

The Young Victoria

by
Julian Fellowes

SHOOTING SCRIPT - 17th June, 2007

BLUE REVISIONS - 14th July, 2007
PINK REVISIONS - 8th August, 2007

Initial Entertainment Group
3000 West Olympic Blvd., Ste 1550
Santa Monica, CA 90404
Tel: 310.315.1722

1 MONTAGE. INT. VICTORIA'S DRESSING ROOM. BUCKINGHAM. DAY. 1

Female fingers are fastening hooks, tightening laces...

We are behind a young woman who raises her arms in slow motion, to allow her maid, Watson, to dress her.

VICTORIA (V.O.)

I do not now remember when I first knew I was different.

1A MONTAGE. EXT. KENSINGTON GARDENS. DAY. FLASHBACK. 1A

A little girl's feet walk on a gravel path beside a woman's heavy skirts. From behind, the child holds the hand of a governess. A couple passes. They see her and stop. The man bows, removing his top hat. The woman curtseys. We see the young face, accepting this deference from strangers.

VICTORIA (V.O.)

Or rather, that my life belonged to others, besides myself.

1B MONTAGE. EXT. ENTRANCE COURT. BUCKINGHAM PALACE. DAY. 1B

A young man's face is in motionless profile. We pull focus to reveal a whole line of Cold Stream guards, all completely still, all looking straight ahead.

1C MONTAGE. INT. VICTORIA'S DRESSING ROOM. BUCKINGHAM. DAY. 1C

The red Robe of State is laid out on a chair. A dog has curled up on the velvet train. Watson waves it away with a tiny shoe.

1D MONTAGE. EXT. ENTRANCE COURT. BUCKINGHAM PALACE. DAY. 1D

The door of a gilded carriage is opened and gloved hands unroll its steps, down towards the ground. A man's stockinged leg and buckled shoe appear to stabilize them. A small, silk-encased foot is placed on the bottom step.

1E MONTAGE. INT. DUCHESS'S DRAWING ROOM. KENSINGTON PALACE. DAY. 1E

A child's finger traces a genealogical chart, showing King George III and Queen Charlotte. It finds their son, George IV, "died 1830," whose daughter, Charlotte, is also dead.

(CONTINUED)

1E CONTINUED:

1E

VICTORIA (V.O.)

I must have been about eleven, or thereabouts, when they left a book open on the nursery table.

The finger moves across to the childless Duke of York, "died 1803." Next, King William IV, and his two dead daughters. On to the dead Duke of Kent, his widow and, finally, his daughter Victoria, "born 1819."

VICTORIA (V.O.)

The first four sons of King George III could boast only one living child... And that was me.

The tiny finger hesitates, poised over the name.

VICTORIA (V.O.)

And so I learned that I was nearer to the Crown than I had thought...

A young girl, with ringlets and a simple dress, is looking at the book. Shadowy figures hover behind. A governess in black, a woman in brilliant colours with an elaborate hair style, and a sharply dressed man. They study the child's reaction. She runs away.

VICTORIA (V.O.)

And I knew then why I must trace a path ordained by others.

1F MONTAGE. INT. VICTORIA'S BEDROOM. KENSINGTON PALACE. NIGHT. 1F

A tearful Victoria is alone in her room, lying on her bed. A silhouette is in the doorway. She turns her back on her mother.

1G DELETED 1G

1H DELETED 1H

1i MONTAGE. INT. WESTMINSTER ABBEY. DAY. 1i

The magnificent ceiling of the Abbey. A woman's head enters frame out of focus.

VICTORIA (V.O.)

They would all bear witness on that sacred morning.

(CONTINUED)

28th June 1838

Blurred faces watch as a young woman processes down the aisle. They crane forward to catch a glimpse. In the high stands, some faces come into focus.

VICTORIA (V.O.)

From my past...

The governess, Lehzen, in a modest box of the Queen's friends, glows with pride.

VICTORIA (V.O.)

My present...

Wellington looks on from among the dukes. Peel is with the politicians. The Duchess of Sutherland hovers behind the Throne, among the ladies.

VICTORIA (V.O.)

And my future...

Among the visiting princes, all resplendent, stands a youthful and wonderfully handsome Albert.

VICTORIA (V.O.)

In truth, I was glad to have them near me at that all-changing moment.

A young girl's forehead is anointed with oil. A hand fastens an elaborate buckle. The folds of a heavy, fur-trimmed, golden robe are being arranged around the central figure. A man's hand lays the golden Sceptre with its Cross in her right hand.

VICTORIA (V.O.)

For even with the knowledge...

The same hand brings the Rod of Equity and lays it in the same young woman's left hand.

VICTORIA (V.O.)

That I was heiress to the Throne,

The older, male hands now take hold of the ermine rim of the new crown we have seen being created.

VICTORIA (V.O.)

Before that day of days, I can't pretend...

Our view is loosening. We are behind the great Gothic chair. The bare-headed Archbishop approaches.

(CONTINUED)

1i CONTINUED: (2)

1i

He lifts the Crown and with a clearly enunciated prayer, he sets it down on the head of the chair's occupant. It fits perfectly.

VICTORIA (V.O.)

I understood the phrase's full significance.

We cut to a spectacular wide shot. The whole of Westminster Abbey is laid out before us in dazzling magnificence, with gallery after gallery, tier upon tier, packed with Government, Court and Aristocracy, all standing, all exultant. The banks of peers, gorgeous in red velvet and ermine, put on their own coronets while the peeresses, in separate stands, reach up to place their coronets among their head-dresses of feathers and diamonds. Their long, white gloves raised in unison, backed by the colours of the costumes, make their arms seem like a thousand swans in flight.

The whole effect is more thrilling, more exciting, more glamorous, than can almost be imagined.

At last, and for the first time, we see the face of the new Queen of England. She is eighteen, soft, innocent and almost childlike, a poignant contrast to the glittering diadem on her head, proclaiming centuries of tradition. The title appears:

The Young Victoria

As it disappears, Victoria turns her head to look at someone: A smiling Melbourne is in the viscounts' stand. The premier mouths "Perfect". As serious as the new Queen tries to be, she can't refrain from the faintest trace of a smile. Now, we pull focus. In the background, in a gallery defined as Royal by the coats of arms upon it, we see a handsome, middle aged woman, deeply moved by the events she witnesses. This is the Duchess of Kent. As we close in on her and see the very real emotion in her eyes, a new voice is heard.

DUCHESS OF KENT (V.O.)

You are sure? That we're doing the right thing?

2 INT. VICTORIA'S BEDROOM. KENSINGTON PALACE. NIGHT.

2

We pull back from the same face, and find that the Duchess, herself, is speaking.

DUCHESS OF KENT

Perhaps we should leave it? Maybe tomorrow she'll be less tired.

(CONTINUED)

No longer in her Coronation robes, she looks like a pretty, painted doll, her hair dressed in the exuberant, extravagant fashion of the 1830s. A title appears...

One year earlier

CONROY

We've waited long enough! For the last time, you will sign this order.

Sir John Conroy, the Duchess's Controller, handsome, vain and arrogant, throws a cold look at the Duchess. Striding past a canopied four poster, he comes to a smaller bed where Victoria lies, flushed with fever, barely awake. He puts in front of her, a paper on a board and, with it, a pen.

VICTORIA

I will not sign it.

CONROY

I say you will!

He pushes the pen into her hand, holding it over the paper.

VICTORIA

And I say I will not!

With a supreme effort, she pulls her hand free and flings the pen to the floor, pushing paper and board after it, as she collapses onto the pillows. His anger bursts as he pounces on it with a roar, lifting his hand to strike her -

LEHZEN

Sir John.

Baroness Lehzen, Victoria's governess, stands, immobile, in the doorway. She is a dour figure next to the weak bird of paradise that is Victoria's mother.

DUCHESS OF KENT

Ah, Baroness, Sir John was just...

She tails away. How can she justify the scene?

LEHZEN

It's time for the Princess's medicine.

DUCHESS OF KENT

Of course. Shall I...?

LEHZEN

I'll do it.

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED: (2)

2

She remains stock still, in possession of the room. For a moment the others stare at her. Then the Duchess weakens.

DUCHESS OF KENT

Well, if you're sure... good night, *mein liebling*.

VICTORIA

Good night, Mama.

As she speaks, Victoria eyes her mother coldly. Pointing up the irony of this relationship is a nearby portrait of the Duchess with her baby daughter. Things have clearly changed. The Duchess glances nervously at Conroy and, after a moment of angry indecision, he picks up the discarded pen and the paper. The Duchess leaves. She passes Lehzen, who sinks low into a court curtsy. Standing, she turns her face away as Conroy marches out.

3 EXT. THE GARDENS OF LAEKEN PALACE. BELGIUM. DAY.

3

The Royal Palace, Brussels.

In a sumptuous setting, two men walk together, one proud and splendid, King Leopold of the Belgians, the other wizened and dressed in black, Baron Stockmar. They are trailed by equerries.

LEOPOLD

My sister says she won't sign the order for a Regency.

Stockmar is not surprised. Leopold waits for an explanation.

STOCKMAR

Why would she sign it? The Princess is nearly eighteen. Why would she sign away her own powers?

LEOPOLD

Because she's an ignorant baby! Because she needs guidance and time, to prepare for her role as Queen! And until she's ready, my sister will take her place as Regent!

The last is added lamely, which Stockmar almost reprimands.

STOCKMAR

Sir John Conroy would be Regent. Unfortunately, the Duchess is controlled by her Controller.

This may be true, but Leopold is exploding with frustration.

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED:

3

LEOPOLD

Nevertheless, I will not be cheated of all I've worked for, because of a stubborn child!

Stockmar gives him a second to simmer down.

STOCKMAR

Conroy has over-played his hand. The Princess detests him. And the Duchess has also forfeited her daughter's good will.

LEOPOLD

According to your spy. Does Victoria know her governess is writing to you?

STOCKMAR

Baroness Lehzen has a wide correspondence.

LEOPOLD

So? What are you suggesting?

STOCKMAR

When the Princess succeeds to the Throne, she'll turn away from anyone who's helped her enemies. It may be in Your Majesty's interest to consider abandoning Conroy and your sister before it's too late, and instead support the future Queen.

Leopold looks at him. Reluctantly, he gives a slight nod.

STOCKMAR

Of course the Duchess won't like it.

LEOPOLD

Baron, I was born the younger son of a penniless duke. Now, I am King of the Belgians. Such journeys are not managed without hard decisions. Besides, the cast of our play is not yet complete. And who controls a young girl most?

A light dawns in Stockmar's eyes.

4 DELETED.

4

5 EXT. GARDENS. ROSENAU CASTLE. COBURG. GERMANY. DAY. 5

Two young men are practising archery. The elder turns and waves. Baron Stockmar is on his way to join them. He bows.

STOCKMAR

Prince Ernest. Good day to you.

ERNEST

Baron. When did you arrive? My uncle is well, I hope?

STOCKMAR

The King is very well. But busy.

ERNEST

What brings you here? Business of his?

STOCKMAR

His and... Prince Albert's.

Ernest looks at his brother, who releases an arrow which thuds into the target. This is His Serene Highness, Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha and he is as handsome as the dawn.

6 INT. STAIRCASE HALL. KENSINGTON PALACE. LONDON. DAY. 6

Victoria and Lehzen are on the landing. The governess holds out her hand and, with a slight sigh, the girl takes it. They descend together to where a footman waits in the hall below.

VICTORIA

Where is the Duchess?

FOOTMAN

In the drawing room, Your Royal Highness.

Victoria goes towards a door, followed by her spaniel, Dash. The footman glances after her.

LEHZEN

Keep your eyes to yourself.

Naturally, she is quite different with the servants.

7 INT. DUCHESS'S DRAWING ROOM. KENSINGTON PALACE. DAY. 7

The Duchess, Conroy and another woman, Lady Flora Hastings, are poring over a map on the central table.

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED:

7

CONROY

We'll spend two nights at Norris Castle,
one for the local gentry, one for the town
officials, then sail up the coast -

He looks up. Victoria has entered the room with her dog. Dash goes
immediately to Conroy. At least the dog likes him. Victoria
curtseys to her mother.

DUCHESS OF KENT

How did you come downstairs?

VICTORIA

I walked.

DUCHESS OF KENT

Not alone?

VICTORIA

No. Not alone. Lehzen was with me.

DUCHESS OF KENT

And she held your hand?

VICTORIA

She did. Though why she still has to -

CONROY

She has to because not everyone in England
wishes you well.

Victoria rolls her eyes. If only Conroy wouldn't stroke Dash.

VICTORIA

I hope we're not planning another journey?

LADY FLORA

Sir John says -

VICTORIA

Thank you, Lady Flora, but I was asking my
mother.

Oh. So these two are enemies. Conroy takes over.

CONROY

As much as possible, we want the people to
know their new Queen.

VICTORIA

But why can't we wait 'til I *am* Queen? His
Majesty clearly said -

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED: (2)

7

At this, Lady Flora smirks at Conroy. Victoria notices.

CONROY

The King is jealous of your popularity and that's why he doesn't approve of your travels. It's no reason to give them up.

VICTORIA

On the contrary, it's a very good reason. I do not wish to annoy my uncle.

CONROY

The King is old.

VICTORIA

He may be old, Sir John, but he's not dead yet.

Sir John eyes Victoria coldly.

8 INT. KING'S PRIVATE ROOMS. WINDSOR CASTLE. DAY.

8

The white head of King William IV is shaking with anger as he shouts at his Prime Minister. This is Lord Melbourne, a handsome, witty, beguiling man in middle age. Queen Adelaide is with them.

KING WILLIAM

Is there no limit to this woman's disobedience?

MELBOURNE

The Duchess wants the Princess to know more of the country.

KING WILLIAM

The Duchess wants the country to know more of the Princess!

MELBOURNE

Is it such a bad thing, Sir?

KING WILLIAM

To make her familiar, you mean? A popular girl who supports your ministry? You would defend it!

QUEEN ADELAIDE

I don't think Lord Melbourne -

(CONTINUED)

KING WILLIAM

You see how Conroy presents her? The young liberal in contrast to the old conservative? She is change and the thrill of the new, but I am stuck in the mud of history. She is hope and the future, while I am despair and the past. She is life, Lord Melbourne, and I am death!

He storms away for a moment. The Queen catches Melbourne's eye and shakes her head gently. She stands and walks over.

QUEEN ADELAIDE

There's nothing to be gained by shouting at the Prime Minister.

KING WILLIAM

Nonsense. I feel much better.

QUEEN ADELAIDE

And none of it is Victoria's fault.

KING WILLIAM

Maybe not. But she and her mother are tools in the hands of a man who knows how to use them. Mark my words. The reign of King Conroy is coming.

QUEEN ADELAIDE

My poor sister in law. What is the hold that wicked man has over her?

The question is rhetorical but the two men catch each other's eye and say nothing.

MELBOURNE

What about her uncle in Brussels? Could he help?

KING WILLIAM

King Leopold is as slippery as a barrel full of eels. If he did dislodge Conroy, it'd only be to tighten his own grip on the girl.

He sighs and shakes his head. Melbourne is very smooth.

MELBOURNE

King Leopold overestimates her power. As a constitutional Monarch, she cannot pass laws, to help or hinder him.

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED: (2)

8

KING WILLIAM

No. We can't make laws. But we can influence the men who do. That's what he's after! And so are you! Don't tell me you're not!

MELBOURNE

It is a Prime Minister's duty to keep the Monarch informed of Parliament's intentions.

The sleekness with which he says this, reveals his plans.

KING WILLIAM

Lord in your mercy, get me past May! That way she'll be of age and we'll have killed off the Regency at least!

*

MELBOURNE

And what of the proposed journey? Might there not be some benefit in showing her to the people? Before Conroy has a chance to usurp her place?

The King hesitates. Melbourne has a good point. As usual.

KING WILLIAM

Oh, very well. Let England get a sight of her future Queen. But I'll have no broadsides! No cannons and guns in salute. I'm still the monarch here!

His face is as red as his hair is white.

9 EXT. THE ENGLISH COAST. DAY.

9

A fusillade of cannon blasts into the air, smoke pouring from their mouths. On a raised and decorated platform, with the sparkling sea behind, Victoria receives the Freedom of a seaside town from a local Mayor. A modest crowd watches them. The Mayor bows and retreats, and Victoria steps back to where her mother, Conroy, Flora and Lehzen are waiting.

CONROY

Curtsey to them.

VICTORIA

I have already curtsied.

CONROY

Then curtsey again.

(CONTINUED)

With a smile, she gives a slight curtsy and is cheered.

VICTORIA

That's enough.

CONROY

I will decide when it's enough.

But Victoria ignores him, looking around. *

DUCHESS OF KENT

Victoria! Will you listen to Sir John! *

VICTORIA

Mama, I'm not running for election. I will be Queen not Prime Minister.

With a last nod, she turns and starts to descend the steps on the way to a waiting carriage. The others follow but, at the base of the steps, Conroy catches at Lehzen's arm.

CONROY

I warn you. If you're her friend, don't set her against me.

The Baroness does not answer but just looks at him.

