



# MARY & GEORGE

Written & Created by

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**Episode 1:**

*"The Second Son"*

- BLUE AMENDS SCRIPT – 19.01.23 -

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1 INT. GOADBY HALL. VILLIERS' BEDROOM 1592. NIGHT. 1

PROLOGUE

A BABY - just born, UMBILICAL CORD attached - falls to the FLOOR of a dark, austere WOOD-PANELLED ROOM, with a THUD. Outside, a HEAVY RAIN falls and falls, as the BABY - understandably, as one might - cries, and wails...

CUT TO BLACK. IN WHITE LETTERS, FADING IN:

1592

THE LETTERS FADE OUT. CUT TO:

2 INT. GOADBY HALL. VILLIERS' BEDROOM 1592. NIGHT. 2

The same ROOM. GOADBY HALL. A provincial, modest MANOR HOUSE. Barely lit by a few CANDLES. MARY - normally a force of nature but deliriously tired - has just given birth. After a long, difficult labour. Lost a lot of BLOOD. The CRYING BABY hangs out of her by its UMBILICAL CORD. A BUCKET in a corner collects RAIN DRIPS, as MARY - as one might - seethes...

MARY  
...who dropped him?

TWO FEMALE SERVANTS - one much SMARTER, one much OLDER - at the end of the BED. And a THIRD FEMALE SERVANT behind MARY, who supports her. The SMARTER SERVANT is LAURA ASHCATTLE:

LAURA  
...sort of...both us.

The OLDER SERVANT studiously avoids eye contact, guiltily...

MARY  
...sort of one of you pick him up.

LAURA nods, and picks up the CRYING BABY. Tries to soothe it. Smiles. Coos. But the BABY still cries, wails...

MARY (CONT'D)  
...no. Here.

LAURA nods, hands over the CRYING BABY, who soon, after a beat or two, stops crying. MARY cradles the BABY in her left ARM - and eyes it, sharply - as the OLDER SERVANT goes to cut the UMBILICAL CORD with a KNIFE...

MARY (CONT'D)  
...no. Here.

MARY gestures with her right hand...

The OLDER SERVANT looks to LAURA who gestures to give her the KNIFE. Bemused, the OLDER SERVANT does...

MARY puts the KNIFE to the UMBILICAL CORD. But stops just before she cuts...

MARY (CONT'D)

...before I cut you free: what should I call you? Do I bother? Perhaps I should have left you to rot, on the floor. Do you know why?

As she speaks, we might glimpse a PORTRAIT behind her, hung on the wall, of her husband, SIR GEORGE VILLIERS. A dashing man in his 40s...

MARY (CONT'D)

...you are my second son. And you will inherit nothing of any human worth. So what use are you to me?

MARY waits, as if she expects an answer. The KNIFE now pointed at the BABY. All THREE FEMALE SERVANTS understandably very uneasy: *has childbirth sent MARY mad...?*

But MARY seems to find some kind of an answer in the BABY'S EYES...

Beat. She lowers the KNIFE. Puts it to one side, close by...

MARY (CONT'D)

...leave him attached. For now. And go, before I avenge the dropping business.

The THREE SERVANTS - rather stunned, dumb - depart. MARY cradles the BABY. LAURA stops at the door:

LAURA

...what of his name, my Lady?

MARY

He is, yes: he is my George.

LAURA half-smiles, goes. The DOORS close...

We shift to a shot of MARY and GEORGE from above, mother and son in a messy harmony of BLOOD, SWEAT, and, yes: LOVE...

CUT TO:

**- TITLES: MARY & GEORGE -**

**ACT ONE**

CUT TO BLACK. IN WHITE LETTERS, FADING IN:

1612

THE LETTERS FADE OUT. CUT TO:

3 **EXT. GOADBY HALL. FOREST. NIGHT.**

3

Twenty years later. Deep in a dark FOREST. Asleep on the ground: a YOUNG DEER. We watch its BREATH dance in and out, before its EYES OPEN and it stands, and runs away. BIRDS flee, above. After a beat, we hear what the YOUNG DEER did...

...BRANCHES snapping in the dark, as something approaches: a BURNING TORCH. Holding it: LAURA ASHCATTLE. Now a HOUSEKEEPER (most senior female SERVANT of GOADBY HALL, albeit of a tiny staff). Older, wiser, weary...

BURNING TORCH in one hand, LEAD of ADAM - a SHORT-HAIRED LURCHER, her closest companion, aiding her search - in the other. After a beat of tracking LAURA and ADAM through the FOREST, we spot behind her: TWO OR THREE OTHER TORCHES in the dark depths of the FOREST. (All out on the same search...) Behind her, arrives JENNY - a SERVANT, 20, nervous, tired - who also holds a BURNING TORCH. JENNY looks across solemnly at LAURA (her boss), who coldly does not return the look...

CUT TO:

4 **INT. GOADBY HALL. VILLIERS' BEDROOM 1612. NIGHT.**

4

An hour later. MARY in the DOORWAY of the BEDROOM she gave birth in. BRUISING across her RIGHT HAND. (Which fades, scene by scene...) Above her the PAINTED PORTRAIT OF SIR GEORGE VILLIERS. Time has been unkind to it. Peeling. Faded. Time has also been unkind to GOADBY HALL...

Decay evident in its WALLS, as we pan down to find: the real SIR GEORGE VILLIERS - 60s, dying - on the same BED (where his son GEORGE was born, 20 years ago). Eyes closed. A stark contrast to the painting. Years of alcoholism, ill health. But also the BRUISES/CUTS of a recent trauma. (A very bad fall.) We hear his pained, irregular WHEEZING / BREATH...

After a beat, LAURA appears, alone, by her side. Exhausted...

MARY

(without looking at her)

...so?

Beat. LAURA just shakes her head. MARY turns to her...

MARY (CONT'D)  
(as much to herself)  
...must I do it all myself?

LAURA  
(of SIR GEORGE)  
Well he's not gonna help us, is he?

LAURA should not have said this. But between her tiredness, and experience, it just comes out. A woman of MARY's position should not stand for it...

MARY  
(matter-of-fact,  
actually agreeing)  
No. He's not.

CUT TO:

5 **EXT. GOADBY HALL. FOREST. NIGHT.** 5

Hours later. We watch over the FOREST and see: A DOZEN BURNING TORCHES, stretched out across it. A SEARCH PARTY.

CUT TO:

6 **EXT. GOADBY HALL. FOREST. NIGHT.** 6

Close on: MARY, LANTERN in hand, as she walks through, and scans, the darkness and silence of the FOREST before her...

MARY  
(as much to herself)  
Where are you, boy?

For a second we might spy a softness in her, until...

...she glimpses JENNY - with a TORCH nearby - who swallows a 'Yelp' as MARY studies her, before looking down in shame...

MARY scans further and sees: LAURA - with TORCH, and ADAM - who is barely able to keep her eyes open. LAURA is approached by WILLIAM THE GROUNDSKEEPER - gnarled, taciturn - who speaks to LAURA in a relative hush. (His voice carries...)

WILLIAM  
Be first light in its time.

LAURA nods, processing. Worried how to communicate this upwards. Steels herself, comes over to MARY, ADAM with her...

MARY  
What?

LAURA

A long night. Even my Adam fit to drop (!). Perhaps we might briefly pause our efforts, 'til dawn, then -

MARY

I heard what the inbred said. First to rest, will be the first flogged.

LAURA

...my Lady, we --

MARY

Let it be known to all: men and women, children and hounds!

MARY disappears, continuing her search...

LAURA makes eye contact with a terrified JENNY, as she kneels down, and pets ADAM to make sure he is assured...

LAURA

(to ADAM, consoling)

Not you boy, alright? Never you.

(to WILLIAM, functional)

Let everyone know: we keep on.

WILLIAM

...reckon they prob'ly heard, love.

CUT TO:

7 **EXT. GOADBY HALL. FOREST. DAWN.**

7

Later. MISTY. MARY, alone, has been out in the FOREST for hours. Her LANTERN burning down; enough light she does not need it. Discards it. Hears SOMETHING ahead. Unclear what it is. Wary, MARY takes out a KNIFE (the same used in scene 2), and heads in the direction of the sound. Disappears in MIST...

8 **EXT. GOADBY HALL. FOREST. DAWN.**

8

Soon after. Close on MARY in MIST. Sees something ahead...

