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The Private Lives of Elizabeth and Essex

By Norman Reilly Raine

There he is!
How nobly he bears himself.
Oh, it must be wonderful
to be a man and a hero.
- He carries himself like a king.
- His eyes constantly look up...
...searching for the queen.
Isn't he wonderful?
Yes, love too has its victories.
And this, I think, belongs to Her Majesty.
An easy victory if one
is a queen and may command it.
What if Her Majesty
should overhear you?
The day when Essex returns...
...every petticoat is chosen
with an eye to pleasing him.
Come along, my son,
into the presence chamber.
You may do as you please, Father.
I'll have no part.
Don't be a fool, Cecil. Elizabeth
is difficult, even on good days.
Good or bad, we'll see
little of her with Essex home.
Something's got to be done to tarnish
him or he'll share England's throne.
Then where shall we be?
I'll be hanged if I welcome him.
You may be hanged
if you do not, my son.
You know Her Majesty's
infatuation for him.
But, Your Majesty,
I beg you to reconsider.
Essex is a proud man.
You must not do this thing to him.
Bacon, this will not be easy for me.
Whatever he has done, he is the man
of all men closest to my heart.
Whatever he suffers,
I suffer a thousand times more intently.
- Then why, Your Majesty, why?
- Because the necessities of a queen...

...must transcend those of a woman.
His ambition has jeopardized
the prosperity of the English people.
It may endanger the very peace
and stability of England.
Your Majesty, forgive this frankness,
but your love jeopardizes the situation.
A situation fraught with gravest
consequence for my subjects, Bacon.
My personal feelings
must not enter into this.
God help me.
Go now. Let me alone.
Your Majesty.
My fan. Hurry.
- Present arms!
- Up!
Robert Devereux...
...by grace of Her Majesty...
...Earl of Essex, general of the horse
and knight of the Garter.
Charles, Baron Howard of Effingham,
Lord High Admiral of England.
Walter Raleigh, knight, vice admiral of
the fleets, and warden of the stannary.
Do you kneel in homage,
my Lord Essex...
...or in shame?
Shame, Your Majesty?
Have you lost your hearing
as well as your military skill?
Stand up.
I believe my military skill was well
demonstrated at Cdiz, madam.
Has our commissioner
not brought you news of my victory?
Your victory!
For three years, the rains of England
have rotted our harvest to the ground.
Three years of famine
and a depleted treasury.
But my Lord of Essex
had the cure for that.
Yes, indeed.

"Raise me but 50,000, madam,"
says he...
..." and I'll sail for Cdiz and fetch you
such a Spanish treasure fleet...
...as will make England rich again."
So I did.
I taxed my already
overburdened people.
Got him his 50,000.
Now, where is
my Spanish treasure fleet?
Look!
He can't answer.
He daren't answer.
- Lf Your Majesty will let me tell you.
- Go on, then.
Unfortunately, it was you
who called the fleet back...
...before my plans
had been carried out.
Unfortunately, the Spanish
treasure fleet, with 12 million ducats...
...lies beneath the waters of Cdiz Harbor,
sunk by the Spaniards themselves.
While Essex, against the advice
of Howard and Raleigh...
...gathered fame for himself
by storming the town.
There was naught else to be done.
- It was for the glory of England.
- For the glory of Essex!
Will that put food into the mouths
of my starving people?
Can they subsist upon laurel wreaths
from your heroic brow?
You think they're displeased with
what I did at Cdiz, madam? Listen.
The English people are more
readily pleased than their queen.
They cry your name, but what will
they say when I must tax them again...
...to pay off the soldiers and the fleet?
Is it nothing that 1200 pieces of Spanish
ordnance were sunk in my hollow victory?

And the Spanish fleet
totally destroyed?
Thanks to my Lord Howard
and Sir Raleigh.
It seems you've no reward
for me as a soldier, madam.
That the soldier can endure.
But the man had hoped
for a different kind of reception.
You meant well, perhaps...
...but my rewards are for unselfish effort,
not for things half or meanly done.
Sir Walter Raleigh.
From today, you take rank
as commander of our guard.
My Lord Howard.
Your Majesty.
In grateful return for what
you tried to do at Cdiz...
...without thought of self
and only for your country's honor...
...I appoint you lord lieutenant,
general of all England...
...commander of my army and my fleet,
and name you Earl of Nottingham.
Your Majesty.
- That's impossible.
- Keep silent.
I will not. Do you intend this Earl of
Nottingham to take precedence over me?
He'll take precedence over you
as he did in wisdom at Cdiz.
You were in command and abused it,
with Essex first and England second.
Think that if you will, but it's
an injustice you place Howard before me.
- I feel you have no right.
- I have... I have no right?
As a queen, yes. But as a woman,
do I mean nothing to you?
Nothing.
Lord Essex!
Do you dare turn your back
on Elizabeth of England?

You dare?

I would not have taken that
from the king, your father.
Much less will I accept it
from a king in petticoats.

If the courier comes,
send him to me at once.

You may go.

I said, that's all.

- Well?

- With Your Grace's indulgence...
...there's another matter.

- Well, what is it? What's it about?

Essex.

Did I not forbid his name
to be spoken at court?

But Sir Thomas Egerton received a letter
from him from his manor at Wanstead.

I knew he'd come to it, Cecil.

Begging Egerton to intercede
for him, of course.

Well, perhaps I was a little harsh.

What did the letter say?

- When is he coming home?

- I have it here.

Let me see.

He says, " I owe to Her Majesty
a duty of allegiance...

...in which I never can,
never will fail."

Poor darling.

Of course he's sorry.

But a little apprehensive perhaps.

Go on. Go on.

"But I do not owe her the duty
of attendance upon her.

And had I that duty,

Her Majesty's conduct has canceled it.

As for asking her pardon, why should
I ask pardon for receiving an insult?"

Stop it!

No.

No, go on. I'll hear it.

"When the vilest of indignities is done to

me, not even religion enforces me to sue.
I have received the wrong.
Let her seek pardon of me."
"And if she refuses...
...all her power can show
no more strength in oppressing me...
...than I can summon to resist it."
Cecil, this is intolerable!
Are you sure Essex wrote this?
- Not you or your friends?
- Your Majesty...
Don't "Your Majesty" me!
You slimy toad. I know human nature.
Nothing would suit you so well as to see
Essex saying farewell to his head.
Will Your Grace examine
the letter more closely?
Rumor hath it you are not unacquainted
with Milord of Essex's writing.
And rumor hath it
I have a heavy hand for insolence.
Have you forgotten it? Now, get out.
- But, madam...
- Get out, I say!
Robert...
Robert, I don't know
which I hate the most...
...you for making me love you...
...or myself for needing you so.
There has seldom been a man
so unwise, so headstrong...
...but he could see the necessity...
...of keeping friends
and not making enemies at court.
But you quarrel with the queen because
she wanted peace and you wanted war.
War? There is a war with Spain.
And such a silly, frightened womanish
war as only a woman would wage.
Let me answer that.
You are not forthright with yourself.
You wish to complete
your record as general...
...crush Spain, make a name