CONROY

You want to keep her for yourself but she needs me. If she tries to walk alone, she'll stumble in a month and fall within a year. For her own sake, don't encourage her rebellion.

LEHZEN

I hope I encourage the Princess in all things, Sir John.

She nods towards the crowd behind them.

LEHZEN

Like it or not, they're cheering her, you know. Not you.

She descends the last step towards the carriage and Victoria.

9A INT. CARRIAGE BY ENGLISH COAST. DAY.

9A

Lost in her thoughts, Victoria is looking at the sparkling sea.

STOCKMAR (V.O.)

England is the key to peace in Europe. *

*
*

10 INT. ALBERT'S ROOM. ROSENAU CASTLE. COBURG. GERMANY. DAY. 10

Close on a map of Europe. Stockmar is putting Albert through his paces. Relentlessly.

STOCKMAR

Your uncle's throne is six years old and born of Civil War. He only took the Crown of Belgium because England pledged her support. If he's to survive, he *must* have English force at his disposal.

*

Stockmar throws an engraving of Princess Victoria on the map.

STOCKMAR (V.O.)

Favourite novels?

Albert takes a moment to switch his focus to the girl.

ALBERT

Err... (He starts to answer in German).

*

STOCKMAR

English! Always English.

*

*

Albert nods. This is a tough discipline, but he will accept it.

*

ALBERT

She hasn't read many novels. They were forbidden until last year.

*

*

*

STOCKMAR

But she *did* like?

ALBERT

The Bride of Lammermoor.

STOCKMAR

By?

ALBERT

Sir Walter Scott.

STOCKMAR

Other recreations?

ALBERT

Drawing. The famous dolls, of course. Piano. Music, generally. Though it's hard to believe she knows so little Schubert.

(CONTINUED)

STOCKMAR

Never mind Schubert. She likes modern composers. Is she permitted the theatre?

ALBERT

Only the opera and ballet.

STOCKMAR

Where she admires?

ALBERT

The soprano, Giulia Grisi and the dancer, Maria Taglioni.

STOCKMAR

And among the men?

ALBERT

Her teacher, the Bass Baritone, Luigi Lablache. She calls him "*Le Papa de Tous.*"

STOCKMAR

Why?

ALBERT

Lablache says that Mozart is the father of all music. The phrase has become her nickname for him.

Stockmar is almost impressed. He nods.

STOCKMAR

Which opera does she like best?

ALBERT

Norma?

Stockmar strikes the table sharply, with impatience.

STOCKMAR

I Puritani. Her favourite opera is Bellini's *Puritani*. How many times?

Albert sighs with resignation and resumes his studies as a song from *Puritani* explodes, full volume.

11 INT. COVENT GARDEN OPERA HOUSE. NIGHT.

11

We are watching the opera from Victoria's point of view. Seated in the Royal Box on the main tier, she is completely absorbed.

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED:

11

As we dolly in on her face, we pull focus behind her to reveal her three gaolers, the Duchess, Conroy and Lady Flora. A half secret glance passes between Conroy and Flora, but Victoria's mother is more interested in the audience. In crowded boxes on the same tier, we see Peel, Melbourne, Wellington and the Duchess of Sutherland. * They in turn watch the Princess, not the stage.

LADY FLORA (V.O.)

Hurry, scurry, to the little Princess.

12 DELETED.

12

13 INT. GALLERY. KENSINGTON PALACE. NIGHT.

13

Bellini's music continues. Lehzen carries some hot milk on a tray, passing Lady Flora, still in evening dress from the opera.

LEHZEN

Yes. That's just what I'll do.

Lady Flora walks on. Then she stops.

LADY FLORA

Don't be too smug. He could save her from a lot of grief if she'd let him.

LEHZEN

This is getting cold.

LADY FLORA

You're no better. In fact you're worse. You covet the same thing but at least he admits it.

LEHZEN

Please don't judge me by your own standards, Lady Flora. Or by those of Sir John Conroy.

The words disgust her. Lady Flora shakes her head.

LADY FLORA

You've tasted power, Baroness, and when she's queen it'll taste much sweeter. You'll see.

But Lehzen has already walked on.

14 INT. VICTORIA'S BEDROOM. KENSINGTON PALACE. NIGHT.

14

On the last note of Bellini's opera, a simple Dutch doll in a young girl's hand, fills the screen... Victoria is having fun with her doll, pretending to sing. The music ends. Victoria is on her cot. Nearby, the huge bed of her mother has been turned down for the night. The doll is replaced among other, similar dolls, all gorgeously arrayed, on a table by her bed.

LEHZEN (O.S.)

Miss Agatha won't stand up straight?

Victoria looks up. Lehzen stands, motionless, in the doorway. The candle on her tray and an oil lamp on a table throw odd shadows on her face and round the cluttered room.

VICTORIA

Then she must go to the back as a punishment.

Lehzen walks into the room, exchanging a smile with Victoria. She pours the milk and hands it to the Princess. The girl smiles her thanks and sips it for a moment.

LEHZEN

I met Lady Flora in the gallery.

VICTORIA

Lying in wait, no doubt.

LEHZEN

She's getting worse. So is Sir John.

Lehzen tidies the bed clothes briskly.

VICTORIA

Of course. In a few months I'll be eighteen. If I don't go mad first... All I ever seem to do is change my clothes and pray for freedom.

She glances at the double portrait on the wall of herself as a baby, with the Duchess. She turns away to avoid looking at it.

LEHZEN

It's only until your birthday. And don't forget who championed you from the start.

They are interrupted by the arrival of the Duchess and her maid. She stops at the sight of Lehzen.

(CONTINUED)

LEHZEN

I'll say good night, Ma'am.

She curtsies and leaves. The Duchess eyes her daughter.

DUCHESS OF KENT

You two are so close. Anyone would think you were plotting treason. Don't fuss me!

She snaps at her maid who unfastens the glittering outer layer. Here is the deconstruction of a Royal icon. The truth behind the image. She entered as Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Kent, in silk, lace and diamonds, her hair dressed with feathers and pearls. We will leave her as a middle-aged woman, ready for bed. As she talks, the skirt comes away, then the embroidered bodice, leaving corsets and layer upon layer of petticoats. She puts on a gown to sit at the dressing table while the maid dismantles the high-piled hair, removing the false switches, brushing it out.

DUCHESS OF KENT

You still don't look well. Maybe we should go away for August.

VICTORIA

No, Mama.

DUCHESS OF KENT

What do you mean no?

VICTORIA

We missed the Queen's birthday. We will not miss the King's. We have accepted. We're going.

DUCHESS OF KENT

Really, Victoria, don't issue orders to me! I'm not a servant.

VICTORIA

You've already disobeyed about the extra rooms. That's enough.

DUCHESS OF KENT

Don't be absurd! Are we to live like rabbits, crammed in a hutch? Of course I "disobeyed"!

VICTORIA

We do live in a palace, Mama. We're a lot better off than most people.

(CONTINUED)

DUCHESS OF KENT

We live in an *apartment* in a palace which is far too small for our needs. The rooms I took were empty. Keeping us out of them was... almost immoral. As Sir John says -

*
*

But at the mention of Conroy's name, Victoria lies back.

*

DUCHESS OF KENT

My dearest child, Sir John only wants the best for you. I wish you'd believe that.

VICTORIA

I'm sure you do.

The Duchess gives a sharp look but, glancing at the maid, she does not reply, studying her face in the mirror.

DUCHESS OF KENT

I've invited the Coburg brothers to come and stay. You ought to know them better.

*

VICTORIA

Why?

DUCHESS OF KENT

Well... because you should. Your Uncle Leopold thinks -

VICTORIA

I knew he'd have a part in it.

DUCHESS OF KENT

Really Victoria, there's no pleasing you. You complain you've no friends but when I find you some companions of a suitable rank, you look as if I'd forced you to take medicine.

Victoria just stares at her for a moment.

VICTORIA

Mama, why do you treat me like a simpleton? Is it my fault? Was I unusually stupid as a child?

There is a quality in her that almost frightens the mother. She stares back, then takes it out on the luckless maid.

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED: (3)

14

DUCHESS OF KENT

If you stick one more pin in me, I swear I shall call the guard.

15 INT. UPSTAIRS PASSAGE. KENSINGTON PALACE. DAY.

15

Through the window, we see a carriage arriving. A footman jumps down, and the two Coburg princes climb out. Conroy receives them. Victoria is watching.

*
*

16 DELETED.

16 *

*

17 EXT. KENSINGTON GARDENS. DAY.

17

Conroy and Lady Flora hover at the rear. Ernest walks with the Duchess. She ignores him, looking ahead at Victoria who is with Albert. The Duchess, glimpsed behind the young couple throughout the scene, conveys a powerful sense of Victoria's incarceration.

ALBERT

Of the modern composers, I suppose Vincenzo Bellini is my favourite.

VICTORIA

What a coincidence. So is mine. Which of his operas do you enjoy most? No, wait, let me guess. *I Puritani*?

ALBERT

As a matter of fact, yes.

VICTORIA

I used to like it, too. But now I prefer *Norma*.

She's aware of what he is up to and has deliberately caught him out. She takes a ball from her pocket and throws it.

VICTORIA

Dash! Fetch! Oh, fetch it, you silly dog!

Albert picks up the ball, dancing along beside the dog, teasing it with the ball just out of reach. But when he looks at Victoria, she is not laughing, just watching. He gives the ball back to Victoria. Their gloved hands touch. She pulls away.

ALBERT

Have I offended you in some way?

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED:

17

VICTORIA

No.

She continues for a few paces. Albert doesn't know what to say next. Then, suddenly, he decides to speak from his heart.

ALBERT

And Schubert. I like Schubert. I think perhaps you don't, but... I do.

She looks at him. She understands that this is true, and not prompted. She decides to reward him for his honesty.

VICTORIA

I don't mind Schubert.

Albert hesitates. He is pleased but he has surprised himself.

ALBERT

Good.

He is very vulnerable. In fact, he has scored a point, which we know. But he doesn't. After a second, Victoria smiles.

18 INT. DUCHESS'S DRAWING ROOM. KENSINGTON PALACE. NIGHT.

18

Albert and Victoria play chess, again watched by the others who sit round the room. It is Albert's turn. He studies the board. She studies him. Conroy notices, but she gives him a cold look when their eyes meet, then lowers her voice.

VICTORIA

Do you ever feel like a chess piece, yourself? In a game being played against your will?

ALBERT

Do you?

VICTORIA

Constantly. I see them leaning in and moving me round the board.

ALBERT

The Duchess and Sir John?

VICTORIA

Not just them. Uncle Leopold. The King. I'm sure half the politicians are ready to seize hold of my skirts and drag me this way and that, from square to square.

(CONTINUED)

ALBERT

Then you had better master the rules of the game. Until you play it better than they can.

Perhaps to her surprise, she likes this and smiles at him.

VICTORIA

You don't recommend I find a husband to play it for me?

ALBERT

I should find one to play it with you, not for you.

She nods. But the urge to tease is never far away.

VICTORIA

Why don't we ring for some music and then we could dance?

We can read panic in Albert's eyes. Victoria enjoys it.

VICTORIA

I've lately discovered the Waltz and I am quite in love with it.

Albert looks to the Duchess. They have been caught out.

ALBERT

Waltzing is not really my forte.

VICTORIA

Oh dear. What a shame.

Victoria gives Albert a provocative glance. In spite of herself, she does like him. She lowers her voice.

VICTORIA

You know the King wants me to marry my Cousin George?

Albert, studying the board, does not rise to the bait.

ALBERT

What's he like at chess?

Lehzen waits by the stairs as Victoria leaves the drawing room. After a moment, Albert appears, closing the door.

ALBERT

Victoria.

She stops, feeling Lehzen's irritation.

VICTORIA

It's all right, Lehzen. Albert can take me up. You'll have to hold my hand. Mama insists. I hope you don't mind.

ALBERT

Not in the least.

The Baroness hesitates then, defeated, goes on up.

VICTORIA

What did you want to say?

ALBERT

Only that I understand more than you think. Of what your life is.

VICTORIA

Do you?

ALBERT

My childhood wasn't easy, either... I lost my mother when I was a boy.

VICTORIA

I know. She died.

ALBERT

No. That is, she did die. Eventually. But she was sent away long before that.

This does interest her. Much more than she expected.

ALBERT

There was some... difficulty... It was all hushed up and no one talks of it now. But I know what it is to live alone in your head. To smile when people are guessing your thoughts and never to give a clue of your real feelings.

She appreciates his honesty. This is also her experience.

VICTORIA

Then you're right. We do understand each other. Did Uncle Leopold ask you to tell me that?

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED: (2)

19

ALBERT

He said I was never to mention it.

VICTORIA

How little he knows me.

She turns towards the stairs, holding out her hand and he takes it as he summons his courage to speak.

ALBERT

May I write to you?

She looks at him and without a word starts upstairs. He climbs with her, waiting for her to speak. But the answer, when it comes, is only a smile. It is more than enough. On the landing, they stop. She looks at her hand, waiting for him to release it. He does, after kissing it in homage. Then she walks off down the passage, stopping once to look back. The fact is, he's perfect.

20 INT. VICTORIA'S BEDROOM. KENSINGTON PALACE. NIGHT.

20

Lehzen is waiting as Victoria walks in... a little out of breath with a smile on her face. She signs to her maid, Watson, to undress her as quickly as possible.

WATSON

I expect you'll miss the Princes when they're gone, Ma'am.

LEHZEN

Don't be impertinent.

Victoria winks at Watson as she is released from her stays.

VICTORIA

The untold luxury of being able to breathe again.

Watson gathers up the discarded clothes and leaves.

LEHZEN

Those boys pester you.

VICTORIA

Give me some credit. You don't think I've come this far to walk straight into *another* gaol?

LEHZEN

You must marry one day.

(CONTINUED)

20 CONTINUED:

20

VICTORIA

I don't see why. And if I do, I'll please myself, not Uncle Leopold or the King or Mama or anyone else. Trust me.

Victoria takes a deep breath, then, dressed in a shift and holding an imaginary partner, she starts to waltz. What does she dream of as she whirls round? Whatever it is, she's more aware of what goes on than Lehzen credits.

21 INT. DUCHESS'S DRAWING ROOM. KENSINGTON PALACE. NIGHT.

21

Albert comes back in, to find Ernest, reading.

ERNEST

They've gone to bed. They said Goodnight. Listen to this. Right now, it takes a day or more to cross England in a coach. By train, the same journey will be achieved in three hours. Isn't that amazing? Trains will change everything.

But there is no answer from Albert.

ERNEST

Are you listening?

No, he's daydreaming. A waltz starts to play.

22 INT. MUSIC ROOM. ROSENAU CASTLE. COBURG. GERMANY. DAY.

22

The smiling profile of a Dancing Master in Close Up. He is waltzing. As the camera slowly pulls back, we discover he's dancing with Albert, who feels ridiculous.

DANCING MASTER

And one two three, one two three and face the window, face the wall, face the window, face the -

But Albert is lagging behind. The Master stops exasperated.

DANCING MASTER

Your Serene Highness must learn to turn as you go.

ALBERT

Must I?

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED:

22

STOCKMAR (V.O.)

Yes. You *must*.

Stockmar is watching. He is pitiless. Silently, Albert takes the Master's hand and waist. The music resumes.

DANCING MASTER

And one two three, one two three -

23 EXT. ENTRANCE COURT. KENSINGTON PALACE. DAY.

23

The waltz still plays through this scene. By the carriage, Watson and the Duchess's maid wait with a footman, as Victoria, her mother, Lady Flora and Conroy emerge. Lehzen follows them.

CONROY

Be on your guard.

VICTORIA

We are going to Windsor for my uncle's birthday party.

CONROY

In the castle of the enemy.

VICTORIA

Your enemy, Sir John. Not mine.

The girl climbs in. He turns to the mother.

CONROY

Agree to nothing.

DUCHESS OF KENT

What should I say about the rooms?

CONROY

You needed more space. Appeal to the Queen. It's ridiculous.

DUCHESS OF KENT

Should I cultivate Melbourne?

CONROY

Smile on any politician you find there.

DUCHESS OF KENT

I wish you were coming with us.

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED:

23

He does not answer but squeezes her hand as he helps her in, followed by Lady Flora. He steps back, catching sight of the governess watching him.

CONROY

You're very intent, Baroness. Are you making a study of me?

LEHZEN

Someone should.

She gets into the carriage as the footman and the maid climb up behind. The coachman yells at the horses. The carriage moves off.

24 INT. MUSIC ROOM. ROSENAU CASTLE. COBURG. GERMANY. NIGHT.

24 *

The waltz plays on, as we see Albert, still practising his steps. Stockmar is with him. He has a pile of engravings on a table which he holds up to illustrate every question.

STOCKMAR

The present Prime Minister?

Albert glances over at the engraving as he twirls past.

ALBERT

Melbourne.

STOCKMAR

Lord Melbourne. The Liberal leader of the Whig Party. Who'll probably be in power when the Princess succeeds.