We pull back and see, before her: GEORGE hanging - eyes closed - from a TREE by a ROPE. A FALLEN TREE near his gently swinging feet. MARY looks at GEORGE, a beat, before stepping forward. KNIFE in hand. Gets close. Gently pushes him...

GEORGE wakes gasping, panicking, swinging, struggling. MARY does not do anything. Watches him a moment. GEORGE - after his initial panic - sees MARY watching him. They eye each other a beat. MARY steps onto the FALLEN TREE...

CUT TO: Close on the KNIFE sawing the ROPE...

CUT TO: The ROPE cut, GEORGE hits the ground, with a THUD.

CUT TO BLACK:

All we hear, GEORGE'S BREATH. Wheezing. Reeling. Gathering...

FADING IN:

9

**INT. GOADBY HALL. GEORGE'S BEDROOM. DAY.**

9

Hours later. Silence, GEORGE, in BED, severe BURNS around his NECK. JENNY - caught between relief and pity - applies OINTMENT to GEORGE'S NECK. The application the only sound. MARY watching on; JOHN - 22, her eldest son, an absent presence - too. LAURA opposite, overseeing. GEORGE grabs JENNY's hand. KISSES it, once. JENNY blushes, self-conscious. MARY is just about ready to kill. Looks at LAURA...

MARY

...maybe you apply it?

LAURA takes over ointment duty, as JENNY, embarrassed, peels away to a corner. We now see KIT - 19, the youngest and worst of MARY's children - and SUSAN - 21, earnest, perennially ignored, meticulous - perched in the DOORWAY...

SUSAN

...is it sore, brother?

KIT

Course it's fucking sore. Could have ripped his head off the preening cretin. Ended up on his deathbed like poor Daddy.

SUSAN

...Kit. That's twice inappropriate.

MARY

Yes, Kit. You and your sister. Go.

MARY gestures that they go. KIT, bored, disinterested, goes.

SUSAN

...but why can John stay, mother?

MARY

Because he's the eldest. And I prefer him. By quite the margin.

SUSAN - hurt but unsurprised - goes. LAURA makes GEORGE wince in pain, as she applies more OINTMENT...

MARY (CONT'D)  
Careful. His skin is worth ten  
thousand of you. More.

LAURA nods - knowing that already - and goes to apply more  
OINTMENT. But GEORGE grabs LAURA's hand, and stops her...

GEORGE  
I want to be scarred. Forever.

Beat. LAURA looks back at MARY, unsure what to do...

MARY  
Perhaps go, Miss Ashcattle?

LAURA nods, goes, quickly. MARY points at JENNY...

MARY (CONT'D)  
Take that one with you. 'Ta.'

LAURA nods. JENNY dutifully follows LAURA out...

10 **INT. GOADBY HALL. GEORGE'S BEDROOM. CORRIDOR. DAY.** 10

...into the CORRIDOR, out through the OPEN DOOR...

LAURA  
I told you to put a cork up it,  
girl.

JENNY  
...he's just so...pretty.

JENNY is staring back at GEORGE, in BED. LAURA, speechless,  
tilts JENNY's head back to face forward, as...

11 **INT. GOADBY HALL. GEORGE'S BEDROOM. DAY.** 11

...MARY moves toward the DOOR, and pushes it firmly closed  
with her foot. Beat. Just MARY, JOHN and GEORGE left now...

MARY  
...what did you do?

GEORGE  
...I don't want to go. All I want  
...is Jenny. I love her.

MARY  
She's a servant.

GEORGE  
Not in my heart.



MARY

...that's not how it works. That's not how a single thing, fucking -

GEORGE

...well it should.

MARY

Are you five? No still just a baby. You will go to France, George.

GEORGE

...if you make me go, I'll kill myself...again, but this time I'll -

MARY

Fall in a way that breaks your neck? Or hang there for hours like a Christmas ornament? Again?

JOHN

I like Christmas. Ivy and laurel.

MARY

...yes, John. Happy Christmas. Yes.

GEORGE

...is that why you left me to hang, as I looked so...decorative?

MARY

I left you there, because it was staged. A transparent -

GEORGE

It was real, I promise you.  
(on MARY's headshake)  
...you don't understand love, do you? You just want me off to France to learn the ways of...refinement, then return to marry some awful rich wife and milk her fat dowry.

MARY

...it's about more than that.

GEORGE

No. It's not.

MARY snaps. Without warning, drags GEORGE out of BED by his foot. Hits the floor. Drags him to the centre of the room...

MARY

I never beat you. Perhaps I begin.

MARY carries a boxer's air. GEORGE seems to want oblivion...

GEORGE

...do it. Father has enough times.  
Used to it by now.

JOHN

...don't hurt him. Falling flower.

A long beat. MARY, breathless, relents; approaches and cradles JOHN. Strokes his hair, gently, as she speaks...

MARY

Only Kings, Gods, or madmen, wander  
through their lives doing as they  
want. Think of John. Eldest and  
heir, but who will marry him? How  
can we pass on or build: anything?  
Unless we use your gifts to -

GEORGE

...what gifts?

JOHN

Are there presents? Is it  
Christmas?

MARY

Soon. There'll be gifts aplenty.  
(back to GEORGE)  
If I were a man and I looked like  
you, I'd rule the fucking planet.

GEORGE

...I don't want to rule the -

MARY

Then it will rule you. Second sons  
offer nothing. Inherit nothing.  
Raise yourself, or you will be -

GEORGE

...if you make me go, I'll slit my  
wrists. This time: I'll make sure.

MARY

You don't have the will. Are you  
scared? Is that it? To leave me?

GEORGE

...father was always against me  
...going. And whilst he still draws  
breath, his word means something.  
Even a baby knows that.

12

**INT. GOADBY HALL. VILLIERS' BEDROOM 1612. DAY.**

12

Close on SIR GEORGE VILLIERS. In the same BED. A SHEET placed over his head by LAURA. He is DEAD. JENNY opposite. LAURA looks over to the FAMILY: MARY, JOHN, GEORGE, KIT, and SUSAN.

KIT  
(to GEORGE)  
(Better pack quick, prick.)

LAURA  
...any final words? From anyone?  
Apart from...those?

MARY shakes her head. As does GEORGE. SUSAN raises a hand...

SUSAN  
...I'd like to...say some things.

SUSAN carefully unfolds a WRITTEN SPEECH. MARY walks out...

SUSAN (CONT'D)  
...just a few thoughts, I won't -

JOHN follows his mother, off. KIT, chuckling, goes, with:

KIT  
Coming, George?  
(of the CORPSE to SUSAN)  
At least he won't walk out on you.

GEORGE stays, staring at his father. SUSAN unsure what to do -

LAURA  
Go on, you have your say, Miss.

SUSAN, humiliated, goes. GEORGE nears SIR GEORGE VILLIERS...

GEORGE  
He reeks. Get rid of him.

13

**INT. GOADBY HALL. COLD ROOM. DAY.**

13

Later. Downstairs in the COLD ROOM. LAURA places SPRIGS of ROSEMARY and THYME (to cover the stench) into a WINDING SHEET, which she wraps methodically around SIR GEORGE'S CORPSE. On a TABLE. A pre-burial ritual. MARY watches on...

LAURA  
Need more sheets. Girl's gone to  
fetch 'em. Where's Master George?

MARY  
No doubt mourning. In his way.

14 INT. GOADBY HALL. JENNY'S LOFT ROOM. DAY. 14

GEORGE upstairs in a cramped LOFT ROOM. Not mourning. JENNY and GEORGE stripping and passionately kissing. Except, GEORGE is keeping most of his CLOTHES on. Not for the first time...

JENNY

I see you looking. At me. And the Harris brothers, down at the forge.  
(as GEORGE studiously evades her look)  
But you never let me see you.

GEORGE

(unconvincing)  
...I'm here.

GEORGE does not undress. Instead, they start to kiss again, and do more, and soon: GEORGE enters JENNY. They both GASP...

CUT TO:

15 EXT. ST DENYS CHURCH. GRAVEYARD. DAY. 15

SIR GEORGE VILLIERS' COFFIN lowered into his GRAVE. The FAMILY - MARY, GEORGE, JOHN, KIT and SUSAN - here, as well as STAFF - LAURA, JENNY, WILLIAM - and a PRIEST, overseeing. FOUR SEXTONS lower the COFFIN on ROPES, but struggling because of the weight. The COFFIN lurches unevenly, and with a fall, hits the ground. THUD.

