

La Princesa

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CHARACTERS:

J – Queen Regent, wears black, F, 30s

B – A Jesuit & member of the court, M, 40s

E – A lady in waiting, F, 20s

C – The heir, hunchbacked, limping, M, teens-early 20s

V – The Inquisitor General, M, 20s

TIME:

Late spring, 1539

Note: Contemporary (or seemingly so) references, language, etc. are used. This should not confuse but add texture to give us a feel for the times being described. Perhaps, and in the best of times, reflect history as a repeating entity, not a dead one. Thus, period should not be strictly enforced in the production

PLACE:

Hapsburg Europe, Spain

The Castle at Valladolid

“She seemed to some a beautiful, austere widow, dressed perpetually in mourning. To others she seemed devoted to the monastic world, even to the point of having her private quarters in her convent.”

- Rose Helena Chinchilla
“Juana of Austria: Courtly Spain and Devotional Expression”

“Dressed always in black, she created a myth as confusing as that of her brother, what has been published about her tends to be part soap opera and part black legend.”

- Anne J. Cruz
“Juana of Austria: Patron of the Arts and Regent of Spain, 1554 -59”

“They do not deserve to be burnt like the rest; for they cannot do the mischief that those of chivalry have done; they are works of genius and fancy, and do nobody hurt.”

- Cervantes

ACT ONE

ONE

The Castle at Valladolid. Morning. Late spring, 1539. E, a lady-in-waiting to the Queen Regent, is in her dressing gown. C, a nefarious-looking teenager with a hunchback, wields a brush and combs her hair.

C
Okay. Hate is a strong word. I *don't like* her.

E
There's nothing wrong with her.

C
Says you: you're obliged to serve her.

E
As are you. And anyway, we practically grew up together. You'd know what that's like if there were more kids your age around.

C
I'm not a kid.

E
Well, you're hardly a man.

C
I could be, if she let me do something.

E
Like what?

C
I'm the prince, I should be in charge. Dad's always had a weakness for women, even if they are his own sister. Someone told me that he always thinks with his little head and I told them that his head is normal sized.

E
You barely know him.

C
I'm the heir. Not her.

E
Don't stop.

C
It's hard to get the back part / this way.

E
Use your good arm and stop complaining. Most women don't take kindly to people spying on them dressing.

C
You have a birthmark.

E
I'm aware.

C
I've never seen a woman with a birthmark before.

E
Have you seen many women?

C
No. It's boring here.

E
When you grow up and become the king and have a wife, you'll get on her good side if you brush her hair correctly.

C
A wife should be subservient to her husband. It says so in the scriptures. Don't read too much into this. It's not like I like you. I'm just bored. You should know your place.

E
Now you sound like your father.

C
Where is your husband?

E
Hand me a pin. I want to put my hair up today.

C
I asked you a question.

E
My husband is away.

C
So, why aren't you with him?

E
Same reason you're not with your father. Give.

C hands her a barrette.

C
They say that the Spanish Netherlands will never fall, that he'll be fighting over there until he dies.

E
They say many things.

C
Is your husband fighting for my father?

E
He's fighting for himself. In the New World.

C
That must be why you like me. You don't have anyone to protect you.

E
You're a political reality. A necessary evil. It has nothing to do with liking or not liking you. You simply are, understand?

C
No.

E
Okay, so let's say that you catch a boy staring at you ass while you're changing. But, let's say that the boy has something that you want. Do you chastise the boy or do you let him stare at your ass first, and the next day turn a bit so he can see your tits, and finally your pussy so that you can get what you want from him?

C
Is this like a riddle?

E
Yes.

C

I'm good at solving riddles.

E

So, tell me what you do.

C

To solve a riddle? The first thing you have to do to solve a riddle is to take it out of the personal. Make it an abstract idea and then you can reason more effectively.

E

It's not an abstract question.

C

Sush, I'm thinking. So, if *one* were to catch a spy in their midst—someone not doing something that they wanted to do—something that might upset the status quo that the person is happy with, would that person punish the spy or allow the spy to continue, even make inroads, in order to turn the spy *against* the person that he or she is spying upon?

E

In a nutshell.

C

What kind of punishment is available?

E

You name it.

C

The Inquisition?

E

If you like.

C

I don't like it, but it's there. And very effective.

E

Sure, if they work for you.

C

Why shouldn't they work for me? The church is bound to serve the ruler.

E

No, the church is bound to serve the God in Rome. You have to be careful when dealing with political realities.

C

This isn't a political reality. It's a riddle and a riddle is a game for people to play when they're bored. What do I get if I answer the riddle correctly?

E

What would you like?

C

I want to be in charge.

E

Well, I can't give you that.

C

Then I'm not going to play. If I can't get what I want, then what incentive do I have to give an answer?

E

The answer is that you use the spy / to get what you want.

C

I was going to say that. Can you ask another question?

E

Fine. Which of my tits is bigger?

C

The left. No, the right.

E

You've chosen both options.

C

It's a trick question. They're the same size.

E

Nature favors certain things. A king might only marry once and produce many heirs while another king might have to marry and marry and marry only to find that his wives, however well their breeding, produce no children or if they do only girls or sickly boys who die before their time. They say that it has to do with offending God.

C

Are you being personal again? I don't like it when you're personal.

E
I don't like it when you stop brushing.

C
You can't talk to me like that.

E
Like what?

C
Like how you're talking to me right now. It's not nice. No, it's worse than that. It's disrespectful.

E
Me?

C
Yes, you. You, you, you!

E
Get your panties out of a bunch.

C
That's what I mean, I'm the prince and you treat me like just another snot nosed kid, like someone who can't tie his shoes or walk properly through a revolving door. Well, I'm the prince, not just some kid. Just watch and don't cry when I leave. Then you'll be all alone and vulnerable. Again. Just like after your husband left you to go fight godknowswhat in godknowswhere with a bunch of smelly, ugly, ill-mannered sailors.