As he speaks, we cut to:

25 DELETED

25

26 EXT. ENTRANCE GATE. WINDSOR CASTLE. EVENING.

26 *

Melbourne's coach outside is in a torch-lit queue. He passes the crowds outside, and enters the gates. *

26A EXT. ENTRANCE COURT. WINDSOR CASTLE. EVENING.

26A

Inside the entrance court, coachmen deposit their brilliant cargo and then drive off. Melbourne gets out of the coach. *

(CONTINUED)

26A CONTINUED:

26A

STOCKMAR (V.O.)

He may be troublesome.

ALBERT (V.O.)

Why?

STOCKMAR (V.O.)

Because he puts the interests of England above those of Europe.

ALBERT (V.O.)

Which is bad?

STOCKMAR (V.O.)

It's not useful to us. He would not spill one drop of British blood to save a foreign throne.

Melbourne walks into the castle.

26B INT. MUSIC ROOM. ROSENAU CASTLE. COBURG. GERMANY. NIGHT.

26B *

Albert seems perplexed.

ALBERT

But why would he want to save a foreign throne if it wasn't in England's interest?

Stockmar stares at Albert. It is an intelligent comment. But...

STOCKMAR

That is just the kind of thinking your Uncle Leopold is afraid of.

26C EXT. ENTRANCE GATE. WINDSOR CASTLE. EVENING.

26C *

Outside the gates, a coach passes quite close to the spectators. It contains Victoria, the Duchess and Lady Flora Hastings.

STOCKMAR (V.O.)

Which is why he's content to find his niece is the future Queen of England.

Among the crowd is a young Londoner, Edward Oxford.

*

27 INT. GRAND RECEPTION ROOM. WINDSOR CASTLE. EVENING.

27

A magnificent room, a magnificent company, Monarchy at its best. Candlelight flickers on tiaras and gems. The King and Queen receive their guests. The Lord Chamberlain's voice rings out.

*

(CONTINUED)

LORD CHAMBERLAIN
The Duke of Wellington.

*

The familiar figure with his Roman nose strides in. We hear the continuing instruction of Stockmar.

STOCKMAR (V.O.)
In the public mind, the leader of the Conservative Opposition is their pet hero and Napoleon's conqueror, the grand old Duke of Wellington.

ALBERT (V.O.)
But not in fact.

STOCKMAR (V.O.)
No. The next Tory Prime Minister will be Sir Robert Peel.

His voice is exactly in sync with the Lord Chamberlain's.

*

LORD CHAMBERLAIN
Sir Robert Peel.

*

A stiff and formal man enters the room. He advances towards Their Majesties and bows, then joins Wellington. We hear:

ALBERT (V.O.)
Which side does Victoria favour?

STOCKMAR (V.O.)
The Whigs. She is a liberal. Or so she thinks. Above all, she favours Lord Melbourne. And Melbourne will take full advantage of it.

LORD CHAMBERLAIN
The Duke and Duchess of Sutherland.

*

Beyond Wellington and Peel, we glimpse the couple enter. They join Melbourne on the other side of the room. Wellington is gossiping with Peel.

*

WELLINGTON
You heard Conroy tried to force her agreement to a regency?

Peel raises his eyebrows to signify that he has.

27 CONTINUED: (2)

27

PEEL

I gather she wouldn't sign it, sick as she was. That says something for the girl's spirit.

*

WELLINGTON

When she's healthy and crowned, what chance would you give her Prime Minister?

*

LORD CHAMBERLAIN

Her Royal Highness the Princess Victoria.
Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Kent. The Lady Flora Hastings.

*

The company breaks apart to make a channel for the women. Across the room, the Duchess of Sutherland whispers to Melbourne.

DUCHESS OF SUTHERLAND

Look at that demure little head. And all of us wondering what's inside it.

MELBOURNE

We'll find out soon enough.

28 INT. MUSIC ROOM. ROSENAU CASTLE. COBURG. NIGHT.

28*

Albert continues at his lessons.

STOCKMAR

Lord Melbourne will make her fall in love with him. It is his method.

ALBERT

Don't underestimate Victoria.

*

STOCKMAR

Don't underestimate Melbourne.

The comment is enough to make Albert stop dancing...

29 INT. GRAND RECEPTION ROOM. WINDSOR CASTLE. EVENING.

29

The King raises the curtsying Victoria and kisses her.

KING WILLIAM

My dearest niece.

Archly, he indicates a spotty and awkward youth nearby.

(CONTINUED)

KING WILLIAM

Aren't you going to greet your cousin?

VICTORIA

Good evening, George.

It's clear from her brisk nod that she isn't interested.

KING WILLIAM

How can my little niece and nephew have grown up when I wasn't looking?

Victoria slips her arm through her uncle's.

VICTORIA

Whereas you are quite unchanged and as handsome as ever.

He laughs and draws her aside from the crowd.

KING WILLIAM

If I put my head close to yours and speak softly, they'll suspect us of hatching a plot.

As he talks, he does exactly this. The company is subdued by their curiosity. Victoria plays along.

VICTORIA

And if I look a little surprised as I listen, they'll know it.

This she does, with her hand at her mouth. The company is almost falling forward in their efforts to hear. He laughs.

KING WILLIAM

Ah, my dear, I wish we saw more of you. But then, nor you nor I are to blame for *that*.

He gives a cold stare at the Duchess but she looks away.

Further down the room, Wellington and Peel whisper softly.

WELLINGTON

What do you make of the Conroy business? The Princess hates him. No doubt about it.

They look at the Duchess, who is talking to the King.

PEEL

I suppose they're lovers.

(CONTINUED)

29 CONTINUED: (2)

29

WELLINGTON

I suppose the girl thinks they are, which is more to the point.

Across the room, the King's voice is suddenly raised.

KING WILLIAM

Madam, the plain fact is you have stolen seventeen rooms!

The Duchess is uncomfortable with the sensation created.

DUCHESS OF KENT

One cannot "steal" a room, Sir. The rooms are where you left them. But now they are used where before they were empty.

KING WILLIAM

I see. So I have no say in my own palaces? Why not move in here and bring your Irish tinker with you? The Queen and I will be happy enough in the lodge!

This is very rude indeed. The Duchess is icy in her reply.

DUCHESS OF KENT

So would I, Sir. If I thought the people there would be *polite* to me!

The Queen steps forward to head off further trouble.

QUEEN ADELAIDE

We're going in.

The Queen holds her husband's arm and the procession forms.

KING WILLIAM

How dare -

QUEEN ADELAIDE

Enough, my dear. You have exhausted the topic.

She looks at him firmly. With a glare at his sister-in-law, he steps off. Victoria follows, the cynosure of all eyes.

30 INT. SAINT GEORGE'S GALLERY. WINDSOR CASTLE. NIGHT.

30

Our waltz becomes practical as an orchestra plays. A table a mile long sparkles with glass, silver and gold. Men and women sit alternately down its length with footmen behind their chairs.

*

(CONTINUED)

The King has clearly had more than enough to drink. Victoria is by Melbourne. Further down the table, the Duchess of Sutherland and the Duke of Wellington are neighbours.

MELBOURNE

Your next birthday will be quite a milestone, Ma'am. I hope it means we'll see more of you at Court.

They glance across at the stony face of her mother.

VICTORIA

I hope so too, Lord Melbourne.

MELBOURNE

You know that if you should ever need an ally, you have one in me.

VICTORIA

A Prime Minister has more important calls upon his time.

MELBOURNE

Not at all. I knew the late Duke of Kent well. Naturally I take an interest in his daughter.

VICTORIA

You knew my father?

This is a direct route to her heart. As he planned.

MELBOURNE

Is it difficult to speak of him?

VICTORIA

No! I love to hear from someone who knew him! For I never did, you see.

MELBOURNE

He was a great gentleman. Of that you may be sure.

VICTORIA

Indeed I am.

MELBOURNE

He was excellent company like his brother, the Regent. But not so extravagant. And he was as kind as his brother, the King...

They both look over to where the red-faced, white-haired King is gabbling dementedly to his neighbour.

(CONTINUED)

30 CONTINUED: (2)

MELBOURNE

But not perhaps so... talkative.

VICTORIA

You make him sound as if he were the best of them.

MELBOURNE

Oh, I think so, Ma'am.

She glows with pleasure. They are watched by an eaves-dropping Wellington and Duchess of Sutherland.

WELLINGTON

Your leader is hard at work, Duchess. See him hover with his net to catch the pretty butterfly.

DUCHESS OF SUTHERLAND

And when your party is back in power, Duke, will you not do the same?

WELLINGTON

Not nearly as well as Melbourne. Unfortunately, I have no small talk and Peel has no manners.

Which makes her laugh.

WELLINGTON

And I'd have a hard time praising her father. The most brutal officer I ever encountered.

He stops. The King, drunk and scarlet in the face, has risen to his feet. He signs for them to remain seated. The music stops.

KING WILLIAM

First, I thank you for your good wishes on my birthday.

This is conventional enough. But his mood is darkening.

KING WILLIAM

It has been a long life and an interesting one and I shall be content with only a short while more. Just enough to dispense with any thought of a Regency, so I may pass the Royal authority directly to that young lady -

His voice is growing angrier as he points at Victoria.

(CONTINUED)

KING WILLIAM

And not to the hands of a person now near me who is surrounded by evil advisers and who cannot act with propriety in the station in which she's been placed!

Suddenly the company sees that he is punishing his sister-in-law. The Duchess tenses. He is very angry now.

KING WILLIAM

I have been insulted - grossly and continually insulted! She has kept her daughter, my brother's child, from my Court! But from now I'd have her know that *I am King!* And I will not be flouted or disobeyed by her or by that *jackanapes* she keeps about her!

He is shouting at the Duchess who blushes with rage. It is too much. She stands, flinging her napkin down, knocking glasses over with a crash, and storms out, sending her chair flying. There is total, pin-dropping silence in that vast chamber. Servants and guests alike are frozen. Victoria blushes, trembling on the brink of tears. Wellington whispers to his other neighbour.

WELLINGTON

Families. Who'd be without them?

The Duchess of Sutherland smiles discreetly behind her fan.

31 INT. A BEDROOM AT WINDSOR CASTLE. NIGHT.

31

Victoria, dressed for bed, is sketching as Lehzen enters.

*

VICTORIA

How is she?

LEHZEN

She wanted to leave tonight but they've persuaded her to stay until the morning. She's asked for your bed to be set up in her room. I'll see to it.

VICTORIA

Can't I be alone for one solitary night?

She sighs. Lehzen says nothing.

VICTORIA

They act as if I had no mind of my own. But I know what lies ahead.

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED:

31

LEHZEN

All the more reason to listen to those who
love you.

She curtseys and leaves. Victoria, alone, goes to the window.

31A INT. VICTORIA'S BEDROOM. KENSINGTON PALACE. NIGHT. FLASHBACK. 31A

An eleven year old Victoria speaks fiercely to the night sky.

YOUNG VICTORIA (AGED 11)

I will be good.

31B INT. A BEDROOM AT WINDSOR CASTLE. NIGHT. 31B

Back in 1836, Victoria looks out at the same sky and murmurs.

VICTORIA

I will.

32 INT. A WALL IN A ROOM IN LONDON. DAY. 32

A cartoon of the row, with Duchess and King raging, and Victoria
cowering in the background, is pinned to a wall.

33 INT. ALBERT'S ROOM. ROSENAU CASTLE. GERMANY. NIGHT. 33

Discarded, unfinished letters have been thrown on the floor. In the
background, the door opens to reveal a man's feet.

ERNEST (O.S.)

Shouldn't you get over there? *

The feet belong to Ernest. He looks at Albert, seated behind a
desk, writing. We see his back, not his face.

ALBERT

What? Like a vulture? To hover at the edge
until the King is dead? *

ERNEST

When he *is* dead, there'll be more than one
vulture to contend with. What is it? Don't
you like her? *

Albert stops writing. He crumples the letter and throws it down
with the others. *

(CONTINUED)

33 CONTINUED:

33

ALBERT

Yes, I like her. More than I dared hope.
But it's not up to me, is it?

Albert finally turns to look at his brother.

ALBERT

What do you call a man who waits for a rich
woman to decide whether or not she wants
him?

Ernest says nothing. Albert nods.

ALBERT

That's the name I'd use, too.

Ernest looks at the discarded letters on the floor.

ERNEST

Then why not tell her how you feel?

He leaves. Albert takes another sheet of blue paper...

34 INT. DUCHESS'S DRAWING ROOM. KENSINGTON PALACE. DAY.

34

A fist slams down onto a letter on a table.

CONROY (V.O.)

Don't you see what he wants!

Victoria is with her mother and Conroy. Dash hovers nearby,
worrying a toy. The girl is attempting to keep her temper.

VICTORIA

He increases my income now I'm eighteen and
he asks to see me at Court. What's wrong
with that?

CONROY

The King wants to separate you from your
mother! He is trying to control you, to
take you from those whose sole aim is to
protect you!

Lehzen enters. Victoria stands, with a cool, studied calm.

VICTORIA

There's no need to shout, Sir John. I'm
sure the people of London will find out our
business soon enough, without hearing it
from your lips.

(CONTINUED)

CONROY

Tell her! Make her understand!

Nervously, the Duchess tries to explain as Conroy crosses the room to a chair, struggling to control his anger.

DUCHESS OF KENT

Victoria, Sir John only means that you're unprepared for the task that awaits you.

VICTORIA

And if I am, whose fault is *that*!

Conroy sits, then jumps up at once. He snatches one of Victoria's dolls and throws it to one side, losing what patience he had. He walks back, shouting in her face.

CONROY

You're too young! You've no experience!
You're a china doll walking over a precipice!

VICTORIA

Then I must smash! For it's too late to mend my ways now! So if you'll excuse me -

CONROY

But I will not excuse you!

Seizing her arm, he flings her back roughly into the chair. For Victoria, this is a savage shock. The other women are stunned. The dog snarls. The Duchess attempts to intervene.

DUCHESS OF KENT

Surely we don't need -

But he silences her, bending over the shrinking girl.

CONROY

Now, here's what you will do! First you'll refuse the money and demand instead that it be given to your mother! Next you will appoint me your private secretary, from today, and finally, you will agree to be co-regent with the Duchess until your twenty fifth birthday. Neither she, nor I, will accept less!

He pauses, panting for breath, leaning into her face. Victoria is trembling with anger when she answers.

(CONTINUED)

34 CONTINUED: (2)

34

VICTORIA

You may do what you like with the money.
Now, *get out of my way!*

He makes a move to prevent her but she brings up her hand to dismiss him so firmly that he drops back. She stands and turns to the Duchess. Her voice is like ice.

VICTORIA

If you think I will ever forget that you sat by silent and watched him treat me thus, you're *dreaming!*

She goes, followed by Lehzen and Dash. The Duchess looks at Conroy who slams the door shut.

35 INT. PASSAGE. KENSINGTON PALACE. DAY. 35

Victoria walks into her room in a fury, slamming the door behind her as violently as Conroy.

36 INT. STAIRCASE HALL. KENSINGTON PALACE. DAY. 36

Two footmen on duty and a butler walking through, hear the bang of the doors. They look at each other, half enjoying the stir.

37 INT. DUCHESS'S DRAWING ROOM. KENSINGTON PALACE. DAY. 37

The door bursts open. Conroy looks up, startled. He stands as Albert walks across the room. Until he stops and punches Conroy full in the face.

38 INT. VICTORIA'S BEDROOM. KENSINGTON PALACE. NIGHT. 38

Victoria embraces Albert. He comforts her, enjoying the fragrance of her skin as a haunting melody played on a piano is heard.

39 INT. ALBERT'S ROOM. ROSENAU CASTLE. GERMANY. NIGHT. 39

Albert is still enjoying Victoria's scent on a letter in his bed.

Later, seen from behind, Albert writes at his desk.

ALBERT (V.O.)

My dear Victoria, if it is ever within my power to assist you, you know you have only to ask...

(CONTINUED)

39 CONTINUED:

39

We go over his shoulder to reveal a sheet of blue paper on which he's writing. Underneath it, we see some music entitled "The Swan Song." But the camera doesn't stop on his letter, nor on the one from Victoria, but rather on the envelope that sits next to it, franked with the mark of the Belgian Royal Household.

40 MONTAGE. INT. DUCHESS'S DRAWING ROOM. KENSINGTON. DAY. 40

Through flashbacks, we follow Victoria's letter:

Victoria hands her letter to a Footman. It is addressed to Albert *
in Germany. *

40A MONTAGE. INT. PASSAGE. KENSINGTON. DAY. 40A

The Footman gives it to the Duchess of Kent. *

40B MONTAGE. INT. DUCHESS'S DRAWING ROOM. KENSINGTON. DAY. 40B

The Duchess of Kent inserts it in another envelope and seals it *
with wax, imprinting it with her cypher. *

40C MONTAGE. INT. GALLERY. LAEKEN PALACE. NIGHT. 40C

King Leopold passes the letter to Stockmar.

40D MONTAGE. INT. KING LEOPOLD'S LIBRARY. LAEKEN PALACE. NIGHT. 40D

Stockmar puts it back in the envelope and seals it. We now *
understand why there are two seals on the envelope. *

LEOPOLD (V.O.)

