

PORTRAIT OF SEBASTIÁN DE MORRA

A Screenplay By

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TITLE CARD: INSPIRED BY ACTUAL EVENTS

FADE IN

INT. OLD STONE BARN - DAY

The barn looks very old and rustic. Farm animals in rough, wooden pens, a mule, a couple goats, a pig or two.

There is a black and white dog with some frisky puppies.

A man is reading from a large, leather-bound book. This is SEBASTIÁN DE MORRA. He is sitting on a rough, three-legged wooden milking stool.

He is reading aloud to the dogs.

SEBASTIÁN

If you have men who will exclude  
any of God's creatures from the  
shelter of compassion and pity, you  
will have men who will deal  
likewise with their fellow men.

The adult dog is looking at Sebastián, her head cocked to one side.

SEBASTIÁN (CONT'D)

I know that is true.

The door to the barn opens. A MONK wearing a brown monk's robe is there.

MONK

Frey Ignacio wants to see you.

Sebastián stands. He is a Little Person, a dwarf, as they were called then. He is dressed in simple woolen clothes. He has curly, dark brown hair, collar length, uncombed. He has a beard, rough and untrimmed.

SEBASTIÁN

(looks worried)

Why?

A MAN

You know we do not ask why.

The monk leaves the barn.

SEBASTIÁN  
(speaking to the dogs)  
Saint Francis will have to wait.

Sebastián pets the dogs. The dog whimpers. He exits the barn. It is raining. He looks up to the sky. He pulls the hood of his cloak over his head.

EXT. BARN A MOMENT LATER - DAY

Sebastián walks from the barn through the yard. There is a small group of children standing under a cover of a building.

The children see Sebastián. Two or three of them pick up some pebbles and throw them at him. Sebastián suddenly turns to the children and hisses and grimaces menacingly. The children scream and run away.

INT. ROOM INSIDE MONASTERY MOMENTS LATER - DAY

There is a fireplace with a fire burning. A table and two chairs are in front of the fireplace.

There is a chessboard set up. There is a man. It is clear he is monk by the brown woolen robe and censure haircut. This is FRAY IGNACIO. He is facing the fire, back to the room.

Sebastián enters the room. Ignacio sees him, turns to Sebastián.

IGNACIO  
Brother Sebastián. Join me in a game.

Sebastián approaches.

IGNACIO (CONT'D)  
For what better way to spend a rainy afternoon?

Sebastián warms his hands in front of the fire.

IGNACIO (CONT'D)  
It seems like it never stops raining in Flanders.

SEBASTIÁN  
God has become rain and is raining on the world.

IGNACIO  
Saint Francis.

Ignacio pours two cups of wine, hands one to Sebastián. They drink for a beat.

IGNACIO (CONT'D)  
Do you ever miss Spain?

SEBASTIÁN  
(dryly)  
Only the weather.

Sebastián moves to sit on the black side of the chessboard.

IGNACIO  
Take the white, brother. You should  
have every advantage.

SEBASTIÁN  
But I am the better player.

IGNACIO  
(chuckles)  
Your confidence does you credit.

Sebastián moves to the other side of the table and sits.  
Ignacio joins him.

Sebastián moves one of his rooks. Ignacio moves one of his  
rooks in response. Sebastián contemplates his next move.

IGNACIO (CONT'D)  
I have a reason for this  
invitation.

Sebastián's eyebrows raise.

SEBASTIÁN  
I am not surprised.

IGNACIO  
You are too clever by half.

Sebastián moves a chess piece.

IGNACIO (CONT'D)  
I received a letter from the King's  
chief minister.

Sebastián shows no reaction.

IGNACIO (CONT'D)  
As the King's brother the Cardinal  
Infante has died, God rest his  
soul...

They both cross themselves.

IGNACIO (CONT'D)  
The King has requisitioned any  
dwarfs in his household.

That gets Sebastián's attention. He stops mid-chess move and looks at Ignacio.

SEBASTIÁN  
But not me.

IGNACIO  
Yes. You.

Sebastián sits back in his chair, the weight of the pronouncement sinking in.

SEBASTIÁN  
I had the Cardinal's permission to  
come here. You know I am studying  
for the priesthood.

IGNACIO  
(gently)  
Dwarfs cannot become priests.

SEBASTIÁN  
Not yet.

IGNACIO  
(quietly)  
Not ever.

Sebastián has a hard look on his face.

SEBASTIÁN  
No.

IGNACIO  
(moving a chess piece)  
One does not refuse the King.

SEBASTIÁN  
(sarcastically)  
So I must be a good little boy?

IGNACIO  
Sebastián, try to look on the  
bright side. There are over a  
hundred of your kind in the King's  
employ.

Sebastián knits his brow.

SEBASTIÁN

My kind?

IGNACIO

Dwarfs.

SEBASTIÁN

So we must all flock together, like sheep?

IGNACIO

Think of them as brothers. Like we are here.

SEBASTIÁN

Are they--we--not called *sabandijas*?

IGNACIO

Little vermin? An unfortunate term.

SEBASTIÁN

Curiosities, then.

IGNACIO

Was this not your role with the Cardinal?

SEBASTIÁN

I am not going back to the life of a buffoon. You do not know what it is like. The humiliation.

IGNACIO

It is true some dwarfs are expected to entertain. One is a court official. You will be companion and tutor His Highness, the Prince.

SEBASTIÁN

(scoffing)

A child? Children hate me!

IGNACIO

An exaggeration, I am sure. And the Prince is hardly a child. He is thirteen.

Sebastián sits back in his chair, dumbstruck.

IGNACIO (CONT'D)

You will have a wage, clothing, live in the palace...

Sebastián is steely-faced.

IGNACIO (CONT'D)

(beat)

Maybe companionship?

SEBASTIÁN

(angrily now)

A woman? A wife? Me?

IGNACIO

Friendships then.

SEBASTIÁN

(holds up a rook)

So I am no more than chattel? To be moved about like a chess piece?

IGNACIO

It is employment! There is much starvation and suffering in Spain. There is no place for you here. It is the best possible situation.

SEBASTIÁN

It is humiliation. I will be expected to play the fool.

IGNACIO

Where there is patience and humility, there is neither anger nor annoyance.

Sebastián looks angry.

IGNACIO (CONT'D)

It is God's will.

SEBASTIÁN

What of my will?

IGNACIO

If God can work through you, he can work through anyone.

SEBASTIÁN

I will be expected to play the fool.

IGNACIO

Who said, "The Lord has told me that he wanted to make a new fool of me?"

SEBASTIÁN  
Do not quote Saint Francis to me.

Ignacio purses his lips.

SEBASTIÁN (CONT'D)  
This is what I want.

IGNACIO  
Only King's get everything they  
want.

SEBASTIÁN  
So I must submit?

IGNACIO  
Accept.

Sebastián sighs. He looks resigned to his fate.

SEBASTIÁN  
(quietly)  
I thought I would never have to go  
back to that place again.

EXT. THE MONASTERY NEXT DAY - MORNING

It is dawn, barely light. The barn and the church buildings are in the background. There are TWO SOLDIERS wearing yellow and red-striped uniforms and plumed hats, preparing horses, packing mules. There is also one donkey with no saddle.

Sebastián enters the barn.

INT. THE BARN SECONDS LATER - DAY

The animals are there. He pets the horses and goats. He looks sad.

SEBASTIÁN  
Goodbye my friends.

He pets the dogs. He realizes the dog has fleas. He squashes a flea crawling on his hand. He exits the barn.

EXT. COURTYARD MOMENTS LATER - DAY

SOLDIER #1  
Dwarf! We need to go!



SOLDIER #2  
There will be plenty of animals  
where you are going!

Both soldiers snort with laughter.

SOLDIER #1  
Very short animals.

SOLDIER #2  
Pests, more like it!

They laughed louder this time. Sebastián sighs. He walks to the donkey and tries to mount. He cannot because he's too short. The soldiers look at each other. Soldier #1 walks over, picks him up under the arms and drops him roughly on the back of the donkey. Sebastián looks mortified.

Ignacio is there. He warmly takes both of Sebastián's hands in his.

IGNACIO  
May God bless you can keep you, my  
friend.

Sebastián looks miserable.

IGNACIO (CONT'D)  
I will pray for you.

SEBASTIÁN  
I will need more than prayers.

Ignacio presses a dagger in a leather scabbard and small leather bag into his hand. It JINGLES slightly. Sebastián shows he is touched by the gesture, he has tears in his eyes.

IGNACIO  
(sotto voce)  
Hide this. I do not trust these  
soldiers.

Sebastián puts the pouch down the front of his trousers.

IGNACIO (CONT'D)  
Go with God, Brother.

SOLDIER #1  
(to the other soldier)  
We are going to regret not bringing  
a cart.

Sebastián has a hard look upon hearing this.

IGNACIO  
(to the soldiers)  
You would be wise to remember this  
man is a member of the King's  
household now!

The soldiers exchange glances and become more serious.

They all ride off.

EXT. SOMEWHERE FLANDERS LATER - DAY

The little party is seen riding through the countryside.

The terrain moves from green forests and gray skies of Flanders to the dry, rolling hills and blue skies of Spain.

EXT. SOMEWHERE IN SPAIN LATER - DAY

The group rides past peasants working in the fields. They barely notice the soldiers. Then they see Sebastián. They stop their work and stare. Sebastián notices. He looks forward, with a hard look on his face.

They pass a group of women and children begging by the side of the road. They look miserable, dressed in rags.

Sebastián fishes a few coins out of his pouch and hands them to them. They look grateful.

EXT. SPAIN DAYS LATER - DAY

They are riding on a dry, dusty road.

SOLDIER #1  
So what is it like being so short?

SEBASTIÁN  
What is it like being so stupid?

Soldier #2 snickers. Soldier #1 furrows his brow, he doesn't get it. Then it dawns on him.

SOLDIER #1  
Hey!

SOLDIER #2  
Are you short all over?

The soldiers snicker at the innuendo.

SEBASTIÁN

I cannot change that I am short.  
You, however, are an idiot by  
choice.

Soldier #2 starts to laugh, Soldier #1 shoots him a murderous  
look. Soldier #2 stifles his laugh.

SEBASTIÁN (CONT'D)

You are the King's Royal Guard.  
Your behavior should behave as the  
King's representative.

SOLDIER #1

There may be no rules where you are  
going, but with me you can know  
your place!

Sebastián looks confused.

SEBASTIÁN

What do you mean?

SOLDIER #1

Know your place? Now who is the  
stupid one?

SEBASTIÁN

No! What you said about no rules  
where I am going?

SOLDIER #1

(impatiently)

I mean, dwarfs do not have to obey  
protocol at court.

SEBASTIÁN

Why?

SOLDIER #1

The King loves having buffoons  
around. The place is filthy with  
the little imps like you.

SOLDIER #2

They are petted and pampered like  
dogs.

SOLDIER #1

Pests, more like it.

Sebastián's brow furrows. He looks confused.

EXT. SPAIN LATER - DUSK

The group rides into a very small village. Nothing much more than a couple of rustic houses and a barn.

SOLDIER #1  
We will stop here for the night.

Sebastián begins to dismount his mule. His face is streaked with dirt, his clothes dusty.

SOLDIER #1 (CONT'D)  
The weather is fine. No point is paying for rooms. We will sleep outside.

SEBASTIÁN  
Which leaves you more money for wine and putas.

SOLDIER #1  
You can keep your tiny mouth shut!

Sebastián is already walking away.

SEBASTIÁN  
(mutters under his breath)  
Tontos.

Sebastián is clearly exhausted. He walks to the well, draws water, and washes his face, neck and hands.

SOLDIER #2  
Only Moriscos wash their hands!

The soldiers are building a fire.

SEBASTIÁN  
If our Lord washed his hands, then so can I.

SOLDIER #1  
He also rode a donkey!

The soldiers snort with laughter.

SEBASTIÁN  
(to himself as he washes)  
Blasphemers, too.

The soldiers walk into one of the buildings. Sebastián takes a bed roll and a book from the donkey, rolls it out next to the fire and tries to make himself comfortable. He opens the book to read. It is a bible.

The soldiers exit the inn with bottles. They drop a loaf of bread and a jug of wine next to Sebastián, landing in the dirt. Soldier #2 takes the animals into a barn. Soldier #1 sits by the fire, opens a bottle and takes a swig. He breaks off a chunk of bread and chews.

SOLDIER #1

There is only one whore in this town and she is uglier than you.

Sebastián does not look up from his bible.

SEBASTIÁN

Seems it is the whore's lucky day.

Soldier #2 snickers.

SEBASTIÁN (CONT'D)

I would like meat, cheese, fruit.

SOLDIER #1

Get it yourself.

SEBASTIÁN

I cannot.

SOLDIER #2

You mean you will not.

SEBASTIÁN

(quietly)

I am not usually

(beat)

welcomed.

But it's too late. The soldiers are lying down, already snoring. Sebastián sits, thinks for a moment. He gets up and walks into the building.

INT. THE INN MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT

Sebastián walks in the door. It's clearly a bodega, a very rustic sort of tavern. There are a few people about. Some sitting, some standing, serving guests and carrying plates and jugs. There is a low murmur of conversation. As Sebastián opens the door, all eyes turn to him then all conversation stops suddenly.

Sebastián sighs. He walks wearily to the nearest table and sits. No one's eyes leave him. The crowd is frozen in fascination by the sight of a little person.

He addresses a woman holding a jug.

SEBASTIÁN  
Do you serve food?

The INNKEEPER looks nervously at what must be her husband.

He nods at her and she walks over to Sebastián's table.

INNKEEPER  
(hesitantly)  
Um, ah. Food. Yes. We have food.  
Liver, olives, oranges...

SEBASTIÁN  
That would be fine.

INNKEEPER  
Um...

SEBASTIÁN  
And wine.

The Innkeeper does not move. Sebastián looks at her expectantly. She still does not move. Sebastián reaches into his pocket and pulls out a coin. This gets her attention. She snatches the coin, and scurries off. The crowd turns back to each other and their conversation, quietly. Sebastián overhears the word "enano". The people stare at him. Sebastián looks very uncomfortable.

The Innkeeper brings the food. Sebastián eats as fast as he can. He takes the orange with him and leaves the inn.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE INN MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT

Walking away from the inn, Sebastián returns to the fire and his blanket. He sits and starts to peel his orange.

Just then, a RATTLING of wheels, the CREAKING of a cart, the SOUND of many hooves upon the dirt road. There in the distance is a cart. Not just any cart, but a huge cart.

It's 16 feet long and 36 feet tall. It's basically a wooden ship on wheels, pulled by a team of oxen. The faint sound of soft SINGING and GUITARS become louder. It's a wonder, painted in bright, garish colors. On board where a number of men and women, dressed in simple, county clothes.

Sebastián is dumb-struck by this spectacle. The Soldiers are awoken by this sound.

SEBASTIÁN  
(to the soldiers)  
What is it?

SOLDIER #2

(yawning)

It is a carro triunfales. Street performers. On their way to Madrid for the festival of Corpus Christi, no doubt.

SOLDIER #1

Tell them to shut up!

Sebastián ignores him. He is enthralled by this spectacle.

SOLDIER #2

Mind your purse, shorty. They are all thieves and pickpockets.

Soldier #2 goes back to sleep. Soldier #1 takes a large swig from his bottle of wine and watches groggily.

Sebastián watches in amazement as some performers exit the cart and make their way into the inn. Others mill about and start to make camp. A fire is soon burning. Alighting from the cart is a woman. She is gorgeous. 16 years old, alabaster skin, wavy, russet-colored hair falling below her waist. This is MARIA CALDERÓN. Soldier #1 notices her, too.

SOLDIER #1

Oh, ho!

Sebastián looks at him with a furrowed brow.

SOLDIER #1 (CONT'D)

My night just got better!

Maria walks around to the back of the inn. Soldier #1 notices. He gets up, takes his bottle of wine and staggers heads to the back of the building. Sebastián watches this.

Sebastián gets up and walks to the side of the building. He peeks around the corner.

Maria is squatting, relieving herself. Soldier #1 is watching her. Maria gets up and turns around. She shrieks a little when she sees the soldier.

Sebastián is too far away to hear the conversation but sees Soldier #1 offer Maria some wine. She refuses. He jiggles the bag of coins tied at his waist. She shakes her head.

He grabs her and tries to kiss her. She tries to push him away. Now the conversation is louder and Sebastián can hear.

SOLDIER #1 (CONT'D)  
You gypsies are all whores. You  
will ride anything for a few coins.

MARIA CALDERÓN  
I am no gypsy and no whore!

SOLDIER #1  
Good! Then I will take you for  
free!

MARIA CALDERÓN  
Let me go, you fool.

Sebastián rushes towards the scene.

SEBASTIÁN  
Let her go!

Soldier #1 ignores him, continues to struggle with Maria.

SEBASTIÁN (CONT'D)  
Let her go now!

SOLDIER #1  
What are you going to do about it,  
runt?

Sebastián quickly produces the small dagger from the back of  
his belt stabs the soldier in the calf. Soldier #1 yelps with  
pain.

SOLDIER #1 (CONT'D)  
Son of a bitch!

The Soldier releases Maria. He attempts a swing at Sebastián.  
He ducks. The ruckus alerts some of the troupe members. Two  
of these men run towards the scene.

One of these men is TOMAS DE ROJAS. He has dark hair and  
brown eyes, Soldier #1 moves to grab Sebastián.

These two men pick up Sebastián under each arm and hustle  
Sebastián up the steps of the carro. Maria is leading the  
escape.

INT. CARRO SECONDS LATER - NIGHT

The group finds a hiding spot and sits. The troupe laughs.

MARIA CALDERÓN  
My Caballero!



SEBASTIÁN  
(still out breath)  
Are you alright?

MARIA CALDERÓN  
Yes, yes. I have been manhandled by  
worse.

Sebastián is breathing hard.

MARIA CALDERÓN (CONT'D)  
Are you alright?

SEBASTIÁN  
(catching his breath)  
I am fine. I am not used to  
running.

MARIA CALDERÓN  
I am, unfortunately.

SEBASTIÁN  
These men are barbarians.

MARIA CALDERÓN  
Most men are.

TOMAS  
You are quite the swordsman.

SEBASTIÁN  
Hardly.

TOMAS  
He is lucky you did not aim a  
little higher.

SOLDIER #1 (O.S.)  
(his voice off in the  
distance)  
I will kill you, dwarf!

SOLDIER #2 (O.S.)  
Do not be a baby. It is no more  
than a pinprick.

TOMAS  
He is lucky you did not aim a  
little higher.

They chuckle. Tomas leaves.

SEBASTIÁN  
May I know your name, my lady?

MARIA CALDERÓN  
María Calderón. And yours, Señor?

SEBASTIÁN  
Sebastián. Sebastián De Morra.

MARIA CALDERÓN  
Mucho gusto, Don Sebastián.

