



The Ballad of Mary Stuart

Historical play in two acts

by Christian Lanciai(1981),
translated 2017

Dramatis personae:

Catherine of Medici, Queen dowager of France
Mary Stuart, Queen of Scotland
Lord Murray, the Queen's half brother
Chastelard, French poet
John Knox, reformer
David Rizzio, papal legate
A priest
Henry Darnley, the Queen's second cousin and second husband
Lord Ruthven with other murderers
James Hepburn, earl of Bothwell, the Queen's third husband
Earl of Lennox, Henry Darnley's father
Queen Elizabeth of England
A judge
Lord Melville
Lord Douglas
Servants and lords

The action is France (the prologue) and Scotland
during the reign of Mary, Queen of Scots.

1. Darnley

(France, before the curtain.)

Catherine Lord Murray, we must ask you to be considerate with our young Queen. In all too short a while our country has been troubled catastrophically by the deepest sorrows, since two kings, my own husband and thereafter my own son, have been taken from us suddenly, and no one mourns for them more deeply than our poor young Queen. She has been seized with shock and lethargy for weeks because of these disasters of our country.

Murray Madame, I am not completely ignorant of what has happened in the world. I only came here for to see my sister, as I was informed that it was quite all right. If there is no impediment, so let me see my sister.

Catherine Naturally. I just wanted to prepare you, that she is not quite herself after her grief as probably the youngest widow in the world. I only wished to caution you to delicacy in your dealings with her, the poor sensitive and vulnerable thing. *(bows slightly and politely and removes herself.)*

Murray She left Scotland as a girl and has been brought up here as a French Catholic. And I am coming to her with the frightening and shocking news that Scotland now has turned completely protestantic, and she is their Queen, a Catholic and brought up to be French. It might be best for here to stay her and remarry the next King of France, whom she is already related with as her own brother-in-law.

Mary (enters, young and beautiful, all in black) My brother, let me welcome you. *(offers her hand, which he kisses, kneeling humbly to greet her.)*

Murray My sister, I am only half your brother and unworthy your unchallengeable royal legitimacy.

Mary How is Scotland?

Murray Sharing your unfathomable grief.

Mary I was never left to grieve a single day alone without the entire royal world insisting on my prompt remarrying any prince or future king or emperor. I would prefer and gladly to come home to Scotland just to grieve alone in peace.

Murray (rising) My honoured sister, does it mean that you don't care about the world and all its princes?

Mary My determined mother-in-law, whom you just met, the strong-willed Catherine of Medici, a merchant's daughter, wants to marry me at any price to her next son and king of France. I wish to get away from her at any price.

Murray Will you then come home with me to Scotland?

Mary My return to Scotland would be something of a longed for liberation.

Murray Come then, Queen and sister! I will see to it that all the people will adore you, cheer you whole-heartedly and embrace you as their one and only welcome Queen! – which Scotland needs as something to put up against the growing threatening position of her cousin England.

Mary I am well aware that I am more legitimate as heir to England's throne than any daughter of Anne Boleyn.

Murray That is why you are so important to us.

Mary But I am a Catholic.

Murray That is the crux.

Mary I will return to Scotland but on one condition. No one must be persecuted for the sake of her religion. Let my land and people be how protestant they like, but may their catholics be catholic in peace, which then of course includes their queen.

Murray That is not more than reasonable.

Mary Do you think such a fanatic fool as that John Knox could tolerate me and accept my terms?

Murray He has no choice, since he is quite alone to be unreasonable among all us normal reasonable Scots.

Mary (offering her hand) Then I will come, my brother, if you will assist me in my government.

Murray It will be both an honour and a pleasure.

(He escorts her out in the opposite direction from which she came.)

The curtain opens to the Scottish court, which Mary immediately takes charge of.)

Mary Gentlemen, I have not come home to this country to rule.

I am but a woman, and women are not very suitable as tyrants.

Just watch our cousin Bloody Mary's hardly edifying way of ruling and the ways of the same country and their present queen Elizabeth's theatrical pretension and conceit! I never wish to be a Queen like them.

I only wish to be a woman and a mother to my nation who was never spoiled by any tenderness. No one did ever love the harsh and stony desert plains up in the Highlands, our hardly fertile mountain lands have raised the Scottish farmers to involuntary greed and deep and tragic isolation; and constantly our English warlike neighbour in the south since history discovered us has only harassed us and wished to own us, burnt our poor lands and has never left us any peace for very long.

The poverty of our nation has only given us more poverty, which the British always wanted to contend with us about.

I come without illusions. Do not think that I in any way can make things better: the intolerable miserable conditions of our Scotland is a part of our Scotland and will probably remain so for as long as Scotland will remain.

No, I can offer you no practical or concrete benefits, for all I have which is my own to give is all my love.

I was once Queen of France. There were no limits there of riches, circumstance, abundance, joy, and best of all:

the culture of spiritual education and nobility.

There I was loved and spoiled by all of Europe and the world,

and there was never any end to mirth and joy. As Queen of France

I lived more paradisisally than in heaven and learned everything and had it all

and was meticulous about acquiring an internationally oriented education with its view of life and of existence, nothing of which you can get in Scotland. Here you find illiterate shepherds, even poorer farmers who have never seen a book or heard a different tongue, and simple brutal soldiers who did never know a thing about the meaning of good manners, honour, virtue and nobility. In a cold and poor and harrowed land like our dark and savage misty Scotland all such spiritual matters are condemned to wither and be taken by the frost. I now come home with all the culture of the world in my possession and with a cultivated and enlightened soul of some enriched and fulfilled education to my homeland bitten bitterly by frost and snow, by wind and storm, where the cold and endless desolation of the moors can hardly offer space for the uniqueness of an orchid, who will dare to try to bloom in Scotland anyway; for it has a strong indomitable will to an insistent love which nothing and not all the evil in the world can harm, except the only thing I fear: the politics of our day. And therefore, brother, pray, be regent of our Scotland in my stead, like you were in my absence. I have no desire to be ruler in this world. I only want to love, for thereby only I believe I ever will be able to achieve some good at all.

Chastelard O goddess, you are the rising sun
in this dense darkness of the north depressed by mists!
On this forsaken Tartarus you have bestowed your light and life and honour which were never known here previously, like also art, the muses, music, grace and flair and above all: the artful dance. You are much more than just a Queen to this wild nation: you are its enchantress and its virgin mother. In your care your people have now started dancing, playing and enjoying life. They will not listen anymore to that fanatic gloomy cruel insane John Knox with his preposterous vain bushy beard, who from his pulpit merely preached about the smells of hell and inhumanity and hatred; but instead they tread a graceful dance in perfect rhythm to your honour and the delicacy of your music. I do not regret that I accompanied you here from France to such a harsher harder and less wholesome climate, since you are the sun itself enlightening the world and most of all the very spot and place which is your own. And there I will remain until it fades and is put out, for such a light I never want to lose. For what is any poet without any muse? What is he without any female inspiration? Woman is for any poet everything, and without such a supernatural adorability of the divine presence of a goddess manifested as a living woman for the poet to extol and be inspired by in following, his vein is dead and dry and only to be buried as discarded and forgotten. Only natures like yourself and your appearance in this world makes art and culture live

and gives all human creativity a meaning, life and power, since you are but love.
It beams from you and spreads its power everywhere to everyone
who only is intelligent and sensible enough to understand it and receive it.
You are the centre of the world, my goddess, for you are the core of all its love,
the sweetest woman of our age, more attractive to everyone than all the world.

Mary My poor friend Chastelard! There was no minstrel lauding me like him.
He was my poet number one, my warmest singer and my best friend out of France.
God knows it certainly was not my meaning to entice the humble artist to my bed.
There never was someone more terrified than I myself when he appeared
in my bedchamber nigh my bed, attracted by his lack of self control and eager lust.
Poor man! For that he now will be decapitated only for my sake,
because he loved me. That was not my will. It was demanded by political necessity,
this monster of inhuman fabrication, the insensitivity of which I always will abhor
and fear. I am a widow only and a queen who should according to political propriety
be married to another king out in the world, and then a poet must not come too close
and be too pertinacious. Maybe that I flirted somewhat with him.
That was irresistible, since I was only made by love for love.
But I could never guess that he would have to die for that. Poor thing!
His whole life was a song of flattery and tribute to my honour.
May that sweet heartrending ballad always keep on sounding
and be sung by bards in this for love to the extreme
so very adequately fitted wild romantic country.
But what is the trouble now brought on by that absurd old bore,
that despicable sanctimonious monster of religious vanity John Knox?
Can't you keep that fanatic to his own domain of sheeple
out of politics, which he had never anything to do with,
you, my brother, who is running all the government?

Murray Dear sister, I suggest that he may put his case to you himself.

Mary Well, let him then, the terrible ridiculous bore!

John Knox (appearing) My Queen, it is not proper that you live so openly
and frivolously in this so strictly virtuous and moral country.

Mary And what is your business with my sacred private life?

John Knox My Queen, I am obliged by my responsibility to show you what is
proper and correct for you as monarch of the country to abide by and to follow as the
rule of ethics for the welfare of your country.

Mary Are you then commander of this country?

Knox No, but I feel my responsibility.

Mary You will assume then the responsibility for that the catholics are
persecuted in this country although I myself am Catholic?

Knox I only wish to hint at some appropriate directions.

Mary No, mister preacher, I am the one who should make hints to you.

I am a woman, and that is my only crime, according to your prejudice of inhumanity,
since any woman never should be given any right to be a monarch.

For such as you all others are excluded except men from human rights,
while women are not fit to anything except to be their slaves.

(Knox wants to interrupt.)

Try not to deny your perfect and accomplished human sexual dehydration!

I propose the following. A persecutor of a Catholic will meet with the same punishment as anyone who persecutes a Presbyterian. Never shall we have in Scotland the same senseless and outrageous persecution that has ravaged England now for thirty years. This has the only legal government of Scotland now unanimously settled and decided once for all, and this you have to kindly suit yourself to, mister holy Calvinist. That's how it is. What do you think about it?

Knox You have spoken with impertinent and open honesty. Do you desire to be answered with the same kind of approach?

Mary I only ask for honesty.

Knox I must of course submit to you and to the legal order of the country with the same necessity as the apostle Paul had to submit to Nero.

Mary Avaunt, incorrigible preacher!

Knox You will hear more of me and of my honesty from all the pulpits of the country.

Murray That is, my Queen, what they call freedom of expression.

Mary I know. May he preach to the sheep as much as he may please, and may all dumbbells bothering to listen to him thereby get enough good sleep for the rest of his service. Get him out of here!

Knox (bowing) With all respect, my most impertinent majestic queen, I hereby voluntarily detach myself entirely from you. *(leaves)*

Murray He could be dangerous an enemy.

Mary Let him go on. No sense and no intelligence could bear at length with only monologues of unilaterally imbecile destructive life-denying and self-blinded ignorance. So let us just forget that senseless hopeless case to settle with more serious and relevant concerns of state. – My brother, you who think most eagerly of all that I should marry, whom then should I marry, do you think?

Murray You have, dear sister, quite a number of attractive suitors.

Mary Who then do I have to choose between?

Murray For one, we have the noble Ferdinand of Habsburg, future emperor of Austria and Germany.

Mary It would sorely grieve Elizabeth if I was married to such a most powerful man and Catholic at that! But he is such a feeble-minded hopeless bore. Who else is suing for my crown?

Murray We have the noble prince Don Carlos of Spain.

Mary Don Carlos! The most noble prince of all Catholicism and of the future world! There could be nothing that would drive Elizabeth more mad than such a marriage! But King Philip is most notoriously outrageous dead slow dealer. It would take ten years before that marriage finally was settled. Anybody else?

Murray King Charles the Ninth of France.

Mary I was married once before in that same country with his brother. I had more than just enough already of that mother of theirs Catherine of Medici, who rules them all no matter who is crowned, by her concoctions of intrigue. Who else?

Murray Those are the three of the most interesting importance – if you married anyone of them you would make Scotland greater and more powerful than England and your cousin Queen Elizabeth.

Mary In other words, all three would be abhorrent to her, and if we accepted anyone of them it would for certain drive her mad politically, which would serve her right. It would amuse us but throw the world order into war to which there hardly would be any end, since such a war would be religious and involve all Catholics against all Protestants, and also Calvinists would join to fight with Lutherans for their survival, until there would neither be left any people, princes, countries or world order any more. My brother, that would hardly be responsible of us. What does my cousin dear Elizabeth suggest herself? What candidate could possibly please her for my consort?

Murray Her choice is her own lover, that besotted cuckold Robert Dudley, earl of Leicester.

Mary Is she making fun of us? That worthless and ridiculous besotted fool, whom she herself despises for his poor performances? That cow of a conceited barren woman without love, who never can get any progeny or even have any experience of love! And she commands and dictates what the Scots shall do and what their queen must do to exercise her love! I must denounce her. She will never order me about and arbitrarily determine how Queen Mary Stuart will determine whom to love! – My brother, those three wooers recommended me are not for me. They are too well equipped like stitched by tailors and do not quite fit me as a woman. The most precious thing I own is my capacity for love, and that shall not be offered anyone and least of all to whom would be politically fittest. No, I must reserve it for the finest nobleman in this intoxicating wilderness of Scotland and the proudest savage of the wuthering and harrowed heaths, the rarest jewel of the deepest crevices shall be alone let in to the most private chamber of my heart. A trueborn native of the heather with its magic perfume in his nostrils and who is acquainted intimately with the most remote and magic lakes and dales of the most secret valleys of the Highlands way up north shall be my husband. Only such a man I honestly could truly love, whom I myself could race and only with the smallest margin beat on horseback, who would never fail me on my hunting sport up in the mountains with the poor excuse of tiredness, which only is decrepit weakness, and who will not die away from me because I loved him. Find me such a man, and I will love him earnestly forever, whatever that old spinster of a queen Elizabeth and all the world may think about it. I will not be satisfied with less. – But who is that blond blue-eyed young man over there?

Murray He could also be a match for you. It's Henry Darnley, your own relative of royal blood like you yourself, but he is really not quite suitable.

Mary Why not?

Murray He is your relative, and there are several of higher rank among your wooers who must have priority.

