dee pulls a heavy ring of keys from his pocket and
fumbles with them.

His hands shake slightly as he turns his key in the lock.

INT. HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT, OFFICE. CONT.

The door swings open, creating a rectangle of light across the room, the centre blocked out by the three figures entering.

John Dee pulls a box of matches from the door and lights two tall candles at either side of the door.

Once the wicks burn, Anne closes the door to the corridor behind them.

John Dee pauses when he sees that William has followed them into the room, a hesitation that William doesn't miss.

The room is still dark, a large oak table surrounded by chairs in the centre. Behind them, a drawn pair of heavy curtains.

The two men dither. Anne rounds the desk and pulls the curtains open. Instantly the room looks brighter.

She sits down and looks at John Dee expectantly.

He sits down opposite her.

William still stands, considering the places around the table. Anne draws the chair beside herself.

ANNE

William?

He takes the seat she's drawn for him.

JOHN DEE

Now, what's brought you to me?

ANNE

I wonder if you'd heard of my recent nuptials, sir?

John Dee adjusts his glasses and blinks.

JOHN DEE

I had not! My congratulations- and apologies, I might have attended had-

Anne holds up a hand. It is shaking badly, but she holds it up anyway.

ANNE

I did not expect you to have heard.
The wedding was rushed, on the
insistence of the groom. Are you
much acquainted with Lord
Castlehaven?

JOHN DEE

I cannot confess to have met him,
but I am alarmed to hear he was
your groom. I have heard a great
many things.

ANNE

I doubt any were as awful as the
truth.

Anne reaches up to the back of her dress and unclips her
ruff. She lets it fall, revealing her bare neck.

The ring of black and purpling bruises are startling.

She rolls up her sleeves to reveal similar handprint bruises
encircling her wrists.

John Dee draws back, before gingerly taking one of Anne's
arms and inspecting it closely.

ANNE (CONT'D)

My father was duped into giving me
to this... rotten orange of a
marriage.

JOHN DEE

I'm afraid to say that there's
nothing illegal about a man
disciplining his wife, my lady.

ANNE

What about a man who lies with his
servants? Who allows his servants
to lie with his wife?

The room is silent.

John Dee rises. He walks to the drawers beneath one of the
burning candles and pulls out a form from within it. He opens
the drawer below that and pulls out a bottle of ink and a
quill.

Then, slowly, he comes to sit back opposite Anne and puts
everything down.

He's reading the form. He doesn't look up.

JOHN DEE

This is a very serious claim. And truly, something must be done. But I'm afraid, especially in such a case as this, it would be unacceptable for the accusation to come from any woman.

WILLIAM

Then I will make the accusation.

John Dee looks up from the document and over his spectacles.

JOHN DEE

And who are you to Lady Anne, sir?

WILLIAM

I- I'm her tutor.

ANNE

He's my closest friend.

John Dee goes back to considering the form for a few more moments before he puts it down.

He slides the document across the desk to William, pushes the ink and the quill after it.

JOHN DEE

If you are sure, sir, you wish to accuse Lord Castlehaven, then you must sign below.

William picks up the quill and dips it in the ink. He takes it to the paper.

The prick of the quill hovers above the dotted line for a long time. A bead of ink slides to the end, less than a millimeter from closing the gap between the feather and the vellum.

William signs.

As soon as he is done, John Dee takes the document from under his hand. He doesn't look at William, only Anne.

JOHN DEE (CONT'D)

There will be a trial in two weeks, but I fear you may struggle to find legal counsel.

(BEAT)

Go home and mourn your father.

He meets Anne's eyes and smiles.

JOHN DEE (CONT'D)
I pray that the next time we meet,
it will be in happier
circumstances.

ANNE
As do I, my lord.

They all stand as one.

INT. HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT, CORRIDOR. CONT.

John Dee exits the office and walks off down the corridor,
the folded document in his hand.

After him, Anne and William leave. They walk in the opposite
direction.

ANNE
I'll need strong legal counsel...
Suppose Anthony Bogart might
represent me?

WILLIAM
We can only ask.

INT. OUTSIDE ANTHONY BOGART'S OFFICE. MINUTES LATER.