SEBASTIÁN  
I am no Don.

MARIA CALDERÓN  
Señor, then.

SOLDIER #2 (O.S.)  
(in the distance)  
We move at first light, dwarf!

SEBASTIÁN  
He will be hung-over until noon.

SOLDIER #2 (O.S.)  
(slurring his speech)  
Ya hear me, you, you...

Sebastián and Maria laugh.

SEBASTIÁN  
What takes you to Madrid?

MARIA CALDERÓN  
I am an actress. I have been  
summoned especially by the Conde-  
Duque de Olivares.

SEBASTIÁN  
Huh. So have I. And for much the  
same reason. To entertain.

MARIA CALDERÓN  
I have heard the King likes his  
entertainments.

SEBASTIÁN  
If he expects me to be  
entertaining, he will be sorely  
disappointed.

Maria stands up, starts to dance, her swirling her skirt back  
and forth.

MARIA CALDERÓN  
Well, I love the theater!

She stops dancing and takes a dramatic, stage pose.

MARIA CALDERÓN (CONT'D)  
 There, four-footed Fury, blast.  
 Engender'd brute, without the wit  
 of brute, or mouth to match the  
 bit. Of man-art satisfied at last?

Sebastián applauds lightly.

SEBASTIÁN  
 Did you write that?

MARIA CALDERÓN  
 No, silly! It is Calderón de la  
 Barca!

SEBASTIÁN  
 Is he a relation?

MARIA CALDERÓN  
 You really have been cloistered!  
 Have you never seen a play?

SEBASTIÁN  
 I saw a passion play once in  
 Flanders.

They are interrupted by a few of the troupe mounting the  
 cart. Some carry bottles of wine. They are jovial. One  
 approaches. It is Tomas.

MARIA CALDERÓN  
 This is Tomas de Rojas, magician.  
 Do not ever play cards with him.

Maria gives Tomas a sideways look, the corners of her mouth  
 turning up. Tomas bows with mock formality.

TOMAS  
 Hombrecito.

MARIA CALDERÓN  
 Do not tease, Tomas.

SEBASTIÁN  
 I had better get used to it.

TOMAS  
 How so?

SEBASTIÁN  
 (a little bitterly)  
 Because I've been requisitioned by  
 the King to be buffoon to the  
 Infante.

TOMAS  
 But that is marvelous!

SEBASTIÁN  
 To act the fool for a spoiled  
 child? I fail to see what is so  
 marvelous.

TOMAS  
 Because boys are just little men,  
 no?

Sebastián looks sad.

SEBASTIÁN  
 I know nothing of children.

TOMAS  
 Children are easy to entertain!  
 Watch, I will show you.

Somewhere in the distance, a GUITAR strikes up a simple tune.

Tomas opens a trunk and pulls out a deck of cards, some rope, a few bits of paper. In the background, a few people can be heard singing. Tomas fans a deck of cards, has Sebastián take one from the deck. Tomas puts the card back into the deck, shuffles them, then pulls out a card. It is the card Sebastián chose. Tomas then takes a rope, ties it in a knot, Sebastián blows on it, Tomas pulls on the rope and the knot unties. Tomas reaches towards Sebastián's head, pulls a coin out from behind his ear. Tomas shows Sebastián how he hides the coin in the palm of his hand. Sebastián is amazed.

He sneaks glances at Maria occasionally.

Some of the troupe enters the carro, pull out mattresses and blankets and settle down for the night.

MARIA CALDERÓN  
 (yawning)  
 You best stay here tonight,  
 Sebastián. You may not be safe with  
 those scoundrels.

Maria procures a blanket for Sebastián. Maria lays down on her side, facing Sebastián. Sebastián lies facing Maria.

MARIA CALDERÓN (CONT'D)  
So you are to be an actor too?

SEBASTIÁN  
I had not thought of it that way.

MARIA CALDERÓN  
We are all actors, in a way. We  
have to act the way we are  
expected. Never revealing how we  
truly think or how we feel.

Sebastián rolls over onto his back and looks at the sky.

SEBASTIÁN  
(sighs)  
I will be expected to act the fool.  
A freak for all to laugh at.

She put her hand on top of hers. He is captivated by her hand  
on his.

MARIA CALDERÓN  
You are no more a freak than I am!

SEBASTIÁN  
How can you be so sure?

MARIA CALDERÓN  
God does not make mistakes.

SEBASTIÁN  
But you have to admit, I do not fit  
in this world.

She closes her eyes and yawns.

MARIA CALDERÓN  
If you do not fit in this world,  
Don Sebastián, perhaps it is  
because you are here to make it a  
better one.

Sebastián looks at the sky. There are tears in his eyes.

He wipes his eyes and turns to look at Maria. Her eyes are  
closed, she is breathing softly. He can't take his eyes off  
her face.

EXT. NEXT DAY - DAWN

Sebastián is at the soldier's campsite, packing up his belongings. His gaze moves from the soldiers to the carro then back again.

Sebastián pokes Soldier #1 with his shoe. The soldier begins to stir. He bends over and speaks close to his ear.

SEBASTIÁN  
(a little loudly)  
We move at first light, jefe.

Soldier #1 starts and tries to take a swing at Sebastián.

He jumps out of the way. Soldier #2 rouses also.

Sebastián walks to the well and fills his water skin. Maria is looking out from the carro. She is combing her luxurious amber locks. Sebastián turns from the well. He takes the moment to take in her countenance. Maria sees Sebastián and gives a little wave. He waves back. Sebastián walks over to carro standing underneath where Maria is standing.

MARIA CALDERÓN  
Caballero!

Sebastián makes a mock bow.

MARIA CALDERÓN (CONT'D)  
You are leaving.

SEBASTIÁN  
I am.

MARIA CALDERÓN  
May our paths cross again, my  
caballero and may you find  
happiness.

SEBASTIÁN  
And you, mi Doña.

MARIA CALDERÓN  
God be with you, Don Sebastián.

SEBASTIÁN  
And with you, my lady.

Sebastián turns and walks away. He looks sad.

EXT. A ROAD IN SPAIN NEXT DAY - DAY

The party is entering Madrid. Soldier #1 is wearing a bandage on his calf.

SOLDIER #1  
You missed your calling, dwarf. You  
belong in the bullfighting ring.

SOLDIER #2  
Picador!

El Escorial palace can be seen in the distance. It stands on a hill, it is massive and magnificent. Sebastián is gob-smacked.

SEDIEGOBASTIÁN  
Is that the palace?

SOLDIER #1  
(sarcastically)  
It is not Saint Peter's.

SEBASTIÁN  
It is huge.

SOLDIER #2  
Something you have never heard.

The two Soldiers snicker.

SEBASTIÁN  
I wish your brains worked half as  
well as your mouths. I will not  
miss either one of you.

SOLDIER #1  
And I thought we were such chums.

SEBASTIÁN  
What would happen, do you suppose,  
if you ever needed anything from  
me?

SOLDIER #2  
Small chance of that.

He laughs at his own joke.

SEBASTIÁN  
I am short, but my memory is long.

The two soldiers look at each other. Soldier #1 sneers.

EXT. THE PALACE MINUTES LATER - DAY

The group rides into the palace. The courtyard is a beehive of activity. There are peddlers with tents and tables selling all sorts of food and wares.

INT. THE CASTLE MOMENTS LATER - DAY

Sebastián and the Soldiers enter a receiving chamber of the palace. He removes his hat.

SOLDIER #1

Wait here.

Sebastián stands alone in the middle of the room. In the vast room, he looks small and vulnerable.

Off camera we hear quiet FOOTSTEPS. A figure enters. He is also a dwarf. This is DON DIEGO DE ACEDO, known to every one as EL PRIMO. Brown hair tinged with red, trimmed Van Dyke beard and mustache en croc. He is dressed well, all in black, with a large, brimmed hat with a white ostrich feather. Sebastián eyes widened at the sight.

EL PRIMO

You look like you have never seen a dwarf before.

SEBASTIÁN

(sarcastically)

Only in the mirror.

EL PRIMO

(chuckling)

Well then, you are in for a shock.

Sebastián looks confused.

EL PRIMO (CONT'D)

I am Diego de Acedo, Under Secretary to the King.

Sebastián realizes Don Diego wants him to introduce himself.

SEBASTIÁN

I am Sebastián de Morra.

EL PRIMO

I was told you were coming.

Sebastián looks expectant.



EL PRIMO (CONT'D)  
 Well then, let us get you sorted.  
 Come.

INT. HALLWAY SECONDS LATER - DAY

Don Diego turns and walks down the hall. They walk, and walk some more. The halls are dark, empty, with little more than an occasional chair.

A servant girl carrying a basket is seen coming the opposite direction. This ELENA. Don Diego obviously notices her.

They make eye contact. The girls smile slightly. She passes the men and Don Diego turns to watch her walk away.

SEBASTIÁN  
 How do you not get lost?

EL PRIMO  
 (with a twinkle in his eye)  
 You get to know the place soon enough.

EXT. DOOR IN HALLWAY LATER - DAY

They arrive at a door. Don Diego enters, holds the door open. Sebastián sees a large room with a number of little people of all sorts, some are sitting, some playing cards, two are engaged in a mock sword fight, one obviously developmentally disabled sitting on the floor playing with a dog. Most are wearing dark green. And there are dogs, golden coated Mastiffs almost as big as some of the little people. Sebastián looks astonished.

EL PRIMO  
 I told you were in for a shock.  
 (to one of the women in the room)  
 Mari-Barbola!

The woman moves towards them. This is MARI-BARBOLA. She is a dwarf, too.

EL PRIMO (CONT'D)  
 (To Mari-Barbola)  
 This is Don Sebastián de Morra,  
 most recently in the Cardinal-  
 Infante's entourage.

She wears a dark green dress with black trim. Stern-looking, her pinched face showing displeasure.

SEBASTIÁN

I am no Don...

They ignore him.

EL PRIMO

This is Mari-Barbola. She's in charge of the dwarfs in the palace.

SEBASTIÁN

Mucho gusto.

Mari-Barbola looks him over. Her disdain is obvious.

MARI-BARBOLA

(sniffing)

You are filthy. And you stink.

SEBASTIÁN

That would be weeks on the road you smell...

MARI-BARBOLA

(snapping at him loudly)

Come with me!

SEBASTIÁN

(under his breath)

Please?

INT. SEBASTIÁN'S BEDROOM MOMENTS LATER - DAY

The room is small, but pleasant. There is a fireplace, very tall bed, a leather chair, table chair with a candlestick, trunk.

MARI-BARBOLA

(tersely)

This will be your room. A servant will bring you water for washing and food. In the morning, you will meet with the palace tailor for some...

She looks down her nose at his rough attire.

MARI-BARBOLA (CONT'D)

....proper clothes, the palace barber...

She eyes his unkempt hair and beard.

MARI-BARBOLA (CONT'D)  
...then you will be trained..

SEBASTIÁN  
Trained?

Mari-Barbola becomes impatient.

MARI-BARBOLA  
Instruction in court protocol, the  
King's schedule, the Infante's  
education.

SEBASTIÁN  
I thought I was the one to, ah,  
train him.

MARI-BARBOLA  
There may be no rules with the  
King, but I will not tolerate  
impertinence.

SEBASTIÁN  
No offense meant.

But she is gone. Sebastián sighs, drops his bundle, moves to the window. There's not much to see but the rolling countryside. He sits in the chair, leans his head back and closes his eyes.

INT. SEBASTIÁN'S BED CHAMBER LATER - NIGHT

There is a KNOCK on the door. Sebastián wakes with a start.

There is another knock.

ELENA (O.S.)  
Señor? I am your maidservant.

SEBASTIÁN  
Come in.

Elena opens the door. She is carrying two jugs, a plate of food, linens.

SEBASTIÁN (CONT'D)  
Let me help you with that...

He reaches to take some of the objects from her hands. She gasps and pulls away, a look of horror in her eyes.

SEBASTIÁN (CONT'D)  
Oh. I see.

ELENA  
(stifling a laugh)  
Oh, no Señor. It is not you. I am  
not allow to have my masters help  
me.

He moves to let her into the room. She places the objects on  
the table.

ELENA (CONT'D)  
The palace is full of dwarfs. They  
no longer...surprise me.

She picks up his bundle from the floor.

ELENA (CONT'D)  
I will wash these.

SEBASTIÁN  
I can do my own washing.

Elena looks at him.

SEBASTIÁN (CONT'D)  
I know. It is not allowed. I would  
not want you to get into trouble.

ELENA  
Thank you, Señor.

Sebastián moves to the table, pours a cup of wine.

SEBASTIÁN  
May I know your name?

ELENA  
Elena.

With that she is out the door.

INT. SEBASTIÁN'S BEDROOM A LITTLE LATER - NIGHT

Sebastián is washed and in a nightshirt. He has his bible in  
his hand. There is a small fire burning in the fireplace.

A single candle burns on a table next to the bed. He moves to  
the bed and tries to climb in. He realizes the bed is too  
high for him. He tried jumping, to no avail. He sighs  
heavily. He pulls the blanket and pillow off the bed, moves  
to in front of the fireplace, lays down and closes his eyes.

INT. SEBASTIÁN'S BEDROOM NEXT MORNING - DAY

Sebastián is still curled up on the floor. There is a knock on the door. He stirs. The door opens. It is Don Diego.

EL PRIMO

Why are you sleeping on the floor?

SEBASTIÁN

The bed is too high.

EL PRIMO

(shaking his head)

There are a hundred and twenty dwarfs in this palace. You would think they could get this right by now.

SEBASTIÁN

What do you mean?

Don Diego ignores this.

EL PRIMO

(lightheartedly)

Get up, lazy bones. Get dressed. We have a busy day ahead of us.

INT. A ROOM IN THE PALACE LATER - DAY

A room inside the palace. It's a beehive of activity--tables and chairs, tailors, embroiderers, fabric, A TAILOR measures his arm. He drapes a length of red velvet and gold trim across his shoulder. Don Diego looks on approvingly.

SEBASTIÁN

I have never had clothes so fine.

EL PRIMO

You are not in the monastery now!

SEBASTIÁN

Everyone here seems to wear black.

EL PRIMO

Only the courtiers. Dwarfs generally wear green.

SEBASTIÁN

Except you.

EL PRIMO  
 (impishly)  
 Especially me! You will find most  
 rules do not apply to us.

SEBASTIÁN  
 So I keep hearing.

INT. ROOM IN CASTLE LATER - DAY

Sebastián sits in a simple wooden chair, a large cloth wrapped around his neck and tied in the back. A BARBER with a scissors and comb clips away industriously. The Barber takes a pot of wax and carefully combs and twirls his mustache upwards *en croc*-style. He hands the pot Sebastián. He tries it himself. Don Diego looks on approvingly.

INT. HALLWAY LATER - DAY

Sebastián and Don Diego are walking.

EL PRIMO  
 Now I will show you...

Just then, a booming voice is heard.

OLIVARES  
 (off Camera)  
 ...the governance of the kingdom...

A man appears. This is CONDE-DUQUE OLIVARES. He is tall, obese, bloated, bulbous nose, jet black hair to his shoulder, splayed black beard and bushy mustache *en croc*. He is dressed all in black. He has a number of papers in his hands, rolled up in his pockets, stuffed in the brim of his hat. His staff also have their hands full.

Don Diego removes his hat.

EL PRIMO  
 Conde-Duque, this is fortuitous,  
 for we were just...

Olivares cuts him short with a threatening glance.

OLIVARES  
 (to Sebastián)  
 You are?

SEBASTIÁN  
 (stammering)  
 Sebastián de Morra.  
 (MORE)

SEBASTIÁN (CONT'D)

(beat)

Señor.

Olivares stands glaring. Don Diego steps in to smooth over the conversation.

EL PRIMO

Late in the service of the Cardinal Infante.

OLIVARES

No one meets the king unless properly attired.

EL PRIMO

We are fresh from the tailors and the barber. He will be fully outfitted tomorrow.

OLIVARES

(barking)

Walk!

Olivares takes off at a fast clip despite his girth, his staff in close pursuit. Sebastián and Don Diego follow, trying to keep up.

EL PRIMO

(under his breath, to Sebastián)

The Conde-Duque Olivares.

SEBASTIÁN

You could have warned me.

EL PRIMO

(with a twinkle in his eye)

You are in luck. He is in a good mood!

INT. OLIVARES' OFFICE MOMENTS LATER - DAY

A large room, light streaming in through the open windows, but the room still it's dark and gloomy. There are candles burning, several desks with a number of male clerks chatting quietly. They see Olivares enter, they jump up. One takes Olivares' hat and hangs it on a peg on the wall.

Two clerks remove the papers from his hands and pockets. A fourth clerk pours him a large goblet of wine. Olivares lifts it to his mouth, his arm shakes slightly. He switches the glass to his other hand, he drains it quickly.

The clerk fills the glass again. Olivares sits at a chair behind a large desk that dominates the room.

OLIVARES  
(to Sebastián)  
Let me make one thing very clear.  
Just because court protocol does  
not apply to you, it does not mean  
it does not apply to me!

Beads of sweat roll down his temples. Olivares picks up a stick from his desk. He lifts up his hair which turns out to be a wig, and places the twig underneath it, propping up the wig.

OLIVARES (CONT'D)  
Your job is to entertain his  
Majesty the King. To me, you are  
all vermin that cannot be  
eradicated.

Sebastián brow furrows. Don Diego seems amused.

OLIVARES (CONT'D)  
(softening slightly)  
Not you, Don Diego. You are at  
least useful.

Don Diego suppresses a smile.

EL PRIMO  
You honor me, Conde-Duque.

OLIVARES  
(hardening again)  
But the rest of you...

Don Diego steps in, trying to rescue the moment.

EL PRIMO  
Conde-Duque, Don Sebastián was in  
the service of the King's brother.

OLIVARES  
(he snaps)  
I know that.  
(getting control of himself  
a little)  
You are to be a tutor and companion  
to the Infante.

SEBASTIÁN  
So the vermin is to educate the  
future king?



Olivares is really angry now. He has an odd, twitching manner.

OLIVARES  
You serve at the King's pleasure!  
Do you understand that?

Sebastián's face hardens.

SEBASTIÁN  
I only look stupid.

OLIVARES  
Are you going to be a problem,  
dwarf?

Sebastián opens his mouth to reply, Don Diego quickly intervenes.

EL PRIMO  
I have not had a chance to entirely  
acquaint Don Sebastián with his,  
um, duties yet.

Like a light switch, Olivares' mood changes. He is calm and considerate.

OLIVARES  
Don Sebastián. Have some wine. And  
you also, Don Diego.

A clerk pours a cup for both of them.

OLIVARES (CONT'D)  
Let me explain your duties at the  
Palace. The King takes Mass every  
morning in his private chapel. You  
will take Mass in the Palace  
chapel. Then you, and the other  
dwarfs, report to Doña Mari-  
Barbola. You are expected to be  
ready to attend the King as he  
wishes.