PRIEST

Earth to earth. Ashes to ashes.  
Dust to dust. In sure and certain  
hope of resurrection to eternal  
life.

The FAMILY, one by one, throw EARTH down on to the COFFIN: KIT. SUSAN. JOHN. MARY, the very last. She lets it fall...

CUT TO:

16 INT. XANDER'S BOOKKEEPERS OFFICE. DAY. 16

A DOOR opens. MARY enters a ramshackle BOOKKEEPERS OFFICE. XANDER PHILBY - the BOOKKEEPER, unhidden depths - stands, having expected her:

XANDER

Lady Villiers. I'm sorry about your husband's... He had a fall at home?

MARY nods, advances into the room. XANDER sits and opens a LEDGER BOOK (with the VILLIERS ACCOUNTS/WILL/DEEDS in them).

XANDER (CONT'D)

And thank you, for hiring me. I know you have little time for bookkeepers, even at the best of -

MARY

Assume I have less.

XANDER

...yes. And you should know: I am...discreet. Will you sit?

MARY

No. So how is it?

XANDER

...between your late husband's chronic gambling losses, loans -

MARY

How bad?

XANDER

Like staring at Medusa. Did you know it was all quite so -

MARY

I know he was reckless. And worse. But he inherited a great deal. I want my second boy to travel overseas. There is money for that?  
(on XANDER's headshake)

So I only have the house? Could it be sold? Or mortgaged, used as -

XANDER

...uh...ayee...ugghh...

MARY

Don't make me ask why you're making those various sounds.

XANDER

...your husband signed over your house to one of his cousins. I think to insulate it from his debt.

MARY

...fuck. Will the cousin sell?

XANDER

No, you can stay. For a fixed rent.

MARY

...I have to pay to live in my own -

XANDER

Well it's not yours, that is the -

MARY

And what do I pay with? Vapour?

XANDER

...crux. No, money. Sorry. Humour.  
There's also, uh: this...

XANDER takes out PAPERS from the LEDGER. Hands them to her.

XANDER (CONT'D)

Payments made, on your behalf, a  
long time ago. To the Beaumont  
family. Your...people. The reason  
for payment is: specified. There.

A beat. MARY silently burns the PAPERS using a CANDLE...

MARY

Never tell anyone of this. Yes?  
Promise. On pain of death. Yours.

(on XANDER's nod)

Good. But do tell me: what do I do  
now? For capital? How do I live?

XANDER

...there's only one option, I see.

MARY

(ahead of him)

...marry, again? Is there any worse  
Hell than a woman's?

XANDER

No. I could suggest...suitable  
bachelors? Though you may have to  
wait. To not seem too: unseemly.

MARY

...how many weeks? To wait?

XANDER

Four at least. Six if you care for -

CUT TO BLACK. IN WHITE LETTERS, FADING IN:

**TWO WEEKS LATER**

THE LETTERS FADE OUT. FADING IN:

17

**INT. COLEORTON HALL. BORING BALL. DAY.**

17

A poorly attended, dull, tasteless MASQUE BALL, in COLEORTON HALL. Provincial. MARY dressed somewhere between SPIRIT and ANIMAL. Other LOCAL GENTRY dressed in SIMILAR COSTUMES...

MARY, drinks WINE, whilst on the move. Eyes SIR THOMAS COMPTON - 60s, self-made, unvarnished - also dressed as a SPIRIT/ANIMAL. MARY looks to her side: XANDER, also wearing a MASK, in a corner with a DRINK. He nods toward COMPTON. MARY downs her DRINK, grabs another, and advances...

MARY

...Sir Thomas Compton?

COMPTON

(bored)

Afraid so. You?

MARY

Lady Villiers. Your next wife.

COMPTON

...I'm sorry, love?

MARY

Don't be.

COMPTON

Is this a joke? I don't know you.  
Yet to even hear your given name.

MARY

There'll be time for that. Let us  
find somewhere more private.  
Intimate. Away from all this  
endless fucking excitement.

MARY goes. A bemused COMPTON follows her off, towards...

18

**INT. COLEORTON HALL. TROPHY ROOM. DAY.**

18

...a nearby TROPHY ROOM (off the MAIN HALL). ANTLERS on every wall. MARY closes the DOOR on them...

COMPTON

...what is this? Really?

MARY

A proposal. Really.

COMPTON

...to what...marry you? I'm way  
past all that shit and noise.

MARY begins to advance on him...

MARY

You've had enough children? Wives?

COMPTON

For two lifetimes. Three.

MARY

Why not live one more time?

COMPTON - aroused, but wary - half-falls, half-sits in a CHAIR in the corner, as MARY gets closer...

COMPTON

...the cost, for a start.

MARY

All living costs. Until we're free.

COMPTON

...till that day, why encourage more expense, and more pain?

MARY

Companionship, no? Closeness?

COMPTON

...something I have missed...

MARY

As have I. And know: I know you are self made. I want none of your fortune. No rights of acquisition, or inheritance. Nothing. Except...

COMPTON

...except?

MARY

Before we wed: a small stipend to cover my son's education.

COMPTON

First you talk like a courtesan. Now, just like a bookkeeper?

MARY

Front and back of the same shop.

COMPTON

Fuck me down. You are forward.



MARY

I have been held back too long.

COMPTON

Seems to me like you're used to getting what you want?

MARY

...the opposite. Why I am presenting such favourable terms.  
(beat, of the ANTLERS)  
Come. Let us live. Before we hang on a wall somewhere, too.

COMPTON

...you really value your son's education enough to endure...me?

MARY

You seem entirely endurable, Sir Thomas. And oh yes, you should know: I'm Mary.

On MARY, framed by the ANTLERS around her...

**ACT TWO**

19

**EXT. GOADBY HALL. LAKE. DAY.**

19

A week later. GEORGE, NECK still BRUISED/MARKED sat before a LAKE, in the GROUNDS of GOADBY HALL. Unvarnished nature. JOHN sat next to him, playing - badly - a PENNYWHISTLE...

GEORGE

You're just spitting in it. Take your time. Like I showed you.

JOHN

...it's happier, with you.

JOHN goes to hand it back to GEORGE but suddenly MARY is above them. JENNY in tow, behind her...

GEORGE

...why is she here?

JENNY's mouth goes to open -

MARY

Me first. I am to marry again.

GEORGE

...what? Who? Father is barely -

MARY

Don't worry, it will not affect you. You'll be in France. It's arranged. You leave in a few days.

GEORGE

...I don't care if he's dead. Or what you say. I don't want to go.

MARY

Your want is irrelevant here.

GEORGE

No. It's my life. And hers.

GEORGE stands, grabs JENNY's hand. JENNY pulls it away...

MARY

Wrong again.

JOHN

...can the music play? I miss the -

MARY

Inside, George. Now.

GEORGE shakes his head, defiant...

MARY (CONT'D)

You know of Jenny's family? Her brothers? Her father? Brutes, all. And if you stay in England, I'll have no choice but send her home.

GEORGE

...you're the Devil.

MARY

Perhaps. But if you love her: go.

We might sense GEORGE's will is cracking...

GEORGE

...why won't you listen to me?

MARY

How about we listen to her?

(beat, eyes on JENNY)

What do you want, Jennifer? His love? Or to stay in my service?

JENNY

(after a beat)

...your service, my Lady.



JOHN

...George doesn't want to drown.

Beat. MARY looks at JOHN, then at the motionless CARRIAGE...

23

**INT/EXT. MARY'S CARRIAGE. GOADBY HALL. DAY.**

23

A minute later. GEORGE in the CARRIAGE. MARY arrives on foot.

GEORGE

Never left England. Or been at sea.  
My French is so *sans*... How will I -

MARY

You have nothing to fear in France.

MARY reaches out to him. GEORGE is touched. And surprised...

GEORGE

...what if I go...later? When I'm  
older?

MARY

If you miss this chance: you will  
fail us all. And live, like your  
father, smeared in the unwashable  
excrement of a foul, eternal shame,  
that haunts you until your final  
breath. And far, far beyond.

Before a speechless GEORGE can respond, MARY double-hits the  
side of the CARRIAGE, which starts off again...