like Caesar's, and climb to fame.
You won Cdiz and caught
the people's hearts.
Caught their voices until the streets
ring with your name when you pass.
Take care. You are
too popular already.
My lord, you are loved better
than the queen.
That's your danger.
She will not suffer a subject
to eclipse her, she cannot.
Make no mistake, she will not.
- So I must wait? Hold back?
- Precisely.
Why? I come of better
blood than Elizabeth.
My name is among the earls who stood
around the oak with King John.
What the nobles once taught a king,
a noble may teach a queen.
You talk treason and death.
The old order is dead. Your house
will die if you cannot learn.
This is Elizabeth we deal with.
What's a king but a man,
a queen but a woman?
There's one man she fears,
and that man's yourself.
- And she has good reason to fear you.
- To fear me? Why? I'm loyal.
You're a man not easily governed...
...moreover, a general,
popular and acclaimed.
And last, she loves you...
...which makes you more to be feared
whether you love her or not.
Love her?
I most certainly do love her.
- My lord, a man as young as yourself...
- If she were my mother's kitchen hag...
...toothless and wooden leg, she'd still
make the others colorless. She's a witch.
She's got a witch's brain.

I love her. I hate her.
I adore her.
That side of it you must
know for yourself.
But, my lord,
permit me to caution you.
Don't count too much
on the loves of queens.
Thanks, Schoolmaster Bacon, for that
sound lecture and the sound advice.
Which you probably will not take.
Which I probably will not.
- What's the shortest road to London?
- Up the hill to the river, then follow it.
So you would take the queen's knight,
Mistress Penelope?
I fear you are overpresumptuous
and over-inexperienced.
- All knights are fair game, Your Grace.
- I have observed you seem to think so.
The queen will protect her own.
Why didn't you move?
- If I do, I...
- You will take my knight.
Is that so far from your desire?
Move, I tell you.
Check to Your Grace.
I fear the queen is powerless now.
The queen is never powerless.
For example...
I had no desire to play,
but Your Majesty commanded me.
Never mind, child.
It's only a game,
and I'm out of sorts.
I'm tired of it.
Do something. Sing. Play.
Amuse me.
- Your Majesty?
- Well?
Would you like to hear
Master Marlowe's song:
- "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love"?
- Anything you please.

Please, Penelope, don't.

- Your Majesty.

- Well?

By Your Grace, Raleigh has lately writ
an answer to Master Marlowe's ballad.

I'll sing it if Mistress Margaret
will take Marlowe's verses against me.

A tournament of song?

By all means.

Proceed. Proceed.

So Sir Walter has turned rhymester.

The words will fit perfectly.

A woman in love with a man
much younger than herself.

Are you mad, Pen? She'll beat you...

...or send you to the tower.

Come live with me

And be my love

Enjoy with me

The pleasures here above

That hills and valleys

Dales and fields

And all the wooded mountains yield

If I could be

As young and fair as you

Believe what every shepherd

Said was true

These pretty speeches

Might me move

To live with you

And be your love

- And I will make your bed of roses

- In lovers ' vows there is but little truth

- And of a thousand fragrant posies

- And love cannot endure without its youth

A cap of flowers and a kirtle

The flowers fade

When summertime is ended

- Embroidered all with leaves of myrtle

- Our love is dead

A love we thought so splendid

If these delights

Your mind may move

Then live with me

And be my love
But were I young
And loved so well
Then I might hold you close forever...
So, you brazen wench, you defy me!
You dare hold your queen up
to ridicule? You forward hussy!
You, who can keep
neither your eyes nor your nose...
...or your person where they belong!
Look at you.
Because a gentleman once glanced
at you doesn't entitle you...
...to come into my presence
dressed like an indecent hedge drab.
Take it off, you shameless baggage.
Get out of my sight!
You too. Do you stand around like a herd
of stupid cattle while I am treated so?
You, too, think I am too old, too ugly
for a man to look upon with love.
Take them down!
Do you hear me?
Smash them.
Destroy them.
Break every mirror in the palace. I never
want to see one in Whitehall again!
What is this?
What now?
Why are you crying,
Mistress Margaret?
Come here.
What have you to fear?
You, the most innocent of them all?
Look at me.
Or do you too find your queen's face
too harsh for kindly glances?
Oh, no, Your Majesty.
I think you're lovely. Really, I do.
But I was crying because I...
- Well?
- Well...
A little for myself
because I was frightened and lonely.

Because I was lonely,
I cried for you too.
You cried for me?
Oh, forgive me, Your Grace...
...but I too know what it is
to love someone...
...and not be able to see and to hear.
It makes me cross too sometimes
and out of sorts.
You've no idea, when I'm
out of your presence, how horrible I am.
Are you indeed?
And what is he like,
this lucky one that you are lonely for?
Oh, he's so tall...
...and his nose curls up.
His nose what?
I mean, when he laughs,
his nose crinkles up like this.
He laughs a lot, you know?
Sometimes at me.
Imagine. Oh, and he's
handsome too, no doubt.
Oh, madam...
...and his eyes are blue,
like cornflowers, only much nicer.
And when he looks at me...
Who is this paragon?
Why, Sir Peter Finchley, Your Grace.
Don't you remember?
Sir Peter Finchley?
Yes. Now I remember.
A wide-shouldered rascal...
...and much better-looking
than any man has a right to be.
With Baganold's forces in Ireland,
isn't he?
- You want him home again, I suppose?
- Oh, more than anything in the world.
He shall be recalled.
I don't know how to thank
Your Majesty.
But it's doubtful if he'll come.
I shall command it.

And when he takes you
in his arms again...
...thank heaven you're not a queen.
But I thought to be a queen...
To be a queen is to be
less than human.
To put pride before desire...
...to search men's hearts
for tenderness...
...and find only ambition...
...to cry out in the dark
for one unselfish voice...
...and hear only the dry rustle
of papers of state.
To turn to one's beloved
with stars for eyes...
...and have him see behind them only
the shadow of the executioner's block.
A queen has no hour for love.
Time presses, events crowd upon her.
And for a shell...
...an empty, glittering husk...
...she must give up all
that a woman holds most dear.
And now...
...fetch me Master Francis Bacon.
- Master Bacon?
- At once.
Yes, Your Majesty.
Will your steps always be so laggard
when I send for you, Master Bacon?
My steps have lost the habit
of being summoned by you.
And your tongue has lost
none of its sharpness, I see.
To bed and hopeful dreams.
You're a friend of my Lord Essex,
aren't you?
- I am whatever Your Grace desires.
- And your own interest dictates.
Anyway, you know him better
than any other man.
- Why has he not returned to court?
- Not for lack of attraction...