How should we play it?

41 INT. KING LEOPOLD'S LIBRARY. LAEKEN PALACE. DAY. 41

King Leopold is by the window in this splendid apartment, looking out at the gardens. He is restless.

STOCKMAR

We've thrown over Conroy. Now go after
Melbourne. Make him an ally. He'll be less
on his guard if he thinks you're a friend.

Leopold nods to dismiss the adviser but as Stockmar bows...

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED:

41

LEOPOLD

And Albert? Is he ready?

42 INT. MUSIC ROOM. ROSENAU CASTLE. GERMANY. DAY.

42

Albert is playing the piano. It is the same melody that we heard in the previous scenes.

STOCKMAR (V.O.)

He may be. But she isn't. Let her enjoy succession and the freedom it will bring.

43 INT. VICTORIA'S BEDROOM. KENSINGTON PALACE. DAY.

43

Victoria's impressive collection of dolls fill the frame.

STOCKMAR (V.O.)

We must wait for disillusion, and the loneliness that follows.

Victoria is being dressed by Watson as she finishes reading a letter on Albert's blue paper. She looks inside the envelope and finds the musical piece: "The Swan Song" by Schubert. It takes some time, but it does finally make her smile.

44 INT. DUCHESS'S DRAWING ROOM. KENSINGTON PALACE. DAY.

44

Melbourne is with Victoria. He stands. She sits.

MELBOURNE

Is there really no compromise? Not private secretary but something harmless? We must keep up the look of the thing -

She cuts him off. She is full of emotion.

VICTORIA

I tell you, Lord Melbourne, his behaviour to me -

Cheeks flushed, she struggles to control her rage.

VICTORIA

Makes it impossible to keep him in any post near my person. Any post *whatever*.

MELBOURNE

You don't think it more dangerous to cut him loose?

(CONTINUED)

VICTORIA

I can't help that! I know things -

When she has recovered, she speaks again. Very calmly.

VICTORIA

Things that mean I could never have confidence in him... I see I must endure Lady Flora. Mama can hardly appear at Court without a lady-in-waiting. But I draw the line at Conroy. Once I am Queen, I do not wish to look upon his face again.

MELBOURNE

We can't prevent the Duchess from leaving him in charge of her own affairs.

VICTORIA

Then that will be her mistake. Not mine.

MELBOURNE

Very well.

He bows. The interview is at an end.

MELBOURNE

And Ma'am... you needn't worry. I'll be your private secretary. To begin with, anyway.

VICTORIA

Thank you, Lord Melbourne. That is a great comfort to me.

For the first time, she is smiling. He goes towards the door, adding, as an afterthought:

MELBOURNE

We must consider the new appointments. Your ladies-in-waiting, and so on... What about the Duchess of Sutherland for Mistress of the Robes?

VICTORIA

I don't really know her.

MELBOURNE

As to that, Ma'am, she's a great friend of mine. You'll like her enormously.

(CONTINUED)

44 CONTINUED: (2)

44

VICTORIA

I should be lost without your guidance. I hope you know how very grateful I am.

MELBOURNE

Don't give it a thought, Ma'am. I'll draw up a list.

She smiles. He bows, and leaves. Victoria, left alone, puts her hands on her sides, breathing against her tight stays.

45 INT. PASSAGE. KENSINGTON PALACE. DAY.

45

Outside the door, Melbourne stands in triumph. He has achieved his first goal of the next reign.

46 INT. STAIRCASE. ROSENAU CASTLE. COBURG. DAY.

46

A letter addressed to Albert in Victoria's writing is given over.

ALBERT (V.O.)

As a matter of interest, will a time come when I read them first?

Albert is with Stockmar, who is immune to this kind of thing.

STOCKMAR

You'll enjoy this one. She has a real flair for description.

ALBERT

Any progress against Conroy?

STOCKMAR

Very much so.

CONROY (V.O.)

This is madness!

47 INT. DUCHESS'S DRAWING ROOM. KENSINGTON PALACE. DAY.

47

Conroy paces the room. The Duchess is wringing her hands. Melbourne sits patiently in front of them and says nothing.

DUCHESS OF KENT

She's only a child!

48 INT. VICTORIA'S BEDROOM. KENSINGTON PALACE. NIGHT.

48

The child is smiling as, all alone, she writes to Albert.

MELBOURNE (V.O.)

If she is a child, it could be said Ma'am,
that you have kept her so.

49 INT. DUCHESS'S DRAWING ROOM. KENSINGTON PALACE. DAY.

49

DUCHESS OF KENT

A mother's duty is to protect her.
daughter's innocence.

MELBOURNE

A mother's duty is to prepare her children
for the lives awaiting them.

CONROY

But what will people say? Surely to exclude
us entirely will launch the new reign in a
cloud of scandal!

MELBOURNE

They'll say the Queen and her mother do not
always agree. These things happen in the
best families.

DUCHESS OF KENT

But where am I to live? Am I to be
abandoned here? Or must I beg along the
highways for a crust?

MELBOURNE

You'll move into the Palace with the Queen,
but she has arranged a separate apartment
for you. It will allow you both more
privacy.

DUCHESS OF KENT

I don't want privacy from my own child!

MELBOURNE

Nevertheless you shall have it.

The Duchess produces a handkerchief.

DUCHESS OF KENT

You are cruel, Sir. You prefer to break my
heart than plead my cause.

(CONTINUED)

49 CONTINUED:

49

CONROY

And when King Leopold learns of this?

50 INT. LIBRARY. LAEKEN PALACE. BELGIUM. DAY.

50

King Leopold is finishing a letter that he gives to Stockmar as we hear Melbourne's and the Duchess's voices.

MELBOURNE (V.O.)

I am here this morning at his express command.

DUCHESS OF KENT (V.O.)

My brother knows that I'm to be cast into the wilderness?

51 INT. DUCHESS'S DRAWING ROOM. KENSINGTON PALACE. DAY.

51

This is a blow. They are both completely stunned.

CONROY

You're lying!

MELBOURNE

You are out of your depth, Sir John. It has made you forget yourself.

DUCHESS OF KENT

I understand your game, my lord. You want to be her father, mother and *who knows what* besides...

Despite himself, Melbourne registers this. He stares at her.

DUCHESS OF KENT

You won't succeed. You do not know her, whatever you may think.

He will not answer. Conroy takes advantage of the cooler climate.

CONROY

Surely, if I'm not to be her secretary, there must be something else -

Melbourne cuts him off with a raised palm.

MELBOURNE

I see I am not speaking clearly. How can I put this? You have played the game...

52 INT. VICTORIA'S BEDROOM. KENSINGTON PALACE. NIGHT. 52

As we cut back to Victoria writing her letter, we see her pronouncing in sync with Melbourne:

MELBOURNE (V.O.)
... and lost.

53 INT. STAIRCASE. ROSENAU CASTLE. COBURG. DAY. 53

Albert looks up from his letter at Stockmar, who smiles.

54 INT. DUCHESS'S DRAWING ROOM. KENSINGTON PALACE. DAY. 54

The Duchess looks at Conroy and then at Melbourne. Melbourne looks at the Duchess and then at Conroy.

55 INT. VICTORIA'S BEDROOM. KENSINGTON PALACE. NIGHT. 55

Victoria smiles a victorious smile as she ends her letter with the firm full stop. Her pen on the paper makes a sound that punctuates the moment. She feels good. So do we.

56 INT. DUCHESS'S DRAWING ROOM. KENSINGTON PALACE. DAY. 56

The tone is abrupt. Melbourne bows to the Duchess.

MELBOURNE
Good day to you, Ma'am.

He has gone, leaving her speechless. She reaches out for Conroy's hand but he is furious. He walks away from her.

DUCHESS OF KENT
You will still run my household.

CONROY
Don't think it's the end! It's not at all the end!

DUCHESS OF KENT
When you talk like that, you frighten me.

CONROY
Good.

56A INT. VICTORIA'S BEDROOM. KENSINGTON PALACE. NIGHT. 56A

Victoria puts her letter for Albert in an envelope. Just before sealing it, she looks at a little scent bottle. Smiling at her own absurdity, she touches the stopper to the page.

57 INT. STAIRCASE. ROSENAU CASTLE. COBURG. DAY. 57

Stockmar is with Albert, who has read Victoria's letter.

ALBERT

But she does not summon me.

STOCKMAR

Not yet. But she will.

He bows and goes, leaving Albert alone, disappointed.

58 INT. KING'S PRIVATE ROOMS. WINDSOR. NIGHT. 58

We are behind Queen Adelaide who watches from a high window as, below, a coach pulls away from the castle.

59 INT. VICTORIA'S BEDROOM. KENSINGTON PALACE. DAWN. 59

The sleeping Victoria is being shaken by the Duchess who stands there in her nightclothes.

DUCHESS OF KENT

Victoria. Liebling...

The girl opens her eyes and the two women, watched by the sightless dolls on the bedside table, stare at each other.

It is the hour.

60 INT. HALL. KENSINGTON PALACE. DAWN. 60

Mother and child, hair loose, are at the top of the stairs. The Duchess, in a heavy, damask dressing gown, is in contrast to Victoria, who wears a white, lace-trimmed *peignoir*. As they start down, the Duchess holds out her hand and Victoria takes it, without complaint. At the bottom, in the hall, stands a footman with tousled hair who has struggled into some part of his livery. *

VICTORIA

Where are they?

(CONTINUED)

60 CONTINUED:

60

FOOTMAN

In the drawing room, Ma'am.

As Victoria walks forward, her mother makes as if to accompany her, *
but the daughter stops her with a look and goes alone. *

61 INT. DUCHESS'S DRAWING ROOM. KENSINGTON PALACE. DAWN.

61

In the flickering light of a single candelabra, Victoria advances through the shadows across the floor. She stops. The archbishop kneels. Then the tall statesman drops to one knee. Reaching out, he takes her hand and kisses it.

LORD CHAMBERLAIN

Long live the Queen. *

It is both moving and awe-inspiring as the Courtier and the Prince of the Church bow in deference to this tiny figure in a simple nightdress, with her shimmering hair.

62 INT. HALL. KENSINGTON PALACE. DAWN.

62

Victoria comes out. The Duchess and the others hover. Already it is clear that Victoria's manner has changed.

VICTORIA

I'm going back to bed. I imagine Lord Melbourne will be here quite early. Lehzen, you can see that he has everything he needs if I'm not ready to receive him.

LEHZEN

Of course, Your Roy -

She stops.

LEHZEN

Of course, Your Majesty.

She goes down into a deep curtsey as Victoria walks by. After a moment, so does her mother and finally Lady Flora sinks to the floor. Victoria walks to the stairs. The Duchess stands. *

DUCHESS OF KENT

Wait. I'll hold your hand.

VICTORIA

No, thank you, Mama.

Her voice does not brook any argument. She pauses.

(CONTINUED)

62 CONTINUED:

62

VICTORIA

And Lehzen, in the morning could you arrange for my bed to be moved into a room of my own?

DUCHESS OF KENT

Well, there's no great -

VICTORIA

As soon as possible, Lehzen. I thought you'd understand, Mama. I'm Queen. Your work is done.

Watched by the women, she climbs the stairs. Alone.

63 INT. VICTORIA'S BEDROOM/PASSAGE/STAIRCASE. KENSINGTON PALACE. DAY.63 *

Victoria, in black, is mouthing words, before a mirror. The Duchess of Sutherland enters. *

DUCHESS OF SUTHERLAND

The Council is assembled, Your Majesty.

Lehzen, also in black, is arranging her skirt. Watson and another maid are present. The doors are being opened. Victoria does not move. Then she looks at Lehzen, as a child would look to her mother for help. Lehzen nods and Victoria starts to walk out the room. Watson chases after, handing Victoria some lace mittens she had forgotten. Victoria and the Duchess then exit. We move along passages until we reach a door in front of which stands Lord Chamberlain. *

LORD CHAMBERLAIN *

Is your Majesty ready?

She nods. A footman opens the door.

LORD CHAMBERLAIN *

Her Majesty the Queen.

64 INT. COUNCIL CHAMBER. KENSINGTON PALACE. DAY.

64

In a crimson room, lined with huge paintings in gilded frames, are many men, old and middle aged, ranged round a table covered in green baize. They are in mourning and they stand as the small figure enters, goes to the throne, bows, and sits. On their feet throughout, the men tower over her. She's nervous but also dignified as she reaches for her speech, placed nearby, coughing gently to clear her throat.

(CONTINUED)

VICTORIA

It is with a sense of reverence and honour that I address you, my Privy Councillors, as your Sovereign and Queen. I mourn sincerely the death of my dear uncle, the King, but I know I may count on you to serve me as loyally as you served him.

She clears her throat again. The men's eyes are brimming.

VICTORIA

I am young but I am willing to learn and I mean to devote my life to the service of my country and my people. I look for your help in this. I know I shall not be disappointed. Thank you.

*

She finishes and holds out her hand to the nearest man who, understanding what is required, sinks to one knee.

COUNCILLOR

I, John, Earl of Derby, swear allegiance to my Sovereign Lady, Queen Victoria, to live and die your liege man. So help me, God.

Watching at the far end of the room, Wellington stands with Melbourne and Peel.

MELBOURNE

A welcome change after all those fat, old men.

WELLINGTON

The country's half in love with her already. I know I am.

PEEL

She starts on your watch, Lord Melbourne. Guard her well and keep her safe from harm.

Melbourne almost laughs as the Lord Chamberlain nods. It is his turn.

*

MELBOURNE

I, William, Viscount Melbourne, swear allegiance to my dear Sovereign Lady, Queen Victoria, to live and die...

The young Queen smiles upon him, her kneeling, surrogate father. Wellington observes this with a look to Peel.

65 INT. PASSAGE IN KENSINGTON PALACE. DAY.

65

The door opens. The Queen emerges soberly, to join the Duchess of Sutherland who have waited outside. The door is shut. Victoria hugs herself with satisfaction and skips off down the passage like a merry child. Thunder rumbles.

*

LEOPOLD (V.O.)

Always remember, you are *first* a Coburg!

66 INT. KING LEOPOLD'S LIBRARY. BRUSSELS. NIGHT.

66

King Leopold is angry. Outside, it is lashing with rain.

LEOPOLD

The King of the Belgians is a Coburg! The King of Portugal is a Coburg! The Queen of England's mother is a Coburg! And you are the next piece in the game!

Prince Albert is smiling.

LEOPOLD

What is it?

ALBERT

Nothing, Sir. You just reminded me of something Victoria once said.

LEOPOLD

I'm glad she makes you smile. Now go to England and make *her* smile!

STOCKMAR

Your Majesty, if I may...

Leopold glares at the baron but he nods.

STOCKMAR

We have only to be patient. The young Queen is testing her wings.

67 EXT. ENTRANCE COURT. BUCKINGHAM PALACE. DAY.

67

Buckingham Palace

A mounted soldier presents his sword as Victoria steps out of a coach and looks at her new home. Lord Chamberlain welcomes her.

*

(CONTINUED)

67 CONTINUED:

67

She walks through an alley of Cold stream guards, all saluting and presenting arms.

STOCKMAR (V.O.)
She won't wish to clip them quite yet.

LEOPOLD (V.O.)
If she flies free she may get away.

STOCKMAR (V.O.)
Wait 'til she flies through a storm.

But Victoria is glad to be in the right place at the right time.

67A INT. GALLERY. BUCKINGHAM PALACE. DAY.

67A

Victoria enters the wide, light, and, above all, free hall of her new home. *

QUEEN ADELAIDE (V.O.)
I'm sad you don't care for poor George.

68 EXT. THE GARDENS. BUCKINGHAM PALACE. DAY.

68

Victoria is walking with Queen Adelaide, both in mourning. Dash capers along in front.

VICTORIA
I like George.

QUEEN ADELAIDE
But not in *that* way.

Victoria's silence confirms this.

QUEEN ADELAIDE
What about Leopold's candidate?

VICTORIA
That's just it. There's nothing wrong with Albert. Nothing at all...

Her mind wanders slightly, then returns to make the point.

VICTORIA
But he *is* Uncle Leopold's choice. I can't marry the man they want me to marry!

QUEEN ADELAIDE
Every suitor will have strings attached.

(CONTINUED)

VICTORIA

Can't I be my own mistress for a while?
Haven't I earned it? And dear Lord M.'s so
very kind. I couldn't have a better tutor.

QUEEN ADELAIDE

You may dream of independence but you won't
get it. From now on, everyone will push and
pull you for their own advantage, Melbourne
more than the rest. Just remember you're a
queen, he's a politician. And politicians,
whatever their creed, always resent a
monarchy. They pass through. You stay. So
just keep "dear Lord M." in his proper
sphere.

Something in this troubles Victoria, which Queen Adelaide notices. *

VICTORIA

He's already chosen the new Household.

QUEEN ADELAIDE

What? You mean your ladies-in-waiting? Did
you ask him to?

Victoria clearly feels she's on weakening ground.

VICTORIA

I couldn't do it. I don't know anyone. I've
been living at the bottom of a well.