MARY (CONT'D)

*Bon voyage.*

CUT TO BLACK:

*'Prelude Pour Mr. Vaquelin' resumes. Plays over scenes 24 and  
25...*

24

**EXT. SEA OFF FRANCE. DAY.**

24

A week later. GEORGE on a ROWING BOAT, separated from a LARGE  
SHIP. Out at SEA, we glimpse the SHIP, far behind him, in  
order to bring GEORGE to SHORE in NORTHERN FRANCE. A LONE  
FRENCH ROWER - seasoned, 30s, silent - powering them, and  
GEORGE'S LUGGAGE, on. A paleness to GEORGE. SWEATING. Takes  
off his SCARF, wipes his SWEAT away with it. His NECK still  
MARKED. As he pats himself, despite feeling ill, takes in the  
ROWER'S POWERFUL MUSCLY ARMS as they row, and row...

CUT TO:

25 **EXT. SEA OFF FRANCE. BEACH. DAY.**

25

Shortly after, the ROWING BOAT comes to SHORE. Waiting on the BEACH: JEAN - 25, French, all cheekbones - and VINCENT - a SERVANT, rugged, bear-ish - next to him. The ROWER helps GEORGE off the BOAT, but it is an awkward effort. GEORGE mis-steps and gets wetter than he would like. JEAN watches him. Gestures for his VINCENT to grab the LUGGAGE from the ROWER.

*'Prelude Pour Mr. Vaquelin' stops.*

JEAN  
(offering his HAND)  
I am Jean. How was your journey?

Beat. GEORGE bends over and VOMITS. JEAN takes him in...

JEAN (CONT'D)  
...right. Maybe we get you home?

26 **EXT. CHATEAU. DAY.**

26

Later. JEAN and GEORGE approach a grand CHATEAU. Behind them, VINCENT unpacks GEORGE'S LUGGAGE from the THREE HORSES they rode in on. GEORGE awed by the CHATEAU. JEAN eyes his NECK MARKS...

JEAN  
How were you hurt, friend?

GEORGE  
...a...just a...little tumble.

JEAN  
You didn't try to hang yourself?

GEORGE  
...no. How do you -

JEAN  
Your mother told me in her letters.

GEORGE  
...that's private. That is -

JEAN  
How can I help you if I do not know who you are? So please, do not lie to me again, yes? Yes yes Villiers?

Beat. GEORGE nods, as the CHATEAU'S SERVANTS open the GRAND DOORS, and they - VINCENT having caught up, with the LUGGAGE - enter...



VINCENT opens another DOOR, behind which: ANOTHER ORGY. Beat. JEAN gestures, and VINCENT closes the DOOR...

GEORGE  
...where are we?

JEAN  
(matter-of-fact)  
France.

30 **INT. CHATEAU. GEORGE'S BEDROOM. DAY.** 30

Soon after. JEAN opens a DOOR to GEORGE's sparse BEDROOM. VINCENT comes in and puts the LUGGAGE down. GEORGE stunned...

JEAN  
This is you. My room is next along.  
Come, you look so shocked. Isn't  
your King a little Frenchy French?

GEORGE  
No monarch of our nation, ever -

JEAN  
...England is really, so different?

On GEORGE - still reeling - who can only nod...

30A **EXT. COMPTON MANOR. FRONT ENTRANCE. DAY.** 30A

MARY'S CARRIAGE pulls up in front of COMPTON'S MANOR HOUSE. (Much bigger than Goadby Hall. Less decrepit. Still austere. But monied...).

COMPTON (PRE-LAP)  
Purchased the place after I made  
real money. When I still had...

31 **INT. COMPTON MANOR. LONG CORRIDOR. DAY.** 31

COMPTON leading MARY through a LONG CORRIDOR in his MANOR HOUSE. They pass MANY BORING PAINTINGS of DULL OLD MEN...

COMPTON  
...young children. Perhaps it's ill-  
advised, rattling around here,  
alone in my cage, so many years?

MARY  
There are worse cages.

COMPTON  
You won't mind living here?

MARY stops, pulls COMPTON into her, so she is against an OLD MAN PAINTING. They kiss. MARY moves COMPTON's hand into her CLOTHES. And between her legs. Touching her as they talk...

MARY  
I'll adjust.  
(reading him)  
...what's wrong?

COMPTON  
You're on...grandfather. Sorry,  
Pap.

MARY  
Pap won't mind. Must be bored of  
the same old view. Let him see  
anew.

COMPTON  
...yes, but before we fully...  
Or... Do know: I will not risk all  
this. A contract must -

MARY  
Don't worry. I know just the man.  
Even Pap would approve. But let us  
first have a taste of our future.

MARY pulls him down on his KNEES, COMPTON glancing at PAP...

32

**INT. XANDER'S BOOKKEEPERS OFFICE. DAY.**

32

XANDER in his OFFICE, before MARY and COMPTON. Presents a MARRIAGE CONTRACT. COMPTON reads as XANDER talks:

XANDER  
In some ways, a purer ritual than  
that in any church. A written  
contract of marriage: inarguable.  
Ineffable. Everything as agreed. No  
dowry from Lady Villiers. And no  
risk to your Estate, Sir Thomas.

Having finished reading: COMPTON signs...

XANDER (CONT'D)  
You may kiss the bride.

MARY  
Oh, he already has.

COMPTON coughs, amused. MARY, too. XANDER, nods, bemused...



33 **INT. CHATEAU. GEORGE'S BEDROOM. DAY.**

33

JEAN barges into GEORGE'S BEDROOM...

JEAN  
...my God, George. What is that?

We now see GEORGE is sat on his BED with the PENNYWHISTLE...  
(We may also notice his NECK MARKS have now fully faded...)

GEORGE  
...shouldn't you knock before -

JEAN  
...why? What do you hide? More  
putrid little things like this? I  
heard you playing, from my room.

JEAN has taken the PENNYWHISTLE. Inspects it like a turd...

GEORGE  
...it's not... It was a gift.

JEAN  
Who from? A child?

JEAN snaps the PENNYWHISTLE in half. Throws it out a WINDOW.

JEAN (CONT'D)  
Follow me. Come on, Mr. Piper.

JEAN heads to the DOOR; gestures to follow and...

34 **INT. CHATEAU. CORRIDOR. DAY.**

34

...outside GEORGE catches up with JEAN in an ornate, vast  
CORRIDOR. (More contrast to England...) VINCENT follows...

GEORGE  
...that was a present, why did you -

JEAN  
You want to be known as the son of  
a knight who falls in love with  
stupid little serving girls and  
also plays a shitty pauper's flute?

GEORGE stops.

GEORGE  
...you know about...her, too?

JEAN turns, advances on GEORGE, and - as he talks - prods GEORGE as a punctuation to his words. Quite hard. GEORGE edges back, taking the prods, and the pain...

JEAN

I know everything. Your poor older brother. Your violent father. How he beat you, daily. And you never fought back. You just...took it.

GEORGE

...what was I meant to do?

JEAN

Defend yourself. Like a man. Not shiver and cry, like a lost boy.

JEAN stops prodding. He may even feel pity for GEORGE. He firmly pushes back GEORGE's shoulders for a better stance...

JEAN (CONT'D)

Yes. Own your body. Your space. Your territory. Everything you do. In France. Even in your wet, sad excuse of a little fucking country. Counts for who you are, George. There are rules. Codes. Honour.

Beat. Ahead is a DOOR. JEAN takes GEORGE through into a...

35

**INT. CHATEAU. MUSIC ROOM. DAY.**

35

...a MUSIC ROOM. (VINCENT waits outside.) INSTRUMENTS - of the highest quality and expense - everywhere...

JEAN

Which is why all that you learn with me. What books we read. Languages we learn. Dances we dance. Instruments we play...

JEAN sizes up a VIOLA DE GAMBA. Like a sexual partner. Sits with it. Finds a BOW. Gets ready to play as he talks...

JEAN (CONT'D)

...all will be for a man who owns himself, and all else. That is what your mother is paying for. And we don't want to upset her, do we?

GEORGE shakes his head, uncertainly. JEAN is about to play. Stops just before he starts...

JEAN (CONT'D)

Also, from now on. No more English.  
It is like a disease of the tongue,  
it debases the mind. Your King  
James, his mother she was French.  
He is fluent: why he is like us.  
Worthy of his crown. From now on...  
(in French, subtitled)  
We speak only French. Are you ready  
now for how we will play, George?