William waits outside another varnished wooden door. ANTHONY
BOGART's name is carved into a sign on its front.

ANTHONY BOGART (O.C.)
Unequivocally no!

The door opens and Anne hurries out. The door slams behind
her.

She and William exchange a look before they keep walking.

INT. ANOTHER LAWYER'S OFFICE. MINUTES LATER.

SECOND LAWYER (O.S.)
You must think me a fool!

The door is already slamming, this one slightly less well
kept than the last- there's no carved sign on the door.

INT. DODGY LAWYER'S OFFICE. LATER.

THIRD LAWYER

No!

Another door slams, its paint peeling.

INT. LAWYER'S OFFICES ALL OVER LONDON. CONT.

ANOTHER LAWYER

No!

AND ANOTHER LAWYER

No!

YET ANOTHER LAWYER

No!

A chorus of slamming doors.

INT. THE INSIDE OF THE CARRIAGE. HOURS LATER.

Anne and William climb back inside the carriage, looking disheveled and beaten down.

Anne sinks her head into her hands and William puts a hand on her shoulder.

WILLIAM

All is not yet lost!

ANNE

Not one of them would help me!
Cowards, all!

WILLIAM

I have some contacts. I'll write,
make some discreet enquiries.

Anne rubs her face and sits upright again. Her shoulders are still slumped, but she manages a smile.

ANNE

Let's go home.

INT. THE INSIDE OF THE CARRIAGE. HOURS LATER.

Grass rushing past the window turns to swaying white flowers.

The Earl of Derby's Manor slowly pulls into view. It's as beautiful as it was the summer before Elizabeth's wedding.

EXT. ENTRANCE TO THE EARL OF DERBY'S MANOR. MINUTES LATER.

William is passing luggage out of the carriage to footmen. Anne is already out, beside the carriage. She's looking out at the field of flowers, and the river, and the tree. Home.

Anne turns to the sound of crunching gravel behind her.

Elizabeth is marching across the driveway towards her in a wide black silk gown, black feathers adorning her hair. Frances is running out after her.

Anne steps forward to embrace her younger sisters. Elizabeth slaps her across the face.

ELIZABETH

We are all in disgrace!

ANNE

Elizabeth?

ELIZABETH

Your own husband, imprisoned at
your hand! Tales of your scandalous
acts, your filthy behaviour!

Frances arrives and pulls Elizabeth away from Anne. Elizabeth struggles to break free.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

All society talks of you, talks of
us! I am forced here, to mourn
father, to escape it!

She stops struggling against Frances and backs away.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

I will not be associated with you!

Elizabeth storms back into the house.

Anne looks at Frances uncertainly.

Then Frances' arms are around her and they're reunited.

FRANCES

I have missed you, sister.

ANNE

And I you. You cannot imagine how
much.

Frances pulls back and takes Anne's hand.

FRANCES

There's much to discuss.

Anne looks back over her shoulder at William, who is moving his luggage inside.

ANNE

Come.

EXT. THE EARL OF DERBY'S ESTATE. MINUTES LATER.

The grounds in front of the manor are once more spread with swaying white flowers.

There are two dents in the patch of flowers beside the old tree, and voices in the air.

From above, set within the flowers, Anne and Frances are visible. They are both in black dresses, lying on their backs with their heads together in the centre. The world is slowly spinning around them.

Frances has one flower in her hand, twirling it between her finger and her thumb.

FRANCES

Do you remember the game we used to play up in the tree branches?

ANNE

I would always be the fairy queen.

FRANCES

You would always insist.

Anne chuckles, but it dies in the air.

ANNE

Frances, should we not speak of other things? All that has transpired?

FRANCES

Let's not. It will do nothing to change them.

Anne tilts her head to look at her youngest sister.

ANNE

When did you grow to be so wise?

FRANCES

Somebody had to be the fairy queen
whilst you were away.

Frances passes the flower to Anne, but instead of taking it from her, Anne holds their hands together. Sharing the white flower.

INT. THE EARL OF DERBY'S MANOR, WILLIAM'S ROOM. AFTERNOON.

The sky outside the window is getting dark.