QUEEN ADELAIDE

I warn you, the public won't stand for a
liberal Court, when they elect a
conservative government.

VICTORIA

It's not my business to pander to Tory
sensibilities.

QUEEN ADELAIDE

But it *is* your business to make the system
work!

Victoria looks at her aunt sharply. Adelaide cools down.

QUEEN ADELAIDE

If Melbourne's packed the palace with the
wives of his supporters, there'll be
trouble when he loses office.

(CONTINUED)

68 CONTINUED: (2)

68

VICTORIA

Then let's hope he never does!

Queen Adelaide's expression is not reassuring.

69 INT. PASSAGE. BUCKINGHAM PALACE. DAY.

69

Victoria comes in. The Duchess of Sutherland is waiting.

DUCHESS OF SUTHERLAND

The Prime Minister is here, Your Majesty.

VICTORIA

Thank you, Duchess.

They start to walk away from camera, down the passage together.

VICTORIA

Have I ever thanked you properly, for accepting the post? I'm afraid it will involve a good deal of inconvenience.

DUCHESS OF SUTHERLAND

To be Mistress of the Robes is a great honour, Ma'am. I'm only anxious to be worthy of it.

VICTORIA

Lord Melbourne says you will be perfect.

DUCHESS OF SUTHERLAND

Lord Melbourne doesn't know everything.

VICTORIA

Oh, I think he does.

They laugh. Victoria notices a nearby flower arrangement.

70 INT. VICTORIA'S SITTING ROOM. BUCKINGHAM PALACE. DAY.

70

Victoria has now a rosebud tucked into her bosom. On a table, the doll collection reminds us of the earlier life. Victoria sits, Dash at her feet, as she talks to Melbourne. He (always) stands.

VICTORIA

The Duchess of Sutherland says the young leave prison worse than they went in.

(CONTINUED)

MELBOURNE

Indeed, Ma'am. But there are many places one leaves worse than one went in. I always leave a ball-room worse than I came in. Are there to be no balls in future?

Victoria laughs. But something is troubling her.

VICTORIA

About my ladies-in-waiting...

MELBOURNE

I'll bring the list later today, Ma'am. They've all accepted.

Oh. The Queen is slightly wrong-footed.

VICTORIA

Only my aunt advised me not to be too partisan in my choice...

She laughs gently as if this is a joke. He is very smooth.

MELBOURNE

With respect, Ma'am, I think I understand these things as well as the Queen Dowager.

VICTORIA

I know that, of course.

MELBOURNE

And we want friends around us as we begin our labours, surely? We mustn't find Sir John Conroy sneaking back to the table.

VICTORIA

No! Not if we have to line up every friend we both possess, in triple ranks!

She is distracted and Melbourne moves matters briskly along.

MELBOURNE

It's very cold. Why haven't they lit the fire?

VICTORIA

It seems fires are laid by the Lord Steward's department but lit by the Lord Chamberlain's. No one knows which footmen should do it. It's not very sensible.

(CONTINUED)

70 CONTINUED: (2)

70

MELBOURNE

Well, if it's the way things are done, I should leave it alone.

Victoria is troubled by this.

VICTORIA

But we must improve where we can! If I've discovered anything from touring England, it's the suffering that needs my help.

MELBOURNE

Never do good, Your Majesty. It always leads to scrapes.

VICTORIA

Really Lord Melbourne. That's *not* what is preached from the pulpit.

MELBOURNE

Exactly why I never go to Church, Ma'am. One hears such *extraordinary* things.

As she laughs again, there is a noise outside the door.

DUCHESS OF KENT (V.O.)

I want to go in!

71 INT. PASSAGE. BUCKINGHAM PALACE. DAY.

71

The Duchess of Kent and Lady Flora are outside with two footmen. *

FOOTMAN

I beg your pardon, Ma'am, but Her Majesty is with the Prime Minister and cannot be disturbed. *

DUCHESS OF KENT

That won't apply to her mother!

She steps forward to reach for the door but he intervenes.

FOOTMAN

I'm very sorry, Ma'am. *

LADY FLORA

What a splendid example for the Nation!

Fuming, they retreat, watched by the servants.

72 INT. VICTORIA'S SITTING ROOM. BUCKINGHAM PALACE. DAY.

72

The Queen and Minister are almost guilty.

VICTORIA

You must think me very harsh.

MELBOURNE

Not in the least. The Duchess is a difficult woman.

VICTORIA

Stubborn, self-centred and *always* right!

MELBOURNE

My mother was the same. But at least *she* was intelligent.

Which elicits a guilty smile. She glances despairingly at the letters covering her writing table.

VICTORIA

You'd think Mama was at the North Pole from the number of letters she writes! Before I can answer one, she sends four more!

Melbourne notices a blue letter under the desk. He retrieves it, studying the writing which is different from the rest.

VICTORIA

I've made no promise to him.

Victoria is actually embarrassed. Her tone is defensive.

VICTORIA

But sometimes I feel quite alone in the world.

MELBOURNE

Never while I'm here, Your Majesty.

Their eyes meet. Victoria blushes.

73 INT. ALBERT'S ROOM. ROSENAU CASTLE. COBURG. DAY.

73

Albert reads a letter. Stockmar, with him, holds the envelope.

ALBERT

Plenty of praise for Lord Melbourne and not much of anything else.

(CONTINUED)

Albert stands, throwing the letter down.

STOCKMAR

Everything comes to he who waits.

ALBERT

And if nothing comes, what then? You've played with me, Baron, you've made me your wax doll, all to please one woman. But what if I do not please her? What's to become of me, then?

*
*
*

Stockmar is very calm, as he comes to a decision.

*

STOCKMAR

You do please her, Sir, but perhaps it is time to remind her *why*... You will attend her Coronation as the representative of His Serene Highness, the Duke of Coburg.

*
*

ALBERT

But my father is planning to go, himself.

STOCKMAR

Then he can un-plan it, can't he?

74 INT, WESTMINSTER ABBEY. DAY.

74

Victoria, in the lilacs and mauves of half-mourning, is with Melbourne in the Abbey. The Duchess of Sutherland, Lady Tavistock and Lady Portman, her new ladies in waiting hover behind.

MELBOURNE

Queen Elizabeth never married and it didn't spoil things for her.

She looks at him but says nothing. They stroll to where the Coronation Chair stands. She touches it silently.

MELBOURNE

You're familiar with the Coronation Chair and the ancient Stone of Scone.

VICTORIA

Familiar yes, but quite in awe.

She steps forward to touch the carvings, to be alone with this seat of her ancestors, then turns back to Melbourne.

(CONTINUED)

VICTORIA

I'm terribly afraid of disappointing. On the day. I so want to do it perfectly.

MELBOURNE

The prison of monarchy, Ma'am, is that *everything* you do must be perfect.

Which is true enough to make her solemn. He reassures her.

MELBOURNE

Just be yourself. Your instincts are always to your credit.

Comforted, she looks round and catches sight of some rough-looking workmen who have gathered to see her.

MELBOURNE

They are preparing the Abbey for the ceremony. I'm told they asked permission for a glimpse of Your Majesty.

She smiles and waves. They are shabby and poor, but they smile back, calling God's blessings on her head. Visibly touched, she turns to Melbourne.

VICTORIA

I do want to help them, whatever you say. And not just the labouring poor, but the lost, the hungry, the homeless... Whose business is it to see to their welfare?

MELBOURNE

These things are best left to develop naturally. Interfere, and you overturn the cart.

VICTORIA

Prince Albert doesn't agree. He's made a study of the working man's conditions and he's full to the brim with ideas for their improvement.

MELBOURNE

Indeed, Ma'am? How inspiring. He sounds ready to take control at the first opportunity.

He makes no further comment but his words sink in.

75 INT. DUCHESS'S DRAWING ROOM. BUCKINGHAM PALACE. NIGHT. 75

As the Duchess arrives, Conroy hides a decanter of whisky in a cabinet. Quickly, he takes a peppermint. *

CONROY

Well?

DUCHESS OF KENT

You may not accompany me to the Proclamation Ceremony. You may not attend the Coronation.

He stares at her, not giving a reaction. *

76 INT. WESTMINSTER ABBEY. DAY. 76 *

The ceremony we witnessed at the start is almost over. Victoria is crowned Queen. But this time, it is from Albert's point of view. He sees a man sleeping, the Coronation ring forced on the wrong finger, a peer taking a sandwich from a page who'd hidden it underneath the coronet he's holding, and a lord falling down the stairs before the Throne. This is quite different from Melbourne's vision. Albert watches as the Prime Minister catches the Queen's eye and mouths "Perfect." Albert takes in Victoria's delighted smile, and ponders what he is up against. Bells are ringing as Zadok The Priest reaches its climax. *

77 INT. DUCHESS'S DRAWING ROOM. DAY. BUCKINGHAM PALACE. DAY. 77

Conroy is drinking. He stares down through a window as we hear a medley of cheering crowds, ringing bells and Zadok The Priest. As the song ends, he suddenly smashes his glass in the fireplace.

78 INT. VICTORIA'S SITTING ROOM. BUCKINGHAM PALACE. DAY. 78

The Prime Minister stops, astonished. Then he smiles and clears his throat. Victoria, in her white dress, is giving Dash a bath.

VICTORIA

Don't look so surprised. A Queen has many different duties.

MELBOURNE

It is heartening to know she will not neglect the least of them. Even on Coronation Day.

(CONTINUED)

VICTORIA

I don't think Dash would allow it.

She holds up the soapy dog and kisses it on the nose.

MELBOURNE

Try to rest before the ball.

VICTORIA

I will. Since I firmly intend to dance until dawn.

MELBOURNE

You've plenty of Royal partners to choose from, for once.

But if he is fishing, she does not rise. Instead she towels the dog and lifts it as her partner in a waltz.

79 INT. BALLROOM. BUCKINGHAM PALACE. NIGHT.

79

The Coronation Ball is as glamorous as the ceremony. Jewels, uniforms, orders, feathers, an orchestra playing. The dance floor is empty. For the first time since the King's death, Victoria wears colours and the effect is enchanting. She is surrounded by visiting princes. Melbourne hovers, watched by Albert from the edge of the crowd. The Lord Chamberlain bows.

*

LORD CHAMBERLAIN

If Your Majesty would open the ball...

*

Victoria looks at the men around her. Who will have the honour? Two or three look hopeful. So does Melbourne. Then she spots someone. We stay on her face as she seems to be pulled magically to the middle of the dance floor by a man. She whispers.

VICTORIA

Are you sure this is wise?

Finally, we see that it is Albert, as handsome as always. He takes her hand and waist. The music starts and he steps off, firmly taking the lead. They spin smoothly round. They're so good together, nobody wants to join them and spoil it.

VICTORIA

You've paid attention to your teachers.

ALBERT

I might say the same for you.

(CONTINUED)

They are beautiful to watch and that's what we do as they enjoy the moment in silence. After a while, we dissolve to:

LATER: They are not alone on the floor any more. Other guests surround them as they all waltz in harmony. Then the music stops.

ALBERT

It's been quite a day. Are you tired?

VICTORIA

Not very. I'm stronger than I look.

ALBERT

Not stronger than you look to *me*.

She quite likes this answer. He never diminishes her.

VICTORIA

How long are you in London?

ALBERT

Only 'til Friday. Then home via Brussels. Uncle Leopold must first have his report.

They share a smile at this as a quadrille starts to play.

VICTORIA

Oh dear. A quadrille with the Prince of Prussia next. My poor little toes. I feel sorry for them already.

A tall man, his chest covered in medals, arrives to claim her with a click of his heels and a bow. Reluctantly, Albert lets go. As he walks back across the floor, he feels Melbourne's eyes on him. These two are aware they are rivals for the Queen.

80 EXT. GARDENS OF BUCKINGHAM PALACE. DAY.

80

A letter addressed to King Leopold is passed from her hand to his. Albert and Victoria are walking. Lehzen and the Duchess of Sutherland hover on the terrace, watching.

VICTORIA

Thank you for being my messenger. I only hope I've given him enough detail. You can fill in anything I've missed.

ALBERT

He takes a great interest in you.

(CONTINUED)

VICTORIA

Don't I know it! If you heard the questions he asks in every letter! Like a never-ending examination! Lord Melbourne calls him -

*

She breaks off, embarrassed at her indiscretion.

ALBERT

What about Lord Melbourne?

VICTORIA

Never mind. It doesn't matter... Well... I wish you a good journey...

She hesitates. He takes her hand. But he holds on to it.

ALBERT

Victoria, I would so much like...

She waits. On the terrace, her ladies have risen. It is time for her next appointment. Albert ends as best he can.

ALBERT

I would like to be useful to you. If there is ever an opportunity.

VICTORIA

I know you would. And one day I may take advantage of your offer.

She looks into his eyes, not wanting her words to hurt him.

VICTORIA

But not yet.

81 INT. KING LEOPOLD'S LIBRARY. BRUSSELS. DAY.

81

Leopold is clutching the letter, raging at Albert and Stockmar.

LEOPOLD

Have you read this?

ALBERT

No, Sir.

LEOPOLD

It seems she does not think it appropriate to discuss politics "in our otherwise delightful correspondence!"

(CONTINUED)

81 CONTINUED:

81

STOCKMAR

Which was dictated by Melbourne.

LEOPOLD

Damn it! I am King of a country that is eight years old! I need help, and it's my niece's duty to give it! Do something!

*

ALBERT

Uncle, please calm down. The Baron is not a magician.

*

*

STOCKMAR

Melbourne guards her like a lion. I can't get past him.

*

*

LEOPOLD

Then get *him* past Melbourne! Get him into her bed!

He points at Albert who is extremely uncomfortable.

LEOPOLD

We'll soon see if she still takes Melbourne's dictation!

Enraged, he tears the letter to shreds. Albert leaves.

82 INT. VICTORIA'S SITTING ROOM. BUCKINGHAM PALACE. DAY.

82

The door bursts open. Albert strides in, going directly to Melbourne who looks up, startled. Albert stops in front of him, takes his glove off. And slaps him across the face.

83 INT. ALBERT'S ROOM. ROSENAU CASTLE. COBURG. NIGHT.

83

Albert slaps the shutter of his bedroom window as he stands, looking out into the night. He slaps it again and again.

ERNEST (V.O.)

What are you playing at?

Ernest is in the doorway, looking very tired and not very pleased. Albert cannot put his angry thoughts into words.

84 INT. VICTORIA'S DRESSING ROOM. BUCKINGHAM PALACE. NIGHT.

84

The Queen is being dressed again.

(CONTINUED)

84 CONTINUED:

84

VICTORIA

Has anyone ever reckoned the hours we waste, with this endless changing of clothes?

*
*
*

WATSON

And if you didn't, Ma'am, what would I do then?

*

Which Victoria had not considered. Watson holds a scent bottle. Victoria hesitates, then waves it away. She will keep it for Albert.

85 INT. WHITE DRAWING ROOM. BUCKINGHAM PALACE. NIGHT.

85

Victoria sits at dinner with a party of about twenty. These include her mother, the Duchess of Kent, seated far away.

VICTORIA

So, Duke, how was Paris?

WELLINGTON

Oh, as charming and as dangerous as ever.

VICTORIA

Lord Melbourne says French doctors kill their patients. English ones just let them die.

This is greeted with a respectful laugh.

WELLINGTON

I thought he might be here tonight.

VICTORIA

He's thrown me over for Lady Holland.

She says it smiling but it clearly rankles.

WELLINGTON

I expect Your Majesty will miss him.

VICTORIA

Not too severely. He'll be back tomorrow.

WELLINGTON

No, I meant when he's out of power.

VICTORIA

What?

(CONTINUED)

85 CONTINUED:

85

Her tone begets a tremor of unease. Her mother looks down the table at her. Wellington had no intention of starting this.

WELLINGTON

Well, only... I don't mean to crow. I just thought it was common knowledge that he's about to lose the vote...

He tails away. Every eye is on the Queen. The great room is in silence. But she is perfectly composed when she speaks.

VICTORIA

Parliamentary democracy is Britain's greatest gift to the world, Duke. Even if sometimes it can be rather trying.

They laugh more than her quip deserves. The danger is over. Victoria turns pleasantly to her other neighbour, without noticing the look of compassion in her mother's eyes.

86 INT. VICTORIA'S SITTING ROOM. BUCKINGHAM PALACE. NIGHT.

86

Victoria is standing by the window, her face turned away.

LEHZEN (V.O.)

Schatzi?

Victoria glances towards the voice. In the shadows, Lehzen is standing, motionless. She holds a tray with some milk again.

LEHZEN

What is it?

Victoria turns away again, to hide her face. Like a silent, stalking beast, Lehzen glides across the room, waits for a moment, and then slides her arm round the girl. After a moment, Victoria's shoulders start to heave.

LEHZEN

There, there... Never mind...

87 INT. PASSAGE. BUCKINGHAM PALACE. NIGHT.

87

The Duchess approaches her daughter's door. She would knock but the sound of crying makes her hesitate.

88 INT. VICTORIA'S SITTING ROOM. BUCKINGHAM PALACE. NIGHT.

88

Lehzen is holding the glass to Victoria's lips.