Pause.

E
I thought you were leaving.

C
I feel bound to you.

E
I have that effect on men.

C
Other punishment is available.

E

Oh?

C

I was contemplating striking you.

E

Why don't you?

C

How much hurt does it take to make someone understand their place?

E

More than you can dish out.

C

Don't tempt me. This is about justice.

E

It's always about something.

C

I have decided. The most prudent course is to strike you. I will administer the punishment.

E

So, should I just sit here, or...?

C

You're fine there.

E

Are you sure?

C

Yes.

E

Am I the first woman you've hit?

C

What? No. I've hit many women.

E

Oh okay. Which way are you going to hit me?

C

This way.

E
Are you sure?

C
Nice try, you're not going to talk me out of it.

E
I wouldn't dream of it. But look, if you hit me that way, my head might go this way and then that would really hurt.

C
So what if I / hit you this way.

E
Well, then you've got the same problem, because I might / hit my head over here.

C
Oh, okay, I didn't think of that.

E
I think that if you're right / here.

C
So straight on is the best option.

E
I think so, don't you?

C
Yes. I agree. Thank you.

E
You're welcome.

E prepares herself for C's slap.

C
Are you ready?

E
Yes. I think so.

C draws back.

Oh, one other thing. You should probably give me the brush.

C
Why?

E
Well, this is about justice, right?

C
Yes.

E
Then you don't want to get too carried away and start hitting me with the brush. So, why don't you give it to me to remove the temptation. You know, in case you really like hitting me.

C
I'm not going to like it.

E
Still, best to do it in restrained fashion, so that it remains about justice and not something personal.

C
It's not personal.

E
You say that now, but let's face it, it's going to get personal very quickly.

C
Fine.

C hands her the brush.

E
Temptation removed. Okay, now go for it.

C takes his position.

C
In retribution for insolence!

E
Not justice?

C

No, retribution.

E
Is that like justice?

C
It's a form of moral punishment.

E
Right. Carry on.

C
In retribution for insolence!

C slaps her. Hard. E hangs her head.

Oh my God!

E looks up quickly.

E
Gotcha.

C
I thought I had hurt you.

E
No. I've been hit harder than that.

C
Wow, really?

E
Yeah. But you're stronger than you look.

C
Thanks.

E
That's not really a compliment.

C
I hit you hard, huh?

E
Yeah, I might have a black eye.

C

Do you think so? Will people know? Will they know I did it?

E

There are always ways us women can cover up what's happened to us. Like makeup

C

What's that?

E

It's made from bat shit. Real nasty stuff, but useful in the correct moments. Hand me that.

C

I've never hit a woman before. It was fun!

C hands her a small makeup box. E begins applying.

E

Yes, your father seems to enjoy it as well.

C

My father?

E

Yes. The Emperor.

C

He hits you?

E

Used to, when he was here.

C

For justice, like I did?

E

Well, technically, you did it for retribution of insolence, because I couldn't give you what you wanted. Which is *hardly* insolent. But, no, he doesn't do it because of that.

C

It was the tone that you spoke to me in.

E

Well, whatever. Frankly at a certain point all justifications seem to run together.

C
It wasn't that you did anything wrong, per se.

E
At a certain point you just stop caring.

C
People can't know about this.

E
Don't you want them to know how strong you are?

C
No. Not like that.

E
Then why did you do it?

C
Why does my father do it?

E
I think because he enjoys it. The only thing that seems to excite him more is...well...

C
What?

E
When he fucks me. Some times he does both at the same time. Of course, when he does that he's not striking my face. Usually.

C
I'll strike you again.

E
Is the truth insolent?

C
No.

E
Well, my bad then. But it's true; he does love to fuck me.

C
Don't say that!

E

I can give you what you want. If you give me what I want.

C

You said you couldn't.

E

I couldn't then, but I could now, because now, I'm going to hit you. For justice. And it's going to be much, much harder on you than you were on me.

E wields the brush.

C

But...I'm the prince.

E

And I'm the Emperor's mistress. So now that the boy has seen everything and got what he wants, it's my turn. I want your father to marry me. You're going to convince him. And then, I'm going to be your mother. Do you understand me?

C

Yes, Mam.

E

Good boy. Now stop being scared. Good mothers never hurt their sons unless their sons have reasons to disappoint them. And I have no reason to be disappointed.

C

But, when my father returns, won't he wish to have a child with you?

E

I told you, nature works mysteriously. Nothing in this world is alike. Some have many children, others have none. Some would say that my birthmark is the kiss of the devil on my skin. But, maybe I'm immune to it. I have never felt sin on my body. No matter what I have done—and I have done some terrible things. I've come to rely on nature. The nature of men, in specific. Because some would say that nature has not been kind to me. Married to a man who would not give me children, bound to a Queen who is destined to be forgotten, lover to a man whose son strikes me...I have no children. Nor will I have. This is the gift that I give to you: in return for what you will do for me. I will not bear one to take the throne. Now, finish my hair, please, the Jesuit returns today.

She holds out the brush. C returns to where he was. He brushes. A moment.

C
So you're saying that one is bigger than the other?

E
The left.

She takes his hands and puts them on her breasts.

See?

C
Yes.

E
Good. Then, we're agreed.

TWO

J's chambers in the convent. B, a Jesuit, is kneeling. J, la princesa, stares at a large painting of her son, Sebastian. She takes no notice of B.

J
I'm sorry, what were you saying?

B
I brought you ham and bread.

J
Oh. That's nice. Thank you. Would you look at this?

B
I begged them.

J
On the road?

B
Yes.

J
It's my son.

They both look at the portrait, unable of what to say.

B

The likeness is striking.

J
You think that?

B
Of course.