Beat. GEORGE nods. And JEAN begins to play. Exquisitely...

CUT TO BLACK:

*JEAN'S VIOLA DE GAMBA plays Marin Marais' 'Sonnerie de Ste. Genevieve Du Mont-de-Paris' (as played by Jordi Savall). It plays over scenes 36 to 43...*

36

**INT. CHURCH. DAY.**

36

A CHURCH. A PRIEST (different from the FUNERAL one) overseeing MARY and COMPTON'S WEDDING CEREMONY. Behind them: KIT, JOHN, and SUSAN. Not romantic. A small, private necessity.

PRIEST

Almighty God, who, at the beginning  
did create our first parents, Adam  
and Eve, and did sanctify and join  
them together in marriage. Power  
upon you the richness of his grace,  
sanctity, and bless you, that you  
may please him in both body and  
soul, until your lives end. Amen.

As we watch, the PRIEST completes the ceremony: COMPTON and MARY peck each other, playfully. And MARY smiles.

37

**INT. CHATEAU. MUSIC ROOM. DAY.**

37

Having finished playing, JEAN offers the VIOLA DE GAMBA to GEORGE, who has never played one before. He takes it, and the BOW. Not sure where to start. JEAN moves around, behind him. Gently guides GEORGE's hands. An undeniable intimacy to it. GEORGE's heart racing (much more at having JEAN so close, than playing a new INSTRUMENT...) JEAN loving this...

38

**INT. CHATEAU. CORRIDOR. DAY.**

38

VINCENT waiting, patiently, outside in the CORRIDOR... He hears something, down the CORRIDOR. Turns to face it...

39 **INT. COMPTON MANOR. LONG CORRIDOR. DAY.** 39

...and we see LAURA and JENNY, burdened with LUGGAGE, walking down the CORRIDOR in COMPTON MANOR, past BORING PAINTINGS (as from scene 31). As she passes it, JENNY grimaces a bit at the GRANDFATHER PAINTING. LAURA just frowns, struggling with her load ...

CUT TO:

40 **INT. CHATEAU. FENCING ROOM. DAY.** 40

GEORGE and JEAN, FENCING in a HALL. At the CHATEAU. VINCENT in a corner, impassive. GEORGE and JEAN really going for it. JEAN more experienced. Toys with GEORGE a bit. But goes too far, and prods GEORGE in the CROTCH. It hurts. (Also: illegal.) GEORGE snaps, in a fury, and ELBOWS JEAN in the FACE. JEAN staggers back. Feels BLOOD in his mouth. Spits some out. GEORGE approaches, apologetic. But JEAN is...proud of him. Lesson learnt. Smiles. Nods, proudly...

CUT TO:

41 **INT. CHATEAU. DRAWING ROOM. NIGHT.** 41

Days later. Late. We hold on GEORGE. Stood in an artificial, odd pose in the CHATEAU'S DRAWING ROOM. JEAN watching, waiting. VINCENT here, too. We might wonder what is going on a second... Before GEORGE breaks into a dance. A galliard. A natural light and grace to him. But raw. He messes up his steps. Asks, through gesture, to start again. JEAN - patient - nods. GEORGE takes a breath. About to start again when we -

CUT TO:

42 OMITTED 42

43 **EXT. COMPTON MANOR. FRONT ENTRANCE. DAY.** 43

MARY walking through the GROUNDS of COMPTON MANOR. A smile to her as she reads a LETTER. But her smile fades, and she folds the LETTER away, as she sees up ahead, by the FRONT ENTRANCE to COMPTON MANOR: COMPTON with SIR DAVID GRAHAM - English, 50s - who shakes COMPTON's hand, gets onto his HORSE, and rides off, before he turns and sees MARY. A moment of eye contact. *'Sonnerie de Ste. Genevieve Du Mont-de-Paris'* stops. MARY - intrigued - approaches COMPTON - quietly fuming - arriving just before he goes back inside COMPTON MANOR...

MARY

...who was that?

COMPTON

(dismissive)

You don't want to know. How's your fetching lad doing in France? He turned full frog yet?

MARY

Tell me who.

COMPTON

...him? The parasite's parasite.

MARY gives him a look...

COMPTON (CONT'D)

An advance party. Scouting for the King. His Majesty's summer travels bring him our way. He needs to be housed and fed; watered and wiped.

MARY

(stunned)

...the King will be staying here?

COMPTON

God fucking no. I told them our renovations won't be finished in time.

MARY

...what renovations?

Small beat.

COMPTON

I thought you were the clever one of your brood, Jesus Christ alive.

MARY

...but why lie about, having -

COMPTON

...I put King James up once before: the big bugging goatfucker nearly bankrupted me ten times over. More.

MARY

...is it not worth the price?

COMPTON

Just how provincial are you, girl?

MARY

(with a shrug)

...I have never met the King. I would like to. Once in my life.

COMPTON

(softer)

I understand the instinct. I do. But honestly, it is a fucking nightmare. The mess. Expense. Paperwork. Or do you think you could seduce His Maj how you did me?

MARY

I could try.

COMPTON

I fear you have one too few penises, and two too many tits.

MARY

...I know about the King's tastes. But still. I'd enjoy the privilege. The time with him. Conversation.

COMPTON

He won't give you a second fucking glance, woman.

MARY

A first is fine.

COMPTON scoffs...

MARY (CONT'D)

Yes, I admit: I am ...provincial. My husband barely ever let our family leave the house. I have spent a long time shuttered away in the dark. I would like to emerge, a little further, into the light. Let me meet His Majesty. Please.

COMPTON approaches, holds her arms...

COMPTON

...I promise you, my love. The King is a dead-eyed, horny-handed horror who surrounds himself with many deceitful, well-hung beauties unlike anything you know.

MARY allows a little smile to cross her lips...

MARY

Are you trying to talk me out of  
this, or not? Indulge me, husband.  
What's the worst a well-hung beauty  
can do?

On COMPTON half-laughs, but his half-grin soon fades...

COMPTON

...you'll find out.

**ACT THREE**

44

**EXT. COMPTON MANOR. FRONT ENTRANCE. DAY.**

44

Weeks later. MARY and COMPTON outside COMPTON MANOR. With:  
JOHN, KIT, SUSAN. And HOUSE STAFF, including LAURA, JENNY,  
and WILLIAM...

KIT

If you drank all your own blood,  
every last drop, what would happen?

COMPTON

...inquisitive lad, your youngest.

SUSAN

Do we call you father, Sir Thomas?

COMPTON

Call me what you want. Fuck it.

SUSAN

...has George written?

MARY

(eyeing JENNY)

Not to me, no. But his tutor has.  
He's settling in. Learning to swim.

COMPTON

My God: here we go. Kill me now.

The KING'S CARRIAGE and ATTENDANT STAFF CARRIAGES arrive.  
Stops. SIR DAVID GRAHAM - 60s, weary - gets out, first...

COMPTON (CONT'D)

Sir David Graham. Only Englishman  
on the King's staff. A shineless  
turd of a man, but I feel for him.

MARY

...why, if he's a turd?

COMPTON

He has to deal with them.

FOUR SCOTTISH GENTLEMEN OF THE KING'S BEDCHAMBER exit the SUPPORT CARRIAGES, next. Followed by EARL SOMERSET - 25, dashing - who peers over at COMPTON MANOR. Not impressed...

COMPTON (CONT'D)

The Well-Hung Crew. All Scots. And he most hung: Earl Somerset. The King's...well, everyfuckingthing.

SIR DAVID stood away from the rest. And uneasy...

MARY

Sir David is...isolated? He looks -

SOMERSET

All of you: inside! King James is tired. Does not want to see anyone!

After a beat, COMPTON - with a shared look/nod to MARY of 'See?' - begins to motion everyone inside...

45

**INT/EXT. COMPTON MANOR. LOBBY. DAY. CONTINUOUS.**

45

...the HOUSE. To the LOBBY. We watch from inside as the STAFF and FAMILY pour in. The DOORS close. Suddenly a tad dark...

MARY

...is this normal?

COMPTON

Nothing is with these cunts.

Suddenly, bellowed from the other side of the DOOR:

SOMERSET (O.S.)