(CONTINUED)

88 CONTINUED:

88

LEHZEN

Just a sip... now another...

She glances at the table of dolls and laughs.

LEHZEN

Oh, look. Miss Agatha is playing up again.
She's just as naughty as ever!

A snuffling Victoria reaches out to stand the fallen doll.

VICTORIA

Dearest, darling Lehzen, you won't desert
me, will you?

LEHZEN

Never, *mein liebe schatzi*. Never.

The Queen is a child once more. As Lehzen intended. Through a
mirror, we see Victoria's door gently closing.

89 INT. PASSAGE. BUCKINGHAM PALACE. NIGHT.

89

The Duchess of Kent is visibly hurt. Her role has been usurped.
Dash's head appears in the ajar door. The Duchess leaves.

90 INT. WHITE DRAWING ROOM. BUCKINGHAM PALACE. DAY.

90*

An exasperated Peel is alone with Victoria.

PEEL

But Sutherland is a prominent Whig! So is
Portman! *Every one* of your ladies is the
wife of a friend of Lord Melbourne? Surely
you can see how it looks?

*

VICTORIA

You should not set such store by
appearances, Sir Robert.

PEEL

I'm only asking for a token, Ma'am. For two
ladies, or even *one*, who supports my cause.
Otherwise, it must look as if Palace and
Parliament have fallen out!

(CONTINUED)

VICTORIA

Let me understand you. Are you telling me it is now the Prime Minister who selects my household? Has the law changed in this regard?

PEEL

Well, no, Your Majesty, but -

VICTORIA

Then there cannot be much more to be said on the subject.

Victoria rings a small bell.

VICTORIA

Good day, Sir Robert. And could you please ask Lady Portman to come in, as you leave?

*

The interview is over. He is boiling, but he bows and goes as a footman opens the door. Lady Portman enters.

*

VICTORIA

I wonder if you could have a note delivered to Lord Melbourne?

*

LADY PORTMAN

Of course, Ma'am.

*

Victoria is satisfied, but the lady-in-waiting is worried.

LEOPOLD (V.O.)

What about Albert?

91 INT. THE DUCHESS'S DRAWING ROOM. KENSINGTON PALACE. NIGHT.

91

We are close on Albert's face. He is concentrating.

LEOPOLD (V.O.)

Should he go now? Is it time?

STOCKMAR (V.O.)

Let her first taste unpopularity. Then we'll see what she will take to ease the pain.

Albert and Victoria are playing chess. She picks up a white Knight and starts to remove a black Castle -

MELBOURNE (O.S.)

Are you quite sure, Ma'am?

(CONTINUED)

91 CONTINUED:

91

She looks up, hesitating. Melbourne, Leopold and Stockmar stand by the chimney-piece, watching the game. She pauses, with the Knight in her hand, looking back to Albert.

ALBERT

Make your move.

She places the Knight on the board and starts to pick up the Castle, when her wrist is seized. She looks up, startled, to find that Albert has become Sir John Conroy.

92 INT. VICTORIA'S BEDROOM. BUCKINGHAM PALACE. DAY.

92

Victoria starts awake. Watson is setting a tray of tea things by her bed. And a newspaper. Victoria reads the headline.

NEWSBOY (V.O.)

Constitutional Crisis! Queen flouts Prime Minister!

93 EXT. A LONDON STREET. DAY.

93

A boy is selling papers, with headlines as loud as he is.

NEWSBOY

Threat to bring down Tory Government!
Palace at War with Parliament!

Edward Oxford, among others, is buying a newspaper.

94 INT. A WALL IN A ROOM IN LONDON. DAY.

94

Another cartoon is pinned to the wall. An arrogant Victoria crushes an anguished Peel, while leaning on Melbourne's arm.

QUEEN ADELAIDE (V.O.)

You reign by right of Parliament! And you must work with the voters' choice!

VICTORIA (V.O.)

But Lord M. says -

95 EXT. CARRIAGE. TYBURN CORNER. LONDON. DAY.

95

Victoria is with Queen Adelaide, arguing.

(CONTINUED)

QUEEN ADELAIDE

Melbourne says what suits his interest!
He's used you to punish his enemies without
thought of the damage to the Crown! My
dear...

She takes Victoria's hand, her tone becoming tender.

QUEEN ADELAIDE

I wish you had an ally to help you in this.

VICTORIA

I have Lehzen. I have Melbourne. Until this
morning, I thought I had you!

QUEEN ADELAIDE

I mean an *equal*, and of your own age -

But, somewhere outside the carriage, a man is shouting.

MAN (V.O.)

The Queen is in the clutches of Melbourne
the Great Seducer!

Sheltering behind the curtains, Victoria and her aunt glance out.
They are at Speakers Corner and a wild-eyed fellow on a soap box is
addressing a modest crowd. He hasn't finished.

MAN

And when he is silent, who does she listen
to? Her *German* mother! Her *German* uncle!
Her *German* governess, who guides her like a
helpless child! When will she remember she
is *English*! When will she wake up to the
damage she has done?

This is greeted by a cheer from his audience. The women sit back.
Adelaide looks to Victoria for a response. She doesn't get one.

*

*

QUEEN ADELAIDE

You're confusing stubbornness with
strength, my dear. And I warn you: The
people will not like you for it!

*

The roar of the crowd's approval outside, is amplified by a far
louder riot of angry shouting. Which Victoria seems to hear.

Wellington and Melbourne, look down into a rowdy House of Commons.
Peel is at the Despatch Box below, shouting to make himself heard.

*

PEEL

With sorrow, I must inform the House that I have been unable to persuade the Queen that her ladies should not solely adhere to the views of my political opponents. I have therefore informed Her Majesty that I am not qualified to form a Government, if I do not enjoy her confidence.

Peel sits down. An MP rises from the back on the other side of the house and looks at the Speaker. *

SPEAKER

Sir Francis Baring.

WHIG MEMBER

Mr. Speaker, are we to understand that the mighty Sir Robert Peel has been frightened off by a few frilly petticoats?

This provokes laughter from his own side. Peel rises again. *

SPEAKER

Prime Minister.

PEEL

Mr. Speaker, what frightens me, is to see the Crown used as a shuttlecock in the game of politics.

Peel sits again. The whig member remains seated.

WHIG MEMBER

Which apparently Lord Melbourne plays better than you do, Sir.

SPEAKER

Order, Order!

More roars of laughter, echoed by Melbourne's supporters above.

97 INT. HOUSE OF COMMONS. VISITORS' GALLERY. DAY.

97

Peel enters the gallery to find Wellington waiting for him. Below them, a quieter House of Commons is emptying.

WELLINGTON

You have nothing to reproach yourself with, Sir Robert. Your hands were tied. I will make the same point when I speak in the Lords.

(CONTINUED)

97 CONTINUED:

97

Then Peel sees that Melbourne is talking to his supporter, the member who interrupted Peel in the earlier debate.

PEEL

You should be ashamed of yourself. If the Queen has been foolish, she can plead her youth. You're old enough to know better.

WHIG MEMBER

Come, Sir Robert, be honest. What troubles you is that Lord Melbourne is Prime Minister again.

He turns aside to Melbourne but speaks to be overheard.

WHIG MEMBER

I hate a bad loser.

PEEL

We are all losers in this, Sir. Most especially the Queen.

He and Wellington walk away.

WHIG MEMBER

What a po-faced prig he is.

MELBOURNE

Maybe. But what if he's right?

For the first time, he sees the damage he's done.

98 DELETED.

98

99 INT. ALBERT'S ROOM. ROSENAU CASTLE. MONTAGE. DAY.

99

Albert is writing when he looks at the clock. With a start, he jumps up, running out of the room, through the castle...

99A INT. PASSAGE. ROSENAU CASTLE. MONTAGE. DAY.

99A

Down a passage...

99B INT. STAIRCASE. ROSENAU CASTLE. MONTAGE. DAY.

99B

... A staircase...

99C INT. BACK HALL. ROSENAU CASTLE. MONTAGE. DAY.

99C

... At last he reaches the back hall, where a Kammerher is sorting *
through letters.

ALBERT

Anything for me, Gubbenholtz?

KAMMERRHER

There is, Your Serene Highness, but the
Baron always likes -

ALBERT

I'll take it, myself. Thank you.

He removes the envelope from the hesitant servant.

100 EXT. GARDENS. ROSENAU CASTLE. DAY.

100

Albert is reading his letter, watched by Ernest.

ERNEST

She's brought down a government over a
handful of ladies?

ALBERT

Apparently.

ERNEST

Then she's a fool.

ALBERT

No. She is not a fool. But she has listened
to a fool.

ERNEST

Then she had better change her advisor. Or
things will get worse before they get
better.

101 INT. THE ROYAL BOX. COVENT GARDEN. NIGHT.

101

The advisor in question, Melbourne, sits with the Queen. Lehzen and
the Duchess of Sutherland are with them. Suddenly, as the singer
takes a breath in the dazzling aria...

WOMAN (V.O.)

Mrs. Melbourne!

(CONTINUED)

The auditorium is stunned. Even the singer falters but recovers.

MELBOURNE

Good God! What are we coming to!

VICTORIA

Who was it? I didn't see.

MELBOURNE

The Duchess of Montrose.

They stare at each other. The Queen is being booed by a duchess.

MELBOURNE

That's the end to her career at Court, I hope.

VICTORIA

If I ban everyone who thinks me wrong, you and I will be alone in the ballroom.

She studies his face for a moment.

VICTORIA

And I'm not that sure about you.

She looks back towards the stage and spots her mother in a box further along the Grand Tier. Conroy and Flora are there. Flora seems to look first at the woman who shouted, then at Victoria and finally to whisper with Conroy and laugh.

VICTORIA

God in heaven, is there no way to be rid of them?

The question was rhetorical, but Lehzen follows her gaze.

LEHZEN

I shouldn't say.

DUCHESS OF SUTHERLAND

No, you *shouldn't*.

Victoria is taken aback, but the Duchess tries to explain.

DUCHESS OF SUTHERLAND

There's a story doing the rounds, Ma'am. I'm sure we should give it no credence.

VICTORIA

Thank you. Now will you go on, Lehzen.

(CONTINUED)

101 CONTINUED: (2)

101

LEHZEN

In June, Lady Flora Hastings came home from Scotland with Sir John Conroy. They were three days on the road, alone.

*
*

She bends to whisper in Victoria's ear.

VICTORIA

What!

Lehzen whispers again. Victoria stares as if she were mad.

LEHZEN

Just look at her waist.

*

The Queen stares at the hated faces.

102 DELETED.

102

103 DELETED.

103

104 INT. VICTORIA'S SITTING ROOM. BUCKINGHAM PALACE. DAY.

104

Queen and Minister are with a smug-looking man in black.

*

SIR JAMES CLARK

Let me just say that I hope she is secretly married.

*

Victoria pretends shock but of course she is delighted.

VICTORIA

Thank you, Sir James. I appreciate your honesty.

SIR JAMES CLARK

I do not know it for certain, Your Majesty. I haven't examined her. She would not let me. It is only my opinion.

*
*

VICTORIA

Of course. Thank you, Sir James.

*

The interview is over and he leaves. Victoria gives Melbourne a satisfied look. He, by contrast, is not happy.

*
*

105 DELETED.

105 *

106 INT. PASSAGE. BUCKINGHAM PALACE. DAY. 106

Footmen and maids are listening. They scramble as a door bursts open and Lady Flora hurries past without a word. She is in hell. The Duchess stands, helpless in the open doorway.

*
*

107 MONTAGE. INT. ALBERT'S ROOM. ROSENAU. NIGHT. 107

Victoria and Albert are writing and reading letters to each other. We cut back and forth so rapidly that it is as if they were conversing, but the changes of scene, inside and out, and the different costumes show that time is passing.

Albert, concerned, is writing at his desk.

ALBERT (V.O.)

I worry that your feelings towards your mother may be clouding your judgement.

107A MONTAGE. INT. VICTORIA'S SITTING ROOM. BUCKINGHAM PALACE. DAY. 107A

Victoria is at her desk, Albert's letter in front of her.

VICTORIA (V.O.)

Surely even my mother might object to the palace being a house of ill repute!

107B MONTAGE. EXT. GARDENS. ROSENAU CASTLE. DAY. 107B

Albert is out walking, reading as he goes.

VICTORIA (V.O.)

Of course views differ on these things. Madame du Barry was a prostitute and yet the King of France found her company congenial. I however should *not*!

Which makes Albert throw back his head and laugh.

107C MONTAGE. INT. VICTORIA'S DRESSING ROOM. BUCKINGHAM PALACE. DAY. 107C

Victoria is being dressed by Watson as she reads.

ALBERT (V.O.)

But you've banned Lady Flora from Court, before anything's been proved against her. That is what people dislike.

*
*
*

(CONTINUED)

107C CONTINUED:

107C

Victoria looks up and speaks aloud, startling Watson.

VICTORIA
It *will* be proved!

She reads on.

ALBERT (V.O.)
Could you not wait until it is?

107D MONTAGE. INT. ALBERT'S ROOM. ROSENAU. DAY.

107D

Now Albert is being dressed by his valet. He is also reading.

VICTORIA (V.O.)
Now they tell me that Lady Flora means to fight it out in public. Which is too typical and vulgar to be believed.

108 INT. VICTORIA'S BEDROOM. BUCKINGHAM PALACE. NIGHT.

108

Victoria is reading the answer from Albert.

ALBERT (V.O.)
It may be vulgar, or typical, my dearest Victoria, but it does not make her guilty.

She half crumples the letter, throwing it down. Then she looks up, startled by Lehzen who, still as ever, stands in the doorway.

VICTORIA
Well?

LEHZEN
There is a swelling, no doubt about it, but no bigger than it was a month ago.

Lehzen sees Albert's letter. It does not please her.

LEHZEN
Do you think it was all a trick to catch us out?

VICTORIA
If it was, then it worked...

Victoria is as cold as ice. Clearly she blames Lehzen. An envelope has been slipped under the door. Lehzen picks it up.

(CONTINUED)

LEHZEN

From your mother.

Victoria takes it but does not answer or even look at her governess, who goes. Victoria sits for a moment, alone. Dash has been watching and now he jumps up, but she pushes him away.

VICTORIA

Oh, get off me!

The dog, hurt and bewildered, shrinks back as her mistress drifts to the window, with the letter from her mother in her hands. We do not see her face as she reads.

DUCHESS OF KENT (V.O.)

My dearest child, You will not let me come to you, and that I may deserve. But however you resent me, however I have failed, I am still, and always, your mother. What troubles you, troubles me. What pleases you, pleases me. I love you, and my only prayer is that, one day, you will understand how much. Good night, *mein Liebling*, your own Mama.

The candles lend a ghostly quality to the room. Below, angry crowds hover. Victoria sits, her head in her hands, and starts to weep, gently at first, but then with racking sobs.

109 MONTAGE. INT. KING LEOPOLD'S LIBRARY. LAEKEN PALACE. DAY. 109

Leopold, Stockmar and Albert study a newspaper. A letter in it is headed "Grave Injustice." It is signed by Lady Flora Hastings.

109A MONTAGE. INT. A WALL IN LONDON. DAY. 109A

The letter, cut out, is pinned on the clippings wall.

109B MONTAGE. INT. KING LEOPOLD'S LIBRARY. LAEKEN PALACE. DAY. 109B

King Leopold is looking at a vicious cartoon of Victoria bullying *
The Duchess of Kent and Lady Flora. He covers his face as he hands *
the newspaper to Albert.

109C MONTAGE. INT. A WALL IN LONDON. DAY. 109C

The cartoon is being pinned to the wall.

109D MONTAGE. INT. HOUSE OF COMMONS. DAY.

109D

Another cartoon, this one of Melbourne and Victoria trampling Lady *
Flora in the dust. Except that it is not on the wall, but in *
Melbourne's hands. He holds a newspaper and stares at it.

VICTORIA (V.O.)

I've had a letter from King Leopold.

110 EXT. THE GARDENS OF BUCKINGHAM PALACE. DAY.

110

Melbourne and Victoria are walking. He waits to hear.

VICTORIA

He proposes another visit by Prince Albert.

MELBOURNE

What have you answered?

VICTORIA

Nothing yet.

And now, at last, the Minister questions his own judgement.

MELBOURNE

Perhaps you should let him come.

She is visibly relieved by this but also defensive.

111 EXT. ENTRANCE COURT. BUCKINGHAM PALACE. DAY.

111

A hostile crowd has gathered outside the palace. Some news is *
making them angry. As usual, Edward Oxford is among them. *

112 DELETED.

112

113 INT. VICTORIA'S DRAWING ROOM. BUCKINGHAM PALACE. DAY.

113 *

The Queen is listening as two actors play a scene from 'Richard II', *
with the Duchess of Sutherland and some ladies. *

ACTOR

Not all the water in the rough rude sea can *
wash the balm from an anointed king. *

(CONTINUED)

113 CONTINUED:

113

At this moment, Duchess of Sutherland is amazed to see Conroy hovering in the doorway. She breaks away to go over to him. As they talk, the scene continues. *

DUCHESS OF SUTHERLAND
Sir John, what on earth are you doing here?

