



MARY STUART

FRIEDRICH SCHILLER

Mary Stuart

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE.



ELIZABETH, Queen of England.

MARY STUART, Queen of Scots, a Prisoner in England.

ROBERT DUDLEY, Earl of Leicester.

GEORGE TALBOT, Earl of Shrewsbury.

WILLIAM CECIL, Lord Burleigh, Lord High Treasurer.

EARL OF KENT.

SIR WILLIAM DAVISON, Secretary of State.

SIR AMIAS PAULET, Keeper of MARY.

SIR EDWARD MORTIMER, his Nephew.

COUNT L'AUBESPINE, the French Ambassador.

O'KELLY, Mortimer's Friend.

COUNT BELLIEVRE, Envoy Extraordinary from France.

SIR DRUE DRURY, another Keeper of MARY.

SIR ANDREW MELVIL, her House Steward.

BURGOYNE, her Physician.

HANNAH KENNEDY, her Nurse.

MARGARET CURL, her Attendant.

Sheriff of the County.

Officer of the Guard.

French and English Lords.

Soldiers.

Servants of State belonging to ELIZABETH.

Servants and Female Attendants of the Queen of Scots.

ACT I.



SCENE I.

A common apartment in the Castle of Fotheringay.

HANNAH KENNEDY, contending violently with PAULET, who is about to break open a closet; DRURY with an iron crown.

KENNEDY.

How now, sir? what fresh outrage have we here?
Back from that cabinet!

PAULET.

Whence came the jewel?
I know 'twas from an upper chamber thrown;
And you would bribe the gardener with your trinkets.
A curse on woman's wiles! In spite of all
My strict precaution and my active search,
Still treasures here, still costly gems concealed!
And doubtless there are more where this lay hid.

[Advancing towards the cabinet.

KENNEDY.

Intruder, back! here lie my lady's secrets.

PAULET.

Exactly what I seek.

[Drawing forth papers.

KENNEDY.

Mere trifling papers;

The amusements only of an idle pen,

To cheat the dreary tedium of a dungeon.

PAULET.

In idle hours the evil mind is busy.

KENNEDY.

Those writings are in French.

PAULET.

So much the worse!

That tongue betokens England's enemy.

KENNEDY.

Sketches of letters to the Queen of England.

PAULET.

I'll be their bearer. Ha! what glitters here?

[He touches a secret spring, and draws out jewels from
a private drawer.

A royal diadem enriched with stones,
And studded with the fleur-de-lis of France.

[He hands it to his assistant.

Here, take it, Drury; lay it with the rest.

[Exit DRURY.

[And ye have found the means to hide from us
Such costly things, and screen them, until now,
From our inquiring eyes?]

KENNEDY.

Oh, insolent

And tyrant power, to which we must submit.

PAULET.

She can work ill as long as she hath treasures;
For all things turn to weapons in her hands.

KENNEDY (supplicating).

Oh, sir! be merciful; deprive us not

Of the last jewel that adorns our life!

'Tis my poor lady's only joy to view

This symbol of her former majesty;

Your hands long since have robbed us of the rest.

PAULET.

'Tis in safe custody; in proper time

'Twill be restored to you with scrupulous care.

KENNEDY.

Who that beholds these naked walls could say

That majesty dwelt here? Where is the throne?

Where the imperial canopy of state?

Must she not set her tender foot, still used

To softest treading, on the rugged ground?

With common pewter, which the lowliest dame

Would scorn, they furnish forth her homely table.

PAULET.

Thus did she treat her spouse at Stirling once;
And pledged, the while, her paramour in gold.

KENNEDY.

Even the mirror's trifling aid withheld.

PAULET.

The contemplation of her own vain image
Incites to hope, and prompts to daring deeds.

KENNEDY.

Books are denied her to divert her mind.

PAULET.

The Bible still is left to mend her heart.

KENNEDY.

Even of her very lute she is deprived!

PAULET.

Because she tuned it to her wanton airs.

KENNEDY.

Is this a fate for her, the gentle born,
Who in her very cradle was a queen?
Who, reared in Catherine's luxurious court,
Enjoyed the fulness of each earthly pleasure?
Was't not enough to rob her of her power,
Must ye then envy her its paltry tinsel?
A noble heart in time resigns itself
To great calamities with fortitude;
But yet it cuts one to the soul to part
At once with all life's little outward trappings!