J
Huh. What makes you say that?

B
A lot of things.

J
Like?

B
Look at the ears. The eyes. Just the face in general is very, very real.

J
Verisimilitude.

B
That's good you remember your art theory. I knew I wasn't such a bad tutor after all. It is very life-like. Feels like you could almost touch him, doesn't it?

J
You think he looks good?

B
I do.

J
Not too fat?

B
No.

J
But not too thin either.

B
I think he looks fine.

J

As do I.

B
It's remarkable.

J watches.

The likeness.

J watches.

It looks just like him

J watches.

How you left him.

J watches.

It's different of course.

J watches.
He's grown.

J watches.

We have a tendency to do that.

J
Yes, well. We do. I guess. What did you say you have?

B
Bread and ham.

J
Wonderful. Thank you.

She takes them.

What am I supposed to do with them?

B
They're a gift.

J
From?

B
Me.

J
I'll cherish them.

B
It's more of a symbol really.

J
Of?

B
Well, they carry significance outside of their nature as only bread and ham.

J
Yes, they feel very significant.

B
They're metaphors.

J watches.

They mean something.

J
You keep saying that and I keep pretending I know what you mean, but let me be honest: I have no idea.

B
I'm back.

J
I see that.

B
It's been a year or longer.

J
Yes. Two.

B
Two years is a long time. It was nice to receive your letters. I know I should have written back. But, you know I was really busy. Taking care of your mother. The

letters were very well formed. Your Latin has gotten better. It's very formal thought. Maybe we could dispense with that now? How are you?

J
I'm good. Well. I'm well. Court is well. The country is well. Everything's great, thank you, for asking. How are you?

B
Tired.

J
Yes, well, it's a long walk.

B
And even longer with the news that I bring of your Mother, the Queen's passing. I'm so sorry for your loss. But, you are the Queen now. Not just a Princess.

J
It was bound to happen.

B
You're taking this better than I'd thought.

J
News about the death of a Queen travels faster when it doesn't have to beg for food along the way. We've known for weeks.

B
I'm sorry I wasn't here sooner.

J
Of course. You were gathering metaphors like little girls pick up flowers from the side of the road. So, obviously, you couldn't be here sooner.

B
I needed some time.

J
Why?

B
When I left:

J
I told you I was committed.

B

I didn't doubt you.

J

Everyone doubts. Even priests.

B

Yes. That is why I needed I needed some time to process. And, also why I didn't send a postcard.

J

I'm sure you heard.

B

About the Cardinal. I did.

J

With you go we had no choice but to promote him and see what he did?

B

You said you couldn't trust anyone else.

J

Well, you're back now. And, look, you look like a pilgrim.

B

I don't know about that.

J

You're dressed like one.

B

Yes. Well, I guess that I am. It was kind of like a pilgrimage to come back.

J

I would have thought that you were going to Santiago de Compostela rather than coming home.

B

Home?

J

Yes, where else would you be?

B

At your court. In your service. For God.

J
Of course. He is always there for us.

B
He is. Just as we can tell that your son is well, though he is not physically present. Deduct from this portrait: If we recall his form as a child, and we imagine his form now, older, we can see that both shapes bear a striking resemblance. As the Bible tells us of God's goodness absent a physical presence. Of course, we are taking this representation as a talisman for his actual appearance, but given current technological limitations it is as good as we can come by. So, too, the Good Book provides sustenance for faith and offers us participation in Our Lord. We do not need to divine his or His appearance, only recall and cast forward as a marker for that which we can see. In short, what's past provides us with a rude marker of where we should be now. We should also remember that the past is the past and the most clearly we see is through memory, prayer, and meditation. None of man's arts can match these. Still, we can, looking at this portrait, devise that he is in good health, looks well (based on how we last saw him), and has a wonderful future ahead of him. A metaphor.

J
How very Lutheran of you: looking solely to an image to deduce the divine plan.

B
The appeal to man's reason never began in Germany.

J
Had I known this was going to be a lesson, I would have brought a slate. So that my tutor could continue to enlighten me and I, as a dutiful student, would sit idly dreaming of the day when my lessons would finally end.

B
What's your deal?

J
I don't have a deal.

B
Are you pissed at me?

J
Hardly. You're insulting me, old friend. It's a momentous day for me. On the one hand, I have the likeness of my son whom I haven't seen since I was coerced to remove him from my breast. And on the other, I have bread and ham.

which she throws

I send for word from my son and this is what they send back.

B
Your house is assured.

J
Here, yes.

B
I'm sorry. Her death was unexpected.

J
You could have at least made it look like the confession came before you showed up with the news.

B
I don't follow.

J
We heard that she died before we heard that she confessed. What was the hold up?

B
Messengers can't be trusted.

J
I'm not talking about them. I'm talking about you.

B
She wouldn't confess to me.

J
Make it look like she didn't pass in sin. Lie. Cover it up. Fuck, deduce your way to make me look like something other than an idiot keeping a seat warm for her brother to come back from fucking every whore in Amsterdam. All this teaching and you still know nothing.

B
I know a bit.

J
No, you don't. About being a woman, you have no idea.

B
Christ calls us to be brothers.

J
He would. He didn't know shit about women.

B
I find it hard to take self-pity from one perched on a throne atop the most powerful country in the world.

J
Power's never real.

B
I've seen it in you.

J
When? When answering my cousin's orders? I can't even be with my own family? Your knowledge is Lutheran, but your notion of power is incredibly Catholic, padre. Like you, I am powerless no matter how many names or titles they stick on me. Like you, I can't get shit done without someone getting in the way. Like you, I have no other choice but to look up and hope that some sort of something rains down a brief respite from this murderous pain which pervades my body each second of this god forsaken life. And you know what makes us different from everyone else? We've got it better. God cannot be our solution for everything.