There's a fire in the grate, the desk is spread with pages. William sits at it, writing.

Anne slips into the room behind him, but he hears her, and turns to look at her.

Anne approaches the desk.

ANNE

Perkins told me you received some
letters.

She studies William's expression, looking for a flicker of something.

WILLIAM

I did.

ANNE

And?

WILLIAM

There's always another way. We'll
find something else.

ANNE

We leave to the trial tomorrow.
There is nothing else to be done.

Anne's expression doesn't change, but a spark in her eyes deadens. She picks up one of the pages from his desk.

ANNE (CONT'D)

Still trying to make my childish
dreams into something real?

WILLIAM

Trying to show you that they can be
real.

She puts the page back on the desk, carefully. She isn't meeting William's eyes any more.

ANNE

Frances was remembering just before, when I used to be the fairy queen.

WILLIAM

You still are.

Anne leaves...

INT. THE EARL OF DERBY'S MANOR, STAIRCASE. CONT.

And descends the stairs towards her own quarters. She passes Elizabeth in the corridor, exiting her own bedroom.

ELIZABETH

I have just had it from Mary that your husband speaks to the judge about the fabric of your morals and reputation.

Anne keeps walking.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

You will have us all ostracised!

Anne just keeps walking.

INT. THE EARL OF DERBY'S MANOR, ANNE'S ROOM. MOMENTS LATER.

Anne stands in front of the mirror. She clutches several dresses in her hands and considers them.

She drops the dresses and pulls the call bell.

INT. THE EARL OF DERBY'S MANOR, SERVANT'S QUARTERS.
SIMULTANEOUS.

A bell on the wall, labeled 'Lady Anne', rings.

INT. THE EARL OF DERBY'S MANOR, STAIRCASE. EVENING.

Anne descends the staircase towards the front door.

She's wearing a huge red dress, encrusted with jewels. She looks otherworldly. She moves slowly.

The door to the banquet hall opens and Perkins walks through it. He stops dead when he sees Anne.

PERKINS

Lady Anne, the hour is late. Are ye expected somewhere?

Perkins stretches out a hand to help Anne down the last of the stairs. She takes it.

ANNE

I wanted to take a turn and think on my childhood here, Perkins. Maybe be Queen of the Fairies for one more night.

PERKINS

Aye, you were always a sweet child. I'll have you some supper left.

ANNE

There'll be no need.

She smiles and glides out into the grounds.

EXT. THE STREETS OF LONDON. DAY.

The streets are crammed with people moving. Only a few stand still beside the pavement, but they aren't stationary.

They're throwing out pamphlets, waving them in the air. Passing them into the hands of whoever will take them.

ELEANOR TOUCHET, 30s, is the nearest pamphlet giver. Her clothes are finer than the others, a large crucifix around her neck, and even though she's handing out her pamphlets with gloved hands, she quickly withdraws them from anybody dirty or scruffy looking.

People are just walking past her outstretched hands.

ELEANOR

Will nobody read of this debauched monster? Will nobody look on its face? Will nobody hear of the scandal, the injustice?

And then people are more interested. Soon they swarm around her and the other pamphlet givers.

When Eleanor's hands are empty, she dusts them off.

A couple of the pamphlets have fallen onto the floor. They're scattered and trodden on, but the title is still clear- 'THE DEVIL'S SEDUCTRESS'.

The face below it, framed by a pale blue ruff, is a twisted, cruel version of-

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. THE EARL OF DERBY'S ESTATE. EVENING.

Anne's face is as pale as the paper her doppelgänger was printed on. Her hair is blowing around her face.

She's standing beside the tree she had all her lessons beneath. Watching the flow of the river.

Anne is still wearing the huge stiff jeweled dress. She lifts her skirts to reveal bare feet and dips a tentative toe into the water, but recoils.

She clasps her book of fairy tales, which has been by her side, to her heart.

She walks straight into the river.

Some of Anne's skirts are still on the riverbank when she goes under. The dress is so huge that most of it stays at the surface.

The force of the water pulls Anne under.

She lets go.

The river pulls the piece of colourful material along to the next bend, and then all the billows and folds sink as one.

