

KING LOUIS SIDES

43.

RICHELIEU

So he's gone – and with him any chance I had of catching him with the Queen.

ROCHEFORT

All is not lost. My spies were able to give me other useful information – information, which if made public, would completely discredit Her Majesty.

RICHELIEU

Go on.

ROCHEFORT

Before he left, the Queen gave Buckingham a parting gift – a token of her love.

RICHELIEU

Which was...?

ROCHEFORT

The diamond set the King gave her as a birthday present. Twelve glorious diamonds attached to a sash. Imagine how angry the King will be when you tell him she gave it away to her lover.

RICHELIEU

I cannot bludgeon the King with this news. It must be revealed delicately.

ROCHEFORT

How?

(A special comes up on LOUIS looking at himself in a handheld mirror.)

START

RICHELIEU

Your Majesty!

(RICHELIEU crosses to LOUIS's light. ROCHEFORT watches.)

LOUIS

Cardinal Richelieu.

RICHELIEU

May I have a word with you?

LOUIS

(Still preening)

Is it important? I'm busy...

RICHELIEU

It's about the Queen, sire.

LOUIS

What about her? Is she ill?

RICHELIEU

No sire, not that I'm aware of – but she does seem a bit... sad.

LOUIS

Sad? Mon Dieu! What does the woman have to be sad about? She's married to me!

RICHELIEU

Yes, but...

LOUIS

She's the Queen of France!

RICHELIEU

Yes, sire, Nevertheless she seems disconsolate. Perhaps she is homesick?

LOUIS

For Spain?

RICHELIEU

I hear Madrid is quite exciting at this time of year. Lots of parties and balls.

LOUIS

I hate balls. Dancing musses my hair.

RICHELIEU

And yet a ball may be just the thing to lift the Queen's spirits.

LOUIS

Why should I care about the Queen's spirits?

RICHELIEU

Sire, if you hope one day to have an heir to the throne, you must pay attention to the Queen's spirits.

LOUIS

Oh. Right. Is that all?

RICHELIEU

A ball would also allow the Queen an opportunity to wear the diamond set you gave her on her birthday. Such an exquisite gift. You have such good taste, sire. I have no doubt the Queen would love to show it off.

LOUIS

Very well, Cardinal – I shall throw a ball for my Queen.

RICHELIEU

And the diamond set?

LOUIS

I shall insist she wear it.

END

(Special out on LOUIS. RICHELIEU crosses back to ROCHEFORT.)

ROCHEFORT

Well done. But preparations for a ball take time – time that the Queen will use to send a message to Buckingham asking for the diamonds return.

(RICHELIEU paces a few steps, considering. Then...)

RICHELIEU

Wait one moment – Milady!

(Special up on MILADY.)

Milady is still in London...

ROCHEFORT

Oui, monsieur – awaiting your orders...

RICHELIEU

...which are these: she is to host a ball of her own – soon, very soon – and her guest of honor will be none other than the Duke of Buckingham...

(The sound of a ballroom – music, chatter, etc. BUCKINGHAM enters the special wearing the diamond set across his chest.)

Buckingham, to honor his love, will no doubt wear the diamond set. Milady will dance with him...

(MILADY and BUCKINGHAM begin to dance.)