Olivares is standing, fidgeting.

OLIVARES (CONT'D)  
The King then takes his mid-day  
meal alone in his private chamber.  
He Then spends two hours in study.

Sebastián looks at Don Diego. Don Diego is examining the back of his hands.

Olivares has a weird, twitchy tic. He squints his eyes as if the room is too bright. Occasionally, his arm will shake.

OLIVARES (CONT'D)

That time should be spent with the dwarfs planning amusements. Then, if there are no affairs of state to attend to, the King often attends the theater. If not, then you and the other...

SEBASTIÁN

Vermin.

OLIVARES

(hardening)

...buffoons, are expected to entertain.

SEBASTIÁN

Doing what, exactly?

EL PRIMO

He has yet to be acquainted with court procedures.

OLIVARES

See that he does!

Like a light switch, his demeanor softens.

OLIVARES (CONT'D)

You will find you are most welcomed here. The Infante is a fine boy. Indeed, a young man. I have no doubt he is in capable hands.

Sebastián looks confused.

OLIVARES (CONT'D)

You are dismissed.

Don Diego takes Sebastián by the arm and leads him out of the room.

EL PRIMO

Thank you, Conde-Duque!

Don Diego and Sebastián leave quickly.

EXT. HALLWAY A SECOND LATER - DAY

SEBASTIÁN

What was that?

EL PRIMO

He is like that. His mood changes  
in the blink of the eye.

SEBASTIÁN

I do not understand anything.

EL PRIMO

Oh, you will! Come, we need a  
drink. I will take you to my  
favorite place!

INT. TAVERN A LITTLE WHILE LATER - DAY

A rustic room with tables and chairs, a fireplace, a few  
candles. It's a lively scene, men drinking, some with women  
sitting on the man's lap. There is MUSIC.

The door opens, in walks Don Diego. The crowd erupts with  
excitement.

THE CROWD

El Primo!

EL PRIMO

Fear not, Señoritas! El Primo is  
here!

Two women in low cut blouses come to Don Diego. He buries his  
head in the cleavage of one of them.

SEX WORKER #1

Have you come to play with us,  
cousin?

SEX WORKER #2

And you have enough...coin?

They all chuckle. Sebastián looks appalled.

SEBASTIÁN

This is a brothel.

EL PRIMO

I told you I was taking you to my  
favorite place.

Sebastián turns to leave.

SEBASTIÁN  
I cannot be here.

Too late. Two women take Sebastián by each arm and lead him to a table. Don Diego follows. They sit, a bottle of wine appears and cups. Don Diego pours.

EL PRIMO  
Relax. Have a drink.

SEBASTIÁN  
I have never been in a...place like  
this before!

Sebastián tries to leave. Don Diego takes him by the arm.

EL PRIMO  
Then you do not want to know.

A woman drapes herself over Sebastián. He leans away horrified.

SEBASTIÁN  
(looks confused)  
I know what happens here.

EL PRIMO  
In the Palace.  
(whispering)  
With the King.

Sebastián raises his eyebrows.

EL PRIMO (CONT'D)  
(to the ladies)  
Señoritas, let my friend and I talk  
business for a while. I promise to  
entertain you later.

The ladies smile at him suggestively and leave.

EL PRIMO (CONT'D)  
A dozen.

SEBASTIÁN  
A dozen what?

EL PRIMO  
That is how many bastards the King  
has. No one is quite sure.

Sebastián drinks, taking this in.

EL PRIMO (CONT'D)  
 Never met an actress he did not  
 like. If you take my meaning.

Don Diego drains his cup and pours another.

EL PRIMO (CONT'D)  
 Olivares, ah-hem, procures them.

EL PRIMO (CONT'D)  
 And dwarfs. Distract the King so he  
 has control.

Don Diego is starting to slur his speech.

EL PRIMO (CONT'D)  
 The Spanish Court has the most  
 rigid protocol in all of Europe.

The King is almost never seen in public. He has never been  
 known to smile in public. In fact, he listens well but rarely  
 speaks.

SEBASTIÁN  
 Why?

EL PRIMO  
 It was that way with his father and  
 his father's father.

SEBASTIÁN  
 Still, he is the King. Should he  
 not lead like a King?

EL PRIMO  
 The war goes badly. The Catalans  
 are in revolt over the crushing  
 taxes. The country is all but  
 bankrupt.

Don Diego drains his cup then refills it.

EL PRIMO (CONT'D)  
 (his speech is becoming  
 slurred)  
 Olivares keeps the King distracted  
 with the two thing the King loves  
 the most--the theater and hunting.

SEBASTIÁN  
 So Olivares can run the government.  
 Why does the King allow this?

EL PRIMO

The King is weak. He does not like dealing with the affairs of state, the paperwork, making decisions.

SEBASTIÁN

Hence the favorite.

EL PRIMO

I forget you are educated. Almost none of the dwarfs are.

EL PRIMO (CONT'D)

Most were sold into service by their parents while children. Expected to stay like children. Act like children.

He drinks.

EL PRIMO (CONT'D)

There are over one hundred dwarfs in the palace.

SEBASTIÁN

I did not think that could be true.

EL PRIMO

We have almost unlimited access to the King. We can say and do almost anything. Almost.

SEBASTIÁN

So this is useful to the courtiers.

EL PRIMO

You understand.

SEBASTIÁN

So we are used to tell the King what others cannot.

Don Diego quaffs his drink and looks over his cup at Sebastián.

EL PRIMO

Since the Queens' death, the King takes counsel from a mystic called Sor Maria.

SEBASTIÁN

The nun. I have read her writings.

Sebastián takes a drink of wine, he looks thoughtful.

SEBASTIÁN (CONT'D)  
And Olivares?

EL PRIMO  
Ah, the Conde-Duque. Spain is in a very bad way, but Olivares does not tell the King that. He keeps the King in the dark as much as possible.

SEBASTIÁN  
Why?

EL PRIMO  
(sighs)  
The King is very intelligent, but like his father, does not care for the affairs of state.

SEBASTIÁN  
It is said his father died mad.

EL PRIMO  
He spent his last days locking himself in his room, never changing out of his nightshirt, in constant prayer to God to relieve him of his sins. I heard a hot brazier was put near his royal person, and when the proper servant was not available to remove it, the old king died from the resulting burns. Death by protocol.

The sex workers are back.

SEX WORKER #1  
El Primo! Come play with us.

EL PRIMO  
Speaking of sin.

SEBASTIÁN  
Why do they call you El Primo?

EL PRIMO  
Because I am a distant relation to the King.

Don Diego drains his cup.

EL PRIMO (CONT'D)  
Or so I have him believing!

The sex workers are enticing him.

EL PRIMO (CONT'D)  
Come, partake of the pleasures of  
the flesh!

Sebastián looks horrified.

SEBASTIÁN  
No.

EL PRIMO  
You are not in the monastery  
anymore!

SEBASTIÁN  
I will not be indulging.

EL PRIMO  
Suit yourself. If you will excuse  
me, Sebastián. I have something to  
give these ladies!

The ladies giggle. Don Diego leaves the table with his arms around the waists of the two ladies and pulls back a curtain which leads to a hallway. Sebastián sips at his wine and looks lost in thought.

INT. SEBASTIÁN'S ROOM LATER - NIGHT

Sebastián returns to his room. There are candles burning.

The legs of the bed have been cut off so the bed barely clears the floor. There is also a low wooden step stool. He sees a trunk that was not there before. He opens it. It is filled with clothing. He pulls up the top garment. It is a white linen shirt with a deep lace collar and cuffs. He pulls out more garments. It is the green doublet and the red cloak from the tailors.

He fingers the rich green velvet and gold trim on the cloak.

INT. SEBASTIÁN'S ROOM LATER NEXT MORNING - DAY

Sebastián is awakened by a KNOCK on the door. The door opens a crack, a voice is heard.

ELENA  
Señor? It is I, your maid servant.



Sebastián rouses himself. Elena enters the room and bustles about, putting a jug of water and clean linens on the wash stand.

ELENA (CONT'D)  
The King has summoned you.

SEBASTIÁN  
The King?

ELENA  
The King.

SEBASTIÁN  
Already? I do not know what to do,  
how to behave.

ELENA  
(giggling)  
Oh, Señor, it does not matter, as  
long as you are amusing!

SEBASTIÁN  
How will I find my way?

ELENA  
The guard will show you.

Sebastián gets out of bed, takes a dressing gown from the peg on the wall next to the bed and puts it on.

SEBASTIÁN  
Elena, tell me about...

But she is gone.

INT. A LITTLE WHILE LATER - DAY

Sebastián exits his room. He is wearing his new clothes. A green velvet doublet with matching pantaloons, a red cloak trimmed with gold, a white linen shirt with a wide galloon lace collar and cuffs, buff-colored short boots. His hair and beard are neatly combed. His mustache is en croc. He carries his plumed hat in his hands.

He sees the guard. It is Soldier #1.

SEBASTIÁN  
You?

SOLDIER #1  
I requested to be your guard.

SEBASTIÁN  
To torment me more?

SOLDIER #1  
(smirking)  
To become better friends.

SEBASTIÁN  
If you think that, you have a very  
odd idea of friendship.

Soldier #1 starts walking briskly without a word. Sebastián follows, putting on his hat.

INT. HALLWAY A SECOND LATER - DAY

Sebastián and Soldier #1 walk, and walk and walk. Sebastián is clearly tiring. He lags behind the guard, he is limping slightly.

Finally they arrive at a door. Soldier #1 opens it. The room is richly appointed. Don Diego is there as well as Olivares.

EL PRIMO  
(with a wink in his eye)  
Punctuality is expected here.

SEBASTIÁN  
I thought the dwarfs had no rules.

EL PRIMO  
They do not. But I do.

Just then, a door opens. Two of the King's guards enter the room. Then a gaggle of dwarfs, some acting silly, walking funny, a couple have dogs on leashes. Then he KING FELIPE enters. He is tall, very lean with reddish brown hair to his shoulder, curled at his temples, clean shaven except for his large mustache en croc. He is dressed all black, except for his white golilla collar. His most striking feature is his very prominent jaw and full red lips. He lisps when he speaks.

Sebastián begins to remove his hat. Don Diego stays his hand.

EL PRIMO (CONT'D)  
(whispering)  
We do not have to remove our hats  
in front of the King.

Sebastián looks incredulous.

EL PRIMO (CONT'D)  
I told you the rules do not apply  
to us.

The King addresses Sebastián.

SEBASTIÁN  
(whispering)  
We will see.

KING FELIPE  
(he lisps slightly)  
You must be my latest dwarf.

SEBASTIÁN  
I am not your latest giant.

The others in the room freeze, eyes widen. There is a long,  
uncomfortable moment of silence.

SEBASTIÁN (CONT'D)  
I was told to be amusing.  
(beat)  
Your Majesty.

Then the King smiles just slightly. This slight expression of  
amusement is a sign the others can relax slightly and they  
chuckle slightly.

KING FELIPE  
I am pleased to meet you, Don  
Sebastián.

The King pats Sebastián on the top of his head. Sebastián  
winces at the slight.

KING FELIPE (CONT'D)  
Come, sit.  
(to everyone else in the  
room.)  
You may leave us.

OLIVARES  
If I may, Sire...

The King just gives Olivares that stops him. The others  
leave. Olivares turns as he exits the door and shoots  
Sebastián a look.

The King takes a leather chair. Sebastián sits on a low  
stool.

KING FELIPE  
You were in my brother's service.

SEBASTIÁN

Briefly.  
(beat)  
Your Majesty.

KING FELIPE

You were there when he died.

SEBASTIÁN

Sadly, yes. He had been ill for many weeks. Stomach ulcer.

KING FELIPE

Poison, some say.

SEBASTIÁN

I do not listen to rumors.

KING FELIPE

Was he at peace?

SEBASTIÁN

At the end, he was praying Mater Gratia Misericordia when he took his last breath then he was gone.

King Felipe looks so sad. He inhales deeply.

KING FELIPE

Twelve thousand requiem masses are being said for him.

SEBASTIÁN

God rest his soul.

KING FELIPE

I find myself in the most oppressed state of sorrow possible.

Sebastián brow furrows.

KING FELIPE (CONT'D)

My father died when I was only sixteen. I was not prepared to rule. He was followed by my brothers, the Queen my wife, more children than I can remember.

King Felipe looks off into the distance for a beat.

KING FELIPE (CONT'D)

Is God punishing me for my sins?

SEBASTIÁN  
No one escapes life without knowing  
grief.

The King signs deeply.

KING FELIPE  
You are here to tutor my son.

SEBASTIÁN  
That is what I have been told,  
Señor.

KING FELIPE  
You were educated by the  
Franciscans.

SEBASTIÁN  
Yes.

KING FELIPE  
You know Latin?

SEBASTIÁN  
Sane quidem.

KING FELIPE  
And mathematics, theology and  
astrology?

SEBASTIÁN  
Yes. And horsemanship.

The King's eyebrow raises.

SEBASTIÁN (CONT'D)  
I can ride with the proper saddle.

KING FELIPE  
Good. Very good. My son is  
intelligent, but not interested in  
his studies.

SEBASTIÁN  
As boys often are.

King Philip sits motionless contemplating this for a beat.

He rouses.

KING FELIPE  
It is time you two met.

The King rises, moves towards the door. The guards open the doors. The courtiers are there, sitting, lounging. They immediately rise. Those wearing hats remove them, except for Don Diego. Two banner carriers leave the room first, then a trumpeter blowing a FANFARE, then two uniformed guards, Then the King. The courtiers stand expectantly, looking at Don Diego and Sebastián. Don Diego moves to walk behind the King. Sebastián looks confused. Don Diego waves him forward.

They fall into step behind the King. Then the courtiers follow.

SEBASTIÁN  
(whispering)  
We walk behind the King?

EL PRIMO  
(whispering)  
I keep telling you, protocol does  
not apply to us.

SEBASTIÁN  
(under his breath)  
Except when it does.

INT. PALACE HALLWAYS MOMENTS LATER - DAY

The entourage walks the halls, one hall after another. They walk and walk. Sebastián is flagging now. He limps, he rubs his thighs, his face looks pained.

INT. ROOM IN PALACE MOMENTS LATER - DAY

Finally they arrive at a door. It opens. There is Mari-Barbola, stern-faced, and a few other dwarfs, a dog, a courtier in black. There is the INFANTE BALTASAR, about 13 years old, very slim, same wavy reddish hair, same jaw line and full lips of his father. He is harrying one of the dwarfs with a short, wooden sword.

The King enters, they all stand, except the dwarfs. The Infante stops poking at the dwarf and addresses the King.

INFANTE BALTASAR  
(excitedly)  
Father!

Baltasar moves toward the King. They bow formally.

KING FELIPE  
My son. How are you today?

INFANTE BALTASAR  
I am well, father.

KING FELIPE  
I brought you a gift.

INFANTE BALTASAR  
(in a worried, high-pitched  
voice.)  
Not a horse I hope!

The King brow furrows.

KING FELIPE  
No. Of course not. It is a new  
dwarf.

Sebastián steps out from behind the King. Baltasar looks him over.

INFANTE BALTASAR  
As long as it is not a horse.

SEBASTIÁN  
I have never been mistaken for a  
horse before. But I have been told  
I am stubborn as a mule.

The crowd laughs nervously. Sebastián ignores the awkward moment and plows on.

SEBASTIÁN (CONT'D)  
I understand I am to be your tutor.

INFANTE BALTASAR  
I need no tutor!

KING FELIPE  
The future King of Spain needs an  
education.

INFANTE BALTASAR  
I need only to know how to fight.

Baltasar lunges forward with his mock sword, aiming for Sebastián's belly. Sebastián steps aside deftly then with lightning speed reaches for the sword with his left hand and slaps Baltasar's wrist with his right hand. Baltasar releases the sword, which is now in Sebastián's hand. Baltasar puts his hand over his wrist and squeals with exaggerated pain.

INFANTE BALTASAR (CONT'D)  
He struck me!

The entourage is moving now. Shocked gasps. Olivares moves forward.

OLIVARES  
(raging)  
You dare strike the Infante?

The King stands, unfazed, with no expression. He stops Olivares from moving forward.

SEBASTIÁN  
I just taught you your first  
lesson. Do not wield a sword unless  
you are prepared to use it.

Olivares looks furious. King Felipe looks nonplussed.

KING FELIPE  
It would appear Don Sebastián is  
also versed in swordsmanship.

Sebastián brow furrows. He turns the mock sword in his hand hilt-forward.

KING FELIPE (CONT'D)  
(to the Infante)  
It would appear you have met your  
match.

Baltasar looks furious. Sebastián looks nonplussed.

KING FELIPE (CONT'D)  
I think we should all retire and  
let Don Sebastián continue with his  
lessons.

OLIVARES  
With respect, your Majesty, this  
dwarf has proven himself dangerous.

A couple of people chuckle quietly.

KING FELIPE  
(eyebrows raised)  
Everyone knows dwarfs lack the  
intelligence to be harmful.

OLIVARES  
Not this one!

SEBASTIÁN  
(to the king)  
I was in the service of your  
brother.



Olivares glares.

The King exits. Followed by the dwarfs and courtiers.

Olivares is last. He leans over and hissed in Sebastián's ear.

OLIVARES

Mind yourself, enano, or you will  
find yourself begging for bread on  
the streets!

Sebastián suppresses a smile. He is alone with the Infante.

INFANTE BALTASAR

I do not like you.

Sebastián shoots him a look.

SEBASTIÁN

You do not know me, so how can that  
be so?

INFANTE BALTASAR

You struck me then took away my  
weapon.

SEBASTIÁN

Are you going to say that to your  
enemy, in the heat of battle?

INFANTE BALTASAR

(sputtering)

N-no. I will be a great fighter by  
then.

Sebastián walks to the wall and picks up another wooden sword.

He quickly tosses back the first wooden sword to Baltasar.

Baltasar, taken off guard, fails to catch it.

INFANTE BALTASAR (CONT'D)

(whines)

Are you trying to strike me again?

SEBASTIÁN

I am teaching you how to fight.

INFANTE BALTASAR

How does a dwarf know sword  
fighting?

SEBASTIÁN  
Very well, it would appear.

Baltasar just stands there.

SEBASTIÁN (CONT'D)  
Defend yourself, sir!

Sebastián takes his sword in both hands and makes a pass at Baltasar. The boy cowers and whimpers. Sebastián rolls his eyes.

SEBASTIÁN (CONT'D)  
If this were a real battle, you  
would be dead. Take up your weapon,  
I will show you how to fight.

Baltasar does so. Sebastián takes a slow-motion swing at Baltasar's sword.

SEBASTIÁN (CONT'D)  
When I lunge, you counter thusly.