Mary The ignominious Ferdinand? The Spanish flower of Don Carlos withering in the sterility of that most morbid convent of a Spanish court? That poor dauphin of France dependent on the intrigues of his mother? Or the cuckold lackey favoured as a caricature of a courtier manipulated by Elizabeth? They must come first before all love and beauty in the world since they are more political? That kind of formal policy, my brother, you can go to hell with. I am after all the Queen of Scots, and in this field I must obey my own command, since this is all about my destiny. I find this young man Darnley much more suitable than any of the others.

Murray But he is your relative, and Queen Elizabeth would be infuriated!

Mary So let that false and faking virgin get infuriated. Darnley is my choice, and he will be the one, since only he has won my heart. Just look at those two azure eyes, so clear and innocent like of a saint! What beauty in the lines of his fair face, what pure angelic blondness, and what golden locks in that divinity of richness in his shining hair! And he is just like me of Scottish blood. How would I not prefer a cherub to all those poor devils stuck in the intrigues of world politics? How would I not choose the only suitor who appeals to me? He is the pearl and jewel of the Highlands. How could you in any way keep him away from me? – I take him.

David Rizzio, my good friend, write promptly to the pope, your master, and get his consent and confirmation of that our mutual blood will be no hindrance to the union between me and Henry Darnley. That old priest cannot deny us any privilege, since that young man like me is faithful to the pope. Get on with it, my dearest David Rizzio!

David I will with pleasure speed such loving correspondence.

Mary But I cannot wait. My darling noble blessed cherub, I am overwhelmed by your good graces and your beauty. I am blinded by you and must be allowed to love you. Never have I seen more beautiful a youth than you. – Has not the pope provided any answer yet?

David Not yet, my gracious Queen.

Mary We cannot wait. Come on now, bring us a good prelate who can marry us! The papal blessing must come anyway sooner or later, he could not refuse the prime opponent against protestantism and Elizabeth his unreserved support, since my cousin is a queen on only protestantic grounds; from a catholic viewpoint I am more legitimate and legal queen of England than herself, since she is born a bastard, while I never got a stain of birth by the falsification by adultery. Her mother was a whore at court, that lady Anne Boleyn, which truth the catholics are well aware of, while the protestants are claiming that the truth is all untrue. So what are we waiting for? The papal permit is self-evident, it is arriving, and we do not have to wait for it. So let's get married, and at once!

David I have sent for a priest.

Murray This is not legitimate. My sister, this is most improper.

Mary I don't care, since everything in love without exceptions is allowed.

But you could never understand that, since you never had a trace of love in all your body.

Priest Whom were I supposed to marry?

David Our queen here with her second cousin.

Priest That came of a sudden! Is then everything in order?

Mary Everything is perfectly in order.

Priest So eager was not even Alexander nor the first great Caesar to get crowned, but here I seem to see the opposite, like Cleopatra, hasting to her self-destruction. Well then, I must then declare you wife and husband until death once and for all will separate you, in the holy father's name and in the son's and also in the holy spirit's name, who oversees it all regrettably in silence. I had better leave now quickly not to get mixed up in any more intrigues and not to see too much of what is going on. (*leaving*)

Mary My Henry! Now you are my husband. How will I not love you! I will give you everything. As you are now my husband you are also legal king of Scotland, and our children will inherit the Elizabethan throne, since she herself can never beget children.

Darnley Just imagine! I am king!

Mary Yes, besides me king of Scotland.

Darnley But are you not just a woman? Could then Scotland have two monarchs, and could any woman be a king? No, only men are fit enough to rule, and you are just a woman. So give over all your governing to those who know that business better. I will prove to you that I am worthy as a man. Let's first drive out all those incompetent and miserable regents from the country who can't rule, like Maitland, Murray and the others. They cannot co-operate with us as those heretic Calvinists they are! And let's decapitate that poor old fool John Knox! We must at last bring on some law and order in this country!

Mary Have you then forgotten me? Will you not love your wife, and will you not reward me for all that I gave you by my love?

Darnley I didn't ask for it. No, all my passion and determination is to rule! I want to live at ease in splendour pulling all the strings so that the puppets of the clans will jump and dance around the country. What do I care about what you call love? No, power is my only lust and love. Your kind of love is for pathetic sentimental and impossible old women; only men are qualified for the administration of responsibility and power. Woman is too weak and soft, while man is always hard and strong and powerful. I am but glad and grateful for that you would marry me because that gave me all the power over Scotland.

Mary You conceited fool and upstart, cheap deceiver and impostor! Nothing is more dangerous to any man than if he dares to hurt a woman! I, who gave you everything, have now been kicked out of your way. I gave you all my love, and you just pissed it off. I gave you all my heart, and you tore it asunder, throwing off the rest like some besmirched and dirty rag, which you would not use even to dry up your own evacuation in my room with! Nothing is more dangerous to any man's

advancement than that woman whom he unashamedly and purposely insulted. If I gave you everything, I also will take everything for certain back.

Darnley No, my darling wife, no wrath, please! Let me keep at least my title as the king of Scotland, and I will be fully satisfied.

Mary You imbecile deplorable and hopeless idiot, do you think you could be spared by any woman whom you did not spare? No more can I forgive you than I could forgive myself for trusting such a base and vain and ignominious fake and failure of a nobleman! You are nothing, and I do not know you any more. My Rizzio, you shall now instead of Darnley be my chief advisor. All responsibility and offices that Darnley could not manage shall be yours now for your management, for you have never failed me. You are well balanced with good sense and are not blinded by delusions. All the powers that my husband got by marrying me and which he boasted of abusing, shaming me to all the world and even more himself, shall now be yours, for you are reasonable with a sound detachment. I can trust you as completely incorruptible. The title only, which he yearned for with such vanity, will he retain, but there was never such a proud and sovereign title with such hollowness as his will be like a black hole of nothing. That weak heart of wax shall be despised and scorned and mocked as any muck of floppy jelly, which is all there is to it.

Darnley My Queen, I kneel to you in humble abject servitude debasing myself in humility to you by crawling on the ground! Just take me back! I love you!

Mary No, you don't! It is too late. You have forgone your opportunity, and there is nothing left for you but to shut up. You are no man and even less my husband. I don't know you. If there's anything you want, then turn to my chief chancellor and secretary David Rizzio.

Darnley That blackguard! That effeminate cad, who only knows the handling of a lute, like that unbearable ridiculous and sentimental womanizer Chastelard!

Mary My Rizzio is my ace of diplomats and actually the only one of any diplomatic quality. These hardened rough barbarians in kilt have never known how to associate with strangers except with swords. For that our Rizzio is our foremost diplomat and indispensable as such, since we have no one else.

Darnley That miserable blackguard!

Mary Is it envy that I hear?

Darnley And justified, for envy of that kind is what is generally known as jealousy!

Mary Well, well, I never have known Rizzio that way.

Darnley But you have given him all power in this country, and you turn to him for daily company, while I may never see you any more!

Mary And that should please you. After your ungrateful answer to my love, it would not do you any good to see me.

Darnley But you loved me!

Mary Yes, I did, to my sincere regret forever. Don't remind me, please.

Darnley But I am still your husband!

Mary Yes, I know, which I will not be able to forget, since you have made me pregnant. Poor that child, and that child's progeny, if ever there will be one, with a father of that sort!

Darnley Are you then certain that the child is mine?

Mary Whose could it be if not your own??

Darnley That lackey David Rizzio's!

Mary You blaspheme!

Darnley Do I? We shall see when it gets born. If it is dark and murky in complexion we shall know the father and the mother to be an adulteress!

Mary Will you give me a miscarriage?

Darnley I am desperate about it and just want you back with that sweet power over Scotland which your love implied and gave me. You are lawfully my wife! I own you!

Mary Never could you own another's soul. Many are they who believed they did, yes, most of them commit that terrible mistake which couldn't be more fatal, but you never shall know me again or own my body, Henry Darnley, and I wish to God you never did! The more you wish to own me, the more difficult it will become for you, the more revolting you shall be to me, the more I'll loathe you like a poisonous disgusting reptile stuck in its own hole of stinking rotten mud. Forget that I did ever love you, Darnley, and I might get over it myself. There's nothing that I rather would forget. I will forget it for the moment now at least with my relaxing company of music at my evening banquet with the lutist David Rizzio. He at least can play the lute. You never could. (*leaves*)

Darnley So that is how it is! Let's see who is the strongest! I am still a man who knows how to apply a sword and without scruples, contrary to every weakened miserable softhead of a woman! If I cannot get what I desire easily with regular consent, I must use violence to get it. So then, die, my rival David Rizzio! (*draws his sword*) My wife and queen must not have fun in private with another man than me! I am in my own right as king of Scotland and am not to be humiliated! (*sheathes his sword and goes to the soirée of the Queen.*) My wife, you must not sup alone without your king!

Mary I never heard such words from you before. Sit down, then, join the party and enjoy the company! There is enough of everything, the wine is good, so is the food, and there was never better entertainment.

Darnley Do we have to listen to that dreadful music by that singer of false notes?

Mary My husband, you were never musical at all.

Ruthven (*appearing suddenly, pale and red-eyed*)

Mary Lord Ruthven! I thought that you were dying!

Ruthven My Queen, I must request your secretary Rizzio to immediately leave your presence, where he has been present all too long.

Mary What do you mean? Are you out of your mind?

Ruthven I must have satisfaction! That unbearable black foreigner has publicly for years now violated Scotland's honour and the Queen's!

Mary (to Darnley) My husband, are you involved in this?

Ruthven My Queen, by intimacies with this papal legate you have much offended all of Scotland with all its nobility, and among others your own brother lord Murray, whom we demand that is returned from exile and dishonour!

Mary You dare accuse me? Servants, throw that maniac out! He is neither sober nor accountable! *(Servants try to force Ruthven to get out.)*

Ruthven The first who touches me is dead!

(As by a signal, suddenly a whole gang of murderers rush in.)

Rizzio (clinging to Mary's skirts) Help! Help! They want to murder me! Justice! Save my life! *(The murderers drag him away from there.)*

Ruthven Die, you infamous and cursed foreign bastard!

(They slaughter him, and blood spirts even on the Queen.)

Mary This is nothing less than a rebellion and an assault against the Queen's own life! And it is carried out here in my chambers although I am pregnant since six months!

(The murderers drag out Rizzio, finish the job and vanish.)

Darnley Die, David Rizzio, for you are in the way to me and in the door of my wife's bedroom! You must not protect her against me, for she is married only to myself and to none other and is therefore mine! She never shall belong to anyone but me! I own her, no one else does, and I am the king of Scotland!

Mary Help! Help!

Darnley No one helps you any more, corrupted infamous adulteress! Now you are mine, like all of Scotland must belong to me!

Mary If only I could die!

Darnley If you could die! You'll die when I am finished with you – not before!

Mary Think of the child! Do not abuse me!

Darnley Yes, the child, the blackguard child with Rizzio! That's what you think of! If it's dark it would be best for it to die within your body, like a worm and larva in its chrysalis, before it flies and proves a parasite infecting others!

Mary You make me miscarry! I feel the coming pangs of labour already approaching! Murderer!

Darnley Keep quiet! No one hears you! All Scotland has been bribed.

Mary My brother even?

Darnley Yes, even your own brother.

Mary What an evil and infernal murderous night of hell! If only I could never more return to life! I only want to die! From now on I will only die. I see my life becoming constantly a path of ever steeper and more difficult descent directing me to finish in abysmal darkness of an endless bottom of a black hole without end. I hate you, violator, murderer, who more than anyone has harmed me and for life, much more and deeper than Elizabeth herself could do! All I can give you now is to be spitting in your face!

Darnley Is that so wise? Should you not think of politics, as that sharp queen you are of talent and intelligence? Should you not think of reconciling, so that matters don't get worse? Remember: Europe and the world are watching you.

Mary They will get tired soon enough of you, though.

Darnley Not as long as I have not grown tired of you.

Mary Well, be my husband then, since you have violated me. Be king and master of this country, since you took the life of my one only faithful friend and minister. So be yourself in all your glorious magnanimous simplicity. Reach greatness as a politician and dig your own grave as such, which all great politicians do. But you must leave me now in peace for the remaining night, for me to sing a dirge for my friend David Rizzio, the only man I could rely on in all Scotland, who was not blinded by his own confusing passions, who was not guided only by his egoism, the only man who was not mad from pettiness, self-limitation and desire.

Darnley No, you never more shall be alone. I will not ever leave you any more. Do you not understand, that it was only out of love of you that I agreed on letting him be killed?

Mary Yes, love of power, love of empty titles, love of the presumption of the vanity of ruling, love of all that makes a man inhuman. Now it suits you to confess your guilt when you think you can get your power back with your position, buying it from me by that false price of love, which in your mouth is like a stinking toad of poison. So you believe and think you love me? No, you are just dependent on me. That is all the truth. You cannot sing, and when you saw me listen and appreciate a man who knew the art, you let that man in petty envy be assassinated and in my most private rooms in front of my most intimate and closest friends at a most innocent and peaceful banquet! And he was not even armed! But you let in a dozen knights by my back secret door, which only you could use and know of as my husband; and when these at your command dispose of that impeccable man's life they are not satisfied with that but have to flay and hack him to irrerecognizability and massacre the innocent poor diplomat, so that they in their bloodthirst even wound each other, smearing my apartment with the blood they spread all over, so that they must be refashioned with new roof and have new tapestries! And while this happens you assert your innocence and don't know nothing whatsoever, as if you were taken by surprise; and now you claim that you yourself for love of me was actually the plotter of the crime, the crudest and most godless, cowardly, unjust and the most brutal murder that in Scotland ever was committed! Get away from me, before you add to all your crimes my own miscarriage and the murder of your son and heir! If only you and your accomplices had taken my life at the same time! Now I must live on with this most undeserved and bloody memory stuck heavily on me for life. Get out! – Alas, my Rizzio, who can I now trust? Where shall I find a friend? Is there a man left in this sliding world into perdition now when Rizzio is dead for a deserted queen to trust? He was unique in being wise enough for constancy and neutrality. Fifty mortal stabs by daggers – such exaggeration was not even Caesar's – was the salary for diplomatic neutrality and his deal striving just for doing right and good. I

never met a Scotsman giving him my trust without his going nuts like Darnley out of pure megalomania.