They're a shadow beneath the water's surface.

Anne is ethereal, the motion of the water pulling her hair and clothes into tendrils. Her hands rise. She lets go of the purple book.

The book is suspended by the water too, with a life of its own. It opens to the insert. There's writing on the otherwise blank page.

WILLIAM (O.S.)

You showed me the power of magic.
Now take that power back and use
it.

A hand grabs the book.

The fields are peaceful, full of birdsong and the sound of the river. The material of Anne's dress bumps the banks. It's empty

Anne bursts from the water and drags herself onto the banks, smearing her white underclothes with grass stains, clutching her sodden purple book.

She just lies there, panting.

Then her eyes open.

INT. THE COURTROOM. A FEW DAYS LATER.

The courtroom is full of clattering sound as people make their way in and sit on the wooden benches.

On their way in, most of them stare at Anne, still clutching her waterlogged purple-bound book. She's trying to fade into obscurity by the stairs to the judge's dock.

The JUDGE already sits in the dock, absorbed by something on his desk.

John Dee passes Anne on his way in and squeezes her arm to catch her attention. He nods to her and she nods back, and then he is lost in the crowd.

JUDGE (O.C.)

Did you have something you meant to say to me, Lady Anne?

The Judge is looking down the stairs at Anne.

ANNE

Yes, my Lord.

Silence.

JUDGE

Well?

Anne takes a few cautious steps up the stairs to be closer to the Judge.

ANNE

I have a last minute witness to call.

The Judge considers this. Then he pulls a fresh leaf of parchment towards himself and picks up his quill.

JUDGE
Very well. Name?

ANNE
W- William Shakespeare.

The Judge begins to scribble.

JUDGE
And you have his permission in
this?

Anne's breath catches in her throat. She swallows it.

ANNE
Of course, my Lord!

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. THE COURTROOM CORRIDOR. MOMENTS LATER.

WILLIAM
You did what?

He and Anne are alone in the corridor, but the noise inside the courtroom is quite loud.

ANNE
This was your idea to begin with.

WILLIAM
I can barely look at either of them
without quaking in my boots.

ANNE
And you think I can?
(beat)
You once told me that this version
of myself is what we'd worked for.
You wanted me to be enlightened,
you wanted me to fight for myself.
I've done everything you wanted and
now it's your turn to fight.

The courtroom door opens. Lord Burghley pokes his head out and spots them.

LORD BURGHELEY
The trial is about to begin.

Anne follows him back into the courtroom. As she turns, William sees the state of her book.

WILLIAM

What happened to your fairy stories?

Anne looks back and then down at her book.

ANNE

A terrible error of judgement.

She keeps walking.

William has a lot to think about. But no time.

INT. THE COURTROOM. CONT.

Anne is just settling into her place in the dock when she sees the door crack open and William slip in at the back.

The Judge is missing, and there's nobody in the defendants' dock.

Anne searches the room for them.

INT. THE JUDGE'S QUARTERS. SIMULTANEOUS.

The interior of the Judge's quarters match the courtroom. There are only three current occupants, the Judge, a GUARD and Lord Castlehaven.

Lord Castlehaven is chained, unshaven and dirty, but still extravagantly dressed.

LORD CASTLEHAVEN

She cannot be allowed to stand as witness, a woman of impeded morals such as she is, tarnished. Who would trust her?

The Judge doesn't respond, but searches his desk and picks up a letter from one end.

He looks over the top of the letter to Lord Castlehaven.

JUDGE

When I heard the particulars of this case, sir, involving Lady Stanley, a young cousin of mine, you see, I took it upon myself to write to some of your staff. One happened to respond.

Judge shakes the letter in his hand gently to indicate it as the response.

He pulls a pair of Nuremburg-style glasses from his breast pocket and perches them on the end of his nose carefully, looking through them at the contents of the letter.

He reads through it to himself, mumbling quietly, but stops triumphantly when he reaches a significant place.

JUDGE (CONT'D)

Ah, yes. Well it's all quite unfortunate.

LORD CASTLEHAVEN

What is?

JUDGE

I'm not at liberty to say.