...but possibly his pride.
- A pox on his pride!
He must come home. I command it!
You need him back so badly,
Your Grace?
Purely for matters of state.
Do you understand?
Perfectly, madam.
Bacon. Bacon, stop being clever.
I'm too tired to fence with you.
I can't force him back,
and you know it.
And he's so stupid,
so stubborn, so pigheaded...
...that he'll never return of his own
accord unless I humble myself to him.
And that I'll never do. Never!
- Do you hear?
- Naturally, Your Majesty.
Naturally! It's against all nature
that I should suffer so.
Tell me, what shall I do?
Find me a way to compel his return
without having to punish him.
I'll not be ungrateful.
My reward would lie
in your happiness.
And the advantage to you
in his return to favor, of course.
I'll not deny it, madam.
But how to persuade him and still save
the pride of each, I'm hanged if I know.
Perhaps if I slept the night upon it.
What is it?
- A courier from Ireland, Your Majesty.
- Have him enter.
Your Majesty.
I came...
Bacon. Wine. Quickly.
Chair.
Allow me, Your Majesty.
- Pardon, Majesty.
- Never mind that. What is the news?
We have been annihilated

in Ireland, Your Grace.
Tyrone surprised us.
Sir William Baganold is dead.
Every company, troop, arms,
stores, everything, utterly destroyed.
Wars, death, famine
in that unhappy land.
And for what?
A few miserable acres
of fever-smitten bog...
...and handfuls of tattered peasants
whose only desire is to be left in peace...
...to cut each other's throats.
Well, they may.
I'll put an end to it.
Not another man goes to Ireland.
And let Philip of Spain use it as a base?
He's not forgotten Cdiz, remember.
And whoever holds Ireland
points a dagger at the heart of England.
I suppose you're right,
but I'm sick of this bloodshed.
My policy has always been peace...
...and this war was forced upon me.
And Ireland...
Get a physician.
- Give him the best of food and lodging.
- Yes, Your Majesty.
One moment.
What of Sir Peter Finchley?
- Is he dead too?
- Yes, Your Majesty. He was struck down.
My thanks to you.
Take good care of him.
His nose crinkles when he laughs...
...and his eyes blue, like cornflowers.
And when he looked at her...
Oh, Bacon...
...I'm only a woman.
Must I carry the weight,
the agony of the world...
...alone?
- Not any longer, Your Majesty.
If you form a new army,

you'll need a leader.

- Who?

- Essex.

If you demand his return now,
he can no longer refuse.

- 'Tis his duty.

- What?

And send him to death
and ruin in Ireland?
Then make him master
of the ordnance.

In that capacity, he'll remain in London
and available for consultation.

Go to him.

Tell him I have need of him.

Your Majesty.

Bacon...

...as you leave the chamber...

...bid Mistress Margaret Radcliffe
come to me.

My pleasure, Your Majesty.

Poor child.

Poor child.

Her Majesty does not beg you, my lord.

She commands you to return.

What? She commands me?

She insults me in front of the court
and now she commands me?

To the devil with her.

If you lose your head now,
you'll lose it in earnest later on.

You're talking of your queen.

My queen?

The great-granddaughter
of a Welsh pantryman.

To the devil with her. I'll stay here.

Your answer will please
those around the queen.

- Why? What do you mean?

- Haven't you heard?

Cecil, laden with honors.

Coke, appointed attorney general.

And Raleigh, working himself
into favor.

Every day, he grows nearer to her
in counsel, closer in her affection.
Raleigh, that toad.

She's bought him new silver armor,
whose magnificence outshines the sun.
He grows closer to her in affection,
you say?

For lack of someone dearer.

She loves you.

- But, being a woman, she has her pride.

- Her pride.

Look, there's no mystery
to handling women.

They're like this lady here. You starve
them a little to make them keen.

Starve them too long,
they turn and rend you.

- I'll look to myself.

- Better look to England.

- Baganold's been defeated in Ireland.

- What's that?

- Baganold defeated?

- Killed, and his army destroyed.

That is the reason Her Majesty
commands you to return. She needs you.

Well, of course she needs me...

...with nincompoops like Raleigh
around her.

- Mountjoy!

- Milord.

Back to Wanstead and pack.

We're returning immediately to London.

My dear Sir Walter.

Well, well, well.

You're even more splendid
than I'd imagined.

Even in my retreat, news came
of that silver armor of yours.

- I was ill. I swear it cured me.

- I'm glad you're well.

You should have heard
the compliments on you.

"Sir Walter's in silver," they said.

"The world has been outdone."

- You need not repeat them.
- Oh, but I insist.
The design. The workmanship.
Look, Bacon. Magnificent, is it not?
And I said to myself,
"The great man."
This is what we needed.
More silver armor.
Silver everywhere. Oceans of silver.
Sir Walter has set the style.
The world will follow.
When I heard Her Majesty herself
admired it, I...
Wait, gentlemen. A moment.
Ho there, guard attendant!
I sent for the silversmiths...
...and had them produce enough armor
for the queen's personal guard.
Take care, my lord.
I bear insults badly.
Insults?
What insults? You ordered
that armor in the queen's service.
- I ordered a dozen more like it.
- I've endured much from you!
And will endure more!
There can be no quarreling here. Have
you forgotten a certain appointment?
- Bacon, you protect me?
- I protect you both.
You may have your laugh,
Lord Essex. Come, gentlemen.
Another lecture? Come, schoolmaster.
Essex, when will you realize how vital
it is not to make enemies at court?
I'll make friends and enemies
to please myself.
Now they'll need friends
more than I do.
You have been my friend and patron.
My star is fixed to yours.
Since I've no wish to see that star fall,
I'll ask you one question:
When you see the queen,

what do you intend?
To pacify her? Retain her favors
and all that go with it?
Or to set yourself against her
and trust your fortunes to the mob?
I'll not answer you directly,
but this I will say:
I've never loved nor hated
for a policy or a purpose...
...and I'll burn in eternity
before I'll ever start it.
You understand, do you not?
- Penelope.
- My lord.
Have I kept the queen?
Would Her Majesty wait for any man?
- I admire your discretion.
- Only my discretion?
Anything you wish.
Tell her I'm here.
She's not quite ready.
- May I have one moment, my lord?
- Of course.
- Answer honestly.
- Honestly.
Do you...?
Do you love the queen?
- I do, my dear. Deeply.
- I wish you loved someone...
...who loved you better.
- Meaning?
No one. Myself perhaps.
Anyone who loved you better.
Why? Doesn't the queen love me?
She loves you, she loves you not.
She loves you, she loves you not.
Why do you tell me this?
- I'm afraid.
- For me?
I've heard her, walking up and down
her room at night...
...all night long cursing you...
...because she must love you
and can't help herself...

...swearing a terrible revenge
for this love she bears you.

Robert, be careful.

You anger her too much.

Why? Isn't it the same
with all lovers?

Oh, no. I've never cursed you.

But if we were lovers, you might.

So thank your lucky stars we're not.

Don't joke.

I'm afraid.

- Promise you'll be careful.

- I promise.

- I'll tell her you're here.

- There is no need.

When my Penelope

passed me just now...

...her eyes and her lips

looked the softer for kissing.

Was I inopportune?

She's just a thoughtless child.

These little children

have their ways with each other.

Do we begin already

with hints and accusations?

- Why, you know perfectly well I...

- I only know what I see.

Do you find Penelope charming?

Well, there are other men for me,

besides yourself, to love and be loved.

There's always Egerton

or Sir Walter the handsome, the...

The silver-plated?

Well, he'll wear no more silver

at your door.

I knew this silver

would draw your fire.

What did you do?

Come on, tell me. What happened?

Nothing. I think the fashion

suddenly became too popular.

He's gone to change his clothes.