But there must be someone! Who is all alone is dead. But first I must escape from here, for I am more or less imprisoned by my husband by his crime. He has cut off all my communications, padlocked my own bedroom and forbidden me all contact with the outside world, which no queen and even more no woman can accept. Look out there in the courtyard where the corpse of David Rizzio lies thrown out with carelessness completely without piety, like some brute carcass of an animal left to the flies and crows to be consumed as slowly and disgracefully as possible, a sordid sludge and twisted bloody muddle of minced meat and clots of blood, a prey and victim to our world's politics! But that coarsely massacred and violated heap of meat is not my David Rizzio. That so brutally annihilated desecrated body thirty meters down below from here, thrown out to everybody's shame and scorn and terror, is the life of Mary Stuart with her love and honour and above all her loud screaming crying mortally and tragically bleeding heart! They did their best to cut out all my love by violence forever. They have violated mortally my entire being and destroyed my life of tenderness and feeling. There is nothing left of my emotional affectionate and sensitive original good nature of just empathy and love. What is there now remaining? Nothing but revenge. And do I still have any love left to continue generously sharing? We shall see.

Come here, my husband.

Darnley Yes, what is it?

Mary I fear greatly a miscarriage. I must have some care. Find me a virgin to attend on me!

Darnley That sounds precarious indeed and awkwardly most inconvenient. How would it look like to the world if she miscarried now upon my staging of the rough political and brutal murder yesterday? I doubt that history would give me any honourable testimonial. – My lady, you must not miscarry. That must absolutely be avoided. Tell me, dear, what can I do for you? Come what may, but never a miscarriage!

Mary My husband, for you are still my consort and father of the child, and we have once for all indulged in our marriage and fulfilled it – I dare now not be alone, after such terribly upsetting scenes! I beg of you to stay with me.

Darnley Shall I remain with you?

Mary Is that too much to ask for? Is that not the least that you could do for your own wife, when she feels haunted nastily by insecurity and nightmares?

Darnley If that could eliminate the risks of a miscarriage, I will gladly stay with you. I will do everything to comfort you and lull you into sleep and sound security. Of course it was a dreadful crime committed here and without warning and outrageously before your very eyes, but I was innocent. You saw yourself that I did not take any part in it.

Mary And who were then the guilty ones?

Darnley The others, all the nobles. I will tell you all about it. I believed, you see, that you had something going on with that musician, for that was what I was told by slandering friends. They spread most terrible and wicked rumours. Tell me now: what is the actual truth? Did you not ever really know him?

Mary Yes, that is the truth. He never made advances, and I also never tempted him.

Darnley Then he is by my soul completely without guilt and murdered without right!

Mary What an ingenious and brilliant conclusion!

Darnley Hear me, Mary: I will honestly atone for this. I must admit it was a gross mistake. Tell me what I can do for you.

Mary To start with, you could get me out of here.

Darnley But what about the Scottish barons who now guard the castle and who murdered Rizzio?

Mary Husband, you must understand, that you can't serve two masters. In its dark political reality the world is evil. Only love is good and can resist it, and that love is I. You follow me and love me, or you serve that madness of politics which here murdered a most innocent musician just because love trusted him. The love I speak of now does not have anything to do with passion. No, the pure and soothing love I speak of is but purity and freedom, grace and decent living, virtue, truth and justice. I am representative of it, and that most precious love alone I wish to serve and spread abroad. I want to cure that passion governing the world with ruthlessness and making it so rotten, evil and corrupt. Are you with me and with my love, or will you be the slave of the political and evil madness of the world?

Darnley I will not live without your love. I must believe in it.

Mary Then you must first of all help me escape. Those murderers who massacred pure innocence must needs be punished, and I am the only one to implement that justice, which I only will be able to in perfect freedom. Therefore you must help me out of here.

Darnley I will help you escape, against all lords and powers of all Scotland, and the world will give you right against them. I will dare my life and everything for you. I am your slave for now and ever. I will lay myself into the mud pool just to let you cross in safety without your feet getting dirty. I will spite the world with you. I do not care what it will give me in return. Perhaps I will one day in even more outrageous brutal manner than poor Rizzio be ignominiously murdered, but I do not care. I have you, and I stand by you on your side and will never leave you or abandon you or your most unassailable and sacred right. For you are the impersonation of the perfect human innocence, integrity and beauty.

Mary Thank you! Listen now. We have one ally, that most able colonel Bothwell. He is waiting for us out there in the freedom of the wilderness of the dark forests. We must find our way to him.

Darnley I follow you, for I am yours, but where? Into a constantly increasing darkness of a fate unknown. For every step I take I get the more confused for feeling

at a loss, and wherever I go my path gets only darker, and the only light I see in all my life is you. I have no choice but in servility to follow this one fading light into a constantly more suffocating and impenetrable darkness. I am yours and follow you, for I have pawned my soul and life and honour in your care. You brought me out into this terrifying wilderness of nowhere and the destiny of the unknown, but I feel safe as long as your most lonesome light keeps tempting and alluring me to just go on as long as it remains to guide me. And your light alone makes me aware of and to see how dark the darkness of this world now actually is. But in equal rhythm with your progressing light is also darkness constantly becoming blacker and more threatening in compact evil to my gradually fading and for every moment more abandoned soul, as if it was already lost forever...

2. Bothwell

Mary Dear James Hepburn, earl of Bothwell, you have never failed your Queen, your duty or your honour. You have served your monarch and your church in every weather, and you are the only man in Scotland whom no man could ever bribe. And in addition you are strong and hardy like the most resilient cliffs and mountains of eternity. You are of iron, and there's nothing that can challenge your position or your influence and power and your personal authority. You are the only fort in Scotland that has never fallen to corruption or the gold of England. All the lords have now escaped for you and with them all their own dishonour. Therefore I now dare to lay my life into your hands as probably the only real man in all Scotland and the only one for certain that I feel that I can trust. But you must never let me down by failing me in faith and confidence.

Bothwell I will try to do my best, madame.

Mary Thus speaks a servant honestly of humble trust, who never fails his sovereign or leaves his post. Dear Hepburn, you cannot imagine the extent of how I am fatigued and bored to death by that pathetic Darnley, who unfortunately is my husband and whom I can never be divorced from. No man caused me more dishonour, harm, my heart's blood's bitterness and sorrow than that man. In a most clumsy awkward piteous effort he tried to convince me that he was my only true and legal husband by in my most private chambers at an innocent nocturnal banquet with twelve ruthless lords commit a brutal murder on my secretary, the man who was the most indispensable as minister and politician and a papal legate in addition to my government, and that in the most brutal, bloody and horrendously inhuman way. In my own presence – I was then with child – they stabbed their victim with no less than fifty knives, while my own husband kept me pinioned and would not let me interfere. One of his villains kept his pistol aimed at me and at my heart, and he would certainly have used it even, if not one among the other ruffians had turned it another way, condemning me to a continued life but in the sign of humiliation, grief, dishonour, sorrow and misfortune. Only you I still have standing on my side who

never fell to baseness. You are the most stable and impregnable of castles in our Scotland and perhaps the last and only one. You are the only one who now can help me keep some law and order in our country.

That detestable and coward weakling Henry Darnley! He is now the fool of Scotland. James, you should have seen how he helped me in my escape from Edinburgh! The night was dark, and we went stealthily out of the castle through its stinking dungeons side by side, although it nauseated me to the extreme. He clung to me, and every time there was the fluttering of bats around and rats kept rattling, he escaped into my arms with terror of the awesomeness. When we came out into the cemetery, there was David Rizzio's body still unburied, lying bare beside his open grave, and when we came up there poor Darnley was so scared, that he, the senseless murderer himself, was shocked and scared out of his wits and almost fell into his victim's grave, more paralysed and terror-struck than if he had met death itself. There is a pending sharp and deadly sword of Damocles in constant wait for the blameworthy murderer's, my husband's head prepared to cut it off at any moment, and how eagerly I wait for it to fall!

Bothwell Why should be so difficult to make it fall? That weakling has himself put his head on the block.

Mary It will fall off one day all by itself. For every day I cut more bonds with the decrepit fool. There are but few that still unite me with him, and when they have broken he is dead. My child, his child and England's heir as well as Scotland's, my boy James is happily brought forth, and I have made and persuaded Darnley to in the cathedral swear to be the father.

Bothwell But who is the father?

Mary I have never felt another's limb inside my body than my poor pathetic husband's, which condition is my life's regret, sincerest loathing and abomination. I have wished to God that I was a dried out and sterile virgin like Elizabeth, my cousin and poor sister! Motherhood is definitely every woman's consummation and her only actual bliss, but that can be destroyed and poisoned if her partner is unworthy. There is only one bond actually that now connects me to that parasite and reptile, and that is his necessary presence at our boy's baptismal. After that I will be better off without him, that poor devil, my life's parasite of the first class. I never can confront him without seeing David Rizzio's blood all over him and dripping from his face and from his greedy hands, which do whatever whim comes on his mind without consulting brain or conscience. How can such a once so beautiful, ideal and noble man become so absolutely despicable, worthless and corrupt?

Bothwell From lack of manliness.

Mary Yes, he is just a child, sometimes I feel guilty fearing that I spoiled that child myself. I didn't have to force that mentally bankrupt and harmless fake without a character to swear in public that he had no part in Rizzio's brutal and atrocious murder. I was not compelled to ask him to dig his own grave.

Bothwell But that is what he did with your help or without, or did he?

Mary Everyone in Scotland from the elders of the heaths to every tiny child in prison knows he was the only instigator of the murder. Everyone knows that so well, that such a public declaration by the executioner must definitely turn that rabbit into the most despicable and dishonourable execration in the history of Scotland. As a politician he is finished and forever bankrupt. He is dead already with his coffin ready made and a waiting grave already dug, which he will fall into if only you give him the slightest push, and he will topple over. – Yes, what is it?

A servant Lord Darnley sends his most sincere regrets but is unable to attend at the baptismal.

Mary Cannot come to the baptismal of his son? What does he mean?

Servant He wants to spare himself all further humiliations.

Mary As if he could be more humiliated and dishonoured than he is already! As if he had any honour left to lose! That funk! He dares not show up at his only son's, the future king of England's baptism! Like his own godmother, that Elizabeth, he won't come near or touch the boy, who will become our future's most important man! Well, well! The entire world is here, the consuls of the pope, of France, of Spain and Savoy, the supreme nobility is here of Scotland and of England, but the father will not be humiliated, and the godmother declines as well, as it's below her dignity. Whom shall we then put in their place at the high seat of the occasion and the final banquet?

Bothwell Your majesty apparently has no one else but me.

Mary Can you then play the part of the dishonoured father and the barren godmother at the concluding summit of festivities and still remain yourself?

Bothwell You'll have to try me.

Mary Well, then! Be my guest! You hereby are invested with the office of the organization of festivities and the master of ceremonies. Let that be my challenge against all the fake political establishment: I still dare trust my favourites and favour new ones! I am still my own as Queen and still far from alone. Stand firm, James Hepburn! You have not yet seen your first defeat, you stand on your own ground as that man of an iron character you are, the opposite of Darnley, and shall never see it either. You will stand beside me at this solemn feast of joy before the eyes of all the world, and how will not the world discuss it! I rejoice at the mere thought. Still triumphs Mary Stuart in her happiness to all the world of love and grace in spite of all her setbacks, while the godmother Elizabeth and that blockhead Darnley sourly sit and sulk pissed off in their own closet stools in impotent and dreary loneliness.

(They go out, Bothwell escorting Mary to festive ceremonial music.

Then they come in again.)

Bothwell The party is over. Now it's time to request my salary.

Mary Your salary? Did I promise you a salary?

Bothwell The entire world has seen us together.

Mary So what? They all saw me as well together with Chastelard and Rizzio and regrettably also with Darnley, but you are none of them.

Bothwell But I could become.

Mary What do you really mean?

Bothwell I maintain the law and order of the country with my iron energy and my most powerful effort, every common farmer is more afraid of my ruthless guards, who only take order from me, than of God. All Scotland is quiet in my iron grip: you'll never fear any rebellion again. I have subjected the nation so that even the preacher John Knox has swallowed his tongue. And for my services I would like to have some kind of a salary.

Mary What salary do you wish for? What office do you still desire?

Bothwell I want neither titles, land or money. There is only one thing I desire.

Mary Which is?

Bothwell Yourself.

Mary I can't at all understand what you mean.

Bothwell You dare not believe that I love you?

Mary Beware! Love is not to be trifled with and Mary's least of all!

Bothwell If you can't give me my salary voluntarily, I have to claim it by other means.

Mary You can't break your Queen's marriage with Henry Darnley. I am still his wife and he my husband.

Bothwell No one has more eagerly than you yourself made an effort to break that bondage. Your last bond to him was that his presence was demanded at his son's baptismal. He didn't come. That bond does not exist any more, and you have punished him for not coming by promptly giving amnesty to all his fiercest enemies and collaborators at the murder of David Rizzio, those very brothers he betrayed to you.

Mary I must warn you: to love me could mean a similar destruction for your own part as what happened to Rizzio and Chastelard and also probably will be the end of Darnley.

Bothwell I ask not for the future. All I want is now. You are the Queen with major letters, you are love with a capital letter, and you are the only woman of importance. You are the loveliest song in the world. I want to join and be a part of that resounding ballad. Don't tell me now that I don't love you.

Mary I am not free to give myself to you. I am married to Darnley.

Bothwell You stick to the greatest disgust in your life to avoid getting me into trouble. Would you not love me? You run away into politics to avoid initiating me in your love, and still love is all what you are. Well then, I can also make political manoeuvres if you want, and against them you and your love will be as powerless as peace against violence. If you don't want to give me the salary I desire – your love – then Scotland will be in rebellion tomorrow. As your trusted factotum I hold the whole country in my hand as in a screw-vice. In a few days, if you please, for I am your favourite who only holds the power you yourself gave me, I could drown all Scotland in blood and transform it into an incurable chaos of suffering, crime and misery forever. If you refuse to give me the salary I want, then I will have to give you mine.

Mary Would I then not love you? You are the wild indomitable and unmanageable flaming beauty and freedom of the Highlands. You are the barbaric Scottish ruthlessness of the wilderness of nature in all its adorable desolation. I love you like I love this wildly beautiful country of vast mountainous savagery. You are the wind-tortured heather of the heaths which charms and involves every heart in the most soothing and comfortable dreams of only truth and beauty. You are these mountains, these cliffs and secret valleys with their deepest concealed secrets and most clandestine mysteries. That I love you like this poor and hateful country with ecstatic commitment mixed with boundless and downright hatred I cannot deny. If you still wish this love, I must warn you that it might cost you your life.

Bothwell It's more important to commit oneself than to live, as the sailors say. What is my life worth against the grace of deserving your love?