PAULET.

These are the things that turn the human heart
To vanity, which should collect itself
In penitence; for a lewd, vicious life,
Want and abasement are the only penance.

KENNEDY.

If youthful blood has led her into error,
With her own heart and God she must account:
There is no judge in England over her.

PAULET.

She shall have judgment where she hath transgressed.

KENNEDY.

Her narrow bonds restrain her from transgression.

PAULET.

And yet she found the means to stretch her arm
Into the world, from out these narrow bonds,
And, with the torch of civil war, inflame
This realm against our queen (whom God preserve).
And arm assassin bands. Did she not rouse
From out these walls the malefactor Parry,
And Babington, to the detested crime
Of regicide? And did this iron grate
Prevent her from decoying to her toils
The virtuous heart of Norfolk? Saw we not
The first, best head in all this island fall
A sacrifice for her upon the block?
[The noble house of Howard fell with him.]
And did this sad example terrify
These mad adventurers, whose rival zeal
Plunges for her into this deep abyss?
The bloody scaffold bends beneath the weight

Of her new daily victims; and we ne'er
Shall see an end till she herself, of all
The guiltiest, be offered up upon it.
Oh! curses on the day when England took
This Helen to its hospitable arms.

KENNEDY.

Did England then receive her hospitably?
Oh, hapless queen! who, since that fatal day
When first she set her foot within this realm,
And, as a suppliant—a fugitive—
Came to implore protection from her sister,
Has been condemned, despite the law of nations,
And royal privilege, to weep away
The fairest years of youth in prison walls.
And now, when she hath suffered everything
Which in imprisonment is hard and bitter,
Is like a felon summoned to the bar,
Foully accused, and though herself a queen,
Constrained to plead for honor and for life.

PAULET.

She came amongst us as a murderess,
Chased by her very subjects from a throne
Which she had oft by vilest deeds disgraced.
Sworn against England's welfare came she hither,
To call the times of bloody Mary back,
Betray our church to Romish tyranny,
And sell our dear-bought liberties to France.
Say, why disdained she to subscribe the treaty
Of Edinborough—to resign her claim
To England's crown—and with one single word,
Traced by her pen, throw wide her prison gates?
No:—she had rather live in vile confinement,
And see herself ill-treated, than renounce
The empty honors of her barren title.

Why acts she thus? Because she trusts to wiles,
And treacherous arts of base conspiracy;
And, hourly plotting schemes of mischief, hopes
To conquer, from her prison, all this isle.

KENNEDY.

You mock us, sir, and edge your cruelty
With words of bitter scorn:—that she should form
Such projects; she, who's here immured alive,
To whom no sound of comfort, not a voice
Of friendship comes from her beloved home;
Who hath so long no human face beheld,
Save her stern gaoler's unrelenting brows;
Till now, of late, in your uncourteous cousin
She sees a second keeper, and beholds
Fresh bolts and bars against her multiplied.

PAULET.

No iron-grate is proof against her wiles.
How do I know these bars are not filed through?
How that this floor, these walls, that seem so strong
Without, may not be hollow from within,
And let in felon treachery when I sleep?
Accursed office, that's intrusted to me,
To guard this cunning mother of all ill!
Fear scares me from my sleep; and in the night
I, like a troubled spirit, roam and try
The strength of every bolt, and put to proof
Each guard's fidelity:—I see, with fear,
The dawning of each morn, which may confirm
My apprehensions:—yet, thank God, there's hope
That all my fears will soon be at an end;
For rather would I at the gates of hell
Stand sentinel, and guard the devilish host
Of damned souls, than this deceitful queen.

KENNEDY.

Here comes the queen.

PAULET.

Christ's image in her hand.

Pride, and all worldly lusts within her heart.

SCENE II.

The same. Enter MARY, veiled, a crucifix in her hand.

KENNEDY (hastening toward her).

O gracious queen! they tread us under foot;

No end of tyranny and base oppression;

Each coming day heaps fresh indignities,

New sufferings on thy royal head.

MARY.

Be calm—

Say, what has happened?

KENNEDY.

See! thy cabinet

Is forced—thy papers—and thy only treasure,

Which with such pains we had secured, the last

Poor remnant of thy bridal ornaments

From France, is in his hands—naught now remains

Of royal state—thou art indeed bereft!