And please do not loiter inside, as His Majesty will of course see you as he enters! The King will not be ready to see anyone, until dinner!

Another look between MARY and COMPTON, before they - with help from LAURA, who gently guides poor, lost JOHN - usher everyone out. We stay on the FRONT DOORS until SOMERSET pops his head in, checking all are gone. Smiles...

46

**INT. COMPTON MANOR. DINING ROOM. NIGHT.**

46

That night. COMPTON, MARY, JOHN, KIT, SUSAN, sat at a beautifully laid-out DINNER TABLE. An expensive FEAST put on for the KING.



Suitably, many STAFF, including LAURA and JENNY, are stood, waiting to serve. But, there is no KING, or KING'S ENTOURAGE. Only EMPTY TABLES and CHAIRS before them...

KIT

I could eat five horses, raw.

JOHN

Please don't. Pretty gallopers.

SUSAN

George would love this. Meeting the actual King. Do you remember, when he was little? He made himself a crown out of feathers and sticks. Called himself King George. Made us kneel and bow, and...kiss his feet.

KIT

Until father burnt the crown and broke five or six of George's ribs.

MARY

...I do recall. Yes.

Beat. Not a happy one. Even COMPTON bothered by it...

SUSAN

...do you think we'll have to wait much longer, for His Majesty?

MARY

Yes, how much longer do we -

The question at him: COMPTON shrugs. After an awkward beat: SOMERSET enters. Followed by a glum looking SIR DAVID....

SOMERSET

The King is more tired than we thought. He may in fact be very ill. As such, he does not want to dine. Or anyone else to, either, in case the sound of your collective masticating echoes through to his very modest rooms, and disturbs his fragile peace yet further.

MARY eyes SIR DAVID who looks down, ashamed. MARY stands.

MARY

If King James is not himself, of course none of us shall eat. But may you stay a while with us, and we converse with you, my Lord?

Beat. SOMERSET just: walks away. Followed by SIR DAVID. MARY stunned. COMPTON chuckles, as if to say, again: 'See?'

COMPTON

(leaning in, hushed)

Let's retire. If I cannot feed, I want to indulge other senses.

MARY

...what is wrong with the King?

COMPTON

You may never know. He is prone to illness, but also moods, tempers, hangovers. Then you have Somerset. Who lies as often as he defecates.

MARY

...so we might not see the King at all? Even as he is...inside our -

COMPTON

I warned you. King James is a headcase. You would be; every other bugger trying to kill, betray, or bugger you ever since a crown pops on your head as a wee bairn. But forget him. Come to bed. What else will you do: stalk the halls all night to grab a wee glimpse?

CUT TO:

47 OMITTED 47

48 **INT. COMPTON MANOR. LONG CORRIDOR. NIGHT.** 48

Later. MARY, stalks down the BORING PAINTING CORRIDOR, towards the KING'S BEDROOM. Before she starts to hear...

SOMERSET (O.S.)

...why bring us here of all places?  
What of what I desire? What I need?

The response muffled. SOMERSET storms out into the CORRIDOR.

SOMERSET (CONT'D)

What are you doing? Are you a spy?

MARY

...it is my house, my Lord.

SOMERSET

No. I am Lord Chamberlain. Privy Councillor. His Majesty's eyes, ears, heart. Wherever I am, is my property for the King's business.

MARY nods, stares at SOMERSET. His face, body. A realisation.

SOMERSET (CONT'D)

...what? What is it?

MARY

You are very handsome. But you must be terrified? His head will turn one day for another more beautiful?

SOMERSET

...luckily, there's no such man.

KING JAMES (O.S.)

If there is we'll have to meet him.

KING JAMES - Scottish, 40s - has come out. Naked. ERECT PENIS on display. (Though we do not have to see it...)

SOMERSET

...you really want to meet some -

KING JAMES

It was a joke, man! For fuck sake!

MARY takes this in. (The tension between them...) Curtsies:

MARY

...Your Majesty.

KING JAMES

(proud, of his BONER)

Isn't he just? Now. Where were we? Before all those rash silly words? Must we fight like cats? We should play, like pups. To the kennels.

KING JAMES gestures for a hug. SOMERSET relents. They embrace. KISS. Disappear inside, to FUCK. MARY, sees at the end of the HALLWAY: SIR DAVID GRAHAM, watching from his DOORWAY. As he sees MARY, he ducks back inside his ROOM...

49

**INT. COMPTON MANOR. LONG CORRIDOR. NIGHT.**

49

Soon after. A QUIET KNOCK on a DOOR. SIR DAVID opens the DOOR. MARY outside. SIR DAVID looks up/down the CORRIDOR...

SIR DAVID  
...quiet. What do you want?

MARY  
I might ask you that.

SIR DAVID  
Been another long day. I've no time  
for riddles, enigmas, or enemas.

MARY  
Nor I. Let us be plain, and clear.

50

**INT. COMPTON MANOR. SIR DAVID'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.**

50

Later. Inside. MARY and SIR DAVID both with a DRINK...

SIR DAVID  
For a thousand years, since the  
Romans, since Hadrian, we kept the  
Scottish hordes at bay. Not much  
more than a decade of James' rule,  
and we're over-run here at home.

MARY  
King James is Scottish. You don't  
want a new monarch? That's Treason.

SIR DAVID  
No. I like the King. Even pity him.  
He's a different kind of Celt. I  
mean that surly sodomite Somerset  
and his Scottish semen-guzzlers.

MARY  
You would rather we were ruled by  
our own plucky homegrown sodomites?

SIR DAVID  
It would be better. Why: know any?

On MARY, who sips thoughtfully at her DRINK...

MARY  
I may know a boy, yes.

51

**INT. CHATEAU. GEORGE'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.**

51

Back in FRANCE. GEORGE, on his own, late at night, BOOKS  
stacked up, in front of him. Learning FRENCH. GEORGE yawns,  
exhausted, distracted. But then notices some SHADOWS - and  
hears something unusual - outside, in the HALLWAY...

52 INT. CHATEAU. BEDROOMS HALLWAY. NIGHT.

52

Moments later. GEORGE - BOOK in hand, in his own, open DOORWAY - watches, down the HALLWAY: JEAN outside his own ROOM, the DOOR of which is open. JEAN, WINE in hand, smiles at something inside. JEAN'S CLOTHES are DRIPPING-WET. A trail of WATER, after him. An alluring sight. JEAN turns, looks at GEORGE, who drops his BOOK. The THUD sounds out. JEAN smiles, blows GEORGE a playful kiss, before disappearing inside his ROOM...

We stay on GEORGE, who picks up his BOOK. Goes back inside his room. We hold on the EMPTY HALLWAY. For a beat. Before GEORGE comes out again, looking down, towards JEAN'S ROOM...

53 INT. CHATEAU. BEDROOMS HALLWAY. NIGHT.

53

Soon after. GEORGE outside JEAN'S ROOM. KNOCKS on the DOOR. No response. Leans in to the DOOR, to be heard...

*[All dialogue in this scene is in French, and subtitled.]*

GEORGE

Jean? Can we talk? I have been wanting to say. I like it here. But I am fit to be seen in Society, now. My French is good. I know how to stand. Be. I am ready to play.

The DOOR opens. JEAN, naked, drying himself with a CLOTH...

JEAN

Society can wait, George. Seen too soon, you may...disgrace yourself. I will not risk it yet. No. Sorry.

GEORGE turns away his gaze...

GEORGE

...why are you...all wet?

JEAN

We went for a swim.

GEORGE looks up: inside, VINCENT is NAKED and drying himself, too. Finished, drier, VINCENT sits on the BED. Looks over...

VINCENT

Is he going to join us?

GEORGE

...what does he mean?  
(on JEAN'S look)  
(MORE)

GEORGE (CONT'D)

...but he's...he's a, a man? And of the...lower orders?

JEAN

The last never stopped you before.

GEORGE

...but he is a man?

JEAN

Oh. Is he? Are you a man, Vincent?

VINCENT shrugs, deadpan...

JEAN (CONT'D)

And I've seen how you stare. At me. Other men. Women, too. But you're less scared of them, aren't you?

GEORGE

...I thought you said there were rules, about...how one...? Honour?

JEAN

The point of rules is to know when to break them into tiny pieces. Didn't your mother teach you that?

VINCENT

Is he coming, or not? I'm cold.