He'll wear no more silver

at your door.

Isn't it strange how one man's kisses
can grow to be like any other's?

Yes, yes. Or one woman's
to be like any other woman's.

- Not mine for you.
- Nor mine for you, you lying villain.
- You deceiver, curse you.
- Curse you and double curse you.
- You devil of brass.
- Silver, darling.

Let me be a devil in silver.

It reminds me of Raleigh.

Raleigh?

Must you forever be thinking of him?

What else do you expect...

...when you prefer the ants
and the squirrels of Wanstead to me?

What's today?

Thursday.

Come again when I'm
in a better mood.

Next Wednesday, say.

Or any Wednesday
later in the summer.

Any summer.

What, you still here?

- Lf I could only walk out that door.
- It's not locked.

If I went, I'd only come back
like a fool, and you know it.

Would you?

- Why didn't you write to me?
- Why didn't you return?

Return? You let it be known
you'd not admit me.

I may have meant it at the time.

If ever a man was possessed of a devil,
you're mine. Why I don't knock...

And if ever a devil tortured a woman,
you're my devil and torture me!

For pity's sake, let us part now
and quickly, or it will grow worse.

- Go, please!
- I'll not go!

Darling.

Come here.

Robert.

Robert, let us be kind for a moment.

No, I'll be kind. You needn't be.

You're young and strangely sweet.

And my heart cries out to you
wherever you are.

And there's something in me
that has drawn you.

But this same lovely, dreadful thing
that draws us together...

...hurts us and blinds us
until we strike at one another.

Yes, dear, but...

This has gone on for a long time...

...and it grows worse with the years.

- It will end badly.

- What are we to do?

You must go away, darling.

I must never see you again.

That's what I said last time
and here I am.

You must love someone else.

I will forgive you.

You mean you'll try to forgive me.

- But I would.

- There'd be nothing to forgive.

I've tried to love others.

It's as empty as ashes.

What others?

- Oh, no one. No one.

- What others?

Oh, everyone. Hundreds of others.

Thousands, if you like.

What are others to me
when I can only hear your voice?

Even your laughter,
mocking me, defying me.

That's what you've done to me.

You've made everything
seem empty away from you.

And with you too.

But what about me

when you are gone?
Darling, if we must quarrel
when we're together...
...why, then let's quarrel.
At least when we do, we're together.
If we are to love, sweet,
we must be silent.
- For, when we speak...
- Then I'll be silent, and you shall speak.
If only sometimes you'd hate me.
If only sometimes, when I'm right,
you'd admit it...
...instead of instantly flying
into opposition, no matter what I say.
But then, my love...
...you so seldom are right.
- For example?
- For example, Cdiz.
Loss of men.
The drain on the treasury.
I might have known
you'd try to dig me with that.
No matter what you think,
what I did there pleased England.
Is it my fame you think of,
my lord, or your own?
Haven't you built your name
high enough?
In spite of your blunder at Cdiz,
there's no name like yours in England.
If we were to ride in the streets,
it's Essex they'd cheer, not me.
Is it for this that you hold me back
from a raid on Spain?
It is because I believe in peace
and have no faith in what wars bring.
The truth is you fear me,
fear what I might become.
I do fear you, because you're flattered
by the praise of fools...
...until you think you'd make
a better king than I a queen.
You think you'd rule England better
because you're a man.

I do indeed.
That's exactly where you fail.
You can't think and act like a man.
I'll make you sorry for those words!
Think like you is what you mean.
And why should I
when my thinking's wiser?
What is your plan?
To take over England? To depose me?
Fiery wench, aren't you?
It's me bringing up.
I never knew from day to day
who my mother was.
It shook me nerves.
You're your father's daughter,
all right.
The same quick temper,
the same hot blood.
Tell me, darling...
...don't I sometimes
wear on you a little?
Never, darling.
And you won't tire of me?
Tire of you?
How could I?
You'd have to say that,
wouldn't you?
I mean, because you
wouldn't want to hurt me.
Because I'm your queen.
And so I'll never know
till everyone else knows...
...and is laughing at me
that I've lost you.
Let me finish, sweet.
When the time comes...
...and I seem old to you...
- You're not old.
I won't have you old.
And you love someone else...
...be kind and tell me.
Will you do that?
You may kill me if I ever say it.
Love...

...may I say one thing more
that may hurt you?
Anything.
Now that you're back
and safe in my heart again...
...the post I have given you
will not content you.
Your blood will be on fire to lead some
new command, some far adventure.
If you hear I need a general anywhere,
promise me you will not ask to go.
Is this what you wanted?
To force me into a cowardly promise?
- Are you afraid I might return in triumph?
- Not that, dearest. No.
But there are those here at court,
powerful enemies...
...who would love to see you
gone from me...
...and who would stop at nothing
to trick you into disaster.
- Am I afraid of such...?
- I asked you not to be angry.
Not angry?
When you think I can't outflank
such numskulls as Raleigh and his clique?
Very well.
Go, if you like.
Only I love you and say
what would be wisest.
The things I love in you most,
your honesty, your reckless pride...
...are the very things
they would play upon, sweet.
All I ask of you is be careful.
Surely you can do so little
for one who loves you so well.
Will you promise?
Promise.
I promise.
Now we must go...
...and talk of Ireland.
This deficit has grown
to alarming proportions.

It's now so large,
we can no longer ignore it.
What do you suggest, milord?
Either a drastic increase in our present
taxes or a series of additional taxes.
- Kendrick will not endure it.
- Milords...
...let us leave this question.
Any further business before us?
There is one perpetual subject,
Your Majesty...
...which we take up time after time
and always leave unsettled:
Tyrone's rebellion in Ulster.
It's no longer a smoldering coal. It's
a running fire spreading north to south.
- Which means?
- Men. Money. Ships.
And more than that, a leader.
A lord protector...
...who'll carry fire and sword from
end to end till there are no more rebels.
Who is this leader?
Unless I am wrong...
...a proved and able general,
Lord Essex.
Yes, indeed. Essex, Essex.
Thank you.
Essex is master of the ordnance.
I need him here.
Who else?
Sir Walter told me before the meeting
that he'd go if Your Majesty wished.
But we both believe Essex
should go with him.
In what capacity?
Leading an equal command.
Two generals, landing north and south,
meeting to crush Tyrone.
You'd have two lord protectors
in Ireland?
It was our thought
to name Raleigh lord protector.
And I under him?

Since your Cdiz adventure
ended so lamely...
...Raleigh should have
first place in this.
My C...?
- That's an insult!
- I speak for the good of the state.
You never spoke for any cause
but your own.
Stop this instantly!
Whoever makes you angry
has won already, Essex.
You'd make me swallow insults
from this bookkeeper...
...who never waved anything
more dangerous than a quill?
Well, were you not wrong at Cdiz?
That's not for you to say.
And if I go to Ireland,
I'll go alone.
Will you?
I'll have something to say about that.
Don't you see what they're trying to do?
I see what Cecil and his friends
are plainly enough:
Yellow rats who only
show their teeth when cornered.
- Essex!
- Who bow and smile and scrape...
...and spend their nights gnawing the
chairs and floors out from under us all.
Madam, this is fantastic!
- Lf we're to discuss...
- Do what you wish about Ireland.
I wash my hands of it.
That we don't doubt.
It's a difficult, dangerous job...
...so how can we blame Lord Essex
for refusing to risk it?
You challenge me to go?
Give me the men I need.
Put me in command.
If I fail to crush Tyrone, take my sword.
I'll never use it again.