MARY.

Compose yourself, my Hannah! and believe me,
'Tis not these baubles that can make a queen—
Basely indeed they may behave to us,
But they cannot debase us. I have learned
To use myself to many a change in England;
I can support this too. Sir, you have taken
By force what I this very day designed
To have delivered to you. There's a letter
Amongst these papers for my royal sister
Of England. Pledge me, sir, your word of honor,
To give it to her majesty's own hands,
And not to the deceitful care of Burleigh.

PAULET.

I shall consider what is best to do.

MARY.

Sir, you shall know its import. In this letter
I beg a favor, a great favor of her,—
That she herself will give me audience,—she
Whom I have never seen. I have been summoned
Before a court of men, whom I can ne'er
Acknowledge as my peers—of men to whom
My heart denies its confidence. The queen
Is of my family, my rank, my sex;
To her alone—a sister, queen, and woman—
Can I unfold my heart.

PAULET.

Too oft, my lady,
Have you intrusted both your fate and honor
To men less worthy your esteem than these.

MARY.

I, in the letter, beg another favor,
And surely naught but inhumanity
Can here reject my prayer. These many years
Have I, in prison, missed the church's comfort,
The blessings of the sacraments—and she
Who robs me of my freedom and my crown,
Who seeks my very life, can never wish
To shut the gates of heaven upon my soul.

PAULET.

Whene'er you wish, the dean shall wait upon you.

MARY (interrupting him sharply).

Talk to me not of deans. I ask the aid
Of one of my own church—a Catholic priest.

PAULET.

[That is against the published laws of England.

MARY.

The laws of England are no rule for me.
I am not England's subject; I have ne'er
Consented to its laws, and will not bow
Before their cruel and despotic sway.
If 'tis your will, to the unheard-of rigor
Which I have borne, to add this new oppression,
I must submit to what your power ordains;
Yet will I raise my voice in loud complaints.]
I also wish a public notary,
And secretaries, to prepare my will—
My sorrows and my prison's wretchedness
Prey on my life—my days, I fear, are numbered—
I feel that I am near the gates of death.

PAULET.

These serious contemplations well become you.

MARY.

And know I then that some too ready hand
May not abridge this tedious work of sorrow?
I would indite my will and make disposal
Of what belongs to me.

PAULET.

This liberty
May be allowed to you, for England's queen
Will not enrich herself by plundering you.

MARY.

I have been parted from my faithful women,
And from my servants; tell me, where are they?
What is their fate? I can indeed dispense
At present with their service, but my heart
Will feel rejoiced to know these faithful ones
Are not exposed to suffering and to want!

PAULET.

Your servants have been cared for; [and again
You shall behold whate'er is taken from you
And all shall be restored in proper season.]

[Going.]

MARY.

And will you leave my presence thus again,
And not relieve my fearful, anxious heart
From the fell torments of uncertainty?
Thanks to the vigilance of your hateful spies,
I am divided from the world; no voice
Can reach me through these prison-walls; my fate
Lies in the hands of those who wish my ruin.
A month of dread suspense is passed already

Since when the forty high commissioners
Surprised me in this castle, and erected,
With most unseemly haste, their dread tribunal;
They forced me, stunned, amazed, and unprepared,
Without an advocate, from memory,
Before their unexampled court, to answer
Their weighty charges, artfully arranged.
They came like ghosts,—like ghosts they disappeared,
And since that day all mouths are closed to me.
In vain I seek to construe from your looks
Which hath prevailed—my cause's innocence
And my friends' zeal—or my foes' cursed counsel.
Oh, break this silence! let me know the worst;
What have I still to fear, and what to hope.

PAULET.

Close your accounts with heaven.

MARY.

From heaven I hope
For mercy, sir; and from my earthly judges
I hope, and still expect, the strictest justice.

PAULET.

Justice, depend upon it, will be done you.

MARY.

Is the suit ended, sir?

PAULET.

I cannot tell.

MARY.

Am I condemned?

PAULET.

I cannot answer, lady.

MARY.

[Sir, a good work fears not the light of day.

PAULET.

The day will shine upon it, doubt it not.]

MARY.

Despatch is here the fashion. Is it meant
The murderer shall surprise me, like the judges?