JEAN looks at GEORGE: 'Well?' GEORGE too shocked to answer...

JEAN

Bodies are just: bodies.

JEAN saunters back to bed, as GEORGE - breathless - watches.

54     **INT. CHATEAU. JEAN'S BEDROOM. NIGHT. CONTINUOUS.**     54

We switch to a shot of JEAN, as he gets into BED and kisses and touches VINCENT, who returns the favour. JEAN sees out of the corner of his eye: the DOOR close. GEORGE has gone away. Something between a smile and frown crosses JEAN's face...

55     **INT. CHATEAU. BEDROOMS HALLWAY. NIGHT. CONTINUOUS.**     55

We watch GEORGE walking down the HALLWAY, back towards his own BEDROOM. Stops at the DOOR. Does not go inside. We hold a beat. Watch him, his BACK to us. Body riddled with tension...

CUT TO:

56 INT. CHATEAU. BEDROOMS HALLWAY. NIGHT. 56

A minute later. Close on GEORGE. JEAN'S DOOR before him. He opens it. He steps forward, warily, inside. We watch from behind as he begins to strip, and heads, steadily, toward JEAN, and VINCENT, on their BED. They turn to welcome him...

CUT TO WHITE. IN BLACK LETTERS:

1614

DISSOLVING IN:

57 INT/EXT. MARY'S CARRIAGE. ROAD NEAR COMPTON MANOR. DAY. 57

MARY in the back of a CARRIAGE, travelling through the ENGLISH COUNTRYSIDE. JOHN - now 24 - sat opposite her. Beat.

JOHN

I like giraffes.

MARY

Good. Me, too. Such long necks.

JOHN

Colours of dawn, and day.

MARY nods, touched. Mary sees another carriage travelling at speed down the hill. The carriage intercepts Mary's carriage and both come to a halt.

58 EXT. MARY'S CARRIAGE. ROAD NEAR COMPTON MANOR. DAY. 58  
CONTINUOUS.

MARY steps out of her CARRIAGE, sees ANOTHER CARRIAGE has overtaken and pulled across their path. She eyes the DRIVER:

MARY

Are we to be robbed and raped?

The DRIVER shrugs, scared. MARY pulls out her KNIFE from a POCKET. Gestures for JOHN (still in the CARRIAGE) to 'stay'. Hides the KNIFE behind her back. Sees on the road, ahead: GEORGE. Looks different. 22. Not just his age has moved on...

MARY (CONT'D)

...who is this new stranger?

GEORGE

Me, mother.

MARY

My son: not due back another week.

They approach each other. She inspects his (clear) NECK...



GEORGE  
Did you miss me?

Before she answers, JOHN sticks his head out of the CARRIAGE.

JOHN  
...is it George?!?

JOHN rushes out of the CARRIAGE and hugs his brother. As she speaks, MARY flings the KNIFE back into the CARRIAGE...

MARY  
Welcome home. Whoever you are.

59 OMITTED 59

60 OMITTED 60

61 **EXT. COMPTON MANOR. GROUNDS FOOTPATH. DAY.** 61

Later. GEORGE and MARY walk alone, in the COMPTON GROUNDS...

MARY  
Your new: inclination. Always in  
you, I think.

GEORGE  
(in French, subtitled)  
Bodies are just...bodies.

MARY  
They're more than that. They're  
currency.

GEORGE  
(beat, taking in the  
GROUNDS)  
You married well. And the King  
visits you here? Impressive.

MARY  
...once. Briefly. Unimpressive.

GEORGE  
...what's he like? James?

MARY  
So cock-struck it's like a curse.

GEORGE  
The French say that. And laugh.

MARY  
It's not funny to him. Do they also  
say how weary he is? Of Somerset?  
(on GEORGE's headshake)  
They argue like man and wife.

GEORGE not sure where she is going with this...

GEORGE  
...what about mine?  
(on MARY's look)  
Do you have a wife ready for me,  
yet? I bet you know just the girl?

MARY  
No. I think we aim higher.  
(beat)  
His Majesty dines soon at Apethorpe  
with his brother-in-law, the Danish  
monarch. They drink a lot. Messy  
affairs. And a new friend tells me  
there are openings for cupbearers.

A moment between MARY and GEORGE. He reads her realising:

GEORGE  
...you want me to hold a man's cup  
as he swallows?

MARY  
I'll leave the specifics to you.  
But it's not a man. It's a King.

CUT TO WHITE. IN BLACK LETTERS, DISSOLVING IN:

**SOON**

THE LETTERS FADE. FADING IN:

63

**INT. APETHORPE. SERVICE ROOM. DAY.**

63

GEORGE - looking like a little boy lost - waiting in the SERVICE ROOM at APETHORPE, which leads to the KITCHEN. Wearing LIVERY that suits his form. Around him: a hive of activity. COOKS, SERVANTS, CUPBEARERS, coming and going... A bit much for GEORGE. Behind him, SIR DAVID has come in to watch a moment. Ahead of him, a HEAD CHEF holds a TRAY OF MEAT. Heavy and impressive. A MEAT CLEAVER on it...

HEAD CHEF

Now. Now. This tray of delights is fit for His Majesty. Well: two of their Majesties. And ours and the Danes' they love their meat. They do. So what are you gonna do?

GEORGE

...uh...take it to them? Though I thought I was to be serving drinks?

HEAD CHEF

You were. To be. Our darling lad little Laurence here...

We see next to GEORGE, watching on bitterly: LAURENCE, a less attractive CUPBEARER/SERVANT...

HEAD CHEF (CONT'D)

...was menna be serving the Two King Table their meat tonight, but some Devil...

The HEAD CHEF makes eye contact with SIR DAVID, who takes this as his opportunity to leave. Goes back to the FEAST...

HEAD CHEF (CONT'D)

...pulled their Devil strings and instead it's the Devil you.

LAURENCE

(faux-polite)

Do be careful. Heavy load, that.

HEAD CHEF

Yeah, best had. Drop any I'll rip out your eyes and tongue, serve em for dessert in a horrible compote.

GEORGE

...uh...thank you. Chef. Yes.

GEORGE nervously takes the TRAY from the HEAD CHEF. It is heavy. GEORGE is not used to this work. Or the pressure. He closes his eyes to take a moment. As he opens them...

64

**INT. APETHORPE. DINING ROOM. DAY. CONTINUOUS.**

64

...we join on GEORGE's shoulder, as he walks through the DINING ROOM towards the TWO KING TABLE. On which are: KING JAMES, EARL SOMERSET, KING OF DENMARK - Falstaffian pisshead - and QUEEN ANNE - 40, married to KING JAMES, sister of the Danish King, a sober presence - as well as COUNTESS SOMERSET - 24, easy with power - and ANNE TURNER (COUNTESS SOMERSET'S Lady In Waiting). And the FOUR SCOTTISH GENTLEMEN OF THE BEDCHAMBER...

Other TABLES, of decreasing importance the further away they are from the TOP TABLE. On one of these we see SIR DAVID, watching GEORGE, hawk-like. MUSICIANS play beautiful MUSIC...

GEORGE gets a look from SIR DAVID, who gestures to keep calm; after, SIR DAVID exchanges a look across the room with SIR FRANCIS BACON (a man we will meet properly in later episodes...), who is watching everything, too. (SIR DAVID watching, sceptically. BACON more enthralled.) GEORGE does not see this: his main focus is on not dropping the MEAT...

As GEORGE gets closer, we see KING JAMES looking at GEORGE. Seems charmed. A proud smile emerges onto GEORGE's face...

We also see SOMERSET spot KING JAMES looking at GEORGE. Seethes, as he drinks. QUEEN ANNE also notices all this going on. As does SIR DAVID and BACON. This is a public stage. And as GEORGE gets to within a metre of the TOP TABLE, LAURENCE - carrying A JUG OF WINE - perfectly times walking behind GEORGE and tripping him. GEORGE and all the MEAT falls...

CUT TO:

Seconds later. We join GEORGE on the floor. All sound bleaches out; we mostly hear GEORGE's desperate BREATH. In the background we hear - muted, muffled, distant - the CROWD reacting to the dropping of MEAT with mocking laughter...