B
When you took your vows, you promised to God.

J
You just admitted isn't even here.

B
Which is why we must be. Don't call me "padre." I'm more than that aren't I?

J
Where have you been?

B
You sent me away. What else was I supposed to do?

J
I couldn't have you here. After I took the vows, I became very guilty. As if nothing I did could live up to you. Maybe you didn't have to go. That I shouldn't have sent you. That I was overreacting.

B
You're not the only one who makes choices.

J
But mine count.

B
And mine don't? I could say no, next time.

They draw closer. J begins to cry.

It looks remarkably like him. You'll see. Just wait and you'll see. How strong he looks. How handsome. A true prince. You should be proud.

B touches her hand tenderly.

J
I lost faith that you'd return.

B
You can't trust letter carriers.

J
When I took my vows, to be a priest, to be like you. I did it so that we could be together, even if I couldn't be with you. If that makes sense.

B
Don't fret.

B touches her face.

I'll say no next time.

J
You'll have to go if I command you. You shouldn't trust me.

B
Don't command me. Let me do what I want to do.

J
Like brothers?

B
Well, something like that.

B smiles.

THREE

The Throne room. V, the Grand Inquisitor, stands before us. He coughs. Looks around. C enters. This takes place at the same time as scene two.

V
Oh, it's you.

C
You were waiting on my aunt, the Princess.

V
No, it's fine, really, I mean she probably knows.

C
I was just going...to the kitchen.

V
So you don't know.

C
Know what?

V
A cache of Lutherans was found today. Well, they will be found today, I'm told.

C
Cache?

V
It's like a group.

C
Oh.

V
Unfortunate, really.

C
Does this mean my Dad's coming home?

V
The Emperor? Oh heavens no. The church can take care of these sorts of things. Auto-da-fes, an act of faith, that sort of thing. We burn them till they confess and if they don't confess, well, we don't need to waste more wood. No need to worry the

real powers that be about this. We wouldn't want that at all. This is a religious thing not a political one. You've heard about separation of church and state, right?

C
Yes.

V
And what do you think about it?

C
That it doesn't work.

V
Bingo. What's in the kitchen?

C
Food.

V
Yes, but what kind of food.

C
Food food.

V
You're a smart boy, aren't you?

C
I'm being schooled. But, I'm the only one in my class so I don't have / much to compare to.

V
That's good. You'll be in charge of this whole thing someday.

C
You think that?

V
Of course, why wouldn't you?

C
My hunchback.

V
It's not that noticeable.

C

It's pretty noticeable.

V

I wish I had one.

C

You do?

V

Of course.

C

Why?

V

It looks cool. Really, really, cool.

C

I can't reach my shoulder blade with my hand. So if I have an itch back there, it's really embarrassing and uncomfortable. I have to find a chair or something to scratch my back on. Then people stare at me so I resent them and go to sleep thinking about interesting ways that I can kill them if my aunt dies and my dad dies and I'm made Emperor.

V

Are you married?

C

No.

V

Betrothed?

C

No.

V

That's not what I heard.

C

Really?

V

I heard they've got a very nice young woman in store for you.

C

Who is she?

V

A French girl.

C

Wow.

V

A princess.

C

When do I meet her?

V

All things in good time. Have a seat.

C

Okay. What's her name?

V

Something French. Listen, I need you to tell me something.

C

What does she smell like? You know some girls you think they look good but then you get closer to them and they smell really bad. Hygiene is very important to me. Also she should know that I know how to brush hair. I've been learning. Can you tell her that? That I know how to brush hair? Does she smell like flowers?

V

She does. French flowers.

C

Awesome.

V

Yeah, she's a looker. Do you ever see weird people come in and out of here?

C

This room?

V

Sure. Or, you know, the castle, the city. That sort of thing.

C

They don't let me out much.

V

You have windows. You can see from your windows. I'll tell you what the French girl's name is if you can tell me about any weird people you've seen.

C

Just you.

V

Who said I was weird?

C

The cook, the butcher, the watchman, the other watchman, the squires, the valets, the guy with the hat, the other guy (you know, his brother), my aunt, the other priests, my aunt's lady-in-waiting, do I need to go on?

V

That's fine thank you.

C

Cool.

V

People fear what is different from them. Are you scared of me?

C

No?

V

Well, you have no reason to be. Other people might be, like those who carry Bibles. So, all those people that you just mentioned, I'm going to write their names down in this little book here and we're going to give them a looksee.

C

What's that?

V

My notebook.

C

No, over there.

V

A Bible. Now stop. Just stop right there. I am not weird.

C
You are so weird.

V
I am not.

C
Whatever.

V
(while this starts like a kind of juvenile fit, by the end, V has erupted into actual anger.)
I'm talking about people other than me who might be lurking around this place and trying to poison the glorious kingdom of Spain, God be praised, with their Protestant treachery! I'm not talking about myself! I'm talking about other people. Don't you get me you hunchbacked worthless piece of shit? Other People!

V composes himself.

C
You're not really going to write their names down, are you?

V
You won't get her, you know. The French girl. She's destined to marry a ruler and you'll never be that. Look at you. Who would ever listen to you?

C
You're listening to me.

V
Sure, for now. And you've told me everything that I need to know. Do you know what an informer is? It's you.

C
No, I mean, wait.

V
What?

C
I know what goes on around here.

V
So prove it. Surely there are some people on the list that are worse off than others. That are weirder than others.

C

/ Like...?

V

/ Like...?

C

Uh, no one thinks you're weird.

V

Except you.

V takes out a little notebook, writes something.

Now, you're first on my list. Now, go tell her I'm here. Then go to the kitchen and eat everything you can. You're going to have to be strong.

FOUR

B & E in the courtyard. B takes a sandwich from a paper bag and hands it to E. He takes one for himself. In almost synchronic fashion, they unwrap the sandwiches, take a first bite and chew. E regards her sandwich.