Mary So love me then, Bothwell, but do it with respect. Be the romantic savage I dreamt of all my life. Take my life if necessary, but never become weak or coward, never lose your sport, for that I never can forgive. Never disappoint me as that fallen angel Darnley, who will never rise again. If you can fulfil that only one condition, I am yours.

Bothwell All Scotland trembles at my name. Would such a name smear Mary Stuart? I will do all right indeed, and this your salary shall I a hundred times and a hundred times again make myself deserving of, as truly as I love you, woman.

Mary Now am I for the first time as loved as I did always love myself. For the first time I can completely give myself to love, as I was never loved before but only used. I always loved, but only he has loved me, and for such a love, as I at last have been rewarded for my own, I easily could sacrifice whatever, everything and all my life. What's honour, power, wealth, position and a throne to such an ecstasy of happiness? What is a world of wealth and riches to just never more be lonely any more? What do I care about my honour, conscience, greatness, culture and my reputation now that I have gained this treasure greater and more precious than all glory of the world and God? I easily could do without my friends in world politics, if I only may retain my lover. I forget my enemies and will instead encourage them for his sake, wish them only well and next to him embrace them with my love and tolerance. What is my name? An empty title, just a formula of history, a parenthesis in the annals of some dates and without consequence as contrary and in comparison with Queen Elizabeth, who only reached her greatness by her impotence. All that is mine, my name and world and life, I'll gladly sacrifice of only it will be to his advantage. For he only dared, was able to and really loved me. His shall be all greatness and all power, he shall be the terror of all haughty politicians in my name, as he by me shall challenge and put all the world to shame, and I shall be his faithful servant and his most obedient lackey. I shall dress up as a man for his sake and never hesitate to sleep out in the wilderness under the naked sky as outcast without any home or peace if necessary. For his sake my sole desire is to live on in humility and tender simplicity to serve his heart and whims. I liberate my back from all responsibility to only carry him, and even all my virtue I will do without. I sacrifice

my all and most of all myself just to be whole united with my lover, as my soul and life belongs to him. I am now nothing since I found at last a man worth loving. Yes, my dearest, kill my husband if it pleases you, since he is anyway already dead. A push is all that's needed to remove him to his grave as finally proved out of any worthy or existing life. You have my blessing whatever you may choose to do, if only you will do it just to own me more.

Bothwell It will be a relished pleasure to me to remove that odious parasite on both our lives and on the Scottish nation, like an obstruction to our breathing through our noses. That sick dog shall presently be buried without howling any more. She only has to trust me. Now to business. Swiftly must the rival be removed with subtle and discreet efficiency, for every day that he remains an obstacle to me and to my purpose, which is the complete control of Scotland, he will only grow a hindrance worse for every day. I am already the Queen's lover, and there are those who already know about it and keep whispering about it, which must not have any consequence against my marriage with this Queen, which marriage only can take place with Darnley dead and gone, and therefore that's how it must be! He is the only obstacle to me and to my progress, as nothing except he can hinder me from getting crowned the King of Scotland as the husband of Queen Mary Stuart, which I must be whether she accepts my marriage to her or not. What do I care about this most erotic lady and her being? She is just a woman like all others. It is only the queen's title and the royal power that allures me, urging me to fight for her. They say she is the sexiest queen of all. What do I care about her previous lovers except for her decrepit husband? For my part she may have any number of reserves just like myself, as I did always keep alternatives. Her morals, expectations and sentimentality is of no concern of mine, since all I want is just the royal crown, which only she can give me.

Mary What's he saying? Has he deceived me and been bluffing all the way and faking all the love he gave me? Was he only interested in power and the crown? Has he seduced me, used me and abused me like so many others? I should have been more careful not so easily take love so seriously, but now it is too late. I am a fallen woman and to him. If only I could die! That's now my only life's desire from the day that I gave way to the most skilful rapist in all Scotland and its most invincible victorious seducer.

Bothwell My Queen, your husband is ill, and nothing could drag him here where we could cure that infectious bladder. He doesn't want to leave his mother, but he must die! And we must get him out of his sewer, so that we could finish off and bury that rat of pestilent intrigue once and for all, but there is only one who could allure that hare into the trap, and that is his beloved wife, whom he still loves heartrendingly and is more sentimental about than ever.

Mary So I should cheat my husband into some kind of a terrible and certain death trap? No, that's not for me. I won't go any further.

Bothwell Madame, you just have to.

Mary Who or what could force me?

Bothwell Your own destiny. Am I not your lover, who has all your country and your people in my hand? Could I not have you killed and give your country and your people over to Elizabeth in just one battle, like in stamping out a flea? You are no longer on your own. You have given over all to me, and you must now obey me. Your own love has made you slave to me and to your destiny, and I shall marry you. You cannot do without me. Without me your people would drive you out of the country and depose you. With the generosity of your so affluent love you have produced too many scandals and cannot afford another. Politics is now your master, and it forces you to do my will. The sooner we are rid of that impossible and beardless Darnley and we then can celebrate your third and ultimate marriage, the sooner you will have your peace with all the country.

Mary You want to marry me?

Bothwell Yes, you shall marry me.

Mary I married twice already, which was twice too much.

Bothwell I do not care. It will be one more time.

Mary And if I refuse?

Bothwell Then you are sacrificed and all the country put at stake. I can still love you. You are well aware of that and cannot live without that love.

Mary My poor husband! I myself tricked him into the abyss. His life has turned into one interminable anguish, and he would fain die than find it even worse. May I then for a last time soothe him and give comfort to his heart with false pretensions and illusions about happiness, security and joy in spite of all. One last time I will lure the poor man into my motherly arms to make him feel and to enjoy his vanity of the fake title as the king of Scotland.

Bothwell Which will soon be mine.

Mary To be even falser in your care.

Bothwell That's for myself to settle. Just entice your husband to your care. That's all for you to do. You will not be complicit in his liquidation. You will only soften it and make it comfortable for him. Do so, and then leave the rest to me, and I will leave you both in peace.

Mary Can I believe you? Can I at all trust any human being? Can there be the least of good in anyone who lives for power?

Bothwell There is no one in this world who could support you in maintaining your position, giving you the love you cannot do without, since you are but a woman. And that much I know of woman, that she sacrifices anything for that true love she once has tasted. So will you as well. You have no other choice. By your own love you have been led into some hopelessness of a blind alley. You are cornered, and there's only me who can protect you against all the dogs that keep harassing you. Just trust me and believe in me, and everything will end but well. I am the last one who would wish you any harm.

Mary You haven't caused me any harm so far, I must admit, as contrary to Darnley, with whom I have not yet settled my accounts for his iniquitous and base assassination of my first most trusted minister and favourite musician David Rizzio.

Bothwell But now the time is come to settle with your enemies and their accounts, now more than long since due, that have to be adjusted finally by force.

Mary What monster I have turned you into by my love!

Bothwell A most efficient monster in that case, for I will gladly have my way and force my right to the extreme with violence if necessary, totally uncompromisingly and without any bad dreams or considerations afterwards about it. Even you must be as hard if you desire to keep your office.

Mary Believe me, I'll do it only to avoid more trouble and atrocious inconvenience than what I can cope with. It's a lesser evil to let Darnley be the victim to your vampires. I will sacrifice my Darnley and be married to you, if you only will let Scotland have their peace.

Bothwell That's fair enough and to my satisfaction, and to prove my pleasure I will keep your country in most perfect order, if you only will fulfil your promise.

Mary For the sake of Scotland I will grant your wish and one last time love Darnley, although it will be his death.

Bothwell The main thing is his death. The means have no importance.

Mary Darnley, darling, here I am, your loving wife and mother!

Darnley Could it actually be true? Am I awake? No, I am just hallucinating.

Mary No, it really is your Mary, your own wife, the mother of your only son.

Darnley What do you want? Did you not once for all forsake me? Didn't you and more than anyone want me to die? No one was so deceived, betrayed and shamed as I by whom I was too foolish not to love. And now you will not even let me die in peace. Will you once more deceive me and now more than ever? There is nothing for you here to seek but my destruction.

Mary Dearest Henry, I just wish to care for you and nurse you. I don't wish to lie here alone so far away from court. Come with me home to Edinburgh! You shall there again enjoy and meet your people and receive their homages. Your crown is there and waiting for you, for you are the only king of Scotland while you live. Come with me to our court, which once again shall be your own! Look, I don't loathe you any more. You are no longer exiled and forsaken, my poor infinitely beloved boy! All is forgiven you, and all the harm you did to me and others you committed only in the ignorance of youth, you did not know yourself what you were doing. I will once more be your wife. Alas, that I, who only wanted love, so badly did succeed in loving my own husband!

Darnley Don't come near, and do not touch me! You might be contaminated. I am not as beautiful as once I used to be, since, as you see, my face is full of small pox.

Mary What do I care about that? Each putrid stinking bladder I will eagerly and gladly kiss to make it vanish and be healed for good, or let me be contaminated and be ruined in my face in the same way! I want to love you, Darnley, for the first time really and forever.

Darnley You are not my wife. You are my mother. Well, my mother, take me back to our home from which you drove me out, and let me die there by your very bosom. That's my only prayer and last wish. I give you leave to kill me, that's perchance my

destination, but just let me die by you and at the bosom of your heart, for you're the one I loved, and I did always love you. Never did I feel desire and true love except for you. I was a king but will renounce that title gladly just to die for you. Take me wherever you desire. If you were my murderess I would be faithful to you anyway and love you.

Mary My poor boy! You never did become a man and will not ever be. You did never grow hair on your breast or chin, and you should really have been born a girl. You faulty man of many wants, who easily was broken by the faintest breath of Highland wind, you are my husband still and will remain so until death will end your helplessness, which is your suffering. And until then I shall remain your loving wife. For strange enough, you were the only one succeeding in bestowing on me the supremest bliss that women know: the beatitude of motherhood and childbirth, and for that I voluntarily will follow you down into the dark pit and abyss of despair which I unhesitatingly myself did throw you into. I can see it now for my own part opening wide without a bottom, and I have come here to soften the hard fall and make the crushing hit so merciful and soft, so beautiful and mild as possible a landing.

Darnley You speak as if you couldn't be more certain of my death. No, it is not that dangerous, my darling mother. My infection is not mortal, I can still get well, and we can once again be happy as a man and wife, and I shall prove more manly and mature than heretofore. I know, I have behaved like any unforgivable and puerile scoundrel, but remember I am only twenty years, and you yourself are not yet twenty-five. Forgive me, please, and don't condemn me for how much I hurt you! I will be a better man in time and outgrow all my vanity. One day I will be man. Still happiness is possible for us. I will be smart in following your hunts and sports and not so soon be tired. We shall ride together in the mountains galloping across the moors and cliffs in frenzied speed and fury across any brooks and rivers and if need be swim across each running stream, and we shall jump all crevices and waterfalls. I will be a better comrade, but what it is it? Are you shedding tears?

Mary You wander so heartrendingly in your imagination.

Darnley And think no more of worldly strife and battlefields and its politics. We can still together tangle ourselves out of their deceitful spider's web, which is the only dangerous and fatal trap for souls there is. We can get rid of Bothwell and the other demons of the military, who believe more in their force and power than in love. We shall drive Bothwell from his soldiers home to his since long so patiently expecting wife. Man is in safety only with his wife, and only there he can't do any harm, where he can take it easy in improving and increasing assets and his health, keep well and keep away from all temptation and perdition, like I will get well myself now as I may return to home and wife, my mother and the ruler of my life, yourself, my queen of lovability. Do you love me as I love you, pray tell me, please? I never loved you more than now. Your visit here is like the shattering of any stormy sky, which in the middle of its blackest furious darkness suddenly admits some light and peace, enlightenment and hope for all the world. Not until now do I believe in

life again. Not until now do I believe that I can love again, and now for serious. You are still in tears. Say, you will surely bring me safely back to Edinburgh?

Mary It is my duty to my country and my people, to myself and most of all to you to do so.

Darnley So when do we leave?

Mary Tomorrow.

Darnley I long so eagerly back to my only home, which is the court I loved so highly. Still all isn't lost. With your assistance we will win back all the lords that after the assassination scandal never knew me anymore but by despising me. You'll see! I still will grow to some maturity and competence and worthiness to my position. I have suddenly grown up to all that I by my own fault lost in bad bargaining and business but will now regain thanks to your help. I think that you now for the first time can rely on me. But you're still crying. You are tired. Poor my Queen! You have been riding all the way from Edinburgh in speed and without any rest at all during the way according to your normal habit. You must have a rest now.

Mary Yes, I actually might need to bring myself together for a while.

Darnley It's a humble cottage which you visited all by yourself. No one can serve you here except the simplest farmer maidens. There are no court ladies here to curtsy and to treat you carefully according to your dignity. But to me you are more of a queen now here than in your highest splendour at your royal castle in your chambers of festivity. You have tried to reduce yourself to but a woman but succeeded only in becoming the more queen-like. Kiss me, mother mine, good-night, before you leave me to the sweetest dreams I ever dreamt.

Mary I will gladly kiss you. Now good-night. You are on your way home.

Darnley I hope it will become my final journey and my last return to that beloved court which I would never wish to leave again whatever happens.

Mary We will go together.

Darnley I will get well in your good company. Now I will fall asleep to carry on my ecstasy and happiness in dreams beyond this world.

Mary You will sleep better than myself.

– James, here I am now bringing your defenceless victim.

Bothwell Do not bring him here.

Mary What do you mean?

Bothwell He cannot stay here at the castle.

Mary Where else should he stay? He is, you know, the king of Scotland. May I carry him to Stirling?

Bothwell He must not be seen in any habitable castle.

Mary But where should I bring the poor man?

Bothwell There is outside the walls of town a desert and decayed chateau which empty and abandoned should be more than suitable for him. There he can sleep in peace.

Mary But how do we get there?

Bothwell Follow straight the Alley of the Thieves. He will as closest neighbour have one of my closest allies. There he can lie in his own dirtied sheets, his stinking sweat, his dangerous contagious disease and his disfiguring disgusting pox. He will not hardly be aware himself of where he is in his delirium.

Mary May I not on any terms give him a decent place of rest?

Bothwell Never! He must never more be seen to be a king. All the country and its people, all the world and everyone who any time have seen the doomed one now despise and loathe him most unanimously: anyone will leave the room he enters. He has not a friend left in the world.

Mary May I nurse him though there in the alley of the Thieves?