CONROY
I must speak to the Queen.

DUCHESS OF SUTHERLAND
You know that's quite impossible.

He lowers his voice. A roar from the crowd outside sends unease rippling through the room. During this, the acting continues, as the Duchess returns to her chair next to the Queen. *

DUCHESS OF SUTHERLAND
Lady Flora Hastings is dying. *

Victoria turns to her, aghast. *

DUCHESS OF SUTHERLAND
It's true. Cancer of the stomach.

Victoria is stunned. She stares at the Duchess. The actors are in agony. Hesitantly, glancing at each other, they continue. *

There is a crash. A brick has been thrown through the window, showering the company with glass. The actress screams, but Victoria looks back at the Duchess with horrible clarity. *

VICTORIA
What have I done?

114 INT. WESTMINSTER ABBEY. NIGHT.

114

The Queen kneels, alone in the vast abbey. An equerry, a night watchman and the Duchess of Sutherland stand in a side aisle watching. Victoria, eyes heavenward, begs for forgiveness.

115 INT. LADY FLORA'S BEDROOM. BUCKINGHAM PALACE. DAY.

115

The light is dim and the curtains closed. Victoria is in the doorway. The shrunken figure of Lady Flora is on the bed. An older woman standing by her stiffens as Victoria approaches.

LADY FLORA
You remember my mother, Your Majesty.

(CONTINUED)

VICTORIA

Indeed. Lady Hastings.

MARCHIONESS OF HASTINGS

Your Majesty.

She curtsies slightly, her manner as stiff as a board.

LADY FLORA

Would you leave us, Mama? Just for a moment.

The Marchioness is reluctant but she goes.

VICTORIA

She hates me.

Since this is clearly true, Flora does not answer.

VICTORIA

I have come to apologise. I wish what I have done could be undone.

LADY FLORA

But it cannot be undone.

They stare at each other, Queen and invalid. Then Flora takes a painful breath.

LADY FLORA

Well, well... I am not on my deathbed because of your cruelty...

She studies the Queen, who is truly at a loss.

LADY FLORA

We never liked each other much, you and I.

At this, Victoria makes to protest, but Flora cuts her off.

LADY FLORA

I beg your pardon, Ma'am, but you will allow that honesty is the privilege of the dying.

Which Victoria does not disagree with.

LADY FLORA

You thought me cold and snobbish and lodged in Sir John Conroy's pocket.

(CONTINUED)

She waits but Victoria says nothing, because this is true. Her silent acceptance seems to please Lady Flora, who nods.

LADY FLORA

I thought you naïve and headstrong and too young for the position you occupy. And we were both right in part. But not entirely.

VICTORIA

Recent events would seem to bear out your verdict, anyway.

LADY FLORA

You have been foolish. Your devotion to Lord Melbourne and your anger at your mother both corrupted your judgement. But you have also shown the world your strength.

This is difficult for Victoria but she accepts the criticism.

VICTORIA

I think the world would use a different term.

LADY FLORA

For good or ill, you've brought down a Government, Ma'am! We've almost had riot in the streets! There's power in you! In you, and not just in the Crown. More power than I ever imagined. Leave off these silly games of favouritism or revenge, and *harness it!*

VICTORIA

Will they still let me?

LADY FLORA

Your subjects may be angry, but they have not done with you yet. Just let your childish anger die with me. Turn your mind to the work ahead... For you are still at the start of a great adventure.

The two enemies look at each other. There is peace in Flora's eyes, guilt in Victoria's. The melody of "The Swan Song" is heard again, played on a solo piano.

The headline, "LADY FLORA HASTINGS DEAD!" is pinned up.

116A INT. VICTORIA'S SITTING ROOM. BUCKINGHAM PALACE. DAY.

116A

Seen from behind, Victoria is seated at her piano. We hear Schubert's melody but, as we close in, we realize that she isn't playing. She's looking at Schubert's music, as she hugs her dog.

117 INT. CARRIAGE. DAY.

117

Victoria in sober mood is with Melbourne. There are men and women on the pavement but no cheers.

VICTORIA

I am not forgiven yet.

MELBOURNE

Not yet but soon. Just wait for unseasonal weather or the news of an elopement, and all will be forgotten.

She looks at him. Is she waking up at last?

VICTORIA

You don't have a very high opinion of ordinary people, do you, Lord Melbourne?

MELBOURNE

With respect, I have lived much longer than your Majesty.

She does not answer this. Instead, she thinks for a moment.

VICTORIA

I said once I did not understand whose task it was to see to the public welfare.

For once, he does not jest. He wants her to understand.

*

MELBOURNE

Ma'am, in my lifetime I have seen what happens when the rabble is empowered. Believe me, they do not profit from it, any more than the kings they overthrow, and -

*

*

*

*

VICTORIA

Lord Melbourne. I want a report on living conditions, on parish benefit, on housing... all of it. And by the end of the month.

(CONTINUED)

117 CONTINUED:

117

Melbourne looks at this young woman, knowing what this means. His child pupil is growing up and he will lose her.

MELBOURNE

Very good, Your Majesty.

118 INT. ALBERT'S ROOM. ROSENAU CASTLE. COBURG. DAY.

118

A valet packs under Albert's supervision, watched by Ernest.

*
*

ERNEST

After what Melbourne and Conroy have done to ruin her, she'll welcome your proposal like the sun in May.

*

ALBERT

She won't. For I can't propose.

Ernest doesn't understand what his brother is talking about.

ALBERT

She must ask me. I cannot ask her. How absurd is that?

But Ernest has something important to say.

ERNEST

When you get there, don't be a spy or Uncle Leopold's puppet. It's your life, Albert. Live it. For yourself and for Victoria.

*

ALBERT

Our uncle wouldn't thank you for that.

ERNEST

I don't care. I don't love him.

Albert is more touched by this than he can say. Awkwardly, He throws a playful punch at his brother. Ernest returns it. Before they abandon the pretence and hug each other.

119 INT. GALLERY AND STAIRCASE. BUCKINGHAM PALACE. DAY.

119

Victoria walks with Lehzen in a gallery. Victoria smiles first. Lehzen smiles back, relieved to be forgiven.

*
*
*

(CONTINUED)

119 CONTINUED:

119

LORD CHAMBERLAIN

His Serene Highness Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha.

The Prince enters the gallery in a travelling costume of dark green coat, with tight, pale, buckskin trousers and high boots. As he climbs, around his legs weave two superb greyhounds. It is almost impossible for a male human to be this handsome...

120 INT. BLUE CLOSET. WINDSOR CASTLE. DAY.

120

Victoria paces restlessly in the pretty little room. On a table are two or three open, red boxes, with crests on the lids and papers, dense with writing and figures and orders, spilling out. She hears a noise in the passage and hastily sits on a sofa. The door opens and Albert enters. He is clearly as nervous as she is.

ALBERT

I only just got your note. I was riding.

VICTORIA

I envy you.

Smiling, she nods at the paper detritus on her writing table.

VICTORIA

Sit. Please... Here.

He does. They are side by side now. But she is still not sure how to steer the conversation around. Nor is he.

ALBERT

The park is marvellous.

VICTORIA

I'm so pleased you like it. I do want you to be quite at home...

Is this it? Maybe. He looks at her, waiting. Here goes.

VICTORIA

I think you must be aware why I wished you to come here... Because it would make me happier than anything - too happy, really - if you'd agree to what I wish...

Now, surely, it's acceptable for him to weigh in.

ALBERT

And stay with you?

(CONTINUED)

120 CONTINUED:

120

VICTORIA
And stay with me.

ALBERT
And marry you?

VICTORIA
And marry me.

These last speeches have come out in a kind of shared, gasping, tumbled rush, but they have reached their destination and there is passionate relief as he takes her in his arms and, at last, kisses her properly.

121 INT. CHAPEL ROYAL. ST. JAMES'S. DAY.

121

They stand before the altar, Victoria and Albert watched by many of our principal characters. The Archbishop presides. *

ARCHBISHOP
I now pronounce you man and wife.

Victoria blushes with pleasure.

122 INT. VICTORIA'S BEDROOM. WINDSOR. NIGHT.

122

Victoria is in bed alone. There is a knock on the door.

VICTORIA
Come in.

The door opens and there is Albert in a dressing gown. He shuts the door behind him. It is a moment of exquisite, sweet awkwardness. He walks to the window, peering out.

ALBERT
I feel more at ease in Windsor. It reminds me of Rosenau.

She looks at him. He is fumbling.

ALBERT
It's much larger, of course.

VICTORIA
I haven't always been so fond of it... I will be now...

He comes and sits on the bed. Gently, he takes her hands.

(CONTINUED)

ALBERT

Alone at last.

They laugh, nervously. Then he becomes serious.

ALBERT

I must tell you that I'll do everything in my power not to disappoint you. Use me. Draw on me for help, with any task that lies ahead.

There is something awkward here. Their expectations do not mesh.

VICTORIA

Shhhh. Just love me. Now.

She takes his face in her two hands and kisses him. This side of things at least will clearly not be a problem.

123 INT. DUCHESS'S DRAWING ROOM. BUCKINGHAM PALACE. DAY.

123

Outside the window is the sound of cheering. The Duchess sits at her desk. Conroy stands nearby holding a letter.

CONROY

It's not complicated. It says you have no money.

DUCHESS OF KENT

But that's impossible... Isn't it? You would have known if...

CONROY

Why did you open it? I always deal with the letters from your banker -

There is a shout from the cheering crowd outside.

CONROY

Can't they keep them quiet? Someone should tell them the Queen is at Windsor.

He walks to the window and looks down, suddenly pensive.

CONROY

How changeable they are... They hate you. They love you. They hate you.

DUCHESS OF KENT

They didn't hate her. They punished her. But they never hated her.

(CONTINUED)

She looks at the picture of herself and her lost child.

CONROY

And now she is a bride and back on top.
Until the next mistake.

He sighs. When he speaks, his tone is genuinely wondering.

CONROY

What on earth have I done with my life?

He glances at her, almost as if she were a stranger.

CONROY

I had many gifts, you know. As a boy, I was
tipped for success.

DUCHESS OF KENT

You have served me faithfully.

He looks at her, this foolish woman. The thought that this is all
he has achieved is suddenly preposterous.

CONROY

And what is that?

For a second, she says nothing. Then, with one wide gesture, she
sweeps everything on her desk to the ground with a loud crash,
papers, candles, inkwells, books, everything. Conroy is shocked and
stunned. In silence, she stands and leaves.

124 INT. VICTORIA'S BEDROOM. WINDSOR CASTLE. DAY.

124

Albert is asleep, watched with wonder by Victoria. She reaches over
to arrange his hair. He opens his eyes.

VICTORIA

Now I know I am quite married.

ALBERT

And when we're old, and surrounded by our
children, we will remember this as the day
our lives began.

He strokes her cheek tenderly. But she protests.

VICTORIA

Not too surrounded, please. And not too
soon.

(CONTINUED)

124 CONTINUED:

124

ALBERT

Oh? I should warn you that I am expecting a very large family!

And he seizes her in a tangle of sheets and giggles.

125 INT. PASSAGE. WINDSOR CASTLE. DAY.

125

Watson is walking down the passage with some linen, when she is surprised by Lehzen, standing motionless in the shadows.

LEHZEN

Have you woken Her Majesty?

WATSON

No, M'm.

LEHZEN

Don't you think you should?

WATSON

No, M'm. Not this morning, I don't.

She walks on, leaving Lehzen seething with jealousy.

126 INT. VICTORIA'S BEDROOM. WINDSOR. DAY.

126

Victoria sits on the edge of the bed in her nightdress, as Albert kneels before her, rolling her stockings up her legs.

ALBERT

Let's take a little tour together and visit Scotland. I hear if any part of Britain is like Germany, it's the highlands of Scotland.

VICTORIA

Yes, we must. One day.

ALBERT

No. I mean straight away. Now.

VICTORIA

Now?

ALBERT

Only for a few weeks. You're a bride. They can't expect you back before that.

(CONTINUED)

VICTORIA

Dearest, I may be a bride but I'm also a queen. I cannot be away more than three days at the most.

This is disappointing. But he doesn't wish to spoil things. Instead, he starts to take her stocking off again.

VICTORIA

What are you doing?

ALBERT

Well, if we've only got three days...

127 EXT. WINDSOR GREAT PARK. DAY.

127

They gallop through the Great Park, and they're an impressive pair, she riding side-saddle in her velvet habit and plumed hat, and Albert in his romantic costume. They rein in.

Later, they're alone by a stream, horses tethered nearby. Albert's head is in Victoria's lap and she strokes his hair.

ALBERT

I ought to warn you of my chief weakness. I never leave enough time for play.

*

VICTORIA

But you'll have all the time in the world. I wish I could say the same.

*

Before he can quite register this, they are kissing and laughing.

*

128 INT. VICTORIA'S BEDROOM. BUCKINGHAM PALACE. NIGHT.

128

The Queen is in bed waiting for Albert to join her. He comes in, removing his dressing gown.

*

ALBERT

We really should end the quarrel with your mother.

*

*

He climbs into bed. Her answer, when it comes, is very calm.

VICTORIA

I cannot while Sir John Conroy remains in her household.

(CONTINUED)

ALBERT

Then we'll get rid of him.

She seems to study his face, which he takes for agreement.

ALBERT

Our power lies in our example, and we can hardly present ourselves to the British as an ideal family if we're torn apart by Civil War!

Again, he smiles, half joking. For a moment, she is silent. When she does speak, her tone is totally altered.

VICTORIA

They warned me of this.

ALBERT

Of what?

VICTORIA

Let me make one thing clear. I will not be governed. I will not be managed. *I will not be controlled!*

ALBERT

Can't I have an opinion? *

VICTORIA

No! *Yes, but...* for eighteen years I could not breathe, I could not dress or bathe or walk down stairs without permission! I'm not a child and I will *never* live that way again! *

ALBERT

I don't want a child! Quite the reverse!

VICTORIA

Then do not lecture me on politics or my mother or anything else! I may be Queen of England. But you are not the King!

There is a deep pool of silence. *

ALBERT

Well, now that's clear, may I ask what *exactly* am I supposed to do?

It is a good point.

129 INT. VICTORIA'S SITTING ROOM. BUCKINGHAM PALACE. NIGHT.

129

Victoria works at her Red Boxes. Lehzen and the Duchess of Sutherland embroider. Albert strokes Dash and reads a newspaper. Victoria stops, biting the end of her pen. *

LEHZEN

What is it?

The Queen shakes her head, laying the document aside.

VICTORIA

Just a question for Lord M.

ALBERT

Could I help?

VICTORIA

It'll keep.

She does not see how dismissive this is, in front of the others. In exasperation, Albert stands and goes to the window.

ALBERT

Why are these windows so dirty? I can hardly see out.

VICTORIA

Same as the fires, I'm afraid. The departments can't agree to wash inside and out at the same time.

ALBERT

Then why not do something about it?

DUCHESS OF SUTHERLAND

I quite agree.

LEHZEN

Because it's the way things are done here and it's worked well for many years.

ALBERT

Meanwhile, we live in a filthy, freezing house.

LEHZEN

We live as guests of the Queen.

It is a reprimand which he does not take kindly.

(CONTINUED)

129 CONTINUED:

129

ALBERT

Thank you, Baroness, for reminding me I am a guest here.

With a curt bow, he leaves. Victoria stands to follow.

LEHZEN

Let him go. It always takes time to get used to a new uniform.

At this, the Duchess looks at Lehzen with real dislike, which Victoria sees. And it makes her think.

130 EXT. BUCKINGHAM PALACE GARDENS. DAY.

130

Victoria is walking with Queen Adelaide.

QUEEN ADELAIDE

How's Albert settling in?

VICTORIA

Why? What have you heard?

Naturally, this is an answer in itself. Out it comes.

VICTORIA

I simply cannot please him. Nothing's ever right. All I hear is a litany of my mistakes from dawn to dusk. He says Lord Melbourne controls me. He says Lehzen controls me. It seems everyone controls me except him! And he never stops complaining he has nothing to do, but Lehzen says -

She breaks off.

QUEEN ADELAIDE

What does Lehzen say?

VICTORIA

Only that most men would love a life of leisure and he should be grateful... She doesn't mean to be unkind.

QUEEN ADELAIDE

Oh no. Anyone could see that.

Her tone makes Victoria look at her.

(CONTINUED)

QUEEN ADELAIDE

A man who does no work becomes ridiculous. And a poor man with a rich wife must work twice as hard as the rest. Besides, you've chosen well.

VICTORIA

My uncle William chose well. But you didn't take on half his duties.

QUEEN ADELAIDE

You don't know that. You don't know what I did.

Adelaide sighs. For once, Victoria is not sure about this.

VICTORIA

He says he wants to reorganise the way the palaces are run.

QUEEN ADELAIDE

Then for Heaven's sake, let him! And do please tell dear Lehzen I said so.

Victoria looks genuinely relieved, which is encouraging.