Lord Castlehaven tries to keep his temper, but his hands ball into fists.

LORD CASTLEHAVEN

I beg you do speak, my Lord!

The Judge puts the letter carefully down in front of himself and surveys Lord Castlehaven with raised eyebrows.

JUDGE

It seems some of your staff would give a rather damning account of your character.

He chuckles.

JUDGE (CONT'D)

Now, as a man of impeded morals, are you tarnished? Are you not to be trusted?

Lord Castlehaven deflates ever so slightly.

INT. THE COURTROOM. MOMENTS LATER.

The chatter of the court dies down as all rise for the Judge's reentry. He takes to his seat.

After him, Lord Castlehaven is lead to his dock by the guard.

JUDGE

Lord Castlehaven, you and your servant Giles Broadway have been accused of rape and of sodomy. How do you plead?

LORD CASTLEHAVEN

Not guilty.

JUDGE

Very well. First witness for the defense!

INT. THE COURTROOM. MOMENTS LATER.

Lord Castlehaven's servant, Mattheson, is on the stand, shifting from foot to foot.

MATTHESON

My Lord and master could be accused of no impropriety, Judge. It is she-

Mattheson points a finger at Anne, who is staring at Lord Castlehaven.

MATTHESON (CONT'D)

-who let herself into strangers' bedchambers, and lay in wait for them there.

Anne opens her mouth to protest, but the Judge silences her with a look.

Mattheson and Lord Castlehaven share their own look.

INT. THE COURTROOM. MOMENTS LATER.

Now the maid who dressed Anne the night she was raped is on the stand, dressed much more conservatively. In contrast to Mattheson, she won't make eye contact with Anne, she only gazes at Lord Castlehaven.

MAID

M'Lord is a gentle soul, always so kind to others. That was why he agreed to marry the girl in a week, save her family from her embarrassing behaviour.

INT. THE COURTROOM. MOMENTS LATER.

The Reverend Clarke is on the stand.

REVEREND CLARKE

They had a marriage bond, it is true. I wed them one week after the marriage was arranged, at the discretion of Lady Stanley's late father...

Anne bursts out of her seat, her face red. The jury gasp and Lord Castlehaven smirks.

The Judge is now glaring at Anne but she takes no notice.

ANNE

Do you not see they mean to paint my reputation black? Has it ever been thus previously?

She looks to each member of the jury.

ANNE (CONT'D)

This man manipulated my father, and when he couldn't manipulate his way with me, he took what he wanted!

Some of the jury are open mouthed at this. Some of them are pointedly looking away.

ANNE (CONT'D)

Don't let him manipulate you.

The Judge raises his hand and Anne sits. She stares straight ahead of herself.

In the seats below, William watches the jury. Several are shaking their heads and whispering to each other.

JUDGE

I call William Shakespeare to the stand!

William's head whips around at the sound of his name.

Lord Castlehaven's head whips around to stare at William.

Slowly, William stands, and makes his way onto the stand. He looks around at all the jury, swallows, stands as tall as he can and deliberately meets Lord Castlehaven's eyes.

He looks up at the Judge.

WILLIAM

I have known Lady Stanley now for
little over a year.

(beat)

But I have known Lord Castlehaven
and Giles much longer, longer than
ever I have wished.

The jury are fixed on him.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

I was a player under Lord Strange's
commission when our troupe was
invited to attend Lord
Castlehaven's hospitality. I was
warned about him, so naturally I
kept to the edges of his web.

EXT. CASTLEHAVEN'S HALL, GARDENS. FIVE YEARS PREVIOUSLY.

A younger William hides in some bushes in the dead of night.
He watches through the leaves as Lord Castlehaven lounges
against a fountain, the young lord's grinning face flickering
by lamplight.

WILLIAM (O.S.)

Another young player was not so
worldly-wise.

Giles and Thomas approach the fountain arm-in-arm, in unheard
conversation.

As soon as Thomas comes to a halt beside the fountain, Lord
Castlehaven and Giles grab him, laughing as they overpower
him.

As Thomas is forced to his knees, he makes eye contact with
William, who runs.

INT. THE COURTROOM. PRESENT DAY.