Bothwell Just nurse him as you please. It suits our politics. Be faithful to your husband as befits the Queen and to his last breath, so that no one will observe you are my mistress. May you to the end patch up and wipe his toxic bladders so that we as soon as he is dead can marry presently.

Mary To sleep in such a derelict disintegrating hovel way out in the wilderness is hardly fitting for a king no matter how much of a helpless patient he is. I will continue sharing his last nights, though, as the king he is. If I have failed him so far and been more than faithless, I will during his last days care more for him than anyone as long as I remain alive. – My Darnley, how is it with you? Can you endure your terrible disease?

Darnley With ease, as long as you are here to care for me.

Mary You will soon leave this terrible unworthy hovel. It is temporary a solution only.

Darnley It's the finest palace in the world as long as you are with me.

Mary So it is for me as well while you are sleeping here and we can be together. I would rather live and follow you right here than live alone as I did over there in Edinburgh in that old castle.

Darnley Never did you speak like that to me before. Since I fell ill you have like stooped down to my level. Never did you humour me like this before except before our marriage.

Mary Believe me, I regret that now.

Darnley What is the reason?

Mary I can't tell you. Try to be content with that I sleep here in your house and by your side as long as you are tied up to your sick-bed here. I'll never leave your side again.

Darnley I am indeed content with that, for there was nothing more I ever wanted. It's for me a bliss supreme, and more than that I cannot even dream of and much less even approach in my imagination. If only you abide by me I own the entire world. And do I not get notice that the world again observes me and respects me since you have come back to me?

Mary Yes, all the lords of Scotland are your friends again.

Darnley And soon I will be well restored completely. May I then come back to court?

Mary Of course. As soon as the last ugly traces of your illness finally have left your body to be healed, you shall come back to court and to your castle.

Darnley It is Saturday today.

Mary Yes. There are wedding celebrations at the court tomorrow. It's my two most faithful servants who are getting married, which is why I must attend myself.

Darnley Cannot the wedding be postponed until I could attend myself?

Mary It's all prepared already. Postponing it would only be interpreted as a bad sign. But I will still try to come here during the party just to visit you one last time.

Darnley Why one last time?

Mary Before you are returned to Edinburgh, of course.

Darnley Will you then stay the last night here with me?

Mary No, that night is the wedded couple's and reserved for them. The last night you will have to be alone. But you will surely go to sleep while I'm still here.

Darnley I'll never sleep again until I am at home at court in Edinburgh! May I not move there and come home at once? The wilderness of nature here, the darkness of the night and that wild neighbour often frighten me to death.

Mary We can't get you to Edinburgh until the wedding's over. Try to manage and endure till Monday.

Darnley Who are 'we'?

Mary Me and the court.

Darnley I fear that devil Bothwell.

Mary So do I.

Darnley We must get rid of that bloodthirsty bloodsucker as soon as I arrive in Edinburgh.

Mary Yes, you shall be rid of him on Monday.

Darnley Have you already organised it?

Mary He has done so by himself.

Darnley But how?

Mary He digs his own grave, into which he also drags along his followers. On Monday he will have committed his most heinous crime, which destiny will call on him for judgement for its despicable outrage.

Mary Do you love him?

Mary Darling, now you wander. Sleep well until we shall meet again soon. It will soon be Monday morning.

Darnley I seem to live like in a dream. Is it already Sunday? I thought it still was Saturday.

Mary For history time is no more than just a turning of a leaf and no more than a line on any random page. Its victims, who are only human, hardly get the time to notice how most cruelly history is treating them.

Darnley So is it now then Monday morning?

Mary Yes.

Darnley And you have celebrated now today your servants' wedding?

Mary Yes, and therefore I should now return to court. Sleep well, my husband. We will meet again for a new dawn of a tomorrow which will no more know of any suffering.

Darnley That sounds most reassuring. But this night that will pass before my rebirth as the king of Scotland on its throne in Edinburgh at your side in the castle will be my life's longest night, like an eternity, and what will make it so eternal is my longing to get home to you in safety.

Mary You will fall asleep for certain anyway, I'm sure. Farewell, my poor dear husband.

Darnley Will you really leave me now? You make it sound as if I already lay in a grave.

Mary From which you will be resurrected already tomorrow.

Darnley I believe your word as more than of a Queen.

Mary Farewell.

Darnley Until tomorrow and the new world which will have a new beginning on the other side of that black abyss which this night's eternity will be to me – and then no more farewell never again.– Alas, she left, and now I lie alone on this abhorrent rack of tormenting disease surrounded by the terrors of dark fright and anguish, suffocating me to death by its sheer lack of presence of whatever life and hope I ever had. She wouldn't even leave me properly with any farewell kiss! I never knew her, that most enigmatic quiet lady, but the more I loved her just for that mysterious unattainability. I never could succeed in understanding anything about her. Only God knows what she thinks; we mortals are too simple and restricted in our minds to understand the subtlety of a true woman.

Mary Now he belongs to you.

Bothwell So queen Iseult has left her Tristan to abandon him to death. Well, there's nothing that could please me more. It's about time. My comrades will now get free reins. Your Judas kiss, my Queen, will have its ordinary consequences.

(A sudden explosion. Darnley with his bed go up in smoke.)

Mary What on earth was that?

Bothwell I think it was some kind of an explosion. *(enter a servant)*

Servant Your highness, that hut that housed Lord Danley has with the force of the bombardment of two dozen cannons suddenly blown up!

Bothwell You can't be serious!

Servant All that's left is charred remains with smoke and ashes!

Bothwell And Lord Darnley?

Servant His fate is unknown if he was still there in the house. In that case he like all the house has gone to cinders and irreognizability.

Bothwell But how could this have happened?

Servant Here are the lords now, who would ask for some kind of an explanation

Lord Melville Your grace my lord James Hepburn and earl Bothwell with your majesty, all Scotland has perceived this night how Henry Darnley, Scotland's legal king, has perished in a terrible explosion so resounding, that it will continue being

heard in all the world. We have some questions and now wish to know: what could have caused such an explosion, and why did the King, who even was affected by a serious illness, lie in such a most unroyal hovel?

Bothwell My honoured gentlemen, as well as you yourselves, we cannot have any idea whatsoever about what could possibly have happened. Only since Lord Darnley was affected by the pox, we dared not have him here as a contagious source at court, but we had still intended to have him transported here and on this very day, and then this happens! What an accident! What a most unheard of tragedy, disaster and catastrophe! Who could have foreseen such a terrible calamity! And look at the affected Queen! As her entire world has crumbled into pieces, she can hardly stand upright on her two legs at the delivery of this most fateful news destroying her existence, like an earthquake rocking and destroying the foundations of her entire world! This is too much for her! And she was there, just a few hours since! What an outrageously upsetting and surprising shock!

Melville You must admit, however, that this gunpowder explosion only could have been prepared, premeditated and well organized with some suspiciously meticulously planned precision.

Bothwell So it was a planned attempt at an assassination! That makes the whole matter even more outrageous and incomprehensible! What Scot could possibly so heinously have planned a murder of his king? I promise you, my gentlemen, that this must be investigated and most thoroughly. You must be satisfied with that for now, for we have had no sleep tonight for this calamity and national disaster. This your Queen, your elevated sovereign above all worldly and revolting matters, has been brutally awakened from her sleep to have to face the news that her most loved king and husband so extremely brutally and suddenly had been blown up! You must allow her to retire, and myself as well, who as the chief responsible authority for national security am no less shaken and upset by this so overwhelming tragedy of violence. I ask you, begging your consideration of the Queen's condition, to excuse us, worthy gentlemen. *(The lords bow their leave.)*

Are they gone now? No one is still standing out there listening? The coast is clear then. Good! The road to our future opens gloriously to us. The planning worked like a machinery of absolute perfection! Now all that remains for us to do is to get married and as fast as possible, and then the power and the happiness of Scotland and the future is all ours. No one dares to say a word against us while I own the power of the country. They shall not even be able to discuss whatever could have happened to that knave Lord Darnley. The last hindrance to our glory and success is happily removed. Now you can marry me and thus give me all power over Scotland. What have you to say, my honoured Queen? Are you not happy? Why then are you silent? Say something then, you godforsaken lady!

Mary What am I to say? Should I extol you for what you have done and for your handling of this matter? Should I feel completely free now to in public throw myself into your arms and to the mercy of my husband's murderer?

Bothwell Desist immediately from calling him your husband, who was no more than a parasite on all your life. I am your husband and a better one from now on.

Mary Yet he is still there.

Bothwell What balderdash is that? You have got rid of him, and now it's me you never will get rid of!

Mary Neither will you, James, yourself ever get rid of the poor victim to your towering ambition, even if you marry me legitimately and become the king of Scotland.

Bothwell You must be out of your mind, my gracious lady. What has Henry Darnley more to do with us? He is quite dead and once for all and ever!

Mary Try convincing someone else about it.

Bothwell Well, it is of no importance whether he is dead or hangs around like some kind of a ghost. What matters is your loyalty. Will you continue to be loyal to me even after our murder?

Mary Dare you call it ours?

Bothwell Dare you call it someone else's?

Mary Was it not completely yours?

Bothwell If it was anyone's it was your own, since you agreed as being sovereign and chief responsible as monarch. You could never put the blame on someone else.

Servant (enter) Lord Murray is here.

Bothwell Knock before you enter, fart of pestilence! I have been waiting for him. Show that blackguard in. – (*cordially*) Lord Murray, you are welcome.

Murray Why have you called me here? My sister, have you anything to say to me?

Bothwell We only wondered if you would have anything to say to us.

Murray And what would that be?

Bothwell Don't you know what's happened?

Murray I know nothing more than anyone else.

Mary You don't reproach us for the accident with Darnley?

Murray No more than anyone else.

Bothwell You dare express yourself with some suspicious innuendo. Out with it, you plotter! What is your heart's meaning? Are you on our side, you villain, or are you our enemy?

Murray I would as little be your enemy as anyone else would.

Bothwell In other words, you dare not take any position?

Murray Like each ordinary person of good sense, I would not have any opinion in the matter.

Mary So then you keep silent about what you really think.

Murray My sister, if I may I will be frank, if I may speak alone with you. Let Bothwell go, and you will hear your brother's honest view of things and his advice, based solidly on many years' experience as practical administrator of this country...

Bothwell Treason! Anything you say to her can also be digested by her only friend!

Murray Earl Bothwell, I am unable to speak with you.

Bothwell But you are speaking to me!

Murray Well then, let me make the matter clear: I must refuse to speak with you.

Bothwell May I ask why?

Murray Because, quite simply, I don't want to.

Bothwell Finally an honest word! Well, what will you then preach to her?

Murray A word of warning.

Bothwell Let us hear it.

Murray There is no one, sister Mary, who knows how or why your husband died, but everyone suspects that truth which, if anyone but whispers any word about it, will become immediately most dangerous. And therefore every Scot with any faculty of reasoning will please to keep his silence, which includes myself. You both will meet, whomever you may choose to ask about this thing, in all your country just a solid wall of silence. Every Scot will be exactly as indifferent to the matter as they see that their queen Mary Stuart, you yourself, dear sister, evidently pleases to adopt as her own attitude to what has happened. They will let the poison of the truth work out in silence. That's the resolution and most sensible decision of each Scot who minds his freedom. May whoever knows the truth and has a part in it live with it if he can at length. For my part I don't care about what's happened. It does not concern me if there will be no investigation, if Lord Darnley hastily is shuffled down to earth without a trace of any royal funeral and without any autopsy or coroner's report. I don't at all care how he died, if he was strangled, knifed or poisoned or just died by that most comprehensive detonation. Those who know something about it claim the body's face was black as if by poisoning, but even that I will not comment on. And thus each one who knows that Darnley now is dead will reason. Live as well you can now that he is thoroughly dead. No one will interfere in your affairs of life. You are completely free. Perhaps you'll take for granted that the graves will keep their silence, but not even that I will give any comment or opinion to...

Bothwell That's enough! What have you now to say, Mary, to your brother's statement?

Mary What he says is true. My country and my people have observed my passive reticence and notorious indifference to my king's and husband's death, and thereby they know all. But at the same time they are prudently so understanding to their silent queen, that they just follow her example and like her is silent. But in that indifference there is in its quietness a deeper sorrow than what tears could possibly express. I feel it, and I think that also my own countrymen are well aware of it, which is why they keep silent. They feel like myself, the crowned queen and thereby all of Scotland, that by what has happened it has lost itself. Whatever has become of Scotland now on this most heinous royal murder that the world has ever seen? What is the queen now after she herself has murdered her own king and husband? Just a grave, a shadow and an abyss without bottom of incessant grief and a black hole to fall into forever just to perish into nothing...

Bothwell Silence, you incorrigible gossip! Pardon our Queen, my good lord Murray, she is not quite normal now, as you can understand, because of her upsetting grief...

Mary No, I will not be silent! I will sing out loud! I cried for long most bitterly at my first husband's grave, the sickly second Francis, king of France. I carried my black widow's veil for well over a month with constant heavy tears of honest grieving and most painful lamentations, as my life's first marriage thereby hopelessly went into nothing even without having been fulfilled, for Francois was just a boy, and I was no more than a maid; and in addition thereby I lost France, which I as queen so much enjoyed of being just the queen. Such sorrow bearing heavily on me at the young charming king's death you can only bear once in your life.

But it occurred a second time that I was stricken by an overwhelming shocking sorrow as my servant David Rizzio before my eyes was cut to pieces, flayed alive and massacred by savage beasts of men, which was a worse experience than only grief, for it was not endurable as a humiliation, and the instigator of this crime was my own king and husband, thus subjecting me to some annihilation of my soul by downright violation. I could not give vent to normal grief on this occasion, since my grief had been exhausted already in France. Instead I started to feel hatred, and my hatred was a flaming fury without end. It spouted from my heart like a volcano against first of all my husband but against the lords as well and even against my own solemn brother, the impeccable and noble lord James Murray, who will always stand aloof and beyond all occurrences of evil but who for some reason always seems to know about it all before it happens and does nothing to prevent it, but will always side with those in charge of the atrocities as the political smart guy and genius he is. Not even he was quite without some part in David Rizzio's death, the only incorruptible, reliable and honest man in Scotland. I did never love that innocent and noble artist but still grieved for him more than for even my own king of France.