E

This isn't the ham and bread you begged on your way here, is it?

B

(mouth full) Maybe.

E picks up the brown bag and spits what's in her mouth into it.

It's not bad.

B continues eating.

E

You've been gone a long time.

B

Tell me about it.

E

Well...

B

Figure of speech. What's new?

E
Not too much, the usual, you know, same-o same-o. What's shakin' with you?

B
Well, I've just come back from Tordesillas.

E
And the crazy Queen.

B
Yes.

E
How crazy was she really?

B
Pretty crazy.

E
Scale of one to ten.

B
What's the worst?

E
Ten.

B
Eleven.

E
That's pretty crazy. Of course, everything is relative. Particularly when it comes to mental health. Just think, not a century ago you would have been put to death for just insinuating that there was another land over the horizon not to mention suggesting that that land might be inhabited by other people who, I might add, are to be found nowhere in the Bible and who know more wealth than we've ever seen.

B
The lost tribes.

E
Hmm.

B

The natives must have come from one of the lost tribes of Israel. House of David, southern Judah, and when they were lost they wound up (don't ask me how) all the way over there. It's in the Book of Kings and Second Book of Chronicles.

E

A heretical text.

B

Priests are allowed certain exceptions.

E

If they're the lost tribes, then why don't they know anything of our God? Surely Israelites would remember about the reason they were kicked out of Israel in the first place.

B

Perhaps they've forgotten.

E

That seems overly fortunate for them.

B

Is something troubling you, daughter?

E

I have a troubled soul, Padre. Wine?

B

Yes please.

E produces a bottle of wine and two plastic cups. She divides some wine between them and, again, with almost uncanny synchronicity, they drink.

If you have a troubled soul, you should unburden yourself.

E

To?

B

Well, I am a priest.

E

Yes, you are. But I'm not going to tell you.

B

I'm her majesty's royal confessor.

E
I'd rather not.

B
My child.

E
What do you think is troubling me?

B
I'm not a mind reader.

E
But you are my father.

B
I am.

E
And you've been gone a long time. Things have changed. It's not going to be easy for you to readjust, just wait and see. Everything might feel like you're at home, but you're not. This is not home. It's a fake place. You leave for a night and come back and your toothbrush is missing. You're like: where's my toothbrush, I thought I left it by the sink. But, it's gone. So, you look for it. But I mean, really, where could it have gone to? It's a toothbrush, for crying out loud. It doesn't just *get up* and walk away. Someone must have taken it. But who steals a person's toothbrush? I mean, really, who would do that? Do you know?

B puts his hand on her. It's a reflex.

B
I know.

E
So, you can see how troubled I am.

B
But you're very smart.

E
I'm not.

B

You are. Some of us have been educated, but you skipped right pass school to pick up street smarts. How did you know about the Natives's religion?

E

I hear things.

B

But not everyone hears that they're unchurched.

E

Do you remember Antonio?

B

Christ...

E

Don't say that, Daddy.

B

Adultery is / a cardinal sin.

E

Don't you think that I know that? Of all people. But, Daddy, he's not coming back. Even if he were alive, he wouldn't.

B

He's still your husband.

E

A husband who is not interested in a wife is barely a husband.

B

There are some things that fathers shouldn't hear.

E

Then you should leave.

B

Pardon?

E

Go back. Go on the road. Don't stay here. They're going to destroy you. Please. It's all I think about. They'll kill you. Things have changed. It's only a matter of time before the Emperor comes back. And when that happens, what will the Princess be then? They took her away from her child, away from her purpose, and asked her to

keep together a crumbling empire. You've been on the road, you've seen it. It's like you like to say – a ruler, fallen from God, destroys the kingdom.

B

Who is going to destroy me?

E

I know what you've done. If I know, then everyone will find out sooner or later. You worship of that crippled pretty boy who founded your order. And maybe she's the only thing that's made the order stay, but what happens when someone whose not us find out?

B

Ignatius is a pure soul / he is doing God's work.

E

You came down at just the right time. Saved his ass. You have a family. Had a wife. Had children. And you give it all up to join a brotherhood. Here you are: a rich man. A powerful man. A man who serves the head of state and what do you tell him? That you can make sure that Spain, that the royal family is forever indebted to him...tell me, is that how you serve your Princess?

B

She's Queen now, with the other dead.

E gets up. B grabs her hand.

You have to understand what I'm doing.

E

Why?

B

Because someone has to.

E

Then. Explain it to me really slowly.

B

I'm in love with her. I've always been. I'm, please understand. I would do anything for her.

E

And you were warning me.

B

You won't say?

E

Of course not. But, don't expect me to confess. To either of you.

B

Do you forgive me?

E

For what? Being human or not being divine?

B

Both.

She kisses the top of his head.

FIVE

The Throne Room. V sits on the throne. B enters.

V

You're late.

B

Should you be sitting there?

V

I probably shouldn't. But, you know, tardiness, geography, these are all matters of time. Let me ask you a question: Do you know how old the world is?

B

No.

V

Neither do I, and if you had told me that you knew, I would have been very suspicious. I've funded some inquiries—monks mostly. I think they should go out and look at rocks and count the rings in trees. But, you know monks: They'd rather sit on those little stools in and scribble, scribble, scribble. The scriptorium is a nasty place. I think some of them were actually born in a barn. Where was I?

B

The age of the earth.

V

Yes. Anyway, after about a month of scribbling one of the wiser ones came to see me. He told me that through a series of computations that he had completed,

measuring up the ages of everyone in the Bible, and thus, during the course of history, he had deductively arrived at the date when God divided the heavens from the earth: October 23, 4004 BC. Look around yourself, my friend, if we can do all this in such a short time, but a blink in the eye of eternity, can you imagine what the next thousand years will bring. Just give us some time.