- Oh, you fool!
- They've challenged me!
It doesn't matter.
You must not go.
- Don't you see?
- Of course I see.
I know that once I've gone,
they'll try to strip me here at home.
And I say to them, "Try it."
I'll go and I'll return too.
More of a problem to the Raleighs
and the Cecils than before I left.
We can hardly refuse
this gracious offer now, Your Majesty.
No.
I suppose not.
Council is dismissed.
Meet again tomorrow.
- And your decision?
- Decision's made. I go to Ireland.
Yes, go to Ireland.
And go to the devil too!
Well?
My court jester once said:
"All the best fools
come from Ireland...
...but only a greater fool
would go there."
You should have my fool's brain,
and he yours.
You'd profit by the exchange.
Thank you, Majesty.
Oh, you!
What malicious star rose in my sky
the day you were born?
You're a child in council.
I saw them draw you into this
and tried to warn you, but it was no use.
Why not win in Ireland?
No man wins there.
Ireland's been fatal to every commander
who risked his fortune there.
Even the cleverest of soldiers
would find it difficult.

But you're so dazzled
to command an army...
...that you'd follow the devil
in an assault on heaven.
That's one thing the devil
doesn't know.
Heaven's always taken by storm.
Robert...
I can't let you go.
- I'll never see you again.
- Foolish fears, my darling.

Remember this:

That when I come back
and all turns out well...
...you thought all
would turn out badly.
Come closer and tell me
everything will turn out well.
And so it will. So it will.
Do you really want to go?
Yes.
No. No.
But I've said I would, and I must.
It's not too late yet.
Remember...
...if you lose, it will divide us.
If you win, that will divide us too.
I'll win, and nothing will divide us.
Is it so hard to believe in me?
No.
I'll even forgive you if you need it.
Here.
My father gave me this ring...
...and said if ever
he lost his temper with me...
...to bring it to him
and he'd forgive me.
And once, long after...
...when he'd forgotten
and was angry...
...it saved my life.
Darling, if you're ever angry,
rings won't help.

Yes, this one would.
I'd think of you as you are now...
...and it would.
I'll take it...
...to remember you in absence.
No. Take it for a better reason.
Take it because the years are long
and full of sharp, wearing days...
...that change us into people
we do not know...
...lest you and I,
who love each other now...
...should wake some morning
strangers and enemies...
...in an alien world, far off.
You fear you'll not always love me?
No.
That you will not always
let me love you.
Close your ranks.
You know what happens to stragglers.
Left flank, close in!
Our losses are growing serious,
my lord.
Losses I expect and can understand.
It's this forever going on
after a retreating enemy...
...over these fever bogs, getting further
and further from our base.
One bold, swift advance now,
and we'd have Tyrone in a trap.
How can we advance lacking arms,
ammunition, necessities even?
The queen seems
to have forgotten us.
She's worse than forgotten us.
- There's a courier from London, milord.
- At last. Where is he? Fetch him here.
Even the water's rotten.
Come.
- Well, is this all?
- Yes, milord.
- No letter from Her Majesty?
- That's all Cecil gave.

You lie. You lie!

- Who tampered with you?

- No, milord, I swear...

- Wait, man. Don't.

- He lies, I tell you.

She wouldn't leave us here without one word from her except bare dispatches.

How am I gonna beat these Irish

when she denies me men, food, arms...

...and doesn't answer

my pleas for them?

And not a single word

from her except these.

- But you haven't read it yet.

- What?

Perhaps she...

Oh, yes. Perhaps.

Essex, what is it? Does she...?

I've endured much, but this caps all.

Listen.

"Lord Essex will disperse his army...

...and return immediately to London

to give himself up."

I'm to return to London

to give myself up.

Do you hear that?

- To give myself up!

- But why?

Why? You may well ask.

Is she in league with Tyrone?

She obstructs my campaign

in every way.

Now, when I'm to finish him...

...I'm to return to London

to give myself up.

- She's the queen.

- And I'm her subject.

But I'm a man too, which

she seems to have forgotten.

Knollys.

- Milord?

- Rouse the camp.

Have every man in.

We march tonight.

- Tonight?
- At once.
- To return to London?
- No. To smash Tyrone.
Bugler! Sound the call to arms.
Remember, my lords,
I'm not alone in this.
Your proof, let me remind you.
The queen gave you letters
to be forwarded.
If Essex did not receive them...
...Her Majesty knows
your feelings for him...
...and would conclude that your jealousy
destroyed them. Or am I wrong?
Why did I ever trust you?
You used me.
Tricked me for your own ends.
Well, I won't stand it. I won't.
I'll tell the queen.
No matter what, I'll tell her.
That we've intercepted their letters!
You've a lovely head
and neck, my lady.
It would be a pity to separate them,
but where would you find pity...
...in the heart of a jealous queen?
Sir Francis.
- You're going to the queen?
- Her Majesty sent for me.
I'll speak with you first.
- Lf it's to tell me what I already know...
- What?
Everything about the suppression of
letters written by Essex and the queen.
What do you intend to do?
I'll let the queen question me.
I'm late already.
If you make accusations
you can't prove...
...you'll argue yourself
under the headsman's ax.
- Lf the queen learns nothing?
- With us, there's no position you can't fill.

If you need an excuse...
I'll find my own excuses.
The queen loves her kingdom and people
above all men and always will.
That is the rock on which
Essex's ship will founder.
You need not trouble
about what I shall say.
You're quite a weathervane...
...always riding
whatever wind is fairest.
I am a man of sense.
Penelope!
Where is Master Bacon?
I summoned him half an hour ago.
Is this a promenade, gentlemen?
Am I never to look out
without seeing you?
- Your pardon, Your Grace, I...
- I'm weary of your faces. Get out.
Come with me.
Caution.
Once again, you force me
to wait for you.
Your pardon.
I was detained by Sir Robert Cecil.
- Are you Cecil's friend?
- I have never been.
He is a shrewd man.
He is a good man to follow.
- He would stand in well at court.
- That may be.
Why are you not his friend, then?
We're not on the same side.
Are you still Essex's friend?
Yes, madam.
- He is a dangerous man to follow.
- Dangerous?
- He is no longer in my favor. Forget him.
- Your Majesty...
All friends of Essex are going
straightaway to the tower.
Are you still his friend?
Yes, madam. Is that all?