A tear rolls down William's cheek as he remembers.

WILLIAM

I have been as cowardly now as I
was then. Only behind my Lady's
shield do I decide to draw my
weapon. They did assault her as
they have assaulted others before
her.

He steps down from the stand and the room flares with chatter. The Judge resorts to banging his gavel until the room is back under control.

William and Anne see each other, just for a second, before William takes his seat.

INT. THE COURTROOM. MOMENTS LATER.

John Dee is now on the stand, using it to stay upright, his frail legs quivering. He lifts one hand from the wood and gestures around his neck and wrists.

JOHN DEE
I saw them. Black with bruises,
great handprints around her wrists,
there's little doubt.

The Judge nods and John Dee hurries off the stand again. It stays empty for a few moments.

Giles takes to the stand.

He looks worse than Lord Castlehaven. His face is gaunt, there are bruises around his head and he is markedly thinner.

Anne is watching him. William is watching him. Lord Castlehaven is watching him, a little smirk on his face.

Giles looks down at the floor.

GILES
I confess to all.

The smirk drops straight off Lord Castlehaven's face.

GILES (CONT'D)
Under the influence of my Lord, I
carried out rape and depravity.
(pause)
He is my lover.

A collective gasp echoes around the court.

The jury fluster to collect themselves.

Giles leaves the stand, and sits in the dock beside Lord Castlehaven. He keeps staring at his feet.

Anne watches the jury carefully. And the Judge. He scribbles something quickly and then looks up to the jury.

JUDGE

My lords, the time has come and I
must have your verdict.

The jury are now in silence. Lord Burghley, who has the seat
beside the Judge, stands.

Lord Burghley looks straight at Lord Castlehaven and Giles.

LORD BURGHELEY

Guilty.

Lord Castlehaven launches himself at Giles. They have to be
held apart by the guard.

JUDGE

Mervyn Touchet, Earl of Castlehaven
and Giles Broadway, you have been
for guilty and are sentenced to
death by beheading-

Now Giles is on his feet.

GILES

I have confessed! I am owed my
immunity! I was promised!

They are all so engaged with their uproar that only William
sees Anne stand and begin the walk to the door.

Anne is walking through the door frame as William catches up
to her. They walk through the doorway together. The door
closes behind them.

EXT. TOWER HILL. HALF AN HOUR LATER.

An open courtyard, caked in dirt and hay and blood. The
executioner stands beside the chopping block, sharpening an
axe.

Anne and William's carriage passes.

INT. THE INSIDE OF THE CARRIAGE. CONT.

William watches the executioner's work through the window. He
looks at Anne, who still stares blankly at the carriage wall.

WILLIAM

You'd be quite within your rights
to stay and see their end.

ANNE

I never want to see their faces
again, alive or dead.

The streets of London pass them by for a few moments.

EXT. LONDON. CONT.

The carriage slows to let some ladies cross the road.

INT. THE INSIDE OF THE CARRIAGE. CONT.

Everything is quiet and peaceful, until-

A face at the window, contorted by rage.

The carriage rocks as Eleanor slams against them, wild,
trying to break through.

ELEANOR

Beast of the devil! You'll burn in
hell! Cursed whore!

Eleanor can still be heard screeching as the carriage pulls
away.

Anne looks out and society looks in, drawn by Eleanor's
scene. Ladies whisper behind their hands, nannies hurry their
children along, mens' eyes boggle.

EXT. LONDON. CONT.

The whispering ladies, ROSALINE and KATHARINE, have a good
view of Anne's drained face through the window of her
carriage, and an equally good view of Eleanor, still wailing
and clutching the crucifix around her neck.

ROSALINE

I should go wild too, had my
brother been taken to the block.

KATHARINE

And the wife! I heard that she gave
every hedonistic detail in court,
with pleasure!

ROSALINE

Doubtless she used similar methods
to earn the Judge's favour.

The carriage finally pulls out of sight, Anne with it.
ROSALINE and KATHARINE keep walking.

ROSALINE (CONT'D)
I'd expect such things from just
the second Earl of Castlehaven,
(snorts)
But was Lady Anne not once a
candidate for the crown?