V holds his hand out.

B
Cardinal.

B kisses his hand.

V
I won't lie, I was expecting better service.

B
You shouldn't pretend you're not threatened by me.

V
Things change. I'm a vital part of the machinery now. Did you know they made me Grand Inquisitor? Not the Princess, of course, the Pope. And, you wouldn't believe the power this Inquisition thing has. Why, at the feast to celebrate my newfound stature, I saw one of the women of the court turn down a slice of ham. Now, of course, such a Jewish proclivity must be banished, especially if it materializes from a member of the court. It was just the hint of wrongdoing, but it was enough to drag me out of the doghouse that you had put me into and back into the light of the day. Once I told the Princess what had happened, that is. She opted for nothing to be breathed about it. Her choice, I assure you. You know what a bad mark that would be on her name not to mention the kingdom. Oh boy. That would have been a mess. With my help, we've practically eradicated the Jews, Judaizers, and Musilmen from Spain. / God be praised.

B
God be praised. I'm glad that you were there to look after her in my absence.

V
Are you?

B
I just said that it was.

V
Oh, well you said it so normal like: can I have that apple? Or, gee, that ceiling could use a paint job, that I could hardly tell how happy you were. Please express yourself appropriately or we'll have to return you to your place.

B

My place is at the hand of the throne. Even you can't change that.

V

Yes, I won't deny that your order has received some rather peculiar privileges for being such neophytes.

B

It's only natural that I would take that role, after all, I have travelled with her since Portugal and there I was her tutor. A certain familiarity is needed.

V

Is that what you call it?

B

I call it nothing. I go as I am called.

V

They tell me you've read some banned books.

B

Perhaps you've changed the list of prohibitions.

V

I don't take things off.

B

Yes, but you could.

V

You can take the guy out of the court intrigue, but you can't take the court intrigue out of the guy. Very good. Very savvy. Very Jesuit. Gone for years and you haven't lost a step, I hope you found everything where you left it. Particularly the mouth of the princess. Tell me, Father Confessor: what does she tell you?

B

Given your bluster, there hasn't been much that's changed in my time away.

V

You Jesuits, always think you're smarter than everyone else. Dominicans, like myself, don't stand a chance, do we? How could she rule for without confession?

B

She wrote me letters.

V

Not the same.

B

Letters are breath inscribed onto paper.

V

Yet words are not the same as voice.

B

They stand in when voice doesn't do. As I'm sure you've heard that the Emperor directs his forces in the New World with letters and they respond in kind. Surely an important man like yourself can understand how efficient and time-saving paper words have become.

V

Sure, but what did they say? Just a hint.

B

No.

V

Not many people tell me no.

B

I'm not many people.

V

Can I guess?

B

I can't stop you.

V

Not even one guess?

B

No.

V

Have you forgotten that, as a priest, you must still answer to me?

B

I'm here aren't I?

V

Grudgingly. Does she talk about: Lutherans?

B

Only to curse them.

V

As she should, still, you will probably be hearing more about them.

B

With the emperor fighting the Dutch and areas of Germany under revolt against the Church, it seems impossible that any of us will escape hearing about the fucking Lutherans.

V

I found some! I found them here! Worshipping here! In Spain. / God be praised.

B

God be praised. You're joking.

V

Do I look like I'm joking?

B

No?

V

That's because I'm not joking. This is a very, very serious thing. As I'm sure you know. To think, we've gotten rid of all the Jews, Judaizers, and Musilmen, and now a new threat and not from the north or the south but the ground upon which we stand. Can you believe that?

B

Who are they?

V

How should I know?

B

You said that you found them.

V

Well, I didn't do it myself. I can't go out as much these days, too many enemies. My spies did it.

B

Spies in your employ.

V

If they didn't come back with something, I'd know that they were unpure, because only an unpure priest cannot find the devil in his midst.

B

Impure.

V

Right you are. So, yes, obviously, they came back with something.

B

You're very pleased with yourself.

V

As I reminded you, Father, you're under my employ as well, so long as you're a priest. I am your Cardinal. Obedience, lest you forget.

B

I have not.

V

That's good. I heard you got that old bird to confess. Nice job.

B

She wasn't an old bird.

V

Kook is what I heard, carried her dead husband around with her like he was perfume. Thought it would keep the stench of power on her, but look how she wound up. Powerless. It's very sad. For her, I mean, not for the kingdom, because of course confession means that God is still with Spain. God be praised.

B stares at him.

Why didn't you say it?

B

I refuse to praise God for what he did to her.

V

I am aghast!

B

Do you know why I'm so good at my job?

V

Because you disobey orders from your Cardinal and the head of the Inquisition?

B

Because I analyze everything that I do, and everything that everyone tells me. If you would like a bit of information from this savvy, intelligent mind, let me tell you: get out of here. No one is going to like what you have to say. And if you don't get out of here right now, I will beat you to within an inch of your life and take your trinkets and cast them out on the floor before shoving each jewel that I have into your hyena's mouth. This is the seat of the state not the seat of your foolish games. I refuse to take praise for making a dying woman waste her breath confessing to a church that was out to kill her, a church that wanted her dead so they could take that chair that you're sitting in from a family that's had it for centuries. As you shouldn't take a position because you blackmailed your employer. Who's a Queen, see that you address her as such.

V

You forget yourself, it was *your* boss – the Pope – who put me here. And now I see why he did. You must be checked. Your entire order is out of line. If you hadn't come back it would have been the best thing for us.

J enters. She sees V on the throne.

J

Wrong chair.

V kneels, as does B.

V

My Queen. Many apologies, there seems to be a shortage.

J

It wasn't coincidental.

V & B stand.

It's good to see you back, officially, Padre.

B

It's good to be back.

J

Your trip was successful, we have learned.