131 INT. ANTE ROOM. BUCKINGHAM PALACE. DAY.

131 *

A servant is laying the table when Albert walks in. *

ALBERT

What is this for? *

FOOTMAN

The Red Room Dinner, Sir. For the officers guarding the King. *

ALBERT

What King? *

FOOTMAN

King George III, Sir. *

ALBERT

And how often do we provide this dinner for a king who has been dead for twenty years? *

FOOTMAN

Every night, Sir. *

The Prince absorbs this information. *

132 INT. VICTORIA'S SITTING ROOM. BUCKINGHAM PALACE. DAY. 132

Albert enters, disturbing the servants at work. One man removes unused candles from a large chandelier which has been lowered.

ALBERT

Those candles are brand new. *

The man is silent. The other servants look nervous as the Prince digests another massive waste. He makes a note.

133 INT. PASSAGE. BUCKINGHAM PALACE. DAY. 133

Albert is walking along when he sees Lehzen laughing with a man who holds a newspaper. They fold it when they see him.

ALBERT

Something amusing?

LEHZEN

Nothing, Your Royal Highness.

But the Prince holds out his hand for the paper. A cartoon shows Albert counting scrubbing brushes: "One brush per housemaid. Any more and Parliament will be told!" He hands it back.

LEHZEN

People always hate change.

ALBERT

That's true, Baroness, but mercifully, few of them hate it as much as you do.

He goes, followed by the cold and jealous eyes of Lehzen.

134 INT. VICTORIA'S BEDROOM. BUCKINGHAM PALACE. NIGHT. 134

Albert's face is as still as stone. So is Victoria's. The tension is vibrant. Is this another battle's aftermath?

ALBERT

You're sure?

She nods and, in a wider shot, Albert walks forward and kneels. Pulling her to him, he kisses her stomach.

135 INT. VICTORIA'S DRAWING ROOM. BUCKINGHAM PALACE. DAY.

135

The fire burns brightly. Albert and Victoria are with the Duchess of Kent, Lehzen, Melbourne and Adelaide. They clap and cheer.

MELBOURNE

Congratulations, Ma'am. You are officially
an ancestor.

*
*

Victoria laughs, as Adelaide hugs her warmly. Seeing this, the Duchess rushes forward, overwhelmed with delight.

*

DUCHESS OF KENT

Mein liebbling! You'll say at once if
there's anything you need!

She tries to hold Victoria, who pulls back slightly.

VICTORIA

Heavens. Don't crush me, Mama.

The Duchess, flattened, retreats from the group, looking round for her reticule. Albert comes over to her.

ALBERT

You're not going already?

DUCHESS OF KENT

I can never leave too early for my
daughter... Anyway, I've a lot on my mind.

ALBERT

Something I could help with?

DUCHESS OF KENT

Just boring things.

ALBERT

Boring things are what sons-in-law are for.

But she kisses him and goes. Melbourne has been listening.

MELBOURNE

And there you have your opening. For your
next task. If you'll take my advice -

Albert cuts him off with a pleasant, easy smile.

(CONTINUED)

135 CONTINUED:

135

ALBERT

Lord Melbourne, forgive me but you seem to have confused me with a member of your club. I am not your drinking companion or your whist partner, I am the husband of your Sovereign. As such, I will make my own decisions and I neither seek nor invite your advice. Good evening.

Albert walks off, leaving Melbourne speechless.

136 INT. DUCHESS'S DRAWING ROOM. BUCKINGHAM PALACE. DAY.

136

Open ledgers, dense with figures, fill the screen.

CONROY (V.O.)

I cannot believe I'm being subjected to this interrogation!

Albert sits at a table piled high with account books, watched by a furious Conroy and the Duchess.

ALBERT

You're not being subjected to anything, Sir John. You have been in charge of the Duchess's finances for many years. Indeed, you have made public statements testifying to their health.

CONROY

I have!

DUCHESS OF KENT

And I am so grateful...

She glances at her implacable son-in-law. She regrets this now and she would beg for mercy but Conroy spurns her glances. Perhaps because he has nothing more to lose.

ALBERT

All I am asking is that you will be so good as to tell us exactly where the money has gone?

Conroy's flushed, furious face tells us precisely where the money has gone. But the tragedy here belongs to the Duchess, who struggles to prevent her tears from flowing. She has lost her daughter's love. And all on account of this worthless man.

136A INT. PASSAGE. BUCKINGHAM PALACE. DAY.

136A

Victoria is walking down a passage when she stops short. A door has opened and Conroy comes out. He is dressed for travelling. He too stands stock still. For a moment, neither speaks. Then...

CONROY

As a point of curiosity, would you ever have accepted my help? If I had managed things differently?

VICTORIA

Not if my life should depend on it.

Victoria's face and voice could both be carved from stone.

VICTORIA

Goodbye, Sir John.

CONROY

Goodbye... *Your Majesty.*

At long last, the battle is over and Victoria has won.

137 EXT. ENTRANCE COURT. BUCKINGHAM PALACE. DAY.

137

A coach is loaded up. Conroy storms out and climbs in. The coachman takes up the reins. The vehicle rumbles off. From a window, the Duchess looks down as her former favourite is swept out of her life. Further along the facade, Victoria also stares down as the devil of her childhood departs. Albert joins her.

138 DELETED.

138

139 INT. THE WHITE DRAWING ROOM. BUCKINGHAM PALACE. DAY.

139

At a reception, Albert is with Wellington and Sir Robert Peel. Victoria and the Duchess of Sutherland walk over to join them.

ALBERT

I've been boring Sir Robert and the Duke with my ideas for encouraging the Arts.

VICTORIA

Does Sir Robert care for such frivolity?

Her tone is soft. But hostile. His reply, if anything, is harder.

(CONTINUED)

PEEL

I have many interests, Ma'am. And my Government would support the Prince's plans wholeheartedly.

VICTORIA

Your Government? What Government is this?

PEEL

I meant if I should be *fortunate* enough to form *another* Government, Ma'am...

Albert decides to throw some oil onto these troubled waters.

ALBERT

And when he does, there'll be no repeat of the old problem. Some of your ladies have already agreed to resign. Sir Robert will ask for no more change than that.

*
*
*

Victoria looks at him and then glances at the Duchess who nods, as if even she were in on this decision. Victoria is silent and smiles pleasantly. Peel smiles back.

*

140 INT. VICTORIA'S BEDROOM. BUCKINGHAM PALACE. NIGHT.

140

The Queen is incandescent with anger.

VICTORIA

How dare you speak in that way to me before them! How dare you talk across me as if I were a child!

ALBERT

I did no such thing!

VICTORIA

Oh no? You've sorted this! You've sorted that! You and Sir Robert! You and the Duke! *And all without reference to me!*

ALBERT

I thought you'd be pleased.

VICTORIA

I'll tell you what you thought! You thought I was a woman, to be petted and passed over and ignored!

(CONTINUED)

ALBERT

Would it were so simple! Then we might avoid more scandals of your making!

VICTORIA

Have you lost your mind?

But now he is getting angry. And his anger matches hers.

ALBERT

Do you wonder at it? Less than three years on the Throne and you and your precious Melbourne have pushed the Monarchy to the brink of an abyss!

VICTORIA

What is *my* Prime Minister to you! I've told you before and I tell you again: You are my husband here and that is all!

ALBERT

It's quite enough, believe me!

VICTORIA

I will not have my role usurped! I wear the Crown and if there are mistakes, they will be *my* mistakes! And no one else will make them! *No one! Not even you!*

He starts to answer. Then he stops.

ALBERT

I'm leaving. Before you excite yourself and harm the child.

VICTORIA

If I do, it will be *your fault!* Just like the baby! Which, by the way, I did not want! And you will go when I dismiss you!

He is shocked by her cruelty. He walks towards the door.

ALBERT

We'll talk tomorrow when you are calmer... and feeling more *grown up!*

VICTORIA

You may not go! I order you to stay here in this room!

He continues and puts his hand on the doorknob.

(CONTINUED)

140 CONTINUED: (2)

140

VICTORIA

I am your Queen and I am telling you to stay!

She is screaming at him. He speaks softly in the doorway.

ALBERT

Goodnight, Victoria.

He is gone and she is left enraged, humiliated, bewildered.

141 EXT. ENTRANCE COURT. BUCKINGHAM PALACE. DAY.

141

There is an open carriage waiting, complete with equerries and a couple of mounted guards.

The Queen and Prince Albert are ready for a drive. But not speaking. At last she addresses him.

VICTORIA

There's no necessity for you to accompany me.

ALBERT

I've said I'll come with you. So I will come with you.

They say nothing more and climb into the carriage together but apart. The guards swap a quick look. The coachman takes up the reins and they move off.

142 DELETED.

142

143 DELETED.

143

144 EXT. CONSTITUTION HILL. DAY.

144

The carriage bowls up the leafy road. Riders in the park gallop over to wave. So do pedestrians. It is a happy scene, but for the iciness between the Royal couple, as they hiss at each other.

ALBERT

For pity's sake, smile. Or they'll think we have quarrelled.

VICTORIA

Then they'll be *right!*

(CONTINUED)

144 CONTINUED:

144

But Albert has noticed something. He seizes his wife's arm. She is outraged at being pulled backwards against the seat and struggles to free herself.

VICTORIA

What!

Edward Oxford, is aiming a gun at the carriage. He shoots.

145 INT. DUCHESS'S DRAWING ROOM. BUCKINGHAM PALACE. DAY. 145

The Duchess of Kent suddenly looks up from her sewing. An extreme close-up shows the hairs on her arm standing up.

146 EXT. CONSTITUTION HILL. DAY. 146

Oxford fires again. Men throw themselves upon him, pinning him to the ground. The riders, men and women, angry and excited, form a tangled guard around the vehicle as the coachman yells at his horses and the whole pack gallops headlong for home.

147 INT. GALLERY AND STAIRCASE. BUCKINGHAM PALACE. DAY. 147

Albert is half dragged, half carried through the hall at a racing speed, followed by Victoria. Lehzen hurries in.

LEHZEN

What's happened? What's he done this time?

VICTORIA

Not now, Lehzen!

She races on, leaving the governess alone among the running servants and officers, as panic streams through the Palace.

148 DELETED. 148

149 INT. EDWARD OXFORD'S ROOM. DAY. 149

The door of a dingy, back street room is forced open and four police officers enter, followed by a harassed landlady.

LANDLADY

What're you doing with Mr Oxford's things?
What's happened? What's he done?

(CONTINUED)

149 CONTINUED:

149

The officers walk in and look around. One notices something above him. Then they all look up at the ceiling. Every cartoon, every headline we have seen pinned up, is on this ceiling. *

150 INT. VICTORIA'S BEDROOM. BUCKINGHAM PALACE. DAY.

150

Start on a CU of paper. Pull back and reveal Albert in bed with a newspaper. He looks dazed and tired and his arm is bandaged. Sir James Clark stands back and takes the paper out of Albert's hand. *

SIR JAMES CLARK

There's nothing more I can do here. The Prince needs rest.

The others file out with him, leaving only Victoria. She sits on the bed, with her husband's hand in hers. He looks at her.

ALBERT

I don't think he was a very good shot. Thank heaven.

They laugh a little with relief. Then she grows serious.

VICTORIA

You saved my life. *

ALBERT

If I did, I had two very good reasons. First, I am replaceable and you are not - *

VICTORIA

You're not replaceable to me.

ALBERT

Second, you're the only wife I've got or ever will have. You are my whole existence. And I will love you until my last breath.

Her eyes fill. She leans down to kiss him with all her heart. *

151 EXT. GARDENS. BUCKINGHAM PALACE. DAY.

151

Victoria is with Melbourne in the gardens.

MELBOURNE

We'll lose the vote tonight. I felt you should hear it from me... How is the Prince?

(CONTINUED)

VICTORIA

Much better. We're told the man was mad. Is that reassuring? I can't decide.

MELBOURNE

May I be honest?

She stops, querying him with a look.

MELBOURNE

Even a politician can be honest sometimes.

She nods, taking his arm as they begin to walk.

MELBOURNE

The years spent in Your Majesty's company won't be repeated. They've meant a good deal to me. More perhaps than anything else in my long career... My guidance may not always have been faultless, and I am sorry for it. But I speak now as a true friend.

VICTORIA

I know.

MELBOURNE

The Prince is a good man. A better man than any of us knew.

Victoria is surprised at this, which he sees.

MELBOURNE

He does not think as well of me, but my vanity is not the issue here. He is able and clever. And faithful. Let him share your work. Take him into your confidence.

VICTORIA

You know King Leopold plans to use him to influence our policy?

Her tone is quite matter-of-fact. He is amazed.

MELBOURNE

I know that. So does the Foreign Office. But nobody thinks you do.

Victoria shrugs slightly.

VICTORIA

Every suitor would have come with strings attached.

(CONTINUED)

151 CONTINUED: (2)

151

Melbourne smiles. The innocent, young girl has become a wise and knowledgeable woman.

MELBOURNE

One other thing, Ma'am. Which you will not want to hear...

VICTORIA

Try me. These days, I value the truth more than I did.

In recognition of this, Melbourne takes her hand and raises it gently to his lips. Which she allows, and then slides her arm through his as they stroll along by the lake, the old Statesman at the end of his career, the young Queen at the start of hers.

152 EXT. ENTRANCE COURT. BUCKINGHAM PALACE. DAY.

152

Another carriage has been loaded up with luggage for a long journey. This one holds the dour figure of Baroness Lehzen. She looks grimly ahead as the vehicle pulls away.

153 INT. VICTORIA'S SITTING ROOM. BUCKINGHAM PALACE. DAY.

153

Victoria is watching this second departure with Albert whose arm is in a sling. She quickly wipes a tear away.

VICTORIA

I needed her so much as a child.

ALBERT

And soon you'll have a child who needs you.

He holds her to him, kissing her tenderly. Then he looks at something. She follows his gaze.

*
*

VICTORIA

I hope you don't mind, I've had your desk brought in.

*
*
*

It's true. Their desks sit side by side. She smiles.

*

VICTORIA

It'll be so much easier to do the boxes or see the ministers, if your papers are here as well as mine.

ALBERT

Don't I have any say in this?

*
*

(CONTINUED)

153 CONTINUED:

153

He looks serious but then smiles. She playfully hits him. *

154 EXT. GARDENS. LAEKEN PALACE. BRUSSELS. DAY.

154

Leopold is with Stockmar. He is holding a blue letter, shaking with rage.

LEOPOLD

This is intolerable! He writes that he would prefer not to talk politics in his letters but only to discuss news of the family! He's copying her!

Stockmar shakes his head.

STOCKMAR

I don't think so. No, they sound alike because they think alike.

LEOPOLD

Spare me the language of a *ladies' novelette!*

But the Baron knows he has to help his Master through this.

STOCKMAR

Sir, we must accept it. The birds have flown.

LEOPOLD

I will *not* accept it! I have planned this marriage for twenty years! And now, because of a simple girl and a callow youth, *I'm to accept that I have failed!*

STOCKMAR

On the contrary, Your Majesty, you are to be congratulated...

The wizened, enigmatic, old Baron is smiling for once.

STOCKMAR

For I would say that the whole affair has been a *very great success.*

The opening scene music theme starts to play as we hear:

VICTORIA (V.O.)

I'll be the judge of that!

155 INT. VICTORIA'S SITTING ROOM. BUCKINGHAM PALACE. DAY.

155

A nurse is at the doorway, carrying a baby. Albert goes to her and takes his daughter in his arms. He walks to Victoria, across the room, and gives her the child to hold.

ALBERT

If you trust me in this matter, you will
thank me.

*

Albert kisses his wife and heads for the door.

VICTORIA

I doubt it.

He smiles as the Duchess of Kent walks in. With his back to Victoria, Albert gives the Duchess a wink and leaves. The Duchess stands enjoying the tableau of her daughter holding the child. The Queen looks up. After a moment, she speaks.

VICTORIA

Don't stand by the door, Mama. Come in.

And we leave this mother and daughter, neither quite so apart, nor really together.

*

*

156 INT. PASSAGE AND RECEPTION ROOM. BUCKINGHAM PALACE. DAY.

156

Victoria and Albert are walking together, arm in arm, down a passage. They are in evening dress but they are talking and laughing. Then they come to a pair of doors, stop, straighten up and nod to the footmen to open them.

In that fraction of a second, they have turned themselves into the Sovereign and her Consort. The company bows and curtsseys as they hold their positions in the doorway, calm, dignified, the perfect Royal couple. They could be posing for a Winterhalter portrait. We freeze frame.

It took Prince Albert ten more years before Victoria and her mother were finally, and happily, at peace.

*

*

Victoria and Albert reigned together for twenty years, and together they would champion reform in every part of their expanding empire. After Albert's death in 1861, on Victoria's orders, his rooms were kept unchanged and his clothes laid out each day, for the rest of her life. Their nine children all married and among their descendants are the Royal

(CONTINUED)

156 CONTINUED:

156

Families of Britain, Spain, Sweden, Norway, Germany, Russia, Greece, Romania and Yugoslavia.

The camera closes in on Victoria's face.

The Queen survived her husband to be the longest reigning Sovereign in British history. To date.

THE END