But then my sorrow was no longer tears but boiling hatred without limits. Now my second husband also has met with a violent death as merely a youth, and I know better than his murderers exactly how it happened, since I was the one who brought him to the very house wherein he found his cruel death. I was perhaps the last one to have spoken with him. I had hated him for certain and had reason well enough for brooding on revenge, but still it wasn't hate that brought me to his side towards the end. No, it was only pity and the opposite. I knew too well that he was bound to die, for that had been decided by the powerful in office, those who only think politically. I had never any power since I never wanted it. You both know well that politics of power is the very worst thing that I know and that I always only sought the peace and grace of love. I therefore neither could prevent my husband's death since I was without power. He is dead now, and my grief for him seems to be non-existent, but I make no show of any grief I feel, for all the tears were long ago exhausted, and my hatred is consumed. I am in my passivity actually dead, for I have not the energy to hate and cry more in this life. All I can feel is bottomless despair much greater and more infinite than any grief can be. I do not hate you, Hepburn, for I can't bear any hatred any longer. I don't hate you either, brother, since my hatred long ago was bitterly transformed to paralyzing emptiness. No one shall ever have me for his

enemy, for all my enmity has been consumed by grief, which is so heavy that I can no longer bear to torture me by feelings.

May the world and Scotland and my own despise and hate me for this scandalous indifference to my own husband's death, which seems to prove that I am far from innocent, which I admit I cannot be, and may they even judge me. I don't care myself no more what will become of me and where my destiny will lead me after this. (*exit*)

Bothwell You must excuse her. She is not herself after the most incomprehensible and grievous incident.

Murray I fear there is a curse of some implacable implementation hanging heavily not over just my sister but for all of us and leading Scotland to a tragic destiny.

Bothwell If there is any such imagined ghost we certainly will have it cured!

Murray And do you really dare to marry her?

Bothwell And who will dare to stop me?

Murray No one, but fate has executed all who came her all too close.

Bothwell If destiny has the audacity to come too close to me with any interference, I will deal accordingly with destiny.

Murray I wish you then good luck but with no great conviction. The anonymity of destiny has already put up posters in the streets of Edinburgh accusing you of murder of the king.

Bothwell What kind of posters?

Murray Accusations at some persons for the murder pointing most of all at you yourself. They came up silently during the night.

Bothwell That is a challenge we immediately will answer! Myths are only for debunking! Come here, Mary! Come right over here, I say!

Murray You should leave her alone.

Bothwell She is the queen, though, of the country. Is she not responsible? Is this not then a matter of the state security? Come back here, Mary!

Mary What does my unquenchable controller want?

Bothwell There have been posters in the alleys of the capital!

Mary So what? Why should some posters bother you?

Bothwell Explain it to her, Murray, since you are her brother.

Murray There are posters in your town accusing your own servants Bothwell, Joseph Bastien and others in your service to have murdered Darnley.

Mary How should that concern me? What do you wish me to do about it?

Murray It's your duty first of all towards yourself to clear the charges!

Mary With this Bothwell as controller by my side? That's quite impossible. You even do not dare yourself say anything against him. I cannot plead innocence, he isn't innocent, my servants are not innocent, there's no one innocent who ever had something to do with power in the country. Not even lord Murray is completely innocent, and that's why he dare not accuse us. So what shall we do? We can't escape, and only Bothwell here is man enough to put up some defence. He will immediately mobilize all armed and stalwart forces against any effort of his destiny to quench him. He will already tomorrow lead and sit in charge of the most legal and

meticulous investigation of what's happened, which he will see to it that it must acquit him thoroughly on every point. But my poor hapless servants will have no defence. We really are all stuck in the uncompromising web of our destiny and cannot get away from it, which we are all aware of who are good at heart. The least thing I can do myself about it is to save my servants' skin. It might affect and compromise myself, but I don't care, as long as they are saved. They will be rescued by myself tomorrow out of Scotland.

Murray Don't you see, my sister, that there's nothing that could harm you more than so to compromise yourself! You must to save your honour sacrifice these servants who are compromised beyond repair! How else could you save your own face?

Mary Did I not tell you that I do not care a whit about myself! We are all trapped. If I can save the least out of the web it shall not be neglected. May I be decapitated. I cannot lose more anyway than I have lost already of my honour and my life, my soul and my integrity. I have once and for all lost all myself and with me all of Scotland. Can you by some trick and more political deceits and black intrigues get anything of Scotland's honour back? No, nothing can you do with even the most furtive means. You can just raise the stakes in order to lose even more. The only thing we can do for our honour is to voluntarily take on our guilt and punishment.

Bothwell She's crazy!

Murray Yes, she is, upon my soul! You cannot deal with such demented politicians.

Bothwell Calm yourself, lord Murray! We shall manage more than well the government of this our country anyway into the future.

Murray Yes, there is no question about that, but to what kind of future? Who knows about that? What can you do with even means of violence if you don't have a goal?

Bothwell My goal is Mary Stuart for my queen.

Murray And do you really think that you could reach that goal?

Bothwell I can indeed and will!

Murray Then you are mad like her. There's nothing that will compromise you more than if you are together after such a most revolting outrage!

Bothwell Compromised to whom?

Murray To all the world! To Europe and the pope and Spain and France and maybe most of all to England, to whom nothing is more pleasing than misfortunes and outrageous scandal tragedies of Scotland! Queen Elizabeth, that ugly barren hag down there, would nothing more desire than to swallow Mary and our monarchy with all our freedom live with all we ever fought for.

Bothwell I don't care a damn about Elizabeth. I'm only after Mary.

Murray You are as bewitched by her as all the others, blinded by her so called love!

Bothwell I am too proud to not deny it. For her sake alone did I commit the murder of Lord Henry Darnley.

Murray Hopeless fool! You race with her into the abyss!

Bothwell No, I only race for happiness.

Murray There is no such thing, at least not in the world of politics and power! My sister, only you can do something about it. It's not you who are the slave of this eccentric wild and raving buccaneer, but he has been enslaved by you, and only you can hinder that you both are lost together. You must act immediately to get this scandal sorted out of history.

Mary Shall I then like Elizabeth be witness to a crime committed by another for my sake and then for show stage an investigation with the purpose only to get nothing out of it and least of all the truth? Shall I become a false pretender and eternal hypocrite like this fake virgin bully out of England, who is living and maintaining her position at the cost of truth? No, never can I mask myself to history.

Murray But history will certainly demand it. Here is now the Earl of Lennox, your own father-in-law, the king's own father, and he will not easily be silenced, since he is in touch with Queen Elizabeth.

Lennox Your majesty, I must have justice!

Mary In which matter, father Lennox?

Lennox My own son, the legal king of Scotland, has been brutally assassinated, and no one does anything about it! In the streets of Edinburgh the names of the assassins are cried out, made public and spread wide abroad by posters all over the world, and no one will bring them to justice!

Mary Who are then these murderers?

Bothwell Just you dare to mention them!

Lennox All the world has heard their names except yourself. It's first of all the Earl of Bothwell...

Bothwell You will never get me into court, you bastard!

Lennox ...and they cry out David Chalmers, Balfour, and the Queen's most faithful servants Joseph, Bastien and others.

Murray Those last mentioned are no more in the country. They were smuggled out by our Queen.

Mary Is she not mentioned with the others as a murderess on those anonymously written posters?

Lennox (with a bow) No, against the victim's wife, the Queen herself, there is no accusation. But in her capacity as monarch and the chief responsible for order in the country it must be her duty to drag Bothwell and the other compromised to an impartial court of justice.

Murray You hear, my sister and my noble lord.

Mary You hear, lord Bothwell. You cannot abscond but must be tried.

Bothwell So, I must as an accused be prosecuted and stand trial! Well, lord Lennox! Throw your glove at me as much as you may please! There will be tens of thousands who will eagerly accept the challenge and not let you come away from Edinburgh alive, if you appear in court there to accuse me! I hold all the country in my fist! Each fortress, castle, garrison and company of soldiers of the Queen I hold the keys of in my hand and am commander of them all. Who dares to face me with an accusation?

What befuddled idiot has so much sense that he would dare to bully and command me? Who commands and rules the absolute dictator of all Scotland? May he without fear step forth and face me eye to eye, and I will strangle that decrepit beggar in his own most bloody guts.

Lennox A higher court of justice will be needed here for an appeal. I call for Queen Elizabeth!

Elizabeth (entering in full majesty) Yes, faithful Lennox, here I am, but I'll be brief. There is just a few words I wish to say to my own cousin and my sister Queen of Scotland, Mary Stuart.

Mary, if you let law and right and justice lose to violence you are no longer worthy to be Queen. If right is not respected and allowed to have its course, and if the guilty are not punished, you are done for with your crown. You cannot make your love and passion more important than the law without your being judged yourself to lose all legal rights as queen. That's all I had to say. Take care, and heed my warning!

Mary You have never loved. You cannot love. You do not know what suffering is. You do not understand my helplessness to destiny and Bothwell.

Elizabeth You can manage and take charge of your own destiny, if you will only handle it.

Mary No, since I am no more than just a woman.

Elizabeth Then you have resigned and given up without a fight and without reason. Die then and go under with your crown and honour, poor defenceless creature, who can't sacrifice your love to power and the welfare of the state with the security it must needs have for a necessity! You are not wise.

Bothwell Abominable spinster, as the general in charge of Scotland I must hereby warningly forbid your interfering with affairs of Scotland. Hereby all communication between you and her is cut forever. Everything you write to her must in the future go through me. All letters coming from you to the Queen of Scotland shall be opened from now on by my security and read and carefully destroyed. Get lost now from this stage, and don't come back, unless you wish to fight! There! Thus we have got rid of among guests the most unwelcome of them all! What is it now, lord Murray?

Murray I just wish to bid my sister my farewell.

Bothwell Why so?

Murray Since I will go away.

Mary Dear brother, why then do you leave me?

Murray You know that perfectly well. The air of Scotland has been poisoned by an heinous crime which no one will atone for. I don't want to witness what will happen next. I go to Venice just to get away from this unhappy turn of fate for Scotland.

Mary So you leave me when I need you most.

Murray And always in the effort that you finally should learn to take some care and manage by yourself. I always leave you when you turn on dangerous paths, but you don't seem to want to learn to change your course before it is too late, when you

can only drown in your own trials. I don't want to see that comedy of a fake trial which your friend will shame all Scotland and its jurisdiction by.

Mary Please stay, my brother. Only you can save me!

Murray No. As little as I can save Scotland, I can save its Queen my sister. We are all the victims of the same implacable and heavy fate of our present history. I cannot save you since you cannot save yourself, and you know why you can't. I have to let you down, my sister, I am not the monarch of this country, but you are and will remain so and forever. Fare thee well.

Mary You were my only true reliable support.

Murray I must think also of myself and Scotland. You think only of yourself, and I do not want to go down with you.

Mary Then you are hard, my brother.

Murray No, not hard but only hardy. Fare thee well.

Bothwell So there he left. Now we are rid of that pedantic bore. I will fulfil what justice rightfully demands, co-operate completely and be at the full disposal of the courts of justice. I will bring four thousand soldiers with me just to make it sure that justice will be made. Well, Lennox, will you be there as my prosecutor?

Lennox I know you too well, and since, in contrary to you, I may bring no one with me to the court, I would prefer to stay at home and keep my head upon my shoulders. I will send instead someone to represent me.

Bothwell Well then, gentlemen and representatives of justice! Give me a fair trial and be good enough to judge me fairly. If you don't you know what is expecting you: some thousand sharpened swords to let you of some blood, which only will do you a lot of good, to start with. But if you will judge me fairly with full justice, you know also what's expecting you: rewards of farms and lands and gold and privileges, titles and protection from above. Well, what do you say to Darnley's father's representative, who has the gross impertinence to foolishly accuse me of the crime of having touched a hair of someone's head of innocence?

Judge We find, that since the prosecutor has declined to show up here in court, there is no ground for any prosecution. And as there is no prosecution the accused must be absolved from any blame or guilt in the mysterious and most incomprehensible upsetting death of Henry Darnley, to which cause we have not found the slightest lead or clue.

Bothwell Complete release and victory from any charge, in other words! Woe to anyone who dares to utter any accusation more against me for whatever accidental murder! With clear evidence it is too obvious that I have been proven absolutely innocent forever and to history! Now we can marry, Mary! Nothing stands in our way! And you, Lennox, should be wise enough to never show your face again in this our country. You are not desirable. Is that understood?

Lennox I shall escape to save my life, but I shall also work on my return and then have something to demand of justice in a more English way, for Scotland is now definitely ethically bankrupt.

Bothwell Yes, because of your insane proceedings against me, the ruler of the Scots! We do not tolerate lunatics here! Just get away and grow demented, old and rotten in that crazy England of their matron of theatrical performances, the fake old maid Elizabeth! So! Now we are rid of another who could never but annoy us.

Mary But the parliament and lords must first recommend and accept you as a proper party to my crown before the marriage can take place.

Bothwell That should be easily arranged. I will invite them all to some occasion on the Ainslie tavern, where I will get them all drunk enough to readily accept whatever, as I will have sober guards around the house, and then I cordially present the paper of the marriage contract, which they can't refuse to sign. Each one will testify to the propriety of our marriage, that I promise! You shall be my own and only mine! Your might and power of all Scotland shall belong to me and only me! I shall buy every lord and every member of the parliament and force by money to obey my wishes, then with wine if money's not enough, and then, if necessary, with the right and might of violence.

Mary My friends since many years are leaving now and more for every day.

Bothwell If they desert you they can hardly any more be called your friends. I bloody don't care anyway. Who do you need apart from me? I am the power! I am all politics you need! With me behind your back you stand above and higher than all others!

Mary But the higher we are rising in the pride of our presumption, the more difficult and deep will be our fall.

Bothwell You sound like a worse weakling than that milksop Darnley! What kind of a crybaby and softhead are you really? Shall we not get married? Didn't you agree to that? Or are you faithful to the ghost of Darnley, who did almost execute you once and in cold blood, which I will never do?

Mary I wish that he had carried through that wholesome execution! But the only one to die was Rizzio, while to my horrendous lack of luck I had to stay alive and live on to meet even worse calamities.

Bothwell Do not complain, my lady. You must not give up. I need you. What am I without you? What am I without your title, power and your crown? I must have them, and for their sake you must stay alive!

Mary So that you can drink my blood.

Bothwell There is no blood so savoury as royal blood.

Mary My comfort is that it will dry with time.