- Sit down.
- But, Your Majesty...
Sit down.
You don't believe me. Why?
If you intended
to imprison me in the tower...
...I'd be there now
and no talk about it.
You're shrewd. Perhaps too shrewd.
If honesty were shrewd, madam,
it would enjoy greater favor.
Honesty.
If I could only be sure
of one honest voice.
Tell me...
He wouldn't,
couldn't fail me, could he?
- No, Your Grace.
- Then why hasn't he written me?
I've written him my love
time and time again.
Tell me truly, bitter or not.
Why hasn't he answered?
Have you angered him,
sent him unwelcome orders?
He's very proud, you know.
I've cut off all revenue and supplies...
...ordered him to disband
his forces and return.
To send a leader out with an army
and then to desert him...
...heap disgrace upon him.
- But before that...
...I wrote him lovingly many times.
- And he answered?
- Nothing.
Well, that, frankly, madam, as Essex's
friend, that can hardly be tolerated.
- Nor will it be.
- But I don't wish to turn you against him.
Perhaps there was
some misunderstanding.
Misunderstanding?
He had my letters, didn't he?

Didn't he?
If you sent them,
he should have received them.
He'd tell you if they didn't arrive.
You've had word from him,
haven't you?
- Yes, but I...
- Yes! He wrote you, but not me.
Or are you lying?
I think you are.
I think you lie to me.
That's it!
Lies, lies, lies!
Trapped and strangling
in a jungle of lies and deceit.
You! You, too, at the first, making me
believe you wouldn't betray him.
No.
No. I've gone mad.
Night after night, pacing my room.
Sleepless, tortured...
...saying, " He loves me,
he loves me not."
He loves me not
and has never loved me.
He thought he'd break me
by not writing.
Break me till I'd say, " I'm yours.
All that I am and have is yours.
Body, soul and throne."
That's it. He never wanted me.
He wanted my kingdom.
But I am queen still, and that
he shall never take from me.
I'm not broken yet...
...am I, Bacon?
No, Your Majesty, nor ever will be.
No, no.
No, we must follow him no longer.
See him no more, my friend.
He walks on quicksand. Avoid him.
Yes, Your Majesty.
And go now.
You have done well. I trust you.

Your Grace.

- What is it?

- A truce party, milord.

Fetch them here.

Sound the cease-fire.

- You be Lord of Essex?

- I am. What is it?

I have a message

from our general, Tyrone.

- Well?

- He has a wish for to talk submission.

Submission?

Very well, but on one condition.

That all resistance ends immediately.

It's already ceased, worst luck.

Lead the way.

You're the Earl of Tyrone?

If you like. Plain Hugh O'Neill will do.

- You're Essex, I take it?

- I am. Plain Robert Devereux will do.

You've a sense of humor,

which you'll need.

- Submission?

- Aye, submission.

You're a great fighter, Tyrone.

It's a pleasure to meet you at last.

Now, let's get down to it.

- My terms...

- Your terms.

You have a sense of humor.

It is me that's granting terms...

...or maybe you misunderstood what I
meant. I meant yours, certainly not mine.

Come now, man.

I've no time for jests.

- You're on the run.

- Oh, are we now?

The boys are skipping over the bogs
for exercise, showing you the way.

To where? Into the very heart
of Ulster, I suppose?

No, that won't do.

- You're beaten.

- Sure.

You've the whole of Ireland
before you now, but...
Take a squint at the sky.
The smoke you see, me friend,
is the smoke of your burning camp.
Your ordnance, your food
and precious little you had...
...and supplies is warming
the hearts of Ireland.
The road's tore up.
Your guides came back to me.
My guides?
They're my men.
Glad to lend them to you.
Me whole army's drawn up
betwixt you and the sea.
In short, Lord Essex, you're trapped.
Now maybe you understand
what I meant by submission.
I'll not do it while
I have an army. I'll fight.
Without food or munitions?
You'd only get yourselves
butchered or drowned.
Throw down your arms and save
your lives the whilst you can.
If I'm trapped, why do you spare us?
Am I a fool to believe that if
I destroyed you, I'd destroy England?
If we fought it out now,
I'd finish you to the last man.
But I'd lose men too...
...men that I need to fight your
successor when he comes in spring.
Throw down your arms and I'll lend you
the guides to take you safe to the coast.
And if I refuse?
It'll be your pride against the life
of every one of your men.
Come now, Essex. What do you say?
Will you not disarm?
Between you here
and betrayal at Whitehall...
...it seems I've no choice.

Then here's me hand on it...
...and a message to the queen,
thanking her for victory...
...for you're the most dangerous foe
I've had to face.
If she'd given you the support
your campaign deserved...
...without the word of a lie, man...
...it would be me and not you
that would be surrendering this day.
I'll give her your message...
...with my whole army.
The mob does nothing but cry
the name of Essex.
It was your intellect that got us
into this. We are grateful.
Don't be a fool. How did I know
that Essex would rise and revolt?
- I thought he'd be killed.
- Instead, he lands in Wales...
...rearms his men, and even now,
marches through London on the palace.
That means we're in grave trouble.
Which means you pulled down more
upon your ears than you bargained for.
One. If Essex prevails, you're lost.
Two. If he becomes
reconciled to her...
...and there are explanations about
their letters, then you're doubly lost.
I'll see her. She'll listen to me.
We've got to keep them apart.
- Make this a war between them.
- Absolutely.
Bacon is right. If Essex is allowed
to speak to her, it's our end.
Guard, right wheel.
What is this, Armand?
Her Majesty ordered
a guard for the throne.
She's holding court
at this hour of night?
- It seems so.
- She is mad.

This is no time for assembly, with
Essex leading an army on the palace.
Can't you order troops out?
There's no precedent, but this is an
emergency without precedent. I'll try.
I show myself for the first time for days
and meet nothing but glum faces.
Burghley, you at least
should be merry.
I hear you've been
attending the theater.
No, madam.
You forbid the performance
of Richard II...
...by Master Shakespeare and
his players without consulting me.
- Why?
- The play is treasonous, Your Majesty.
It shows the dethronement of a king.
What then? Are my people so easily led
that they would run from the theater...
...to pull their queen out of her chair?
Who is there here
fears a rebellion against me?
Not myself, certainly.
There are mutterings, Your Grace.
Let them mutter. Let them cry out.
When they've worn themselves weary,
they'll get drunk...
...sleep soundly, wake up the wiser.
Your Majesty, I beg you to speak
with me alone a moment.
I answered your request earlier.
If Your Majesty knew
what it was about...
I do know.
Lord Essex is on his way here.
Let him come.
I should be glad to see him.
Let him bring his revolution with him.
How long do you think it will last
when I have looked on it?
Please. There are plenty
of troops available. Let me post...

With your gracious permission,
I will not.
Burghley, stay where you are,
all of you.
This court wriggles
like a mess of eels.
There will be no troops posted, no guard,
no defense steps taken, none.
Your Grace, there's a mob
rising in the city.
It's true, I've come from there.
They've stormed Fleet Street
and broken into a wine merchant's cellar.
It's said they'll attack Fleet Prison
and set free the prisoners.
They've broken into a wine cellar.
They'll go no farther.
We're a marvelous people,
we English...
...but we cannot hold our liquor.
- But, Your Majesty...
What do they say,
these wine drinkers?
- "Up Essex, down Elizabeth"?
- Yes, Your Majesty.
Of course. What else
would they be crying?
"Up Essex. Viva!
Down Elizabeth. En bas.
The queen is dead.
Long live the king."
If I were there, I'd be crying it myself.
It has a wonderful ring.
"Up Essex, down Elizabeth."
- Your Majesty.
- Well?
Lord Essex has entered.
He's on his way.
- I've ordered your guard to hold the stair.
- You ordered them against my wishes?
I had to, Your Grace.
- They wait for your signal...
- Which I'll never give.
This is madness.