Sebastián shows Baltasar how to hold his sword and move to parry Sebastián's attack. They carry on for a beat or two.

Soon Baltasar is holding his own at fighting.

SEBASTIÁN (CONT'D)  
Had enough?

Baltasar is out of breath.

INFANTE BALTASAR  
Yes, yes. I surrender!

They move to the wall to hang up the swords. Baltasar moves to a table and pours two glasses of wine, hands one to Sebastián. They drink. Baltasar sits. Sebastián looks around the room.

SEBASTIÁN  
I see no books.

INFANTE BALTASAR  
What use have I for books?

Sebastián looks incredulous.

SEBASTIÁN  
I find they are beneficial for  
learning.

INFANTE BALTASAR  
I know enough.

SEBASTIÁN  
(scoffing)  
No one knows enough.

INFANTE BALTASAR  
I do not care for study. It is boring.

SEBASTIÁN  
Ah, now we are getting closer to the truth.

INFANTE BALTASAR  
I am going to be a soldier.

SEBASTIÁN  
Even soldiers need an education.

Sebastián sees a chess set on a shelf.

SEBASTIÁN (CONT'D)  
A chess set. Do you play?

INFANTE BALTASAR  
Don Francisco tried to teach me, but I did not care for it.

SEBASTIÁN  
Don Francisco?

INFANTE BALTASAR  
Quevedo. The writer. A favorite of the Conde-Duque.

Sebastián moves the chess set to the table where Baltasar sits. He starts to set up the board.

SEBASTIÁN  
Chess is the farthest thing from boring, for it is about war.

Baltasar shows interest.

INFANTE BALTASAR  
These are nothing but wooden dolls. What do they have to do with war?

SEBASTIÁN  
Sit and I will tell you.

He does.

SEBASTIÁN (CONT'D)  
Which piece is the most powerful on  
the chess board?

He thinks about it for a beat.

INFANTE BALTASAR  
The King, of course!

Sebastián holds up the Queen.

SEBASTIÁN  
No. It is the Queen for she can  
move any direction she wishes.

INFANTE BALTASAR  
(frowning slightly)  
My mother the Queen is dead.

SEBASTIÁN  
For that I am deeply sorry. But  
were she alive, would have control  
over the King?

INFANTE BALTASAR  
(giggling)  
Yes!

SEBASTIÁN  
Then you see what I mean.

Sebastián finishes setting up the board.

SEBASTIÁN (CONT'D)  
I will teach you.

Sebastián waits for Baltasar to sit. The boy waves his hand  
indicated Sebastián may sit also. He holds up a pawn.

SEBASTIÁN (CONT'D)  
This is called a rook. Except on  
its first move, a rook may only  
move one square forward at a time.

The two sit for a beat, Sebastián explaining, moving pieces,  
Baltasar nodding.

Baltasar moves a piece, Sebastián shakes his head.

INFANTE BALTASAR  
Where did chess come from?

SEBASTIÁN  
Some say it came to Spain with the  
Moors.

INFANTE BALTASAR  
Are you a Morisco?

SEBASTIÁN  
I do not know.

INFANTE BALTASAR  
A Converso?

SEBASTIÁN  
I do not know.

INFANTE BALTASAR  
Jews have horns and tails.

Sebastián looks up, holding the chess piece in mid-air.

SEBASTIÁN  
Our Lord and Savior was a Jew. Did  
He have horns and a tail?

Baltasar looks embarrassed.

INFANTE BALTASAR  
Then what are you?

SEBASTIÁN  
Nothing more than an orphan, put  
into the care of the brothers at  
San Sebastián.

A knock is heard on the door. Olivares enters. He glares at  
Sebastián.

OLIVARES  
Your Highness. I trust your lessons  
are going well.

INFANTE BALTASAR  
Don Sebastián is teaching me chess!

Olivares looks shocked. Sebastián notices.

SEBASTIÁN  
He is an apt pupil.

Sebastián starts to leave.

SEBASTIÁN (CONT'D)  
Tomorrow I will bring books.

INFANTE BALTASAR  
 (in a singsong voice)  
 I will not read them!

Sebastián smiles as he walks away.

INT. PALACE HALLWAYS LATER - DAY

Sebastián walks the hallways. They are a maze, with no landmarks, one looking very much like the other. Sebastián is clearly tiring, limping a little.

Finally he passes a cracked door. He peers in, his eyes widen. He pushes open the door.

INT. LIBRARY A SECOND LATER - DAY

It is the palace library. The room is magnificent. Huge, vaulted ceilings covered in paintings and gilt. Wall of carved bookshelves, marble floors.

Sebastián wanders as if in a dream. He checks out the books on the shelves, fingering the leather bindings. He pulls down a book, peruses it for a moment.

A voice comes from the shadows. This is DIEGO VELÁZQUEZ.

VELÁZQUEZ  
 Are you fond of poetry?

Sebastián is startled. He did not know there was anyone there. He returns the book to the shelf.

SEBASTIÁN  
 A have read very little of it. The Psalms, mostly.

Velázquez walks over, takes the book from the shelf.

VELÁZQUEZ  
 Ah, Quevedo. Do you know him?

SEBASTIÁN  
 I have, ah, heard of him.

VELÁZQUEZ  
 He is a brilliant writer. Controversial. Satirical. Makes friends and enemies in equal measure. I will introduce you someday.

SEBASTIÁN

You know him?

VELÁZQUEZ

Dear fellow. Everyone knows him. He is a favorite of the Conde-Duque.

SEBASTIÁN

Hard to believe that man has favorites.

VELÁZQUEZ

He is unpopular, it is true, but he has the King's ear.

SEBASTIÁN

A little lower, perhaps.

VELÁZQUEZ

(chuckles)

I try to stay out of politics.

SEBASTIÁN

(wistfully)

I fear I will not be able to.

Velázquez hands the book to Sebastián.

SEBASTIÁN (CONT'D)

Oh, no. I am sure it is not allowed.

VELÁZQUEZ

It is. I will see to it.

Sebastián looks up at Velázquez' kind face and smiles slightly.

INT. DWARF'S ROOM LATER - DAY

Sebastián enters the room. There are several dwarfs there.

One, clearly developmentally disabled, sits on the floor in a corner and teases a dog. Mari-Barbola is there. She is speaking to them, leading them in something. He watches for a few moments.

MARI-BARBOLA

(harshly)

...then you enter and say, "Before the starry threshold of Joves Court..."

The dwarfs move half-hardheartedly, practicing their act.

Mari-Barbola sees Sebastián.

MARI-BARBOLA (CONT'D)  
I see you have deigned to join us.

SEBASTIÁN  
I was with the Infante.

She looks down her nose at him.

MARI-BARBOLA  
Stand here. Try and keep up.

SEBASTIÁN  
I do not understand. What is happening?

MARI-BARBOLA  
Has no one told you anything?

SEBASTIÁN  
Is that not that your job?

MARI-BARBOLA  
(exasperated)  
Once a month the King holds a public dinner. The dwarfs always entertain. We are performing a masque.

In the background, the dwarfs are starting to horse around with each other. Playing with the costumes and masks.

SEBASTIÁN  
I cannot.

MARI-BARBOLA  
You mean you will not. It is not a request. It is required.

Mari-Barbola rummages through some papers and hands a couple to Sebastián.

MARI-BARBOLA (CONT'D)  
As you can read, you can perform this.

Sebastián looks at the pages. His brow furrows.

SEBASTIÁN  
I have no wish to perform.



Mari-Barbola looks furious.

MARI-BARBOLA  
None of us do! We are here to act  
the buffoon.

The others in the room begin to stop what they are doing.

MARI-BARBOLA (CONT'D)  
(bitterly)  
Do you think we like this? We have  
no choice!

SEBASTIÁN  
We always have a choice.

The others in the room stop dead at these words. Eyes wide,  
in shock.

MARI-BARBOLA  
(punching the words)  
You may think you do, but you do  
not.

SEBASTIÁN  
I am here to be tutor to the  
Infante. Not a jester.

Just then two of the dogs start fighting. Mari-Barbola's  
attention diverted, Sebastián drops the papers on the floor  
and quietly slips out the door.

EXT. HALLWAY JUST OUTSIDE THE DWARF'S ROOM A SECOND LATER -  
DAY

Mari-Barbola SLAMS opens the door.

MARI-BARBOLA  
(authoritatively)  
Dwarf!

Sebastián's back is to her. He stops dead in his tracks and  
scowls.

SEBASTIÁN  
I have a name, Mari-Barbola.

MARI-BARBOLA  
You think you are better than us.

SEBASTIÁN  
I think nothing of the sort. You,  
on the other hand...

MARI-BARBOLA  
You best learn your place.

She shoves the papers into his chest.

SEBASTIÁN  
I intend to.

He bows from the neck, turns and walks away.

INT. THE KINGS PRIVATE DINING ROOM LATER - DAY

The room is large and beautifully decorated, but in a modest way. The center of the room is a dining table. At the head is sitting King Felipe, sitting alone. A servant is standing at the edge of the room, next to a sideboard with a few platters of food and a jug of wine. Another servant approaches with a plate of food. He kneels next to the King.

The King serves himself a modest portion of food. The servant withdraws. The second servant approaches with the wine jug.

He kneels also and awkwardly pours wine into the King's goblet. The King delicately sips at the wine, puts down his glass and takes a tiny bite of food.

EXT. WHITEHALL CASTLE LONDON ENGLAND DAY - ESTABLISHING

INT. A ROOM INSIDE THE CASTLE - DAY

We are an antechamber. A well-dressed man is there. This is SIR FRANCIS COTTINGTON.

Two men enter the room, PRINCE CHARLES and GEORGE VILLIERS, THE DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM. The Prince is dark-haired, clean shaven, very short. Buckingham is a contrast, tall, well formed, ginger-haired, blue eyes, strikingly handsome.

Cottington bows his head before the Prince.

BUCKINGHAM  
(to the two men)  
Ah, Sir Francis. Good, you are here.

COTTINGTON  
The King has summoned me. For what reason, I know not.

BUCKINGHAM  
All will be revealed anon.

TWO GUARDS, in uniform with swords open the doors.

A richly appointed room. The contrast to the Spanish interiors is notable. Rich wood paneling, Tudor-style windows, a large fireplace with a roaring fire burning.

Sitting in a regal chair is man, dark hair, reddish pointed Van Dyke beard, dressed in bright colors, a quilted doublet, pantaloons, white stockings tied above the knee with ribbons.

This is KING JAMES I of England.

PRINCE CHARLES

(stuttering)

When y-y-your majesty is at l-l-leisure I crave a w-w-word with you.

KING JAMES

(speaks with a thick, Scottish brogue)

Bide awee, baby Charlie, bide awee!

The men approach, Charles first. Charles kisses the king's hand perfunctorily.

KING JAMES (CONT'D)

Ah am engaged on yer ain [own] business. That confounded alliance with Spain. It has given me more trouble than aught I ever undertook. But Ah wull make an end of it now.

The King notices Buckingham.

KING JAMES (CONT'D)

Is that you, Steenie?

Buckingham kisses the King's hand, but his gesture is more deliberate. He looks up from the King's hand and their eyes meet. King James sighs slightly to himself.

BUCKINGHAM

(smirking)

In the flesh, your Majesty.

King James suppresses a smile.

KING JAMES

Saul [soul] o' my body, lads, I canna say that ye are either of you welcome to yer auld Dad at this moment, for he has been sairly

(MORE)

KING JAMES (CONT'D)

[sorely] a put out by a dispatch  
just received from oor Ambassador  
Bristol. Fresh delays, new demands,  
enough to drive one mad. Ye mist  
gie [give] up all thoughts of the  
Infanta, Baby Charlie. Ah am about  
to break off the match.

PRINCE CHARLES

N-n-nay, sire — not s-so!

KING JAMES

Hear what I hae written to Bristol,  
and then ye'll understand whether  
Ah am in earnest or no.

PRINCE CHARLES

H-h-hear us, for we have a p-p-  
plan.

BUCKINGHAM

Your majesty need not trouble  
yourself to read the dispatch. We  
know what it contains. But in spite  
of the Spanish being untrustworthy,  
in spite of Bristol's mis-  
management, in spite of Rome, the  
match will take place!

KING JAMES

Ye are wrang, Steenie. I tell ye,  
man, Ah am about to break it off.

There is a large tapestry on the wall. There is a pair of  
pointed shoes poking out from under the bottom of the  
tapestry.

BUCKINGHAM

I should be the last to counsel  
your majesty to truckle to Rome,  
but cease the dispatch. I will  
stake my head that the match shall  
take place by Easter!

KING JAMES

(laughing)

Ye are a bauld man, Steenie. Ye can  
do maist things weel, but ye canna  
perform th' impossible.

BUCKINGHAM

I can do what Bristol has failed to  
do this is no idle boast, your  
majesty. Put me to the test.

KING JAMES

Yee ken fu' weel that I am not  
likely to try ye. But I tell ye  
man, the match will nae happen.

Buckingham nods his head indicating Prince Charles should  
move forward. Charles looks reticent but moves forward and  
kneels before the king.

PRINCE CHARLES

I n-n-need your word the secret I  
am about to i-impart to you cannot  
s-share with any one – not even to  
your c-council. Otherwise, my lips  
will remain s-sealed.

Buckingham is getting impatient.

KING JAMES

Ye may speak freely around Steenie,  
mah bairn. Steenie knows full wull  
how tae keep a secret.

The King and Buckingham exchange a knowing glance.

PRINCE CHARLES

G-g-gracious sovereign and f-f-  
father, grant me, I b-beseech you..

Buckingham interrupts angrily.

BUCKINGHAM

God's blood, man! We are going to  
Madrid!

The King's eyes widen in shock at the suggestion.

From behind the tapestry muffled SQUEAK is heard.

PRINCE CHARLES

I am s-sure that unless I g-go to  
her, the Infanta will n-never will  
be m-mine!

Buckingham looks smug.

PRINCE CHARLES (CONT'D)

Instead of q-q-quenching my d-  
desire, the protracted n-  
negotiations has only inflamed my  
a-a-ardor.

BUCKINGHAM

You have never met her.

KING JAMES  
Steenie makes a gud point.

PRINCE CHARLES  
It m-m-matters not. I have heard of  
her c-c-charms and am s-set on the  
match.

KING JAMES  
What put this hare-brained idea  
inta yer head?

PRINCE CHARLES  
Your own ardent nature which p-p-  
prompted you to sail to D-Denmark  
to marry the princess who became  
your q-q-queen.

KING JAMES  
(coughing dryly)  
Dinna be guided by me, baby  
Charlie. Even the wisest of men  
sometimes err.

PRINCE CHARLES  
As you proved your devotion to the  
queen my m-mother, sire, I will  
prove my devotion of the Infanta.  
I beg your permission to travel to  
M-Madrid!

KING JAMES  
Ye hae ta'en me so much by surprise  
that Ah can scarcely response. The  
matter requires great  
consideration. When do ye desire to  
set out?

PRINCE CHARLES  
Without delay – tomorrow!

KING JAMES  
T'morrow! Ye must be daft! It will  
tak' a month to fit out a fleet to  
convey ye to Spain!

King James is pacing, fretting.

KING JAMES (CONT'D)  
Ask Steenie, who is Lord High  
Admiral, and he will explain to ye  
the time it will tak'.

PRINCE CHARLES

It is n-not my intention to go to  
Spain in p-princely fashion. I will  
t-travel by post.

King James SQUEAKS in horror.

KING JAMES

By post? Like a servant?

PRINCE CHARLES

Like a gentlemen, accompanied only  
by Buckingham and two or t-three  
attendants.

KING JAMES

(excitedly)

Wha the de'il has put this daft  
scheme into yer head? Ride by post  
frae London to Madrid, like a  
commoner! Is it befitting the heir  
to the throne of England to travel  
sae? Answer me that, Baby Charlie!

PRINCE CHARLES

We shall t-travel in d-disguise, s-  
sire, and shall n-not be discovered  
t-till we reach Madrid.

KING JAMES

Hae ye reflectit on the perils of  
the journey? Ye will be set upon by  
robbers and barbarously murdered!  
I shall lose my twa darling boys.

He dramatically takes ahold of Buckingham's hand, pressing it  
to his cheek. Buckingham rolls his eyes.

KING JAMES (CONT'D)

Say nae mair aboot it, spare your  
breath, nae arguments will move me.

PRINCE CHARLES

I s-shall not arise till you g-  
grant my request, sire!

Charles is on one knee, wobbling slightly.

King James addresses Buckingham.

KING JAMES

Surely ye canna be party to this  
mad scheme?

BUCKINGHAM

If the prince travels to Madrid as he desires to do, I shall accompany him. Your paternal anxiety magnifies the dangers of the journey. I warrant me you will laugh heartily at our adventures when we come back.

KING JAMES

Ah darenae consent without consulting' the council, and they may prohibit mah son's departure.

PRINCE CHARLES

Very likely they would, sire, which is why I asked for your your royal word not to mention the matter to any one!

KING FELIPE

Idiot I am to bind myself sae! But ye will gain naething by the holding me to my pledge. I refuse my consent!

Buckingham ramps up the drama to persuade the King.

BUCKINGHAM

Good God, man! Can you not see the Prince will die if he loses the Infanta? Then the prince's death will lie at your door!

The Prince shifts from one knee to the other.

KING JAMES

Ye shallnae prevail. Ah am firm in mah refusal.

PRINCE CHARLES

If I am d-denied the Infanta, I will t-take no other w-wife.

BUCKINGHAM

He means it.

KING JAMES

Was ever king sae sair beset? I need council. Summon Sir Francis.

The doors open, Cottington enters and bows before the King.



COTTINGTON  
Your Majesty?

KING JAMES  
Ah hav' always trusted ye as an  
honest man, Sir Francis. Ah ask you  
to truthfully answer a quaistion of  
gravest consequence.

The corners of Cottington mouth turn up and his eyebrows  
raise expectantly.

KING JAMES (CONT'D)  
Baby Charlie and Steenie are of a  
great mind to travel to Madrid to  
fetch the Infanta.

Cottington's eyes widen. Then the corners of his mouth turn  
up slightly.

COTTINGTON  
You jest, your majesty. And a merry  
one it is.

KING JAMES  
Ah am serious.

Cottington looks horrified.

COTTINGTON  
It will take weeks arrange such a  
voyage to Spain, outfit ships...

KING JAMES  
(interrupts)  
By post. T'morrow.

Cottington wobbles unsteadily. Buckingham leans over and  
whispers in Cottington's ear.

BUCKINGHAM  
(hissing)  
Remember to whom you owe your  
Baronetcy.

Cottington's looks panicked, his eyes dart, his mouth gapes.

KING JAMES  
Wha' do ye think o' this plan?

Cottington starts to tremble.

COTTINGTON  
(his voice cracks)  
With whom else?