Bothwell That day, that sorrow. While you live I have terrific use of you, and therefore I must have you all alive. It is too late now to turn back. A crime we never can pardoned bind us irrevocably together, and unravellably we race down together into the black hole of hell, and no one could enjoy it more than I. You are my own, and you shall never be another's as long as you live, and as long as I live myself. Forever your blood is now mixed with mine, and it is black like any night out on the stormy Highlands heather moors. We never will be civilized or tame, since the howling storm among the mountains whining in the cliffs, the holes and caverns has

become our life. On that day when the Highlands no more are wild and desolate, when the moors no longer spread their perfume, when the winter hurricanes no longer lash our west coast and abandon each confident ship to wreckage and to plunder and into the hands of greedy wreckers, only then our love will cease to exist. Not until then our saga will be gone and finished and forgotten by the world, for then all nature also will be gone and all the Highlands winds of storm gone with it nevermore to furiously testify about it. When the wind no longer lashes the old hermit's front so deeply furrowed by atrocious sorrows and sad losses and departures and his harrowed prophet's face, the world will no more now how we two loved each other. Now, my Queen, we must get married and at once before it is too late!

Mary According to my brother, that is the maddest thing that we could do. There's nothing that could compromise us more to history and to the world. That only would make our presence totally intolerable to this country and my people. Nothing would be more insane politically. But we shall do it, for I have no other choice. It is our destiny which forces us into this ultimate and desperate consummate folly, for it has ordained me to be pregnant with your child.

Bothwell And if you hadn't been so blessed, you would have turned me down. A marriage only could tone down the formidable scandal which it would be, if you had committed an adultery with me, while poor royal husband still was living, his own murderer! O glorious resplendent destiny! You give me full hands in your game!

Mary But you must be aware of that the terrible coitus not was voluntary.

Bothwell What does such a poor excuse matter to posterity and history? Are you appealing to the laws of nature? That will not work out. It already has had its most unalterable course. And what was it if not voluntary play of love?

Mary It was a rape!

Bothwell For you, maybe, but not for me. And you co-operated more than well.

Mary Then I will marry you but only to speed up the most insufferable suffering that my life's tragic running of the gauntlet has become and ever more is growing into, for I only live to see it end. That is my life's desire and the only one remaining.

Bothwell What you think is of no consequence to me. The only thing that matters is that you agree to marry me. That favours my material interest and is therefore interesting to me and nothing else. I thank that destiny which made you pregnant. Never did I serve myself more than when I intentionally raped the queen. And when at last you are my wife there's nothing any more that possibly could separate your destiny from mine. You will then be the wife and criminal with me, my closest ally and accomplice, guilty hopelessly to history of any crime that I committed or was part of, equally corrupt and stained, dishonoured, wicked, devilish, condemned forever and a hopeless outcast case as I.

Mary But are you not already married?

Bothwell I don't want her any more. I will divorce her presently. She has already fulfilled her plight and that small part she had to play. I have no longer any use of her. She can get lost.

Mary But Bothwell, you can't marry me, since you lack proper rank. Our law would only let me be your wife if it were proved that you had raped me, for then you were legally obliged to retribute my honour by a formal marriage.

Bothwell Then let me rape you openly, so the whole world can see it! You could go away and visit your own son in Stirling, while I on the way would carry you away and ravish you. All would be cautioned in advance, so there would be no skirmish. I will keep you prisoner a week, so that the whole world will have known that Bothwell raped you. Thereby our legal union would be possible: by marriage only could the man who owned the queen against her will restore her honour. It will be a burlesque comedy with some erotic elements completely in our style!

Mary Bothwell, spare me!

Bothwell How!

Mary Let us proceed no further!

Bothwell But I must proceed, my lovely. As long as I have any further step to climb upon the power ladder to success and glory, nothing possibly could stop me. I must own your crown, and that is only possible by owning you. And you must honestly accept with joy and acclamation, for who does not do what I want him to do I must by force compel him to, and you yourself gave me the power of implementation.

Mary How you shame us and our country to the entire world, and I am by your force humiliated to annihilation!

Bothwell That is no concern of mine. It is your problem only. Now we must arrange the wedding.

Mary Our court prelate John Craig refuses our marriage.

Bothwell Does he? Then I must show him how the gallows work. If he is forced to choose between eternal punishment in hell for marrying us or being hung himself, he will be wise enough a human protestant to choose the first. For we must needs be married in the church of protestants.

Mary But we are catholics!

Bothwell But that most holy only sanctifying church will never cancel and dissolve my marriage with my wife Jane Gordon. If I can't divorce her we cannot be married, and the only church allowing compromises of that kind is the more loose and liberal one that tolerates divorces.

Mary Then we have to do without the blessing and support of the whole catholic world order and its indispensable support in case for instance of a conflict with Elizabeth and England. We will then lose mighty Spain and France as allies.

Bothwell I thought you didn't care about world politics and all its bloody business. What is all the world to your and our love?

Mary But you want only power. Don't you want to keep it also?

Bothwell It cannot be kept by anyone. It can be reached once but not kept for long, for it is never tangible. It burns your hands. Who once acquired it can only lose it. It will bring all down, and yet, there's no one who does not desire it, its greed is irresistible, all are agreed that it is worth all vanity to strive for it in competition, since to own it if just for a moment is the highest truth momentum possible. I have it

now here within reach and will not be content with just a bite. I must have it all and for my own! How long it lasts is of no consequence to me, for such a moment of supreme and total power is for me a moment of eternity! We must get married! It will never matter how much all the world may scorn, reject, despise and loathe me afterwards.

Mary Yes, we shall marry. Quiet as a grave the chapel then will be, for no one of the lords will want to witness how the king's own murderer marries his widowed queen. The chapel will be no more than a grave, and the protestantic ceremony will be like a Requiem mass. The grave is all that shall unite us as a sacrament. I have been married twice before. The first time it was in resplendent daylight, and the sumptuous festivity was without bounds with the rejoicing of the people, which could not be stopped and just went on without an end.

The second time it was less solemn a festivity, for it was quite early in the morning, people were more quiet, but the whole nobility and diplomatic corps was present and attentive with their blessings. But my third ceremony of marriage will be in the night behind locked doors in darkness and with none of the invited guests arrived. The alienated priest will wed us stuttering against his will under protest with only hollow emptiness in his dry blessings without meaning. And how we shall quarrel! You will hardly wait a day before you will commit your next adultery against your newly wedded most atrociously humiliated wife, and the last lords who were our friends will leave us. No one more will want to see us. They will starve us out and kill us by their silence, and against the deafening inhuman silence of the people, lords and the entire world the only thing you can do is to arm yourself and all your hooligans up to their teeth against an enemy invisible, untouchable, unreachable and unattainable of empty silence, which is all reward there is to all the world's ambitions. You will not be able to trust anyone, you'll be driven crazy by suspicion in this most cruel of prisons: the indifference and silence of the world around you. And I will follow you into the grave of pestilence of buried, hidden, rotten and forgotten memories of crimes and die there in a misery far worse than if I was a whore in Glasgow.

Bothwell Silence, wicked witch! Our wedding will be an unequalled party of success and splendour! We will organize fresh tournaments which no one of the people can resist, and there I will myself excel all others as the champion! And within a year your former husband will be willingly and quite forgotten by all people and by even history! His name shall be erased from all the solemn chronicles and books of history. The history of Scotland shall begin with us!

Mary If you could only in your zest of reformation strike a knife into my heart, and only then I would be happy.

Bothwell You crazy bitch! You are my Queen! Then you must live! Look here our wedding table! It is crowded with delicious fruits and courses, puddings, turkeys, meat pies and the most exclusive wines, that have been fetched from some of the most exquisite of wine cellars of collectors.

Mary We are only waiting for the guests.

Bothwell The guests? Yes, all the chairs are welcoming in stately splendour all the noblest knighthood of our clans while we are honouring the thrones.

Mary But all these chairs are empty.

Bothwell Yes, they are still empty, but they will soon begin to fill. When people learn what sumptuous banquet stuff we will invite them for they will no longer hesitate, for no one can resist good food and even less so obvious proofs of generosity which we will offer to them all if only they with gratitude and cheer will drink our health. When in a powerful position, you can always get resources to be generous with carefully strategically well invested bribes.

Mary My dearest Bothwell, already I see a number of well situated guests who have now arrived.

Bothwell Where do you see them?

Mary Can't you see them all at table? That's the kind of guests who nowadays appear at the depressive banquets of queen Mary Stuart and who are her only company in loneliness. You see them all there more indifferent and quiet than all Scotland and the world. Do you not see there smart and slender with his lute now quiet on his arm, my friend the noblest David Rizzio with his empty sad and broken eyes in terrible deploring accusation? There are fifty gaping heart wounds in his body.

Don't you see there my most faithful minstrel and musician Chastelard, who was crippled by his shyness to be careful to his queen and therefore was decapitated, sitting there now with his head in front of him upon his plate as empty, dead and staring into my entangled twisted heart? And do you not see there king Francis, my first husband of the gay sophisticated France, with whom I never was allowed to even be grown up to love? And do you not see over there my parents with their sad resigned looks confirming mine, their own and all the Stuarts' ever cursed destiny to never become happy but the more the contrary? And don't you see my second husband there, the king of Scotland with his blackened face by poisoning now pointing at us with his bloodshot eyes like Allecto now ablaze with hatred and eternal cursing condemnation? Don't you see our own fate in all these unwelcome uninvited but still present guests, who have come here to mock and scorn us to then drag us with them down to their domains of demons? Only these have come to us to join the party of our wedding night, while all the living of this world refused to keep us company. At least all these are here, and we will never now get rid of them. They are our court for now and ever.

Bothwell (breaking up) Horrid mad prophetic woman! Let me out! I must have air!

Mary Your tournament has gone awry completely, since the only ones who want to fight you are the dead, and you can never throw them off their saddles.

Bothwell Crazy woman! I would rather remain married to my wife than to the best of monarchs in the world, if she is to be mad!

Mary I am only the house mistress of the madhouse and its chief in charge. As such you did desire me, that is the office that you wanted for yourself. Behold your madhouse! You invited all the bedlamites yourself to your own wedding party! Now

be generous to them! Enrich them with good gifts and drink their health! They gladly will accept just any bribes.

Bothwell You are completely mad.

Mary I am not mad, for who is dead cannot be mad, and that is what I am: quite dead, as I died with my honour, which you took away from me by violence. Now I am one of these, one of the madhouse fleeting phantoms of the dead, completely passive and indifferent like them. But they are anything but mad. You are now king, my Bothwell, in the realm of fools. For that you have been crowned, that is your great momentum of the highest truth. This is the madhouse where the madmen not are mad, and I myself, the mistress of the madhouse, am one of them. You are king now, Bothwell. You'll have to understand that everything is lost.

Bothwell Who are you really?

Mary The Queen who turned a whore and brings disaster to whoever gets too close to her. My friend, you now had better get away.

Bothwell Why so?

Mary Before the feast is interrupted by reality. You are a feast to me and my life's only feast as long as you remain alive, and it must carry on continuing as a feast.

Lords (breaking in) It's already too late, Madame. No one of you may escape. You have to come with us.

Bothwell Why?

Melville All Scotland is in our hands. Your army has gone home, since they did not find any trouble worth defending you. Not one of them was willing to. You are lost.

Bothwell And what do you dare to accuse us of?

Melville You, colonel Hepburn, we accuse of having murdered Henry Darnley, our Queen's consort and rightful king of Scotland. You, Queen Mary, all the people are accusing of complicity in that assassination. And what proves your guilt in all eyes of the people and the world is your outrageous intimacy with James Hepburn Bothwell.

Mary I shall be at your disposal, but on one condition.

Melville Which is?

Mary That you let this man, whom I seduced, out of the country.

Melville Well. You never shall see him again, and also he shall never more be seen in this our country. He shall be allowed full freedom to get out if only he will never more come back.

Mary That's all I ask.

Bothwell Farewell, my poor misfortune.

Mary Still the wind is howling over all the perfumed heaths of Scotland.

Bothwell Among cliffs and mountains love is ever free.

Mary The lamentable party is now over.

Bothwell Farewell. (*They embrace. He leaves.*)

Mary Now you can take my life, for I have taken leave of it for good.

Melville All people are now crying for your blood. They want to see you at the scaffold and have only one name of you nowadays, and it is...

Mary I am well aware of what it is. It is slut.

Melville And murderess. But we wish to protect your life. We therefore have decided for you to be taken in the care of lady Margaret Douglas in the castle of Lochleven.

Mary Taken care of in a prison! And surrounded on all sides by water! That will be secure indeed for a most dangerous state prisoner! Secured for life by my half-brother's mother, who made him a bastard!

Melville I must warn you. Speak no ill of whom you will be taken care of by.

Mary I want no better than to die.

Melville And as long as that is what you wish, you will be punished thoroughly by our enforcement of you to live on.

Mary A Queen in prison, and in Scotland! Where is that free nature that can be controlled by rules? What falcon can you cage without it being murdered? Where is that wild Highland wind which cannot live without its stormy freedom that can be shut in within four walls? In Scotland there is no caged bird that can remain locked in for long.

Melville That's anyway where you will be confined. And I must warn you: every effort to escape is to be punished.

Mary And how do you think you could punish any queen with less than death?

Melville With life.

Mary As long as she is still alive she is not punished.

Melville And you really think you own your life? You are no longer Queen.

Mary Who says so?

Melville You have been deposed.

Mary My blood is still no less than of a Queen, in which blood I was born to be one and the only one of royal blood, which all the world knows and is written down in history.

Melville Your moral right as monarch is forfeited by yourself by your outrageous criminal abuse of power overrunning law and right and by your sexual self-indulgence. You must look abroad for any help. In Scotland you'll find no one any more supporting your immoral licence.

Mary And it will be sought abroad. Hear, Europe and the world, a Queen is prisoner in her own land, in Scotland! Is it right? Has she no right to live? Has she no right to love like ordinary women? May she not be woman? Shall she be denied all happiness in life, which every mortal villain has the right to without charge without conditions? Is a Queen not queen except in jail?

Melville You are not even queen in prison, since you are deposed.

Mary Can God deprive his children of the right of having had them royally anointed?

Melville It is not possible to speak with you.

Mary And therefore you resort to violence.

Melville Yes, since you are impossible.

Mary Not worse than that I am a woman.

Melville And that's the very worst of it.

Mary So I am behind locks and bars at the Lochleven Castle waiting for an opportunity to get away. What a most cheerful prospect!