PAULET.

Still entertain that thought and he will find you
Better prepared to meet your fate than they did.

MARY (after a pause).

Sir, nothing can surprise me which a court
Inspired by Burleigh's hate and Hatton's zeal,
Howe'er unjust, may venture to pronounce:
But I have yet to learn how far the queen
Will dare in execution of the sentence.

PAULET.

The sovereigns of England have no fear
But for their conscience and their parliament.
What justice hath decreed her fearless hand
Will execute before the assembled world.

SCENE III.

The same. MORTIMER enters, and without paying attention
to the QUEEN, addresses PAULET.

MORTIMER.

Uncle, you're sought for.

[He retires in the same manner. The QUEEN remarks it,
and
turns towards PAULET, who is about to follow him.]

MARY.

Sir, one favor more

If you have aught to say to me—from you

I can bear much—I reverence your gray hairs;

But cannot bear that young man's insolence;

Spare me in future his unmannered rudeness.

PAULET.

I prize him most for that which makes you hate him

He is not, truly, one of those poor fools

Who melt before a woman's treacherous tears.

He has seen much—has been to Rheims and Paris,

And brings us back his true old English heart.

Lady, your cunning arts are lost on him.

[Exit.]

SCENE IV.

MARY, KENNEDY.

KENNEDY.

And dare the ruffian venture to your face
Such language! Oh, 'tis hard—'tis past endurance.

MARY (lost in reflection).

In the fair moments of our former splendor
We lent to flatterers a too willing ear;—
It is but just, good Hannah, we should now
Be forced to hear the bitter voice of censure.

KENNEDY.

So downcast, so depressed, my dearest lady!
You, who before so gay, so full of hope,
Were used to comfort me in my distress;
More gracious were the task to check your mirth
Than chide your heavy sadness.

MARY.

Well I know him—
It is the bleeding Darnley's royal shade,
Rising in anger from his darksome grave
And never will he make his peace with me
Until the measures of my woes be full.

KENNEDY.

What thoughts are these—

MARY.

Thou may'st forget it, Hannah;

But I've a faithful memory—'tis this day
Another wretched anniversary
Of that regretted, that unhappy deed—
Which I must celebrate with fast and penance.

KENNEDY.

Dismiss at length in peace this evil spirit.
The penitence of many a heavy year,
Of many a suffering, has atoned the deed;
The church, which holds the key of absolution,
Pardons the crime, and heaven itself's appeased.

MARY.

This long-atoned crime arises fresh
And bleeding from its lightly-covered grave;
My husband's restless spirit seeks revenge;
No sacred bell can exorcise, no host
In priestly hands dismiss it to his tomb.

KENNEDY.

You did not murder him; 'twas done by others.

MARY.

But it was known to me; I suffered it,
And lured him with my smiles to death's embrace.

KENNEDY.

Your youth extenuates your guilt. You were
Of tender years.

MARY.

So tender, yet I drew
This heavy guilt upon my youthful head.

KENNEDY.

You were provoked by direst injuries,

And by the rude presumption of the man,
Whom out of darkness, like the hand of heaven,
Your love drew forth, and raised above all others.
Whom through your bridal chamber you conducted
Up to your throne, and with your lovely self,
And your hereditary crown, distinguished
[Your work was his existence, and your grace
Bedewed him like the gentle rains of heaven.]
Could he forget that his so splendid lot
Was the creation of your generous love?
Yet did he, worthless as he was, forget it.
With base suspicions, and with brutal manners,
He wearied your affections, and became
An object to you of deserved disgust:
The illusion, which till now had overcast
Your judgment, vanished; angrily you fled
His foul embrace, and gave him up to scorn.
And did he seek again to win your love?
Your favor? Did he e'er implore your pardon?
Or fall in deep repentance at your feet?
No; the base wretch defied you; he, who was
Your bounty's creature, wished to play your king,
[And strove, through fear, to force your inclination.]
Before your eyes he had your favorite singer,
Poor Rizzio, murdered; you did but avenge
With blood the bloody deed——

MARY.

And bloodily,
I fear, too soon 'twill be avenged on me:
You seek to comfort me, and you condemn me.

KENNEDY.

You were, when you consented to this deed,
No more yourself; belonged not to yourself;
The madness of a frantic love possessed you,