PRINCE CHARLES  
You, and Endymion Porter, as he  
also s-speaks Spanish.

COTTINGTON  
(his voice shakes)  
Ah, allow me to speak freely, Your  
Majesty.

KING JAMES  
Of course.

COTTINGTON  
The plan strikes me as unwise.

Beads of sweat appear on his forehead. He couches his words  
carefully.

COTTINGTON (CONT'D)  
Such a scheme is fraught with  
danger.

Buckingham glares. Cottington continues boldly despite his  
fear.

COTTINGTON (CONT'D)  
And unsafe. There are bandits on  
the roads.

King James becomes distraught.

KING JAMES  
Ah wull lose my Baby Charlie  
forever!

Charles grimaces.

COTTINGTON  
Such a scheme would unravel all the  
negotiations we have made.

BUCKINGHAM  
(angrily)  
Nonsense! Bold action is what is  
needed!

COTTINGTON  
Furthermore, once the Prince is  
there, the Spaniards will surely  
increase their demands.

BUCKINGHAM

(angrily)

You--and Bristol--have been  
dithering for too long. Let me to  
Spain and I will have the match  
sealed by Easter!

COTTINGTON

With respect my lord...

BUCKINGHAM

You forget your place, sir! You  
should not discuss matters of  
policy when only asked for your  
opinion!

KING JAMES

Nae, my lord. Stay yerself. Ye  
abuse a man I hae only kent to be  
honest and who only says what was  
asked o' him.

Charles seizes the moment.

PRINCE CHARLES

I shall never be h-h-happy without  
her, and indeed have v-v-vowed to  
take no other w-w-wife, so that,  
unless I win her, I shall commit to  
a life of c-c-celibacy, and your  
royal line  
(beat)  
w-w-will not be continued!

The King gasps in horror.

KING JAMES

Saints forbend!

All eyes are on the king expectantly.

From behind the tapestry a head appears wearing a coxcomb  
hat. The man steps out from behind the tapestry. He is  
wearing a motley fool's coat. He is very short. This is ARCHY  
ARMSTRONG.

The group sees him.

ARCHY

(he too has a Scottish  
accent)

Will ye take a fool's advice?

Buckingham is clearly displeased by the Archy's appearance.

BUCKINGHAM

God help us.

KING JAMES

Hav' ye been playing the spy,  
Archy?

ARCHY

Aye. And I ha'e not lost a word of  
the discourse.

KING JAMES

Tell me what I shall do, Archie? Ah  
am well-nigh at my wits' end.

BUCKINGHAM

Why do you persist in taking  
counsel from this fool?

King James pouts at Buckingham. Archy smirks.

Archy removes his jester's hat and hands it to the King.

ARCHY

The plan is folly. If you persist  
the th' scheme, then we shuid trade  
hats, for ye be the bigger fool  
than meh.

KING JAMES

But what if they return safely?

ARCHY

Then I weel send me hat to King  
Philip.

The King chuckles at this.

Buckingham throws his hands up, he is clearly angry.

ARCHY (CONT'D)

...but since you asked, I will tell  
you that you must not break your  
word to Spain or you will never be  
trusted again.

Buckingham nods approvingly. Prince Charles looks pleased.

BUCKINGHAM

For once you speak sense, jester.

ARCHY

Balk and ye will nae have a  
princess.

PRINCE CHARLES  
 Excellent c-counsel. Wisdom  
 proceeds from the lips of f-fools.

ARCHY  
 There is no use is saying nay. Baby  
 Charlie and Steenie at set on the  
 scheme. Best to yield with good  
 grace.

The king ponders on this for a beat.

KING JAMES  
 Aweel, my bairns, I can hauld out  
 nae longer.

Buckingham looks pleased. Cottington mops his brow with a  
 handkerchief.

KING JAMES (CONT'D)  
 Heaven bless ye, my bonnie bairn,  
 and grant ye a prosperous journey!

BUCKINGHAM  
 Your Majesty's decision has been  
 wisely made. You will not regret  
 it.

Prince Charles and Buckingham are jubilant. Archy does a  
 little jig.

Charles takes the kings hand in his and kisses it profusely.

PRINCE CHARLES  
 You are the best and most indulgent  
 of kings!

The king embraces his son. The display of emotion borders on  
 camp.

KING JAMES  
 Buss me, mah wee bairns. Then awa'  
 wi' ye afore mah mind changes.

INT. BUCKINGHAM'S BED CHAMBER LATER - NIGHT

Buckingham sits at a table. He wears nothing but a un-tucked  
 shirt and breeches. His hair is tousled. He has a flask of  
 wine and a cup. He drains the cup, fills it sloppily, and  
 drinks some more. He looks down into the cup, he looks drunk  
 and morose.

A door hidden in a wall opens. It is King James. He is wearing a dressing gown.

Buckingham sees him. Close on his face. He grimaces. Drinks again from his cup. Close on his face again, he looks at the King and forces himself to look happy to see the King.

He reaches out his hand to King James. The King rushes to Buckingham and takes his hand. The King falls to his knees before Buckingham. Close on King James's face. He is all love and adoration. He kisses Buckingham's hands over and over.

KING JAMES  
(passionately)  
Steenie, my love.

EXT. ROAD LEADING FROM CASTLE THE NEXT MORNING - DAWN

Two men are riding away from the castle. They are wearing simple, plain clothing. They are wearing false beards.

Buckingham's is dark brown and obviously doesn't match his hair color.

Close on the two men. They are Prince Charles and Buckingham in disguise.

Buckingham's beard is coming unglued. He presses on it with his hand.

BUCKINGHAM  
Damnable thing itches.

PRINCE CHARLES  
(stroking his beard)  
I r-rather like it. I feel q-quite  
the rogue.

They canter along the road when a "thump" is heard. Buckingham turns to see Prince Charles lying on the ground.

Buckingham is nonplussed.

BUCKINGHAM  
You appear to have fallen from your  
horse, sir.

PRINCE CHARLES  
You have an astonishing command of  
the obvious.

Prince Charles rights himself, brushes off his clothes. His false beard is askew.

BUCKINGHAM  
Your fluff has fetched loose.

Charles tries to fix his beard. It is still not straight.

BUCKINGHAM (CONT'D)  
Remember, we are simply two county gentlemen, the brothers Smith.

PRINCE CHARLES  
Just so, Tom.

BUCKINGHAM  
(chuckling)  
Just so, Jack.

EXT. DOVER SHIP DOCKS LATER - DAY

Cottingham and Porter are there.

PORTER  
This is madness.

COTTINGTON  
And dangerous. Riding through Spain with no escort save us.

PORTER  
And Not informing the ambassador? Our Lord Bristol should be told. The breach in protocol will be ill received.

COTTINGTON  
Bristol has ensured the King that Spain is keen on the match.

PORTER  
Spain's only aim is to advance Popeism.

COTTINGTON  
An alliance with Spain is necessary to regain the Palatinate.

PORTER  
England will never accept a Catholic queen.

COTTINGTON  
(looks wistfully off into the distance)  
Perhaps.

EXT. DOVER SHIP DOCKS MOMENTS LATER - DAY

Prince Charles and Buckingham are on the docks. Cottingham and Porter meet them. The docks are bustling with men, cargo, activity. They walk up the gangplank. The skies are dark and ominous.

INT. A CABIN INSIDE THE SHIP LATER - DAY

The ship is rolling and pitching violently. Cottingham is holding a bucket. Prince Charles vomits into it. Porter wipes the Prince's mouth with a large handkerchief. Buckingham is standing, holding onto a post. He looks upon the Prince without reaction.

PRINCE CHARLES

How c-can you hold your s-stomach  
in this tempest?

BUCKINGHAM

(dryly)

I am Admiral of the Navy.

PRINCE CHARLES

Your jests are unhelpful.

The corner of Buckingham's mouth turns up.

PRINCE CHARLES (CONT'D)

This w-wretched ship! I am in  
mortal f-fear for my life. Write to  
my f-father. Tell him I s-surely  
will perish.

BUCKINGHAM

I will write, but I assure you your  
death is not imminent.

Charles retches again and lies down in his bunk. Buckingham rolls his eyes.

Cottingham and Porter moved to the door.

COTTINGTON

(whispering)

If he dies, it will be our heads.

PORTER

(concerned)

Then we make sure he does not.



XT. FRANCE NEXT MORNING - DAY

Prince Charles, Buckingham, Porter and Cottingham are on horseback, riding through the countryside.

PRINCE CHARLES  
I am in high s-s-spirits,  
gentlemen!

BUCKINGHAM  
Gladdened to see the Channel  
crossing did you no ill...Jack.

PRINCE CHARLES  
Nae, nae! 'Twas but a twinge of the  
s-s-sea sickness, Buck...er...Tom.

Porter and Cottingham look at each other.

PORTER  
(whispering to Cottingham)  
Esto es una locura.

COTTINGTON  
(whispering back.)  
Lo sé. ¿Pero que podemos hacer?

PRINCE CHARLES  
Every day b-b-brings me closer to  
my Princess.

Just then, a thump is heard. Charles has fallen from his horse again.

Porter and Cottingham scramble to upright the Prince.

Cottingham is clearly agitated, shaking in fear.

COTTINGTON  
Dear God! The Prince is injured!

BUCKINGHAM  
He is fine.

COTTINGTON  
He needs a physician!

BUCKINGHAM  
Tell him you are unharmed--Jack.

PRINCE CHARLES  
I am quite well, as you can see.

Buckingham sighs and rolls his eyes.

BUCKINGHAM

Perhaps your mount is too spirited.

The horse is standing passive and still, with its head down.

Prince Charles just laughs.

EXT. A ROAD SOME DAYS LATER - DAY

The four are riding.

PRINCE CHARLES

Porter, you were in s-s-service of Olivares.

PORTER

I was a page for the Conde-Duque, Sir.

PRINCE CHARLES

Then you must have seen my i-i-intended

(pronounces the name in the English way)

Maria Ana.

PORTER

(pronouncing the name in the Spanish way)

Doña Maria? I have seen only a handful of times, and then from a distance.

PRINCE CHARLES

What of you, Cottingham? You've been to c-c-court many times. Is she as comely a lass as they s-s-ay?

Cottingham looks uncomfortable.

COTTINGTON

Ah, she is

(beat)

quite fair, my lord.

PORTER

With hair red enough to be Scottish.

PRINCE CHARLES  
(making a high pitched-  
cooing sound)

Ah.

COTTINGTON  
A complexion of milk and roses and  
the gray eyes of her Hapsburg  
ancestry. And devoutly Catholic.

PRINCE CHARLES  
Ah, well. The course of t-t-true  
love n-n-never did run smooth.

Prince Charles rides ahead. Porter and Cottingham look at  
each other.

INT. AN INN SOMEWHERE IN SPAIN - NIGHT

Prince Charles is asleep in a bed. The only light from a low  
fire in the fireplace. Cottingham is lying on a low, small  
cot at the foot of Charles' bed. He is fully clothed, boots  
and all. His eyes are wide open.

EXT. BRISTOL'S HOUSE MADRID DAYS LATER - NIGHT

It is late at night. The streets are dark and quiet.

Prince Charles and Buckingham riding mules now. They look  
tired, dirty and disheveled.

They stop in front of the House of the Seven Chimneys and  
dismount.

BUCKINGHAM  
This is lord Bristol's house.

PRINCE CHARLES  
I s-s-shall announce our p-  
presence.

BUCKINGHAM  
Nae, sir, I fear they will not  
believe you. Plus we should  
maintain our disguises for as long  
as possible. I will go.

PRINCE CHARLES  
Very well then.

Buckingham knocks. A SERVANT opens the door.

BUCKINGHAM

I have urgent business with the  
Ambassador.

THE SERVANT

(dismissively)

The Ambassador has retired for the  
evening.

The servant tried to slam the door in Buckingham's face.

Buckingham puts his booted foot in the doorway, preventing  
the servant from shutting the door.

BUCKINGHAM

(getting angry)

I have an message from Sir Francis  
Cottington. An important message.

The servant scowls.

THE SERVANT

Then give it to me. I will give to  
his Lordship.

BUCKINGHAM

Um, I am commanded to vouchsafe it  
in person.

THE SERVANT

Then come back tomorrow.

Buckingham's temper is flaring now.

BUCKINGHAM

God's blood, man. I am on the  
King's business!

The servant pauses for a moment, then reluctantly opens the  
door.

INT. BRISTOL'S HOUSE A SECOND LATER - NIGHT

Buckingham enters.

THE SERVANT

Wait here. He climbs the stairs,  
giving Buckingham a sideways glare.

Buckingham opens the door and indicates to Charles to enter.

INT. BRISTOL'S PRIVATE CHAMBER - A SECOND LATER

The servant enters the room. Bristol is sitting at a table, writing. He is wearing a dressing gown.

BRISTOL  
What is the commotion downstairs?

THE SERVANT  
Begging your pardon, your Lordship,  
but there is a  
(beat)  
man here. Says he has an urgent  
message from Lord Cottington.

Bristol looks up from his writing.

BRISTOL  
What is it then?

THE SERVANT  
The man says he must deliver the  
message in person.

Bristol goes back to his writing.

BRISTOL  
Very well, then. Show him up.

INT. BRISTOL'S PRIVATE CHAMBER - SECONDS LATER.

The door opens. It is Buckingham. Bristol does not look up.

BRISTOL  
I trust this is important.

BUCKINGHAM  
Only if the Prince of Wales is  
important.

Bristol stops writing and looks at Buckingham. Buckingham removes his hat revealing his face.

BUCKINGHAM (CONT'D)  
Digby.

Bristol looks shocked. He drops his pen and stands. In his haste he knocks over the inkwell.

BRISTOL  
(voice rising)  
Buckingham?

Bristol tries to mop up some of the spilled ink.

BRISTOL (CONT'D)  
Here? In Madrid? Why?

BUCKINGHAM  
I have a message from the King.

BRISTOL  
Why send you when he could...

The door opens. It is Prince Charles.

Bristol is so shaken, he has to sit down.

BUCKINGHAM  
You should probably stand before  
the Prince.

Bristol realizing his faux pas, hastily stands up.

BRISTOL  
Forgive me, your Highness. I am  
understandably shocked to see you  
here.

PRINCE CHARLES  
N-n-not at all. I am happy to be h-  
h-here at last.

BRISTOL  
But...why are you here?

Charles smiles.

PRINCE CHARLES  
(grinning goofily)  
I am here to m-m-marry the Infanta,  
of course!

INT. OLIVARES' DINING ROOM - A LITTLE LATER

Olivares is sitting at the end of a long table. A napkin tucked under his chin. There is a massive amount of food before him. A roast chicken, big platter of meat, a dozen boiled eggs, bowls of olives, oranges, grapes, cheese, a loaf of bread, a large bottle of wine, a filled wine glass.

Olivares' plate is piled high. He is tucking in heartily.

Bristol stands before him.

Olivares stands up suddenly. His wine glass tips over onto the table. Clearly he is agitated.

OLIVARES  
(almost screaming)  
What?

BRISTOL  
I said, His Highness, Charles  
Prince of Wales and the Marquis of  
Buckingham are...

OLIVARES  
I heard you! Did you know about  
this?

BRISTOL  
No! Of course not!

OLIVARES  
Is he mad? The arrogance!

BRISTOL  
It is a shocking breach of  
protocol.

Olivares paces. Still agitated.

OLIVARES  
What has possessed him?

BRISTOL  
They are here to advance the  
marriage negotiations with the  
Infanta.

OLIVARES  
We both know that must never  
happen.

BRISTOL  
Yes, of course. But it must be done  
without inciting war with England.

OLIVARES  
Naturally. The Prince will have to  
be entertained--lavishly.

BRISTOL  
Befittingly.

OLIVARES  
I will have to meet them before  
they meet the King, of course.

BRISTOL

About that. The Marquis is, shall we say, particular on that point.

OLIVARES

In what way?

BRISTOL

Buckingham expects you to come to him.

OLIVARES

Preposterous! Court protocol must be observed! He must come to me!

BRISTOL

Perhaps then a compromise.

Olivares paces.

BRISTOL (CONT'D)

Could we devise a chance meeting, perhaps? Your carriages could happen to pass at the same time.

Olivares ponders this a moment.

OLIVARES

This would be acceptable. Tomorrow. At noon.

BRISTOL

Very good, my lord.

OLIVARES

Now to inform the King.

INT. KING FELIPE'S BED CHAMBER NEXT MORNING - DAY

Close on Olivares.

He brusquely pulls open a pair of curtains, creating a swishing sound. The curtains are surrounding a very large four poster bed in which the King sleeps.

Olivares is kneeling before the King's bedside.

OLIVARES

Your Majesty!

The King yawns and stretches. He gets out of bed. He is wearing a long night dress, nearly to the floor. Olivares stands.



KING FELIPE  
Conde-Duque.

OLIVARES  
I have news of the greatest  
importance.

Felipe sighs.

KING FELIPE  
More bad news about the war, no  
doubt.

OLIVARES  
The most extraordinary thing.

Felipe is pretty much tuning out what Olivares is saying.

KING FELIPE  
I should like to attend the theater  
today.

OLIVARES  
Of course, your majesty, as you  
wish. But my lord...

KING FELIPE  
I heard there is a new Tirso de  
Molina.

OLIVARES  
Sire! Begging your Majesty's  
pardon! Charles the Prince of Wales  
arrived last night at the residence  
of Lord Bristol.

KING FELIPE  
Hmm?

OLIVARES  
Prince Charles of England is in  
here, in Madrid!

KING FELIPE  
Prince Charles? Of England? Heir to  
the throne? Here? In Madrid?

OLIVARES  
Yes, Señor!

KING FELIPE  
Conde-Duque, I expect jests from  
the dwarfs, not from my ministers.

OLIVARES  
Your Majesty, when have you ever  
known me to jest?

Olivares' expression is of the utmost seriousness.

KING FELIPE  
Gracious God in Heaven. This can't  
be true, it is beyond  
comprehension. What could possibly  
be...f

OLIVARES  
(interrupting brusquely)  
He here to marry the Infanta your  
sister!

Felipe looks horrified.

KING FELIPE  
But you said that must never  
happen.

OLIVARES  
It is impossible. Of course. But he  
must not know that.

KING FELIPE  
This is terrible!

Olivares can barely contain his glee.

OLIVARES  
Quite the opposite! It is  
magnificent! This is the best  
possible news!

KING FELIPE  
How so?

OLIVARES  
Because now we can dictate any  
terms we like to England and they  
will have no choice but to accept!

KING FELIPE  
Yes, right, of course.

OLIVARES  
It is vital to my--your Majesty's  
and Spain's interests that we  
retain England as an ally.

KING FELIPE

Quite.

OLIVARES

So we must thread this needle with the utmost care. We must, nevertheless, fulfill our duties of hospitality that have been thrust upon us.

KING FELIPE

Yes, of course.