GEORGE livid. Embarrassed. In an animal state. From the floor, eyes LAURENCE, who smiles daggers. GEORGE stands, runs at LAURENCE, tackles him to the ground. Punches him in the face. Thrice. KING JAMES stands, taking this all in. Before GEORGE can punch again, SIR DAVID, aghast, intervenes and pulls GEORGE back. LAURENCE writhes and turns on the floor. As SIR DAVID restrains and slaps GEORGE: normal sound returns. We hear the FEAST-GOERS; sounds like a bear-pit...

SOMERSET walks through it all towards GEORGE. The CROWD hush.

SOMERSET

Do you know the customary  
punishment for starting a physical  
assault in your monarch's presence?

GEORGE does not know what to say. SIR DAVID - after a discreet gesture from BACON - releases GEORGE from his grip; all aware something bad is coming. (They are right.) SOMERSET grabs GEORGE and pushes him down, forward, his face to the table, as he grabs a MEAT CLEAVER from nearby...

SOMERSET (CONT'D)

By law, you lose a hand. As there  
are two Kings here: it's both.

GEORGE squirms but a SCOTTISH BEDCHAMBER GENTLEMAN helps SOMERSET restrain him. Holds him as SOMERSET pulls one of his arms out, to get a clean cut. SIR DAVID, watching - sighs, gravely - as COUNTESS SOMERSET arrives, too, loving this...

COUNTESS SOMERSET

Stop resisting my husband or who  
knows what else will be severed?

GEORGE

...he tripped me! Deliberately!

SOMERSET

Don't dare talk back to the woman  
who shares my bed! Be silent. And  
still. Or it will be a massacre.

SOMERSET raises the MEAT CLEAVER. But as SOMERSET brings the MEAT CLEAVER down...KING JAMES arrives, and nudges him. The MEAT CLEAVER just misses GEORGE. All eyes on KING JAMES...

KING JAMES

I saw it. The other boy did trip  
him. Wasted a King's meal. Sought  
his own justice. There is no need  
to implement more. All is done.

SOMERSET

...Your Majesty, I -

KING JAMES (CONT'D)

Does King Christian agree?

The KING OF DENMARK wanders over, eating, with QUEEN ANNE:

KING OF DENMARK

I enjoyed the fight, but I am just  
here for ale. And more ale. It's my  
sister you married for her wisdom.

KING JAMES

...and what is Queen Anne's decree?

QUEEN ANNE  
(no fan of SOMERSET)  
Same as my King's. Let the boy keep  
both wrists. You saw what you saw.

GEORGE stands, bows in desperate thanks; is escorted back to the KITCHEN by SIR DAVID. SOMERSET petulantly throws the MEAT CLEAVER down; COUNTESS SOMERSET comforts him. KING JAMES watches GEORGE depart; the KING OF DENMARK slaps his back; QUEEN ANNE eyes her husband's gaze. At the back, SIR DAVID exhales, whereas BACON grins.

65 **OMITTED** 65

66 **EXT. APETHORPE. COURTYARD. DAY.** 66

GEORGE thrown from the KITCHEN out into a MUDDY COURTYARD.  
Lands in a lump. The HEAD CHEF - who kicked him out - throws the TRAY (that GEORGE dropped) at GEORGE. Connects. Hurts.

HEAD CHEF  
I see you again, you big bumboy, in  
my kitchen, I will slice you to  
pieces, make hairy tapas for dirty  
Spaniards. Now fuck off home, son!

67 **EXT. COMPTON MANOR. FRONT ENTRANCE. NIGHT.** 67

Later. GEORGE - still in his muddied, worn LIVERY - arrives back on his HORSE at COMPTON MANOR. Exhausted, dismounts.

68 **INT. COMPTON MANOR. JENNY'S ROOM. NIGHT.** 68

Soon after. JENNY asleep in her SERVANTS QUARTERS BED. She wakes to see GEORGE sat on her BED. In a state. JENNY sits up, slowly. GEORGE looks down, in exhaustion and shame. Before GEORGE stands, and strips for JENNY. Stands before her NAKED. Unashamed. At least of his body. (If not the night...)

JENNY  
...thought you only like boys now?

GEORGE  
...bodies are just...

JENNY  
...what? What are they?

GEORGE  
...temporary.

JENNY takes this in, thoughtful. Before they start to KISS/CARESS/STRIP and then, at last: FUCK...

69 INT. COMPTON MANOR. JENNY'S ROOM. NIGHT. 69

Later. Post-coital. JENNY cosy, sated, sprawled in BED.  
GEORGE stood, re-dressing. A softly manic energy to him...

JENNY  
What's he like? The King?

GEORGE  
...I didn't speak to him. Directly.

JENNY  
He can cure with his touch. Did you know? Imagine. If he touched ya.

JENNY reaches out to touch him, GEORGE moves away...

GEORGE  
...unlikely for you. Goodbye.

JENNY  
...why? Where you going, love?

70 INT. COMPTON MANOR. MARY & COMPTON'S BEDROOM. NIGHT. 70

Soon after. GEORGE in MARY and COMPTON'S BEDROOM. GEORGE watches MARY sleep. (Unconcerned with the sleeping COMPTON.) After a second, he steps forward, quietly opens a DRAWER by MARY's side of the BED. Inside: her KNIFE. (The same one she held to him as a baby, and cut him down with, once...)

CUT TO:

71 INT. COMPTON MANOR. MARY & COMPTON'S BEDROOM. NIGHT. 71

Very soon after. MARY waking. COMPTON still asleep. She sees the DOOR to the BEDROOM is open. As is her DRAWER. The KNIFE missing. A moment as MARY pieces together events...

CUT TO:

72 OMITTED 72

73 EXT. COMPTON MANOR. FOREST. NIGHT. 73

MARY, scanning the darkness of the FOREST, with a LANTERN. We watch her a beat. Before she sees, ahead: a large STAG in the dark. Awake. Stood. It watches her, unafraid. (It does not bolt like the YOUNG DEER once did...) We watch a moment. It seems to calm her. A sudden stillness to the FOREST, too. She advances...

CUT TO:

74

**EXT. COMPTON MANOR. FOREST. NIGHT.**

74

Soon after. GEORGE sat under a TREE. The KNIFE poised over his WRISTS. Been here a while. Unable to cut himself...

GEORGE looks up and MARY is before him, with a LANTERN...

MARY

...Apethorpe went well, then?

GEORGE shakes his head, helplessly...

GEORGE

(about his WRISTS)

When you were young, did you ever disgrace your family like this? The Beaumonts?

MARY

...I barely knew them.

MARY steadily approaching...

GEORGE

...so who raised you? You never talk about your own -

MARY

Myself. I raised myself.

GEORGE holds the KNIFE over his SKIN...

MARY (CONT'D)

...no. Here.

Beat. GEORGE hands her the KNIFE...

MARY (CONT'D)

Do you know why you couldn't? Pride.

GEORGE

...I have none.

MARY

Of course you do. Now: tell me what happened. Do not miss out a single thing. We face the world. Together.

MARY sits by him. Stabs the KNIFE in the ground. GEORGE, about to begin -

CUT TO:



75

**EXT. COMPTON MANOR. FOREST. DAWN.**

75

Later. The story told. GEORGE, embarrassed. MARY, thoughtful. She plays with the KNIFE in the ground, as she talks...

MARY

My first boy died inside me. My second emerged...not all himself. Then there was you. Second sons are usually...a waste of a life. Yet, as I held you I saw with your grace and light, I might raise you up.

GEORGE

...I'm sorry.

MARY

Why?

GEORGE

...I ruined everything, before I -

MARY

Self-pity is so ugly, leave it to the ugly. But beauty is fragile. Brittle. It does not last. So we act. Quickly.

GEORGE

...how?

MARY

Kings do not pardon men for crimes done in their sight. Against their lover's say. Unless they yearn for the new. He saw you. And he will think of you tonight as he sleeps. Wakes. Defecates. Pleasures himself. Idly dreams. All we need do is get you back in his sight.

GEORGE

...are you...pleased, with me?

A smile dawns on GEORGE's face. MARY cradles him into her...

MARY

As the Snake as Eve ate her dark fruit. If we tread right, James, he will be yours. Mine. Ours, George.

We end on a shot of MARY and GEORGE from above, one living, breathing thing, lit by a DAWN LIGHT and, yes, their: LOVE.

MARY & GEORGE - EPISODE 1 BLUE AMENDS - DC MOORE - 19.01.23 48.

- CREDITS -