B

Yes, My Queen, your rule is assured from God himself with her dying words, your Grandmother commended her spirit into the arms of the Lord and with that, Spain is assured its rightful place as the home of the spirit of Christ and his hand in the world. You are no longer a Princess, but the Queen of Spain, God be praised, charged with all the rights and responsibilities of that role.

J
That is good news.

V
Ahem, other guy in the room.

J
I hope this one didn't keep you too long.

B
With my return, I hope that you will allow his leave from your employ, as I'm sure there are many things which demand his attention.

J
I assure you, the best that we can do for him, we will do for him.

B
You're the Queen. You call the shots.

V
Guy you're talking about, right here.

B
We were just ironing out some issues that seem to have arisen since I've been gone. Transitional issues mostly.

J
Such as?

B
Who shall continue as your Royal Confessor?

J
Though you have left the palace, you have never left my heart. I gladly take you back as my consultant, advisor, and confessor.

V
I've heard some rather appalling news.

J

With your return, we shouldn't need to keep on another representative from the Church, he likes to remind us how important he is within the flock, why shouldn't he go and be there shepherd them...

V

There's no good news, so you don't have a choice of hearing the good news first. It's all bad new.

J

Cardinal, you are granted your leave. Please consider your duties here terminated as of, well, now.

V

It's very, *very* bad news.

J

...because you're a sniveling rat sucking the life out of the kingdom of Spain.

V

/God be praised.

B

/God be praised.

B looks at J.

J

...God be praised.

V

The, uh, rumors of my standing here notwithstanding, my Grace, I do have something not-so-good to say.

J

They are not rumors, they are facts. I hope you're packed.

V

While I appreciate that your aide has been away, and his return has brought the return of a good, wholesome Catholic presence *back* to the court, and as a result you don't need me around anymore. I'm afraid this is beyond any of us.

J

Did someone turn down the second course again?

V

My Queen, I did what I did under your orders.

J
Were my orders to kill her? You're lucky her husband was such a devout man that he was thankful to have his house purified.

V
Jews do not eat pork, My Queen. I can only assume she was not a Moor because of the color of her skin, though I am told they refrain from the consumption as well.

J
She was full.

V
How can we be sure?

J
Get this straight, Cardinal. You suck shit. You stick your nose where it isn't welcome, you try to run this chair as if it were your own. I don't need you anymore, you rat.

V
Rats only run where food has been spread. Have you been dropping bread, your grace?

B
He found some Lutherans.

V
I wanted to tell her that!

B
Probably he didn't, but he said he did.

V
I did too!

B
Prove it.

V
I thought you'd never ask.

In a very theatrical gesture, from somewhere in his vestment, V drops, maybe a dozen Bibles.

Ah hah! Bibles! Tell me what these are doing around given that hardly anyone besides us three can read! Now, can I sit down, please? I've been carrying those around all day.

B picks up a Bible and scrutinizes it.

J
Big deal.

V
Big deal? Big deal?!? YES! Big FUCKING Deal. Will you explain to her what this means?

B
It means he stole some Bibles from the scriptorium.

V
What? I did not. #8. Thou shalt not / bear false witness.

B
Bear false witness. Yes, but these have hardly been touched. Look, no crinkled pages, no broken spines. These must be very lazy Lutherans, or monks you bribed for their work.

J
I have a Bible, does that make me a Lutheran?

V
Of course not.

J
Well then, even *if* others have them, why should we care?

V
Because the people need priests, bishops, cardinals: to help them *understand*. That fucking German is going around telling people to figure things out for themselves – where do you think it starts? In books! With words!

J
Are these real or are they your invention?

V
He thinks he's the only one who serves you! He's not. I serve you, too. As God's chosen for the throne, His hand on the most blessed country in the world. Can't you see that this is for the good of all of us?

J

I have been chosen for nothing. I am here until the Emperor returns, when I will step down. Since the Pope has ordained that your place is what it is, my dear Cardinal, there is little I can do besides limit your damage. We must all know what our place is and whom we serve. Just as we both know this ruse is only for you. (*to B*) See that the door hits him on the way out before you lock it.

B hands V the stack of books, which V has trouble handling. B pushes him out the door.

B

Now, your grace, if you don't mind, I'd like to rest.

J

Please, sit.

B sits on the throne.

You've had a long trip.

B

I don't know what it was, it's like one minute I'm pushing him out the door, the next – woo!

J

Put your feet up.

B

Thanks, I will.

J

Here.

J takes his legs and elevates him. She smiles at him awkwardly. B suddenly lunges down and kisses her. They both look immensely surprised.

B

I don't know what/ came over me.

J

It's fine, don't worry about it.

B

I beg pardon.

J
Shut up.

B
Should I?

J lunges at him now, pinning him against the throne, kissing him. They come up for air.

J
Yes. Probably we should.

B
Should?

J moves back a bit, B grabs her and kisses her, pushing her on the throne now, grabbing her arms and holding them back. He kisses her neck.

J
I meant stop.

B stops.

B
Oh.

J grabs his crotch.

J
But. Don't. Stop. Now.

He pushes her down onto the throne, reaches up, grabs (undoes?) her panties, pulls them down. They fuck and she cums and he cums and they fall back on the floor.

J
You were gone too long.

B
Mucho.

Quick Black.

SIX

Later. The Throne Room. J & C. J hands him a letter.

J
He's your father, read it yourself.

C takes the letter.

C
...ruler of Portugal, Spain, the Kingdoms of... Does he have to say all that?

J
Makes it official.

C
...peace is of the utmost concern; therefore, I have decide to take as my bride, in the name of God and for the greater glory of our kingdom and our continued security, the princess of France, who is but 14, and still, I am told...blah, blah, blah, okay...in order to consolidate the holdings of our family and our kingdoms, I have arranged for my sister, the current Queen Regent of Spain, to marry my son, her cousin, the Prince...PS – tell your lady in waiting I said “Hi.” He can't do that.