The whole town's behind him.
So I've been told.
What are you considering,
me or your hide?
Your Majesty, if we do nothing...
...both you and your kingdom
are at the mercy of Essex.
Little man, little man, leave me alone.
Stand back, milords!
Stand back, I tell you!
Let him enter.
You come with armed men
at your back...
...into my throne room,
my Lord of Essex?
- Do I need them, Your Majesty?
- You do not.
That we shall see.
- They told me you wouldn't see me.
- They were wrong.
I will see you.
State your grievance if you have any.
Myself, I have a great affection
for rebels...
...being frequently one myself.
Your Majesty thinks me a rebel?
Why, no.
I'm but come from Ireland bringing
you news of your loyal subjects there.
But you have your army
here with you.
I but bring my men home to London.
Didn't you receive my orders
directing you to disband?
Is Your Majesty aware that an army
turned loose becomes a mob?
Your revenues were suspended.
- Who is paying them?
- I am.
They're in your service now?
In my service.
Well, an honest answer at any rate.
Why should I lie?
And Ireland. What of Ireland?

I left it worse than I found it,
for which Tyrone sends you his thanks.
- Lf you'd supported my plans...
- Plans? What plans?
Am I a mind reader to know
what goes on across the sea?
- Why do you think I ordered you home?
- I wrote.
Yes, masterly letters.
Brief, to the point, wasting no words.
In short, nothing.
That's not true.
I wrote many times,
giving you details...
...asking your aid and trust,
and in reply, I got nothing.
No men, no arms, no food. Nothing.
If you gave me support, I'd have beaten
Tyrone and forced peace in a month.
You wrote me letters?
Not once but many times.
- And received no letters from me?
- None.
Before heaven...
...if our letters
have been tampered with...
...there will be heads
lopped off aplenty here.
I wish to speak
to my Lord of Essex alone.
- Your Majesty, do you think it's safe?
- Leave us, all of you!
Wait outside.
Post guards in all the corridors.
See that no one enters or leaves.
Yes, milord.
Follow me.
Robert, what did you write to me?
At first, I wrote my love.
Then when I didn't hear
from you, I wrote angrily...
...but always I ended
by telling you the same.
That I love you.

- And you?
- I, too, wrote my love.
And God keep you safe.
Then when I received no answer...
...I wrote you heaven
knows what madness...
...because I thought you faithless.
- I should have known.
Forgive me.
You never should have gone.
I hated you...
...planned to put you to the torture.
- I've been tortured enough.
When I didn't hear from you...
I...
I can't think yet.
Can't breathe.
Put your arms around me.
Can we ever believe again?
Can it ever be as it used to be?
- Do you love me still?
- I'll love you always.
Yes.
Yes, if this were false,
then I would know it now...
...and truly I should die.
You see...
...I thought...
...because I was older...
...there might be someone else.
- No one. Ever.
- You were not changed?
- No.
- No?
- No.
Yes, a little.
I think they've changed us a little.
Not I, sweet.
In spite of all those horrible months.
And though I've come back
to you in defiance...
...I really came back to find you,
who had been lost to me.
And found again.

Sweet, these few years
we have left...
...let's never distrust each other again.
- Never.
Take me, my life, my world...
...my present and future
in your dear hands.
You shall stand behind my throne...
...and together we shall
build up an England...
...that will make
the old world wonder.
What's the matter, my darling?
I must be honest with you.
I brought my army here partly
from anger, mostly from love.
What really made me do it was
something else, something within myself.
Something I can't explain.
If you had shown anger, I could have
spoken easily. It's not easy now.
Perhaps you have no need to tell me.
Loving you so well,
I know you better than yourself.
This thing. Isn't it ambition...
...a thirst for power?
- Yes, that's stronger than myself.
And deeper than love?
It's true.
The throne's yours by descent
and possession...
...but if this had been a freer time,
if people could elect...
...I'd have swept the country.
Since we're equal in love,
why can't we be equal in power as well?
- But we are equal. I have made you so.
- No.
It's still all yours to grant me
or take away as you see fit.
- Can it be otherwise?
- I ask you this in all devotion.
Am I not as worthy to be king as you
to be queen? Must you rule alone?

Darling.

You're so young in policy.

If I granted you this, do you know what people would say?

That you had forced it on me by revolution...

...and all the security and safety...

...which I have built for them through years of planning would be blown away.

Is that your reason, or is it that you wouldn't trust me as king?

No, I would not trust you. No.

You're jealous of your rights, your throne.

Yes.

So the court's in my hands, the country mine, you my prisoner...

...I must disband my army, give your kingdom back to you?

I, your prisoner?

Of course. The throne's mine for the taking.

So this is your loyalty?

This is your love?

Well, at least I know now what it was you wanted.

You shall have it.

- Your throne?

- Yes, and make the best of it.

So shall I.

What are your plans?

- I have none.

- The tower? The block?

Having been a queen, I realize how useful they are to consolidate power.

You could hardly take a queen prisoner and have no thought of her destiny.

My mother walked that path.

I can walk it too.

- You know, you're as free as air.

- I am your prisoner.

My dear prisoner still.

Let's finish with pretending.

- You neither love me nor want me.

- I do love you, and I want you.
Yes, and I want power too.
- But not without you.
- No...
...if you wanted me, would you
strike at me with an army?
No. You'd have come to me quietly...
...and talked to me as lovers should
at the proper time.
But now, no.
What you really wanted, you've taken.
This is your throne now...
...but I am not yours.
So put me where I'll do
the least harm.
That you know I'll never do.
Promise me you'll share
your throne with me...
...and I'll disband my army,
and you shall be free.
I promised.
You shall share my realm with me.
As I am queen, I promise it.
Here's the answer then, my queen.
Mountjoy.
Dismiss the troops.
Return the palace to the queen, release
the guard, send them to their posts.
- Essex, are you certain?
- All is well, Knollys.
Darling...
...forgive me now...
...and let this be our last quarrel.
- Yes, our last.
Here's heaven risen out
of suffering and pain.
My sweet.
No more talk of kingdoms and thrones.
Let's talk of you and me.
Yes. Yes, let us forget the other.
But have you kept your word?
My word?
I mean, if I were to clap
my hands now...

...whose guard would come,
mine or yours?
- Yours only, sweet. Shall I call?
- No. Wait.
I will.
- See?
- Your Majesty.
Captain Armand...
...is the palace again in our hands?
Yes, Your Majesty.
And my Lord of Essex's men?
They have gone, Your Majesty.
It has taken me many years
of ruling England, my Essex...
...to discover that a ruler
must be without friendship...
...without mercy, and without love.
Arrest my Lord of Essex.
- Arrest?
- Arrest him. Take him to the tower.
Is this a jest?
I never jest when I play for kingdoms,
my Lord of Essex.
And I trusted you.
And I trusted you.
And learned from you
that no one can be trusted...
...a lover least of all.
I will remember that.
Take care, Your Majesty.
Lest that be all
you ever have to remember.
I will take care.
- Is Her Majesty in the tower?
- Yes, milord.
She took residence in her apartment
above two nights ago.
- No...? No word for me?
- No, milord.
It's almost dawn, Your Majesty.
You've had no sleep.
I beg you, retire to your chamber
for a little rest.
I beg Your Majesty's pardon.