OLIVARES

But no Catholic can ever marry a heretic. It is unthinkable.

Felipe worries at his lower lip.

KING FELIPE

I must pray!

Felipe rises and goes to a large Crucifix on the wall. He kisses the feet.

KING FELIPE (CONT'D)

O Lord! I swear to Thee that I adore, and upon whose feet I seal this pledge with my lips, I will not concede one point in the matter of the Catholic religion, but even if I were to lose all the realms I enjoy, by Thy grace I will not give way a single iota.

EXT. RIVERSIDE ROAD NEXT DAY - DAY

Olivares is riding in a gilded carriage. Two liveried servants are driving. A team of gaudily decked mules are pulling.

He peers out the windows. Another carriage approaches.

Buckingham is inside.

Both carriages stop. Both carriages servants open the doors.

The two alight their respective coaches.

OLIVARES

(sotto voce)

Are you the Marquis of Buckingham?

BUCKINGHAM  
Are you the Count-Duke?

Olivares bows removes his hat in a great flourish, bows deeply, almost theatrically.

OLIVARES  
(loudly, obviously he wants  
to be heard.)  
I can not believe my eyes! The  
Marquis of Buckingham here in  
Madrid.

People on the street are slowing down, watching, whispering to each other.

Buckingham looks haughty, regal. He is getting the kind of attention and respect he thinks he deserves.

BUCKINGHAM  
You are too kind.

OLIVARES  
On behalf of the his most Imperial  
Catholic Majesty, the Planet King,  
the most gracious Felipe, the  
fourth of his name, I welcome you  
to the center of the world...

BUCKINGHAM  
(getting annoyed)  
London...

OLIVARES  
(ignores him)  
...Spain. I am your most humble and  
obedient slave. It is my most  
esteemed honor and privilege to  
meet you welcome you most gracious  
lordship, and of course, his  
Highness, the Prince of Wales.

BUCKINGHAM  
His Highness is anxious for the  
marriage negotiations to be done.

A pair of pretty señoritas has caught Buckingham's eye.

Olivares notices this.

BUCKINGHAM (CONT'D)  
As is his Majesty, King James.

OLIVARES

Let us continue this in the carriage. Allow me to give you a tour of the city.

BUCKINGHAM

And of course, the Prince.

OLIVARES

Of course! Of course! We will hammer out the wrinkles of diplomacy without delay.

BUCKINGHAM

The Prince must meet your King immediately.

OLIVARES

Naturally! But your lordship will no doubt understand that, as the King's chief minister, it will be necessary for me to meet first the Prince.

BUCKINGHAM

No.

OLIVARES

With respect, your grace, there are matters of protocol, arrangements to be made. We only wish to welcome the Prince in a manner befitting a visit from our country's most precious friend and ally.

BUCKINGHAM

Yes, His Highness must receive a royal welcome.

OLIVARES

(pleased)

Precisely. We are of one mind. Now, I meet the Prince.

Buckingham raises his eyebrows.

EXT. BRISTOL'S HOUSE MOMENTS LATER - DAY

The carriage stops. Olivares and Buckingham exit. People on the street watch, whisper to each other.

INT. BRISTOL'S HOUSE A SECOND LATER - DAY

Olivares and Buckingham are in the house. Bristol enters.

BRISTOL  
Conde-Duque, My Lord Buckingham.

Buckingham pours himself a cup of wine from a side table, drinks, moves to a couch where he flops down.

BRISTOL (CONT'D)  
Once again, a word of advance  
notice would not have gone  
unappreciated.

OLIVARES  
(angrily)  
As would have I about....

Prince Charles enters. He is still wearing his traveling clothes, but cleaner. Olivares is all obsequiousness again.

Olivares sweeps the hat off his head.

BRISTOL  
Your Highness. May I introduce the  
King's chief minister, Conde-Duque  
Olivares.

Buckingham takes a draught of his wine. He does not stand.

OLIVARES  
Your Highness!

Olivares falls to his knees. He takes the Prince's hands and kisses them profusely.

OLIVARES (CONT'D)  
Your most gracious highness! On  
behalf of my King Felipe...

Olivares hugs Charles' thighs. Charles smiles nervously.

OLIVARES (CONT'D)  
I am pleased to tell you that his  
Catholic Majesty is immeasurably  
glad that you have graced us with  
your presence.

Olivares takes a sideways glance at Buckingham. It takes in this scene impassively.

PRINCE CHARLES  
 Count-D-d-duke. We are overwhelmed  
 by your h-h-hospitable welcome.

Olivares is not letting go of Charles. Bristol looks uncomfortable.

PRINCE CHARLES (CONT'D)  
 Most k-kind. Most b-beneficent.

Olivares finally lets go. Two servants rush forward to help Olivares to his knees.

BRISTOL  
 The Spanish are known for their  
 warm welcome.

BUCKINGHAM  
 (under his breath)  
 A little too warm.

Charles, now release from Olivares' awkward embrace, moves to the sofa and sits.

PRINCE CHARLES  
 My lord, I am m-most anxious to  
 meet the King Felipe, of c-course,  
 and to hasten the m-m-marriage  
 negotiations for the Infante Donna  
 Maria.

OLIVARES  
 As are we, your Highness, as are  
 we!

PRINCE CHARLES  
 It is my ardent d-d-desire that I  
 meet the Infanta as s-s-soon as  
 possible.

BUCKINGHAM  
 So she may discover the wooer.

There is a moment of awkward silence.

OLIVARES  
 Your Highness' fervor does you  
 credit. Believe me, uniting our  
 glorious Spain with  
 (beat)  
 England match is our highest  
 priority.

All look at Olivares expectantly.

OLIVARES (CONT'D)

First, there are a very few matters of protocol to discuss.

BUCKINGHAM

Such as?

OLIVARES

There is the matter of apparel.

PRINCE CHARLES

Apparel?

OLIVARES

Clothing. Everyone who meets the King must be attired in the Spanish fashion. Black doublet, breeches, jacket, stockings, shoes and cloak. White golilla collar. Jewels of course.

BUCKINGHAM

We will wear...

Prince Charles holds up his hand. Buckingham stops speaking.

PRINCE CHARLES

V-very well.

OLIVARES

And also more colorful attire for formal occasions. Naturally, we will show our warmest welcome to your Highness. There will be spectacular festivities to honor your Highness. Parades, theatricals, bullfights...

Charles leans forward on the couch. His face is all eagerness.

PRINCE CHARLES

So when may I meet her?

INT. SITTING ROOM INSIDE PALACE LATER - DAY

Several people are in the room. Mostly women, dressed very well. A few dwarfs, including Mari-Barbola and Sebastián.

The dwarfs lounge about on cushions or low stools at the edge of the room.



One woman looks is center of the group. She is standing, pacing, agitated. This is the INFANTA MARIA ANA. She is taller than most, with hair even thicker and redder than King Felipe.

King Felipe is there along with Olivares.

INFANTA MARIA ANA

Never!

The audience freezes. All eyes on are this scene.

KING FELIPE

Now hear us out, sister.

INFANTA MARIA ANA

I will never marry a heretic!

Eyebrows raise among some of the onlookers. A dwarf or two says "oho". Mari-Barbola hushes them.

KING FELIPE

King James has agreed to release Catholic prisoners and allow private worship.

Infanta Maria Ana scoffs.

KING FELIPE (CONT'D)

His grandmother was Catholic.

INFANTA MARIA ANA

So what? He is not!

KING FELIPE

His mother may have converted.

INFANTA MARIA ANA

A secret Catholic is no Catholic at all! His Great Uncle, that madman Henry, was a heretic, was he not? As well as his bastard Elizabeth!

KING FELIPE

My dear, an alliance between England and Spain is vital to our war efforts.

INFANTA MARIA ANA

Will he convert?

Her eyebrows raise expectantly. The King looks at a loss for words, he turns to Olivares.

OLIVARES

If our most gracious lord and lady  
will allow me, Ambassador Bristol  
is optimistic the Prince will agree  
to all our conditions.

The Infanta is very agitated now.

INFANTA MARIA ANA

I will take the veil before I marry  
a, a...Protestant!

KING FELIPE

Calm yourself, sister.

OLIVARES

The Prince's conversion would  
require a dispensation from the  
Pope.

INFANTA MARIA ANA

Yes! Precisely! His Holiness would  
never!

The Infanta is pacing back and forth, biting at her lower  
lip, worrying the beads around neck.

INFANTA MARIA ANA (CONT'D)

(thoughtfully)

It is God's will that heresy be  
rooted out and destroyed.

OLIVARES

Your Highness's devotion is  
admirable. But Bristol assures us  
conversion of the Prince is  
entirely possible.

INFANTA MARIA ANA

Our aunt, Mary Tudor had it right.  
Burn the heretics. Like we do here.

The assemblage nods with approval. Sebastián brow is  
furrowed. One of the dwarfs speaks.

DWARF

Auto de fe!

INFANTA MARIA ANA

A proper burning of heretics will  
show him the righteousness of the  
one true religion!

OLIVARES  
(nods in ascent)  
God bless you for your piety.

INFANTA MARIA ANA  
I was told me of the horror of the  
fate that awaits me.

He glances at Sebastian.

INFANTA MARIA ANA (CONT'D)  
Worse than hell it is, he said, to  
lie with a heretic, or worse. Bear  
heretic children!

Felipe moves to the Infanta, takes her hands in his.

KING FELIPE  
Dear sister, that will not happen.  
The Conde-Duque assures us of the  
Prince's conversion. What say you,  
Don Sebastián?

Olivares looks shocked.

OLIVARES  
My Lord?

Sebastián, who had been sitting on a low bench against the  
wall, staring off into distance, head pops up. His eyes widen  
in surprise having been singled out.

All eyes on on Sebastián now. He stands.

KING FELIPE  
(addressing Olivares)  
He is late from the monastery and  
well-versed in theology.

Olivares bows his head and waves his hand to single to  
Sebastián to go on.

Sebastián is on the spot. He contemplates what he will say.

SEBASTIÁN  
It seems to me that if the Prince  
wanted to convert, he would have by  
now.

INFANTA MARIA ANA  
And should he not and I marry him  
anyway?

There is a long, dramatic pause.

SEBASTIÁN  
You will surely burn in hell.

Several people gasp. Olivares nods in approval.

Sebastian walks away. There is a slight smile on his face.

EXT. THE CALLE MAYOR MADRID A FEW DAYS LATER - DAY

There are people in the street. Many wearing little more than rags, begging for money.

Prince Charles, Buckingham, Olivares and Bristol are in a carriage.

PRINCE CHARLES  
H-h-how will I k-k-know which is  
she?

BUCKINGHAM  
(sarcastically)  
She will be the one who looks  
Scottish.

OLIVARES  
She will be wearing a blue ribbon  
on her arm.

The carriage waits in a side street. There are many people around the square. They seem to be waiting for something.

Then a parade of very regal carriages appear, complete with liveried servants and pulled by mules bedecked with finery.

Charles' carriage moves into the square. Charles cranes his head, looking for the Infanta. The King is seen, riding a horse along side a carriage. Inside are the Infanta and Sebastián. The carriages cross each other in SLOW MOTION.

The Infanta is at the window, blue ribbon on her arm fluttering in the breeze.

King Felipe see Prince Charles, and bows his head. The Infanta turns to see what Felipe is looking at.

INFANTA MARIA ANA  
Our Lord Bristol's carriage.

SEBASTIÁN  
Seems he has guests.

The Infanta see Charles. Charles sees the Infanta. His eyes widen.

INFANTA MARIA ANA  
Don Sebastián, who is that man?

Sebastián looks uncomfortable. He answers reluctantly.

SEBASTIÁN  
It would appear to be your suitor,  
mi Doña. The Prince of Wales.

Charles smiles, he looks like love sick puppy dog. The Infanta gasps, then hardens her mouth. She flushes and quickly turns her head away.

Charles eyes follow her carriage as it rides away.

EXT. A THEATER SOME DAYS LATER - DAY

This is an outdoor venue set in a three-sided courtyard. Two stories of terraced walkways surround the courtyard. The floor is lined with benches. They are filled to capacity.

It is raucous the floor. Talking, milling about, women selling oranges and nuts.

On the stage are guitar players and women dancing.

There is wooden screen blocking the audience from seeing the King in his royal box. Sebastián is there alone.

Velázquez arrives and sits next to Sebastián.

VELÁZQUEZ  
Don Sebastián. Well met, friend.

SEBASTIÁN  
Maestro. I have not seen you here before.

VELÁZQUEZ  
I need respite from the peace and quiet of the palace.

On the floor of the theater, two men get into a fist fight.

They both chuckle.

A man joins them. He has gray hair and beard, and distinctive black, round eyeglasses.

VELÁZQUEZ (CONT'D)  
Quevedo!

QUEVEDO

Maestro. It is a great pleasure to see you again.

VELÁZQUEZ

Don Francisco, may I introduce Sebastián De Morra?

Bows with mock formality.

QUEVEDO

I have never seen you here before.

SEBASTIÁN

I am recently arrived here.

VELÁZQUEZ

Sebastián has been studying your poetry.

QUEVEDO

Ah. Time well spent, for there is no finer poet in Spain. How goes it?

SEBASTIÁN

(looking up in thought)

Yesterday is gone, tomorrow has not come. Today one point is leaving without stopping; I am a was, and a will be and one is tired.

Quevedo eyebrows raise.

SEBASTIÁN (CONT'D)

It is both literal and metaphorical.

Quevedo turns to look at Sebastián with admiration.

SEBASTIÁN (CONT'D)

(wistfully)

Our sojourn on earth is brief. We only have now and now and now.

Quevedo takes in Sebastián appreciatively.

QUEVEDO

You understand.

SEBASTIÁN

I spent some time with the monks. The credit it theirs.

QUEVEDO

The credit is all yours. I consider  
poetry to be an art only for the  
learned and ingenious, and not for  
people so

(waves his hand indicating  
the teeming crowd)

ignorant.

Sebastián smiles.

SEBASTIÁN

And do you know today's playwright?

QUEVEDO

Tirso de Molina? He is a monk who  
writes of tricksters and  
scoundrels.

SEBASTIÁN

Really?

QUEVEDO

A subject a monk would know all  
about.

Sebastián smiles at his sarcasm.

SEBASTIÁN

I have heard speak your mind.

QUEVEDO

Many speak ill of me, and I speak  
ill of many. My speech is the  
braver one for they are many and I  
am alone.

King Felipe arrives, with Prince Charles and Buckingham,  
Olivares and a few courtiers.

Maria Ana is in another balcony box, where the ladies sit.

She fans herself distractedly. Charles sees her and can't  
take his eyes off her. Buckingham notices and Finally, the  
play begins.

Who should appear on stage but María Calderón. There is  
another actor with her. It is Tomas de Rojas. He is playing  
Don Juan.

Sebastián gasps in recognition upon seeing Maria.

The King sees María Calderón and is transfixed.

The audience too is captivated, for they quiet down and watch the play.

MARIA CALDERÓN  
(as the Duchessa)  
Leave this way, Duque, you will not  
be seen.

TOMAS  
(as Don Juan)  
Duchessa, again I swear to you my  
complete devotion.

MARIA CALDERÓN  
My most precious gift I given you,  
my virtue, to prove to you the most  
ardent affection I feel for you.

TOMAS  
Yes, my sweet.

King Felipe is his private box, behind a screen, watching intently. He leans forward.

QUEVEDO  
(musing to himself)  
A curly storm of wavy gold.

SEBASTIÁN  
(sotto voce)  
It is Maria.

The King overhears him. He speaks in Sebastián's ear.

KING FELIPE  
(whispering)  
You know her?

Sebastián eyes dart back and forth. He knows why the King is asking.

SEBASTIÁN  
(hesitantly)  
I-I met her once, on the way to  
Madrid.

The play goes on.

MARIA CALDERÓN  
I wish to light a candle.

TOMAS  
Why? What for?



MARIA CALDERÓN

So my see you, my dearest. For the  
soul to give faith of the good that  
I come to enjoy.

TOMAS

I will light the candle myself.

María Calderón gasps when he see Don Juan.

MARIA CALDERÓN

Who are you? You are not my  
betrothed, Duque Octavio!

TOMAS

I am a man without a name.

MARIA CALDERÓN

I will raise the alarm!

TOMAS

Stop!

MARIA CALDERÓN

And wake the entire palace!

TOMAS

Madam, give me your hand.

MARIA CALDERÓN

Do not stop me, villain. Guards!

The audience "oohs" laughs and at the performance.

María Calderón leaves the stage. The performance goes on in  
the background.

KING FELIPE

I would meet her.

Sebastián looks worried.

KING FELIPE (CONT'D)

Now.

Sebastián freezes for a beat. His eyes meet the King's. The  
King's eyes widen and he bobs his head to one side.

Sebastián reluctantly stands and exits the box.

INT. BACKSTAGE A FEW SECONDS LATER - DAY

The backstage is a flurry of activity. Actors, dresser, stagehands. People ordering directions, calling to each other.

Two King's guards enter, followed by Sebastián. The backstage people see this and move aside to make way. Two older actresses look at each other and raise their eyebrows.

OLD ACTRESS  
(looking at the other  
actress)  
Who this time?

He sees Maria. She sits quietly. She is all calm and grace among the chaos. Sebastián stops and takes her in. His face shows adoration.

SEBASTIÁN  
(quietly)  
Maria.

She doesn't hear him at first. After a beat she turns and sees him. Her face shows surprise. Her face beams, she stands.

MARIA CALDERÓN  
Hombrecito! This is incredible!

She holds out her hands in welcome. Sebastián moves forward. She clasps his hands in hers.

SEBASTIÁN  
(under his breath)  
Not as incredible as you think.

MARIA CALDERÓN  
Fortuitous, then.

SEBASTIÁN  
How are you, my lady? Are you well?

MARIA CALDERÓN  
I am very well, as you can see.

She smooths her hands over her torso. He notices her figure.

MARIA CALDERÓN (CONT'D)  
Are you well? How are you finding  
life in the palace?

SEBASTIÁN

Is is the palace that brings me.

Her brown furrows. She sits so she can look at him at eye level.

MARIA CALDERÓN

Ah, yes. You are in service at the palace now. So how goes it?

Sebastián sighs. His face show conflict.

SEBASTIÁN

It is why I am here. I am on a mission from the King.

MARIA CALDERÓN

The King!

SEBASTIÁN

He wants to meet you.

Maria gasps. Her eyes widen. She is horrified.

MARIA CALDERÓN

No!

SEBASTIÁN

It is true. He sent me.

MARIA CALDERÓN

I will not!

SEBASTIÁN

Denying the King will be  
(beat)  
difficult.

MARIA CALDERÓN

Tell him no!

SEBASTIÁN

One does not refuse the King.

MARIA CALDERÓN

The women here talk. I know what this means.

SEBASTIÁN

As do I.