Melville You will be released as soon as you denounce your marriage with the colonel Bothwell and declare it as illegal as it was. That is the only point that brought about your fall, and if you will remove it you shall be restored.

Mary So that is how it sounds! If only I deny my love of Bothwell and declare that child I had with him a bastard, I shall be restored as Queen. No, worthy gentleman, I choose then rather to remain a Queen in prison than to be restored and scorned and laughed at as a public scandal for the rest of my days as a notoriety. If I resumed the throne I would be just a public scandal never to be taken seriously or to be trusted. I am too far out in too deep waters to be able to swim back. And never to all power in this godforsaken rotten world could I accept to see my child with Bothwell libelled as a bastard without rights, and you have no inhuman and absurd right to demand that of me as a mother.

Melville You seem to stick to your delusion that you still are queen of Scotland. You are not. You are and will remain deposed by all Scots in the country for all future. And the only way for you to save your life is by resigning voluntarily your throne and crown. Your letters to James Hepburn have been seized like your most private poems, which too clearly prove your partial guilt in the outrageous murder of your king and husband Henry Darnley. If you do not willingly resign the throne of Scotland to your son prince James, you will be prosecuted for adultery and murder of the king, and for these two crimes you will be sentenced and proved guilty as your letters prove your guilt, and you know what you wrote in them yourself. And nothing can then any more save your life from the scaffold and a public most dishonourable execution. You can save your honour by accepting your throne resignation with your name under the document which I brought you here. That is the only way for you to save your life.

Mary My destiny has cornered me. But my son is too young to rule as king. He cannot even talk yet. Who shall be his guardian and Scotland's regent until he grows up and comes of age?

Melville Your brother lord Murray.

Mary Of course. Now he comes back. He always kept away when someone in politics acted more emotionally than sensibly, and when the emotional act led to some grievous consequence for who dared to contrive it, he returns to take care of the power which the shamefully seduced and innocent idealist lost. You need not worry. I shall abdicate. I will not argue with you any more. But know, that there is nothing that I curse more than the day I came to Scotland as her queen. With that I sign my resignation, abdicating to my son king James the sixth, who also shall be the first king of both united kingdoms. I must trust you, my lord Melville, as I always did, but you are not completely without blame yourself in these events in which I have been implicated, for you were my closest faithful servant as long as I was your Queen. I trust you when you promise that my one condition for my abdication will be granted, namely that my honour as the monarch will be saved, and that the letters

with the compromising secrets of the state that you came over never will be public. Will you promise that?

Melville I think I well can promise that.

Mary I trust you then. And hereby I surrender to my brother and his lords to as they will continue forming arbitrarily my destiny. Now let me be in peace.

Melville Madame. (*leaves*)

Mary What is truth in life? The human truth is that she lives to only eat her fill, get dirty, smeared and slimy in indulgent sex and sleep and not work more than necessary. Birth and sex and death and not one day without intolerable stinking offals – that's the earthbound logical and ordinary human humdrum sum of truth. To her, life is but only about what you get into your body and what you get out of it. But I object and challenge you, cold morbid truth! I scorn you, black abominable human beastliness, who only wants to follow ordinary furrows closing up your mind to anything that is not common sense! I defy and vomit all your shit into your face, unbearable lack of fantasy, for you have failed to have me subjugated! I am still unvanquished and with me the ballad of my loves, for I have lived as contrary to all the thralls of you! And you have only got me behind bars because I am a woman; for being such a loving woman was the only cause of my defeat at Langside and Carberry Hill. For any person bent on love cannot shed blood of human beings. Therefore I tried to evade and cancel any battle, but those enemies of bankrupt love saw that as their strategic opportunity to even more defeat my party, and that possibility he used most recklessly unscrupulously. Only that made me a prisoner, and thus I am sitting here a prisoner confined by destiny. But even if I never more shall have my freedom, all my life and for all future shall be a most potent challenge to all materialistic and inhuman blind belief in only common sense and the infringement by the crass reality, for I alone in all this land with my last husband have been living! And the song of that sweet life will sound forever from the souls and memories of timeless and persistent souls of bards, since that eternal song of life itself can never end or die. Life lives on in eternity, and all that therein has a share, and everything that lives that sees life as it is, experiencing the eternal life in depth, is blessed and doomed to immortality. Love teaches you that you are mortal, say the men of vanity, but I was taught by love that I could only be immortal.

Sing, ye bards, the song of about the dressed up queen to be a man to get away from her pedantic boring lords who kept her prisoner, to her beloved villain, the wild earl of Bothwell! Sing the song about how they interminably loved each other till the end, how she, disguised without her royal dignity, swore to remain by him in life and death!

Sing to the world how she like any farmer's girl rode by his side to the last battle about love against the monstrous world political power, which had to be lost just for that reason! Never let it be forgotten how brave Bothwell with his tiny following decided to die with his own in battle rather than to compromise with the supremacy of crass political power! Don't forget the treason whereby the two lovers were

betrayed and taken prisoners, and how the queen in kilt let her be separated from him just to save his life, to let him get away, escaping to wherever!

And where did you go then, my beloved lover? You went far beyond the seas but found no friends no more in this world. You were shipwrecked outside Denmark and were taken prisoner, and like any lion in a cage you are there bereft of all your action without friends and without any touch with nature with its wind and light, with only silence for your company while the emptiness will drive you mad. You shake the bars and cry my name, you beat your bloody hands against the stones and crush your head against the walls in languishment and thirst for freedom, but there's no one who can hear you, no one cares the least about you, and you die bereft of the one thing you owned, the only thing that made you and the only thing that for you was worth living for: your freedom.

There was never anyone more cruelly starved to death than the most free of men when he was robbed of all his freedom.

But as any howling mountain winds you'll never die, for our love is eternal, like the raving hurricane of the Dantesque Inferno, raving on forever by its passion. Bothwell, you will never die, for we, the two of us, have made it one in the eternal love, whatever petty accusations we were subject to. Who kills of love can never be brought down with any charge of guilt, which any Frenchman knows who is familiar with the element and nature of Crime Passionel.

Sing then of how the queen of Scotland was outrageously humiliated afterwards and almost crucified! Sing of the treasons she was subject to by the authorities, and how she almost had to run the gauntlet through the lower streets of Edinburgh and to the very site of where the house was which was burned up with her husband Henry Darnley!

Do not forget how she was almost lynched by her own loving people on the way, and let the world know how to them she was now but a whore!

Do not forget how she was not supposed to wash, to eat and even to change clothes, the so humiliated coarsely violated queen by her own people!

Let the world know how the noblest lords of Scotland tried to trick her into the betrayal of her loved husband by backbiting him and by convincing her that he did never love but only used his royal wife!

Do not forget, o my own Scottish people, how she in her desperation with her hair all down and with her naked bosom pleaded to them just for mercy, help and understanding, and how they just looked at her like on some escapee from any bedlam!

Never did I fail you or was I unfaithful to you, dearest husband. Even if you had betrayed me with that barren sow of England, Queen Elizabeth, it wouldn't have made my love any less of you! I am your own, and you alone did love me, as each woman only lives for to be loved by man.

Sing also of the queen who never sleeps no more, who only lies awake at night and only cries and cries and cries! Do not neglect the duty to report, that she, however powerless she has become, continues still to only be betrayed, humiliated and

dishonoured; how her private letters of intimacy are being read in public by the lords to all nobility and sent to foreign courts to prove the guilt of the two lovers to them and as much as possible to compromise the jailed imprisoned queen, though she agreed on abdicating and resigning from the crown on the condition only, that the intimacy of these letters never were made public! But these politicians never hesitated to with most malicious mirth expose the deposed queen's most private thoughts and feelings in their blatant nakedness to all the world, like pimps exhibiting their slaves of sex in all their nakedness to all the world, undressed and without their ability to in any way defend themselves.

"Look!" these politicians cry out on the fair of vanity, "how this queen was whom we most righteously humiliated and buried alive in prison! Relish in the naked glory of her wickedness! Behold the truth of her, good people!" Yes, it suits them to expose the dirty truth. The truth serves them, since it is dirty, and they live for dirt alone. Just throw more dirt on that defenceless naked violated bleeding body of the stinking bitch, since she can't anyway defend herself! There's no defence for women, and especially when you have taken from them all you wanted. What you promised them before the deed as an exchange is of no consequence. No word is valid when your deal is with a woman. That you promised to keep silent about her most intimate and private secrets naked and undressed means only that you dare the more expose it, just to make her more disdained, despised and scorned. Let her be furthermore dishonoured and exposed in church! Let that most holy man of God undress and brand that witch in the cathedral to the public as a whore, so that they bring that word and sentence out of church and all over the country! She was certainly a witch and whore who well deserved her brand as such, since she unlike all others had the impropriety to share her love with others! And thus ends the ballad of queen Mary Stuart. Here she lies buried alive in sleeplessness in prison, spent, exhausted and abused by all the gloating world. She loved it, but it loved her back to death, misunderstanding all of her and most especially her love. The merry wild triumphant hunts into the wilderness are gone and lost now, and there is an end to all the glory of her freedom. Never more she may taste any freedom, least of all the only true and perfect freedom, which is the ability and possibility to love without restrictions.

A voice But still the Scots will love their only Queen.

Mary Who are you?

Douglas Lord Douglas, at your service.

Mary What do you want?

Douglas Help you escape.

Mary Escape? Where to?

Douglas Somewhere. Out in the wilderness, out to the virgin Scottish nature, where the royal stag is waiting for you in his realm of freedom in the mountains, singing all your praise like no one else, or maybe to the sea. You can there from the shore go home to friends abroad.

Mary I have no friends abroad, since Spain and France don't recognize me any more.

Douglas But still you have in England your own spiritual sister who had never anything against you. You will find with her some comfort and some help, for she is queen herself and hates the thought of that another queen has been deposed in spite of all monarchic laws of inviolability, and even on the island which is partly yours, which she is also queen of. Ride down to the coast and save yourself to England! There you can complete your saga and fulfil it! It is only three days' ride down there. You'll make it shorter, I am sure. You are yourself of nature and its freedom which can never be inhibited, which nothing can shut out or tire out, you are the freest Scottish fresh and howling wind which keeps forever blowing over the wild Highlands just to disappear but still remain to start again whenever but to never let itself be caught or interrupted. You are free, my Queen! Ride out! The wilderness of Scotland calls you to her freedom in the mountains and the sea! Be free and lonely now! The politics of this world now has nothing more to do with you, it leaves you from henceforth in peace to its incessant turmoil and dishonourable shameful curiosity, you are quite free from every thrall in the debasing service of the state of common sense who harmed you. Ride and save your life, your legend and your honour! For they are still to be saved, and you must save them!

Mary Well then, noble lord, I'll follow your advice. Unfortunately I was always loved by everybody, which was my misfortune. Maybe your salvation of my future only throws me into deeper trouble and calamity, but I will take the chance. I never hesitated to take chances, which I always found to be my happiness. I leave you now to definitely give me over to the loneliness of freedom. I don't know to what I hence will journey forth, but God give that I never more may come to any certain end. Just let the sea take care of me in her eternal rolling billows, may the wind take care of me in blowing blasts, may my beloved Highland wilderness with all its bears and stags unite with me, if only I could die in freedom. For as long as I am free, so long I still will go on loving, which is my desire to go on with and interminably. That was really all that I was good for, as my soul was always overflowing with unquenchable and constantly continuous love, especially out in the Scottish wilderness. That's my word of farewell and testament to any writer of my history. That word will pardon me, forgive me and atone for everything I did.

Douglas It also will forgive your enemy.

Mary Who was my enemy? World politics. And it is such, that it can never more forgive itself, not even if all others may forgive it. Noble brave and stalwart cavalier, thanks for your help! Good-bye!

Douglas To have been included in your ballad, even if just in a corner in the end, is my life's chief remaining pleasure and delight.

Mary I promise you it shall not be forgotten for as long as there are bards remaining who will still be singing of me.

Douglas I will always sing of you myself.

Mary My ballad can be sung but out of love. If your love isn't false you will be able certainly to sing.

Douglas No bard will ever about you be able to hit a false tone.

Mary Well, you have found a tone all right.

Douglas You are the reason.

Mary Well. I'll get away.

Douglas She never ceases to amaze and charm. As long as there is wind in maples, oaks and beeches, she will never cease to fill all men's hearts with the beauty that she teaches. Woman is it who alone can charm eternally all living things, for she alone is life's own muse to everything.

The End.

Comment.

Modern research has the following interesting results to present in the case of Mary Stuart.

1) The Queen never deceived her husband Henry Darnley as long as he lived and least of all with David Rizzio. Not until after Darnley's death she came together with Bothwell, who demonstratively raped her. On the other hand, Darnley must have deceived his four years older wife and queen, since his illness was not small pox but syphilis.

2) The murder of Henry Darnley was committed by strangling before his house was blown up. He noticed something was going on from his room and tried to escape but was caught up by the murderers who strangled him in the garden, after which the house was blown up as already carefully planned.

3) Mary's child with Bothwell were twins who died in a miscarriage in the third month, when she was prisoner at Lochleven. The miscarriage made her divorce from Bothwell possible.

4) The Douglas who helped Mary escape to England were two nobles, George and William Douglas. They both followed her to England and continued to serve her there, for which she always remained sincerely thankful to them.

The grossest injustice committed against Mary Stuart are all the accusations against her for looseness. She was a virgin when she married her second husband Henry Darnley, and the only other man who ever knew her was Bothwell and that by violence against her will. Both relationships were extremely unfortunate for her, as she with her romantic and loving fantasy embraced them both with an idealistic love which none of them deserved. Humiliation and disaster was about the only thing she got out of both, although she never failed anyone of them with her love. She was completely innocent of the murder of Darnley although she afterwards had feelings of guilt. She was as little initiated in the plans to murder Darnley as she knew that David Rizzio was to be murdered. Darnley chose the house Kirk o'Field himself as suitable for his convalescence, and the Queen was with him each and every day and would even according to her plans have passed his last night with him, if she hadn't been detained by her servants' wedding. Archibald Douglas, one of the murderers, tried on one occasion to get her permission to commit the murder. When she refused to give it, the murder was committed on the murderers' own initiative. Most of them afterwards took over the government and helped to depose and dishonour her to save their own faces.

The play inspired by Stefan Zweig's biography was first written in Swedish in 1981 at the author's age of 29, translated 5-12.9.2017 in Manali and Dharamsala, India.