Yes, Your Majesty.
It was I who intercepted your letters.
They couldn't have done it without my
help. Essex, thinking himself forgotten...
...turned against you,
but it wasn't his fault.
He didn't know. It was mine.
You tell me this
because you want to save him?
Yes, yes, I do. But also, it's true.
You must believe me.
Send for him.
If it is true...
...do you realize you've spoken
your own death warrant?
Yes, I know, but it doesn't matter.
Nothing, nothing matters but him.
Penelope, come closer.
- You love him greatly, don't you?
- Oh, yes, Your Majesty.
I, too, but he has never loved me.
But he does love you.
I was jealous of you. That's why...
Jealous?
You poor child.
Because he loved you
and me not at all.
He told me so.
What did he say?
He said, "I love her more than life."
And then I warned him against you,
but he laughed and went in to you.
Perhaps I should have
trusted him more...
...but it's too late now.
No one dies happily, queen or no.
Will he send me the ring,
do you think?
There is still time.
No, not now.
This is the end.
On, no, no. You must send for him.
He's as proud as you are.
He'll say nothing.

You must send for him.
Bring him here.
No.
I shall live and he shall die.
Oh, I shall walk about
and give orders...
...for a horrible while.
But even though my heart
goes into his grave along with him...
...I will never send for him.
He must ask to come to me.
He will ask. He will.
I told you.
He has sent someone to plead.
Enter.
- By your leave, Your Grace.
- Well?
All London's outside the tower
protesting the execution.
Haven't I ears?
Can't I hear them? What of it?
The captain of the guard begs permission
to use force to scatter them.
So that's what you came
to see me about?
I thought you brought word.
Milord of Essex would hardly condescend
to plead through me, Your Majesty.
And for an excellent reason.
He could never be sure of the form
in which you'd deliver it.
This is your day, Cecil.
The snake in the grass endures.
Yes, the snake's mind is best.
To the end of time, it will be so.
The snakes and the rats,
they shall flourish...
...and those who are noble
and free of soul go down.
But, madam, if you'll pardon me,
the crowd is dangerous.
- Lf I may order the guard.
- You may not.
But I will give you a task

less to your liking.
Go to my Lord of Essex in his cell
and send him here.
Well, are you struck dumb?
But, Your Grace, Lord Essex
is preparing for execution.
- Even now, a priest...
- Go, I tell you.
Oh, Your Majesty.
Penelope...
...Look on my face.
What you see here, he will also see.
Oh, but, Your Majesty...
...you're tired and worn,
and your beauty...
Has gone...
...and left a bitter, aging mask.
I need no mirror to tell me now.
And you are young and lovely still.
And he, too, is young and beautiful.
And if he looks at you...
...and then at me...
Penelope...
...do you mind?
You must not be here when he comes.
You sent for me.
Yes.
You spoil me for death.
Wouldn't it have been kinder
to have left me with my thoughts?
Are you so set on dying?
I can't say I care for it...
...but if it's to come, why then,
it's best I go forward quickly.
You must have known
I never meant you to die.
I've been found guilty of treason.
- Treason is punishable with death.
- Robert.
Be kind to me just this once.
I am proud too,
and bitter with much cause...
...but I did speak first.
I sent for you.

Are you going to degrade me further...
...make me tell you how
I have longed for you?
You can tell me that because
you've nothing to gain or lose by it.
But if I were to tell you
that I love you...
...you might suppose I'd do it
to save my life.
You love me still?
No, you have never loved me.
I loved you.
And that was your nearest
way to power.
This is the hour for truth,
so let me speak.
I am older than you, but a queen...
...so perhaps it was natural that you
should flatter me and I believe you.
Why, yes, yes.
That's true, if you wish.
And now, may I go?
This dying sticks in my mind
and makes me poor company.
But remember this, I did love you.
- And still do?
- Yes.
Then why didn't
you send me the ring?
I'd have forgiven you everything
at any hour of the day or night.
I waited, thinking of course
it would come.
And the nights went by somehow
like the days, and it never came.
And here it is, the last morning...
...the last quarter-hour.
- Even if I believed you...
...I couldn't have sent it.
- Why not?
Because if I'd tried to hold you
to your promise and you'd broken it...
...I'd have died more unhappy than I am.
- But I'd have kept my promise.

I'd keep it now.
If I were to offer you this ring now,
you'd pardon me, love me as before?
Oh, yes. Everything as before.
And what would happen
to your throne?
My throne?
- Why, nothing.
- Now there you're wrong...
...for I'd try to take it from you.
I played for power once...
...and I lost, but if...
Listen.
Do you hear that, Elizabeth?
The people are all with me.
And if I had another chance, I'd win.
Why do you tell me this?
- Don't you know it means...?
- My death?
Yes, I know.
I only tell you because
I've loved you, love you still.
I can never accept pardon from you...
...without you knowing
the truth and facing it.
So...
...it's best I leave.
Robert, you can't.
You can't go like this.
I won't let you.
I love you.
Then are you ready
to give up your throne?
No, no, no. I cannot.
And you talk of love.
A love that clings to a tinsel throne.
Robert, wait. Listen.
I do love you. I'll always love you...
...till life is drained from me...
...no matter how long and lonely
the after years may be.
But there is another love,
greater even than that I have for you.
What's this greater love

that lets the lesser go to its death?

England.

That is my greatest
and most enduring love.

And when I think what you would do
to my country if you were king...

...I will see you dead, yes, and your soul
condemned to eternity forever...

...before I'd let you do it.

- You think I don't love England?

- You do.

But your love does not match
your lust for power.

For the greater glory of Essex,
you would make war upon the world...

...drag your country down and
drown her in a sea of debts and blood.

I had hoped, in prison...

...you would lose conceit
of yourself a little...

...for prison's very quiet.

Be content to reign with me...

...so we could leave behind us a legacy
to our people of peace and happiness.

But no.

You stayed crazed with ambition...

...and faithless to England
as well as to me to the end.

Perhaps you're right...

...and I'd have made a sorry king.

So then, it's better this way.

But this I'd have you know.

If things had been different,
you simply a woman, not a queen...

...and I a man,

with no crown between us...

...we could've searched heaven
and earth for two perfect lovers...

...and ended the search

with ourselves.

Of all the things on this earth
that I'm now to leave...

...I care about leaving none
of them but you.

Robert.

Stay with me. Share with me.

Give me the ring.

- Give me the ring.

- No.

For if I did, I'd be your death

or you'd be mine...

...and you and England must live.

Isn't that true?

- Yes.

- So then, goodbye, my love.

No.

I'm old.

I'm old.

With you, I could've

been young again.

Why can't you love me enough to

give me your love and keep me as I was?

I don't know. I only know I cannot.

Robert...

...take my throne!

Take England! It's yours!

You may loosen my hands.

I'm ready.