The ladies' dresses disappear around the corner...

INT. THE INSIDE OF THE CARRIAGE. CONT.

And Anne, still staring out of the window, watches them.

EXT. TOWER HILL. SIMULTANEOUS.

Two necks rest on the filthy chopping block.

The EXECUTIONER grinds his axe beside them on the scaffold.
The courtyard itself is empty, but beyond the gates, a large
crowd are all trying to catch a glimpse.

A judge, LORD FOXE, steps out onto the scaffold, a scroll in
his hands. He unrolls it.

LORD FOXE
Mervyn Touchet, Earl of
Castlehaven. Giles Broadway. You
have been found guilty of the
crimes of rape and sodomy and you
have been sentenced to death.

LORD FOXE nods his head to the EXECUTIONER, who steps towards
Giles. He looks down and grins.

EXECUTIONER
You first.

The crowd clamour at the gates. Eleanor's face is amongst
them, tear-stained and quivering.

Giles promptly wets himself, darkening his trousers and
pooling around his knees.

The EXECUTIONER raises his axe.

EXT. THE GATES OUTSIDE TOWER HILL. CONT.

The thud of the axe. Crows rise from the building.

The crowd groans.

Through the gate, the figure of the EXECUTIONER showing Giles' severed head to its body is just visible.

The EXECUTIONER drops Giles' head. He steps up to Lord Castlehaven. A hush falls over the crowd.

Then, from within the crowd, screaming.

EXT. TOWER HILL. CONT.

Eleanor is rattling the gates to Tower Hill. She's the source of the screaming.

The people around her are staring.

ELEANOR
Tell them their mistake, Mervyn! Do something!

Lord Castlehaven looks up towards his sister. He sees the crowd's enormity.

LORD CASTLEHAVEN (O.C.)
I am here at the word of the most wicked woman that ever lived! Let me walk fre-

The axe swings. It hits the wood with a sharp crack.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. THE EARL OF DERBY'S MANOR, HALLWAY. WEEKS LATER.

Frances knocks on Anne's bedroom door again.

It opens, but only a maid, MEG, leaves. She has an armful of plates and cups.

FRANCES
Could she not be brought downstairs at all today?

Meg just shakes her head and hurries on down the hallway.

Frances bangs on Anne's door again.

FRANCES (CONT'D)
Annie! You've got a guest!

INT. THE EARL OF DERBY'S MANOR, STAIRCASE. CONT.

MEG is still hurrying down the stairs, where she passes William.

He's waiting at the foot of the stairs, a small rectangular package in his hand.

FRANCES (O.S.)
You're being rude!

Frances appears at the top of the staircase. She stomps down it.

WILLIAM
Is there nothing to be done today?

FRANCES
Perhaps at lunchtime. I'm sure we will have her out by the afternoon.

WILLIAM
Heaven knows we cannot make her.

They both look back up the stairs.

William hands Frances the package.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
See that she gets this.

Then he turns and leaves.

INT. THE EARL OF DERBY'S MANOR, ANNE'S BEDROOM. MOMENTS LATER.

The only light entering the room is through a sliver in the curtains. It reflects off all the dust in the air.

The door opens and Frances enters, shutting it behind herself.

She glances around.

The room looks empty.

With the package tucked under her arm, Frances marches over to the curtains and whips them open.

Light floods the room, reflecting off even more dust, and showing up the lump in the bed. Frances spots it.

She marches across to the bed next.

FRANCES
You. Are. Not. Ailing!

She whips the covers back to reveal Anne, dark bags under her eyes, greasy, unkempt hair, who squeals and tries to snatch the blanket back. She can't reach it.

FRANCES (CONT'D)
William called on you this morning.
Again! He brought you this.

Frances throws the package at Anne, who flinches when it lands on her.

Anne sits up, picks up the package and puts it to one side. She looks paper thin.

Frances gets into bed beside her, drawing the sheets around them both. They huddle together.

Frances plays with Anne's limp hair, tucking it behind her ear.

FRANCES (CONT'D)
You found your fight, in London.
Where is it hidden now?

Anne takes her sister's hand.