But it is too late. Two palace guards appear, followed by the King.

María Calderón sees him. She turns and run to a room with an open door, rushes in and slams the door shut.

KING FELIPE  
Señorita?

MARIA CALDERÓN  
(from behind the door)  
No, Señor! I do not wish to become  
a nun!

KING FELIPE  
I only wish to tell you of my  
appreciation for your performance.

The people in the hall are staring now, whispering.

MARIA CALDERÓN  
I thank you, Señor, but with  
respect, I must insist you admire  
me from the audience.

Just then Tomas de Rojas appears. He whispers through the door.

TOMAS  
(gently)  
Maria, you must open the door.

Maria can be heard gently weeping.

MARIA CALDERÓN  
Tomas, please. Do not ask this of  
me.

TOMAS  
It is a great honor. Think of it as  
just another role. One you will  
play to perfection.

The crowd is frozen watching this event unfold.

Silence can be heard for a beat. Then slowly the latch can be heard. The door opens. Maria looks at Tomas. He smiles sadly and nods. She opens the door, looks at the King, the King pushes open the door, enters the room and closes the door behind him.

Sebastián watches this and just looks sad.

INT. RECEPTION ROOM THE PALACE - DAY

A number of courtiers are milling about, or sitting at table playing cards. Porter and Cottington are there, as well as Buckingham, looking bored and angry.

Charles enters. All stand. Except Buckingham. A few of the crowd look at each other questioningly.

COURTIER #1

(whispering)

He does not stand before his  
Prince?

COURTIER #2

Worse. He will meet the Prince in  
his shirt sleeves.

Courtier #1 gasps quietly.

BUCKINGHAM

(to Charles)

I have received word the men and  
gifts from England will be here  
today.

CHARLES

Ah, good. My father desires me to  
wear Garter robes on Saint George's  
day.

Just then, an entourage of English gentlemen enter,  
conspicuous by their English fashions.

BUCKINGHAM

Speak and they appear.

Charles looks pleased.

The Englishmen part and who should we see but Archy  
Armstrong.

BUCKINGHAM (CONT'D)

Oh hell no!

Archy brightens up upon seeing the pair, removes his hat with  
a flourish.

ARCHY

Why, my laird, it soonds lik' you  
ur nae happy to see me!

BUCKINGHAM

You are an insufferable fool.

ARCHY

'Tis by the King's request I am here.

CHARLES

Archy, how is our father the King?

ARCHY

(imitating James' thick  
Scottish brogue)

Baby Charlie! Baby Charlie! I didna expect this from him, my sweet bairn. When I trusted ye to gang to Spain to fetch the Infanta, I was sair troubled at heart, as ye ken, but I didna think ye wad disobey my instructions.

Some of the audience chuckles at the display.

CHARLES

(frowning)

How so, gossip?

Just then, Sebastián enters. He is unseen by the group. He watches Archy at work.

ARCHY

Hear what I have to say to ye, sir, and dinna interrupt me. In trustin' ye to the court of Spain, I didna think ye wad give a private audience to a priest, whose sole aim is to bring ye over to his idolatrous faith. I canna believe ye hae fallen.

BUCKINGHAM

(angrily)

Enough, fool! Or I will have you hanged!

ARCHY

No one ever heard of a fool being hanged fur talking, but mony Dukes in England have been hanged fur insolence.

BUCKINGHAM

I will hang you myself, you contemptuous dog!

CHARLES

Peace, sirrahs!

Charles stands. Buckingham remains seated. The assemblage murmurs at the shocking breach of protocol. Charles leaves the room.

COURTIER #1

(whispering)

What strange manners these English have?

COURTIER #2

Worse. He is Scottish. They are little more than beasts.

Sebastián watches all this. Archy flits about the room, then sees Sebastián. Arch approaches. He bows low, respectfully.

ARCHY

Archy Armstrong, at your service.

SEBASTIÁN

Sebastián de Morra.

ARCHY

Ah suspect oor roles in the theatrics of court oor similar.

SEBASTIÁN

If you mean am I buffoon, then yes.

ARCHY

Come, let us drink.

INT. THE TAVERN LATER - DAY

Sebastián and Archy are sitting. Cups in front of them. A pretty Señorita sidles up to Archy. He takes notice.

ARCHY

Ah am taking a likin' to Spain a'ready.

SEX WORKER #1

Inglés, no?

ARCHY

English? Nae, lassie! Ah am somemat much better. Ah am Scottish!

Sebastián waves her off. Archy watches her walk away.

SEBASTIÁN

How do you do it?

ARCHY  
What is that noo?

SEBASTIÁN  
How can you play the fool and enjoy  
it?

ARCHY  
Och, there's nothin' to it, mah wee  
laddie. I juist remember it is  
better than hingin' from a noose.

Sebastián squints.

ARCHY (CONT'D)  
You have proper learnin'. I hav'  
only my wits. And guid looks!

Archy laughs at his own joke.

EXT. STREET LATER - NIGHT

Sebastián is riding in his donkey-drawn cart. He sees a group  
of men in the street being rowdy. Closer, he sees there

ruffians harassing someone. They have daggers. We see it is  
Soldier #1. He has a bottle in one hand. He is clearly drunk.

SOLDIER #1  
(slurring his speech)  
I am th' King's guard!

RUFFIAN #1  
So you must have a few coins then.

RUFFIAN #2  
Give 'em over.

They are trying to search him for his coin bag. Soldier #1  
tries to draw his sword, but he is too drunk. He staggers.

SOLDIER #1  
I will kill y-you!

The ruffians just laugh and taunt his some more.

SEBASTIÁN  
He is with me.

The youths look in Sebastián direction. They stopped their  
harassment.



RUFFIAN #2  
(whispering)  
'Tis a King's dwarf.

RUFFIAN #1  
Just havin' a bit of sport, Señor.  
No harm done.

SEBASTIÁN  
Then you best leave.

The youths run in the opposite direction. Soldier #1 looks up at Sebastián, bleary-eyed.

SOLDIER #1  
You, runt.

SEBASTIÁN  
Should you be speaking to me like that?

Soldier #1 tries to stand straighter.

SOLDIER #1  
'Cuse me, Don Sebastián.

He takes off his plumed hat and tries to flourish it with a bow.

He falls off balance and stumbles.

SOLDIER #1 (CONT'D)  
Stabbed anyone lately?

SEBASTIÁN  
Not yet.

SOLDIER #1  
You think you are amusing, do you not?

SEBASTIÁN  
I do not think I am amusing. I know I am.

SOLDIER #1  
You think you are smarter than me too.

SEBASTIÁN  
My donkey is smarter than you.  
There are a dozen murders a day in Madrid.

(MORE)

SEBASTIÁN (CONT'D)  
Men who would kill you for nothing  
more than the feather in your hat.  
What makes you think your King's  
guard uniform will protect you?

Solder #1 just takes a swig from his bottle.

SEBASTIÁN (CONT'D)  
I had better pour you home. Get in.

The soldier climbs in the back. Sebastián drives away. The  
soldier's legs dangle from the back of the cart.

INT. KING'S ROOMS SOMETIME LATER - NIGHT

Sebastián enters. The King is there, but one else.

KING FELIPE  
I have a task for you, Don  
Sebastián.

SEBASTIÁN  
Your Majesty?

KING FELIPE  
I want you to make a delivery.

SEBASTIÁN  
Señor? Is that not a errand for a  
page?

KING FELIPE  
There is no one else I can ask.

Sebastián looks expectant. The King retrieves a wooden  
casket.

KING FELIPE (CONT'D)  
Take this to Maria.

Sebastián looks pained. He sighs.

SEBASTIÁN  
As you wish, your Majesty.

KING FELIPE  
Go alone. And tell no one. Can I  
trust you, Don Sebastián?

Beat.

SEBASTIÁN  
Of course.

INT. MARIA'S ROOMS LATER - NIGHT

They are sitting opposite each other, Maria opens the casket.

There is a letter inside that says "Maria." She removed the letter to reveal a gorgeous gold jeweled necklace. She bursts into tears.

SEBASTIÁN

My lady. What distresses you?

MARIA CALDERÓN

I do not want his jewels. I do not want his attentions. But how can I say no to the King?

SEBASTIÁN

By just saying no.

MARIA CALDERÓN

You do not understand. I am just a poor girl from the country. Being the King's--zorrra...

SEBASTIÁN

Do not say that.

MARIA CALDERÓN

Amante, then, is the best I can hope for.

SEBASTIÁN

If that is what you believe, then that is all that happen.

MARIA CALDERÓN

Has any of mistresses...escaped being forced into the convent?

Sebastián hesitates to answer.

SEBASTIÁN

None that I know of.

Maria throws herself on the chair, distraught.

SEBASTIÁN (CONT'D)

Maria, I cannot bear to see you in pain.

He takes her hands in his.

MARIA CALDERÓN

Why are so kind to me?

SEBASTIÁN  
How can you not know?

She looks into his eyes. She puts her hand on his face.

MARIA CALDERÓN  
You are so dear.

He moves his face closer to hers. She does not pull away.  
Her eyes are half closed. He kisses her.

INT. MARIA'S ROOMS A LITTLE WHILE LATER - NIGHT

They are in bed together.

MARIA CALDERÓN  
Oh, Sebastián. What will become of me?

SEBASTIÁN  
I will find a way to get us out of Madrid. We will be together.

MARIA CALDERÓN  
I wish I could believe you.

SEBASTIÁN  
I will find a way.

Sebastián looks off into the distance.

INT. BASILICA EL ESCORIAL LATER - DAY

The room is magnificent. Sebastián is alone, he sits in a pew in the back, fingering a rosary. Olivares appears, genuflects, then sit behind him.

OLIVARES  
Do you consider yourself a good Catholic?

SEBASTIÁN  
I am an observant one.

OLIVARES  
You wanted to be a priest.

SEBASTIÁN  
I still do.

OLIVARES  
 (full of innuendo)  
 Do you not have to take a vow of  
 obedience?

The innuendo is not lost on Sebastián.

SEBASTIÁN  
 To the church.

OLIVARES  
 And what do you pray for?

SEBASTIÁN  
 I pray for peace.

OLIVARES  
 (getting angry)  
 You oppose the war?

SEBASTIÁN  
 (deliberately)  
 Your war is killing more than the  
 enemy. It is killing the country.  
 You are killing the country.

OLIVARES  
 God is Spanish and fights for our  
 nation these days!

SEBASTIÁN  
 God wants us to make peace; for He  
 is depriving us all the means of  
 war.

OLIVARES  
 Blessed be the Lord, my rock, who  
 trains my hands for war, and my  
 fingers for battle.

SEBASTIÁN  
 Blessed are the peacemakers for  
 they will be called the sons of  
 God.

Olivares' anger flares.

OLIVARES  
 You over step beyond your station,  
 enano...

SEBASTIÁN  
 I have a name. It is Sebastián De  
 Morra. Don Sebastián.

OLIVARES  
 (hissing)  
 You would be wise to remember you  
 serve at my pleasure.

With this Sebastián turns and looks at Olivares.

SEBASTIÁN  
 We both serve at the King's  
 pleasure. You would be wise to  
 remember that.

INT. VELÁZQUEZ' STUDIO LATER - DAY

The room is quite large, high ceilings, with very large  
 windows streaming in light.

The King enters, followed by Olivares, Sebastián, a couple of  
 the dwarfs, a entourage of King's servants.

Velázquez is there, working on a painting on a large easel.

VELÁZQUEZ  
 (bowing)  
 Your Majesty.

KING FELIPE  
 Maestro. Buenos Días. Am I  
 interrupting you?

VELÁZQUEZ  
 Never, my lord.

The King stops at Velázquez' easel to study the work in  
 progress.

KING FELIPE  
 There were some people who said  
 that all of your ability is limited  
 to knowing how to paint a head.

VELÁZQUEZ  
 Sire, they flatter me greatly, for  
 I do not know of anybody who knows  
 how to paint one.

The king show a rare hint of a smile.

Just then, Velázquez sees Sebastián. Velázquez smiles.

Sebastián looks a little embarrassed.

VELÁZQUEZ (CONT'D)  
(addressing Sebastián)  
How goes your studies?

SEBASTIÁN  
I thought you were the librarian.

The King overhears this.

KING FELIPE  
You have met?

VELÁZQUEZ  
In the library. He was looking for  
books for the Infante.

KING FELIPE  
Ah, yes. How are his studies  
progressing?

Sebastián pauses for a beat before speaking.

SEBASTIÁN  
He is an intelligent young man.

The King looks pleased. Olivares nods slightly in approval.

SEBASTIÁN (CONT'D)  
But he more interested in playing  
at war than working on his lessons.

The King raises an eyebrow. Olivares scowls. Sebastián moves  
to the wall and takes his place on the floor.

KING FELIPE  
War is an unfortunate part of a  
King's duties.

SEBASTIÁN  
The war goes badly.

KING FELIPE  
What say you, Conde-Duque?

OLIVARES  
It seems God wants us to make  
peace; for He is depriving us of  
all the means of war.

Olivares looks at Sebastián as if to say, I dare you to say  
something. Sebastián's face hardens. His expression says all  
and nothing.

He balls up his hands into fists and presses them hard into his thighs.

VELÁZQUEZ

Don Sebastián. What a singular expression.

All look at him.

VELÁZQUEZ (CONT'D)

I would like to paint you, looking just like that.

KING FELIPE

Wonderful idea. My son's tutor should be immortalized.

Close in Sebastián's face. It is the expression immortalized in Velázquez' portrait.

INT. HALLWAY EL ESCORIAL LATER - DAY

Sebastián is walking down a hallway.

QUEVEDO (O.S.)

Pssst.

Sebastián stops, looks around. Quevedo appears from out of the shadows. Quevedo pulls Sebastián into the shadow with him.

QUEVEDO (CONT'D)

Don Sebastián. Your King needs you.

SEBASTIÁN

What do you mean? I am going to the King now.

QUEVEDO

Your country needs you.

A look of recognition is on his face.

SEBASTIÁN

You want me to tell the King what you cannot.

QUEVEDO

Not what I speak, but what I write.

Quevedo takes a folded paper from his pocket and hands it to Sebastián. He opens it and reads.



SEBASTIÁN

A poem? Olivares will know it is you.

QUEVEDO

Only if you tell him. And you will not.

SEBASTIÁN

You risk both our heads for this.

QUEVEDO

Only mine, Bravo.

Sebastián ponders this for a beat.

QUEVEDO (CONT'D)

You want him gone more than anyone

SEBASTIÁN

What is in it for me?

QUEVEDO

Men are like strumpets. Everyone of them has to be bought.

Sebastián looks angry and starts to walk away. Quevedo stops him.

Quevedo reaches into his pocket and pulls out a drawstring bag. It JINGLES quietly.

Sebastián face shows he's conflicted. After a beat, he holds out his hand. Quevedo drops the bag into his open hand.

INT. DINING HALL MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT

The table is set with finery. Finely embroidered tablecloths, gold plates, glass goblets, candles ablaze. There are a few cushions on the floor against the wall.

Many servants are bustling about. Sebastián watches this through a crack in the door. Seeing a moment when no one is looking, he darts into the room and dashes under a table.

The cloth hides him. He crawls on his hands and knees to the head of the table. He peeks out from beneath the cloth.

Seeing no one, he lifts his hand holding the paper and slips it into the napkin. A tiny corner of the paper can be seen peeking out from under the napkin.

Suddenly, Olivares' booming voice can be heard.

OLIVARES (O.S.)  
And do not seat Sandoval...

Olivares enters the room with a handful of papers, a trail of clerks in his wake.

Sebastián is still under the table. Olivares circles the table. Sebastián crawls on his hands and knees to the other end of the table.

OLIVARES (CONT'D)  
...too close to the king...

Olivares walks past the King's place. He does not notice the note under the napkin.

OLIVARES (CONT'D)  
...and keep the fires low...

He wanders about the table, moving this and adjusting that.

OLIVARES (CONT'D)  
...so the ladies do not become  
overheated...

He sees the note now. Sebastián, still under the table, peeks out looking for a chance to make an escape.

Olivares opens the napkin and sees the note. He reads it.

He looks furious.

INT. DINING HALL LATER - NIGHT

King Felipe and Prince Charles are seated at a dais at the head of the table. Baltasar and Maria Ana are there also.

The tables are filled with a great many people, all the English, Spanish Grandees, and of course, Olivares. El Primo is there also, seated at the very end of the table. Seated across from him is Archy.

The dwarfs are there. But they sitting on pillows around the edge of the room.

The atmosphere is stiff, formal. There is subdued gaiety.

Sebastián is picking at the food on his plate. He watches everything.

Mari-Barbola sits next to Sebastián.

SEBASTIÁN

I am not accustomed to sitting on the floor while eating.

MARI-BARBOLA

You are not accustomed to a great many things, dwarf.

SEBASTIÁN

How do you endure it?

MARI-BARBOLA

Endure what?

SEBASTIÁN

The humiliation?

Mari-Barbola turns to look at him.

MARI-BARBOLA

There you go again. Thinking we have a choice.

SEBASTIÁN

I am no performer.

MARI-BARBOLA

We are all performers. Take the King, for example.

The king sits at the end of the table. His face is impassive, shows no emotion.

MARI-BARBOLA (CONT'D)

It is said he has only smiled twice in his life. He acts at being king when he only wants to hunt. And bed actresses.

Sebastián looks at her.

MARI-BARBOLA (CONT'D)

The Conde-Duque cares only for power and control. He acts at being king. Prince Charles and Buckingham are their English twins.

SEBASTIÁN

And Archy?

MARI-BARBOLA

You could take a page from his book. He has taken his lot in life and profited.

SEBASTIÁN

Should we not be masters of our  
fate and not subject to the whims  
of others?

MARI-BARBOLA

Would that were that simple.

SEBASTIÁN

God gave man dominion over the  
animals. Who gave a few men  
dominion over the rest?

MARI-BARBOLA

Have a care. Your fool's position  
will not protect you from burning.

Sebastián scowls.

MARI-BARBOLA (CONT'D)

We will be expected to perform.

SEBASTIÁN

I have told you. I have no taste  
for the theater.

MARI-BARBOLA

No. I mean now. Follow my lead.

INT. DINING HALL MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT

The meal is taking place. Sebastián and the other dwarfs sit  
on the floor against the wall, eating their meal.

Sebastián eats slowly and watches all.

The King watches the room, but shows little expression. He  
eats little and drinks less. The assembled crowd the room of  
one of forced gaiety.

He eats little and drinks less. Olivares is there. He leans  
over to a servant and says something.

The dwarfs stand. They engage in general foolery. Some  
singing, some dancing, a couple sit on the laps of the  
guests.

Even Mari-Barbola engages, but not at the level of the  
others.

It is uncomfortable to watch and Sebastián winches at the  
spectacle. The crowd is thrilled by the display.