J
He's the king.

C
They told me I was going to marry the French girl. I don't want to marry you.

J
Well, the feeling is mutual.

C hands the letter back to her.

C
You've already been married.

J
Yes.

C
You've got a son who's half my age.

J
I do.

C
And you're old.

J

My lady in waiting is only two years younger than me. You don't seem to have any problem spying on her dressing.

C

How do you know about that?

J

Trust me, I'm not happy about this either.

C

Do they expect us to, you know, produce an heir?

J

I think that's the idea.

C

Gross.

J

Your father is a very busy man. Sometimes we do what's easiest regardless of whether or not it's the best decision.

C

You think he's dumb.

J

I think you're the last person on earth I'd want to marry.

C

Why?

J

Well, um, I've never thought about you that way. Have you ever thought about me that way?

C

Gross.

J

Well, then, we won't respond. Things get lost in the mail all the time.

C

He'll notice.

J

Why?

C
You don't think he wouldn't notice? Are we so far down on his list of priorities?

J
There are always bigger problems. An excess of possible heirs is the least of his concerns.

C
Something's different about you.

J
Because I'm not listening to your father?

C
No, something else.

J
Care to enlighten me?

C
Ever since he came back.

J
He was my tutor as I am yours.

C
You're more like my mother.

J
Well, that's all the more reason to forget that we got this.

She goes to tear the letter up.

C
Wait.

J
What?

C
Can I see it?

J
Sure.

J hands him the letter. He looks over it.

C

What if I don't want to?

J

What if you don't want to?

C

Yeah. I mean, getting married to you. I mean, you know me. You've known me almost half of my life. What would be more worthwhile for a wife than to know her husband. I mean really, really know him and then, in that place, can't happiness grow?

J

What? No.

C

Why not?

J

It's not how it works.

C

You were married to your cousin before. And he was 16. Before he died. You gave him an heir. Wouldn't you like to be the queen?

J

I am the Queen.

C

You're the Queen regent.

J

No one is in charge of anything. Except your father. And you see what he does.

C

He wants things to be better. Why else is he sending this? Because he's going to quash the Dutch and when he does, you know where he's going? To FRANCE. Just like he went to HOLLAND. Anywhere but here. And that means while he's gone, we get to do what we want.

J

If you're going to try to get a woman to do what you want, you could at least mention love?

C

But I don't love you.

J

That's the problem. Couples, even royal ones, have to be able to get along. At least long enough to have a child. Then, they have to stomach the presence of each other long enough to sit through masques, concerts, courtly demonstrations, parades, public hangings, trips to the summer residence, and other incredibly tedious autocratic functions.

C

I'm ready to make a baby.

J

It isn't that easy.

C

It sounds pretty easy.

J

Hand me the letter.

C

This is an order.

J

It's an unjust order.

C

Because suddenly you're pious now.

J

I've always been pious. Give it to me.

C

As long as I have this, you're going to have to kneel down to your husband.

J

I'm warning you.

C

NO! I'm warning you. You do what I say or I'll make sure this letter comes true.

J

Fine. What do you want?

C

I want to be king.

J

Then you want what's on the paper.

C

Yes.

J

That is called blackmail. I do what you want or you do what I don't want you to do. You've already got what you want. So, why are you threatening me?

C

Because I want you to be happy about it.

J

Well, that violates the entire idea, then, doesn't it?

C

Fine. Be happy about what happens, or we'll do it anyway, and you *won't* be happy about what happens.

J

Okay.

C

Okay?

J

Yes, okay.

C

Good.

J

Can we hug it out?

C

Sure.

They move closer.

J

I'm sorry.

J grabs him and takes his bad arm and pins it behind his back, she easily removes the paper from his other hand, rips it up and throws it on the floor.

C
Unfair! Unfair! Unfair!

J
Am I changed? Yes. Am I pious? Yes. Look at me son. That wasn't a woman who hurt you. It was Mateo Sanchez of the order of Ignatius. I am priest Mateo Sanchez, a Jesuit. And I am telling you right now who you have to obey.

C
I'm sorry.

J
What?

C
I'm sorry! Okay? I'm sorry.

Either with her previous line, or somewhere in here, J has reduced C to his knees.

J
Ask for forgiveness for your sins.

C
My sins?

J
Pride. Sloth. Lust. For starters.

C
Blessmefatherforlhavesinnedmylastconfessionwasonmuhmumph, I humbly ask for your forgiveness for the error of my ways, for forcing people to do what I want, for jerking off to your lady-in-waiting for wishing, death to my family members for taking from me what I desire. / Please, Jesus Christ help me.

J
Please, Jesus Christ help him.

C
What shall I do for penance, Father?

J

Get out of my sight.

C
Are you really a priest?

J
From before my friend left. I have changed. You were correct. Congratulations, you're smart.

C
Thank you?

In a gesture of benevolence, J brings C to his feet. She cleans him like a mother.

J
You're filthy. And skinny.

C
I lost my appetite.

J
That's not like you.

C
Women don't like chubby kids.

J
Women don't like kids. Well, so long as they're not their own. I've always treated you like my son, haven't I?

C
You have.

J
Then allow me to dispense some hard won advice to you: take what you can without affecting others; cultivate love; pray; all these things will lead you to where you want to go.

C
She's going to marry him, and then she's going to be my mother. She told me that if I got her to marry him then I'd be the King. I was trying to save you. This way you can still be the Queen. But you've ruined it. And I was trying to save you.

J
I know you were. But there's only one who can do that.

C
My father?

J
No. Let's pray.

J kneels. She smiles at him. He follows her and kneels. She closes her eyes and begins to pray. C watches her. Black.

Intermission.

END OF EXCERPT
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