ANNE
The battle is won. You are safe.
Your whole life is now ahead of
you.

FRANCES
Why won't you come and live it with
me?

Frances picks up the package and puts it into Anne's hands. She stands.

FRANCES (CONT'D)
I have lost everyone. But you, I
might yet retrieve.

Frances leaves Anne alone to stare at the book in her hands.

She pulls at the string. She unfolds the paper.

A new, well bound book falls out. Anne drops the paper and picks up the book.

It's a collection of greek myths.

Anne picks up the book and opens the cover. The image inside is of Clytie watching Helios' path across the sky. When she opens the next page, two stubs of parchment fall into her lap, and there's an inky inscription on the back of one. Anne runs her fingers over it.

WILLIAM (O.S.)

Come and see the magic you inspired
in me.

Anne picks up the parchment. It's a pair of tickets, emblazoned with the title 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'.

She considers it for a long time.

INT. THE EARL OF DERBY'S MANOR, HALLWAY. MINUTES LATER.

Anne's head pops out from around her door.

ANNE

Frances!

The click of a door. Frances walks into the hallway and when she sees Anne, rubs her eyes.

FRANCES

Yes?

ANNE

Get dressed, we're expected at the
theatre later.

Anne's head disappears back behind her door.

Frances just stands in the corridor, staring at where Anne was.

EXT. THE STREET OUTSIDE THE THEATRE. AFTERNOON.

The afternoon sun is framed by trees, thick with leaves, and still. Beneath them is a cobbled street, lit up by buildings. There is a hum of noise from within the largest one, an amphitheatre.

A man in mystical dress rounds the corner of the building and enters through a side door...

INT. THE PLAYHOUSE. THE TIRING HOUSE. CONT.

...pulling on a thick wig, revealing himself to be in costume as OBERON.

He begins walking, passing people in varying states of costume. They are all consumed in work, sewing, practicing lines, or otherwise drinking and debauching.

Above them, between gaps in the planks, are the backsides of rich people sitting on cushions. One of the backsides has its skirts hitched up.

Actors dodge as urine trickles from above.

William stands at the bottom of the steps to the stage. OBERON joins him. They both watch the audience gathering. Beyond them, the stage is visible, empty.

OBERON

Will we make them wait much longer?

William raises his hand in a signal for OBERON to be quiet. He's looking out around the audience.

From the empty stage, the audience looks overwhelming, even if most of them are still filing in. William keeps staring at the seats above the stage- the Lord's Rooms.

OBERON (CONT'D)

Are you expecting the Queen, sir?

WILLIAM

Of sorts.

In the moment it has taken William to turn and talk to OBERON, a hushed murmur falls over the audience. William looks up at the Lord's Rooms again.

Frances and Anne, in fine dresses, are quietly filing into their seats in the Lord's Rooms.

INT. THE THEATRE, THE LORD'S ROOMS. CONT.

Anne and Frances sit down. All eyes in the theatre are on them.

Frances glances at Anne, but Anne is sitting up straight, looking out towards the stage. If not for her knotted hands, Frances might be fooled that Anne didn't feel all the eyes on her.

There's some scuffling going on beside the stage. After a moment, William herds a group of players onstage. THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, and PHILOSTRATE stand to the forefront.

THESEUS

Now, fair Hippolyta, our nuptial
hour draws on apace; four happy
days bring in another moon...

Frances reaches out to touch Anne's wrist gently. Her hand
hovers for a moment, before moving back to the arm rest.

Anne takes Frances' hand and squeezes it. Although she's
still fixed on the play, her smile is for her sister.

ANNE

Nobody shall take this from me
again.

Down below, the stage is once more filled with actors,
beginning a new scene.

From beside the stage, William smiles up at Anne.

Anne smiles back at William.

They look into each others' eyes for the longest time, until
the darkness of their pupils...

FADE TO BLACK.

(SUBTITLE)

Lady Anne Stanley set a precedent
for wives to be allowed to give
evidence against their husbands.

(CONT'D)

She eventually received a formal
pardon from King James VI for her
"debauchery"...

(CONT'D)

...and spent the rest of her life
in seclusion.

END.