Sebastián watches this in disgust. Mari-Barbola catches his eye, indicates he should join in. Instead, he quietly slips out a door.

The King stands. The frivolity dies down, The guests stand.

He takes the queen's hand and walks out the room. They are followed by the Infantes, then the dwarfs.

INT. THEATER A MOMENT LATER - NIGHT

There are three chairs facing the stage. The King and Baltasar take two them. Prince Charles take the third. The ladies are sitting on cushions on the floor around the perimeter of the room. Some of them are biting on the edges of clay cups and chewing on it.

Everyone else is standing behind.

BUCKINGHAM  
I should like a chair.

OLIVARES  
(whispering)  
Only the royal family may sit in front of the King.

BUCKINGHAM  
I am Ambassador to the King of England and The Prince of Wales.

OLIVARES  
My lord, protocol demands your most gracious acquiescence.

PRINCE CHARLES  
(quietly, imploringly)  
Steenie.

Buckingham backs down, but his face shows he is clearly not happy.

INT. AN ANTEROOM TO THE THEATER A MOMENT LATER - NIGHT

Sebastián and Mari-Barbola are there. As well as the other dwarfs.

Mari-Barbola hands Sebastián a wooden sword. He stand motionless.

MARI-BARBOLA  
Take it.

SEBASTIÁN

No.

MARI-BARBOLA

(forcefully)

Know your place, you fool!

She pushes the sword and pushes him hard. He stumbles on to the stage. He looks awkwardly at the audience.

A troupe of dwarfs take the stage, some of them brandishing wooden swords. A few of them get down on all fours. Other dwarfs sit on their backs. They engage in a mock battle.

INFANTE BALTASAR

(calling from the audience)

En garde, Don Sebastián!

There is some courtesy applause.

Meanwhile, the other entertainers Sebastián engages halfheartedly in the mock battle. A few thrust and parries with his sword.

INFANTE BALTASAR (CONT'D)

Slay the heretics!

Then the dwarfs all fall down in a dog pile. The audience laughs uproariously. Sebastián realizing that he's supposed to follow suit, falls down awkwardly.

The troupe leaves the stage to great applause.

INT. THEATER BACKSTAGE A FEW SECONDS LATER - NIGHT

The dwarfs are laughing quietly, milling about, Mari-Barbola watches all sternly. Sebastián is there, holding a piece of parchment in his hand. Mari-Barbola snatches it from his hand. Reads it for a beat.

MARI-BARBOLA

What is this?

SEBASTIÁN

You want me to perform. I will perform this.

MARI-BARBOLA

No you will not.

Sebastián face is unreadable. After a beat, he turns and walks onto the stage.

MARI-BARBOLA (CONT'D)

(hissing)

Damn you.

Sebastián enters the stage. Some of the audience is quietly.

They barely notice Sebastián's presence. He then begins to speak.

SEBASTIÁN

In a curly tempest of wavy gold,  
nothing gulfs the burning and pure  
light. My heart, thirsty for  
beauty, longs for the hair  
unraveling with night.

The audience settles down. Mari-Barbola watches from the wings. She looks furious.

SEBASTIÁN (CONT'D)

Leandro swims a sea of stormy fire,  
his love shows, his loving gyres...

The audience is fully engaged now.

SEBASTIÁN (CONT'D)

Icarus, burns his wings to die  
glorious last with the pretense of  
Phoenix on fire. Their hopes, how  
dead I cried, he tries to make his  
death beget lives.

Sebastián pointedly looks directly at the King. His eyebrows furrow almost imperceptibly.

SEBASTIÁN (CONT'D)

Punishment and hunger imitate  
Midas' measure. Like Tantalus, I  
dare not dine with the gods of old,  
fugitive source of purest gold.

The audience is transfixed for a beat. Then the audience applauds appreciatively. Baltasar is especially enthused.

INFANTE BALTASAR

Bravo, Don Sebastián!

Sebastián looks backstage. Mari-Barbola's is scowling. He takes a slow bow.

EXT. AN INN LATER - DAY

Quevedo is being taken away by two palace guards, Two more follow. A crowd has formed.

QUEVEDO  
(addressing the crowd)  
Your continued misery is the fault  
of that degenerate race of our  
countrymen who are well perfumed  
but are poorly conducted hosts!

INT. A DUNGEON LATER - NIGHT

A door opens. Quevedo is pushed roughly into the cell. It contains only a cot, a rough blanket, a table and chair.

The door closes with a chilling clang. Quevedo moves to the door and looks out the barred window.

QUEVEDO  
(calling out to the guards)  
I must have quill and paper!

INT. A ROOM INSIDE THE CASTLE SOME TIME LATER - DAY

Charles, Buckingham and Olivares are there. Enters a man, this is FRIAR ANTONIO DE SOTOMAYOR. White hair, clean shaven, dressed in black.

OLIVARES  
Your highness, your Grace, this is  
Friar Sotomayor, Inquisitor-  
General.

PRINCE CHARLES  
It is my honor, Frey.

Charles sits.

OLIVARES  
Your Highness, the King is most  
agreeable to a match between  
yourself and his sister. To unite  
our two great countries is our  
deepest desire.

BUCKINGHAM  
I am sensing an impediment to  
follow.



OLIVARES

There are just a few points, as to religion work out.

SOTOMAYOR

The Pope has written, in order to grant a dispensation for the Infanta, a devout Catholic to marry a...

(beat)

Your Highness. The offspring of your union, would be allowed to stay in their mother's household until the age of twelve, to be educated in the Catholic faith, to repeal the penal laws against Catholics in England.

Olivares looks smug. Buckingham is fuming.

BUCKINGHAM

This is outrageous!

Charles lifts his hand to stay Buckingham's outburst.

PRINCE CHARLES

I will write to the King.

Buckingham is fuming, he throws up his hands. Olivares looks shocked that Charles is even considering this.

PRINCE CHARLES (CONT'D)

Now can I meet the Infanta?

INT. A ROOM IN THE PALACE LATER - DAY

Sebastián and Archy are alone. They speak in whispers.

SEBASTIÁN

This match cannot take place.

ARCHY

England will ne'er accept a Catholic queen. Or Scotland, for that matter.

SEBASTIÁN

Even if your prince converted.

ARCHY

Which he will not.

SEBASTIÁN  
So this is what we do...

INT. A ROOM INSIDE THE CASTLE LATER - DAY

The Infanta Maria Ana are there with her ladies in waiting.

A few dwarfs including Mari-Barbola. They sit on cushions on the floor against the wall with the ever present dogs. A few of the English, including Porter and Cottington. Some of the ladies are taking tiny bites out of ceramic cups, making a CRUNCHING sound.

They are all sitting, exchanging formal pleasantries.

Sebastián and Archy enters. Archy is all swagger. Porter rolls his eyes. Cottington groans quietly under his breath.

Infanta Maria Ana takes this in, looks to Porter expectantly.

PORTER  
Ah, Your Highness. Allow me to  
introduce Archy Armstrong  
(beat)  
Jester to His Majesty, King James.

Archy doffs his hat and makes a deep, theatrical bow.

ARCHY  
'Tis the greatest honor, Me Donna,  
to be in the presence of so  
illustrious a lady.

INFANTA MARIA ANA  
England has dwarfs, too?

ARCHY  
My species are ev'rywhere. Though  
no' in such great abundance as  
here.

Archy shoots a side-long glance at Sebastián.

INFANTA MARIA ANA  
Are there many of you in England?

ARCHY  
Thare is only one of meh anywhere  
in the world!

The audience chuckles.

INFANTA MARIA ANA  
How are you finding the city,  
Señor? And the court?

ARCHY  
I lik' the city well, though it be  
not so large nor so well built as I  
expected.

Maria Ana's eyes narrow a bit.

ARCHY (CONT'D)  
But 'tis a fine city ne'ertheless,  
and has a gayer air than London.

Eyeing the pretty ladies in waiting.

ARCHY (CONT'D)  
As for th' Señoritas  
(beat)  
Ah am enchanted!

The ladies giggle.

INFANTA MARIA ANA  
And the King?

Porter and Cottington look nervous.

ARCHY  
Which one?

The audience laughs.

INFANTA MARIA ANA  
And our armies?

ARCHY  
I wid nae fight a-one of thaim!

Laughter.

INFANTA MARIA ANA  
We were just discussing the war,  
Don Archy.

ARCHY  
Aye, me lady?

INFANTA MARIA ANA  
Is is not a wonderful thing that  
the Duke of Bavaria has taken  
Prague from the Palgrave army?

Archy and Sebastián exchange a knowing glance.

ARCHY

Ah wull tell ye a stranger thing  
yit. That in 1588 there shuid come  
a fleet of 140 sail from Spain to  
invade England and only 10 shuid  
return.

The audience freezes. Maria Ana looks furious. Everyone looks horrified except Archy, who barely suppresses a smile.

The King enters the room. It breaks the frozen silence. All stand. The King sits.

ARCHY (CONT'D)

Your Majesty, Ah was jus' tellin'  
the assemblage how ah cam' to be  
King James' closest advisor.

PORTER

No you are not.

Archy gives him the stink eye.

ARCHY

Ah man fittin' mah description was  
accused of stealin' a sheep.

Cottingham snorts quietly.

ARCHY (CONT'D)

When the minions of the law found  
me in my croft, sittin' by the  
fire, wrapped in me tartan, rockin'  
my wee sister in her cradle.

The audience looks amused.

ARCHY (CONT'D)

Seein' nothin' amiss, they were  
aboot to retire, when the bairn  
starts a-bleetin'.

Sebastián reaction shot.

ARCHY (CONT'D)

The bastion of the law pulls back  
the blanket and what shuid he find  
but the missin' sheep!

Laughter.

ARCHY (CONT'D)  
 How the daft beast got into the  
 cradle I wull ne'er know!

The audience laughs heartily. Even the King shows a hint of a smile.

ARCHY (CONT'D)  
 Ah was brought before the King to  
 face my judgment. I was wrongly  
 accused of the crime...

Archy is playing the room.

ARCHY (CONT'D)  
 ...I was condemned to die!

The Infanta's eyes widen. Some of the ladies gasp. Sebastián is amused. Cottington and Porter are not moved.

ARCHY (CONT'D)  
 I pleaded with the good King James.  
 Mercy, mercy, I said!

Oohs.

ARCHY (CONT'D)  
 I said to the King--Ah am but a  
 poor, ignorant man who has but  
 recently heard of the Bible an' I  
 am desirous, for my souls' sake, of  
 a readin' through of this precious  
 volume.

INFANTA MARIA ANA  
 For your immortal soul's sake.

ARCHY  
 Wid his Majesty's grace, I said, be  
 pleased to respite me until I had  
 done just this?

All are the edge of their seats.

ARCHY (CONT'D)  
 Our good-natured King James  
 graciously acceded to my petition.  
 To which I replied....

Archy makes a dramatic pause. With a sly look in his eye.

ARCHY (CONT'D)

Then de'il tak' me an' I ever read  
a word o't as lang as my een are  
open!

The Spanish laugh. The English are straight-face. Sebastián looks bemused.

INT. ROOM IN EL ESCORIAL PALACE - DAY

The room is large, gorgeously decorated. Prince Charles, King Felipe, the Infanta, Baltasar are seated in a straight line. The audience are a number of Grandees, Ladies in Waiting, all standing, as are Olivares, Buckingham, Cottington, Porter, Archy and Sebastián. Everyone looks stiff, awkward, very formal.

Buckingham leans to whisper in Charles' ear.

ARCHY

(whispering to Sebastián)  
Ah hae sae charmed the lassie  
Maria, she haes relented tae  
meetin' wi' me Prince.

SEBASTIÁN

Pity you cannot work your charms on  
your Lord Buckingham.

BUCKINGHAM

(whispering)  
If you can win the lady's favor,  
then we will need to make little,  
if any concessions to the Pope or  
to Spain.

Charles nods in understanding.

Prince Charles stands. The Infanta stands. He has a silly grin on his face, he is smitten. They face each other. We see she is a noticeable taller than him. Charles kisses her hand formally.

PRINCE CHARLES

Your most g-g-gracious Highness,  
Milady, Doña M-m-maria Anna. It is  
mmy- esteemed honored to mme-et  
you.

ARCHY

(whispering to Sebastián)  
Watch how mah Prince woos.

The Infanta stands stiffly, unsmiling, she has trouble making eye contact with him. Charles is clearly very nervous.

PRINCE CHARLES

I am t-t-troubled to learn you have not been in perfect health.

The Infanta looks disgusted by Charles.

INFANTA MARIA ANA

(formally)

I am now well, your Highness, and am at your service.

Sebastián has to suppress a smile.

SEBASTIÁN

(whispering to Archy)

I see what you mean.

PRINCE CHARLES

I wish you c-compliments of the s-season, on this Easter Sunday. May I-I know how y-you spent the Lent s-season?

INFANTA MARIA ANA

By remembering the suffering of our Lord and Savior with daily Mass and Catholic devotion.

Sebastián watches this with a bemused expression.

PRINCE CHARLES

The great friendship between his Catholic Majesty and my father the King has brought me to this court to make personal acknowledgement of this friendship.

King Felipe looks pleased by this pronouncement. She reads from a piece of paper, in a formal, stiff manner.

INFANTA MARIA ANA

On behalf of my brother the King and of Spain, we welcome you, Charles of Wales. We express to you our gratitude for your compliments. Spain is grateful for the continued friendship between our two nations. We trust you will find our welcome warm and our hospitality worthy of a person of your esteem.

Charles beams. Archy moves forward with a wooden casket.

SEBASTIÁN

(to Archy, whispering)

I see your meaning. He is really  
winner her over.

PRINCE CHARLES

I would like to honor your with a  
token of my appreciation.

Archy opens the box with a flourish. Charles extracts a large diamond broach. The audience murmurs. The Infanta looks at it without expression. Another casket is produced, in it an huge strand of large pearls.

INFANTA MARIA ANA

Your generosity does you credit.

Charles beams.

INFANTA MARIA ANA (CONT'D)

I fear I will never wear them.

With that, King Felipe stands. Bows his head to Charles. He leaves the room and the Spanish contingent follows.

Only Charles, Buckingham and Archy remain.

Charles looks very pleased.

PRINCE CHARLES

That went well, methinks. Very well  
indeed!

BUCKINGHAM

(under his breath)

If you like ice.

PRINCE CHARLES

How is that, Steenie?

BUCKINGHAM

(brightly)

She has discovered the wooer, your  
Highness!

Prince Charles smiles broadly.



INT. EL ESCORIAL RECEPTION ROOM MANY DAYS LATER - DAY

The same England entourage are there. Archy and Sebastián are chatting. Buckingham is seated, sprawled. Charles is standing, fretting.

PRINCE CHARLES

The pace of this courtship moves too slowly.

BUCKINGHAM

Olivares blocks us at every turn.

PRINCE CHARLES

I crave a private audience with the Infanta. She consumes my thoughts.

BUCKINGHAM

(ruminating)

Damnably man.

Archy overhears him.

ARCHY

Your Highness, methinks ah hav' a notion.

BUCKINGHAM

Unlikely.

PRINCE CHARLES

Speak, cousin Archy.

ARCHY

The Infanta tarries most mornings at the Casa del Campo, accompanied only by her ladies and an old priest. Why nae seek your prey there?

BUCKINGHAM

It would be against protocol.

PRINCE CHARLES

That it would.

BUCKINGHAM

It would prick at the insufferable Olivares.

ARCHY

Nae if ye took Don Sebastián.

All eyes turn to Sebastián. He notices. The all smile at him.

EXT. CASA DEL CAMPO OUTSIDE THE NEXT MORNING- DAY

Charles, Buckingham, Archy and Sebastián are hiding behind some bushes outside the walls of the garden, peering out. A couple of carriages approach. Maria Ana is in one of them with a few of chaperons and ladies in waiting.

SEBASTIÁN

Just how do you plan to see the Infanta? You will not be allowed inside.

PRINCE CHARLES

This is a p-p-problem. Archy, this was y-y-your idea.

BUCKINGHAM

Her carriage approaches.

ARCHY

(beat)

Scale the wall.

PRINCE CHARLES

Indeed! It is n-n-ot so high. Don Sebastián, I will s-s-stand on your shoulders.

SEBASTIÁN

Me? Surely you will crush me. His Lordship is tall and sturdy.

BUCKINGHAM

(haughtily)

I am a peer of the realm.

Before Sebastián could react, Charles is climbing up on his shoulders. The Prince's boots on Sebastián's shoulders.

SEBASTIÁN

(gritting his teeth)

At least take off your boots.

Too late, Charles is over the wall.

EXT. THE GARDEN A SECOND LATER - DAY

Charles lands on his feet. The shrubbery hides him from view for a moment. He take a moment to take in her loveliness. As she approaches, he springs out from his hiding place.

PRINCE CHARLES  
F-f-fortune indeed has favored me,  
p-p-princess!

Charles flings himself on his knee before her and takes her hand, holding it tightly in his two hands.

Maria Ana shrieks. She tries to pull away. But Charles has got a hold of her.

PRINCE CHARLES (CONT'D)  
I have entered t-t-this retreat,  
scarcely hoping to f-f-find you,  
but chance has b-b-brought me to  
you at l-l-last.

The commotion has alerted the attention of her attendants.

They start shrieking too. Maria Ana manages to free herself from Charles's hold and run away, along with her entourage.

Charles runs after her, calling to her.

PRINCE CHARLES (CONT'D)  
Do not r-r-run from me! I cannot t-  
t-t-tear myself from you. I am n-n-  
never able to obtain a m-m-moment's  
private converse with you - n-n-  
never allowed to breathe my p-p-  
passion to you. Am I not your s-s-  
suitor? Why, then, s-s-should I be  
barred f-from approaching you?

But it is too late. She is gone.

Buckingham's head peeks over the top of the wall.

BUCKINGHAM  
She was clay in your hands, your  
Highness!

INT. THE PALACE LATER - DAY

PRINCE CHARLES  
I am b-b-beginning to think you do  
not wish for this m-m-marriage to  
take place.

OLIVARES  
The surest way to win the Infanta's  
heart is through conversion.

PRINCE CHARLES  
Do you w-w-ant us to m-m-marry?

KING FELIPE  
Yes, of course!

INT. THE PALACE SECONDS LATER - DAY

OLIVARES  
They can never marry unless the  
Prince converts.

KING FELIPE  
No, Of course not!

INT. THE PALACE WEEKS LATER - DAY

Olivares is sitting at his desk, paper on desk, quill in hand. Buckingham is standing before him. He is clearly agitated.

OLIVARES  
It is most unfortunate, but we  
cannot complete the marriage treaty  
without the dispensation from His  
Holiness.

BUCKINGHAM  
I have just received a blank  
commission from King James.  
(reading)  
We do hereby promise by the word of  
a King that whatsoever our son  
shall promise in our name we shall  
punctually perform.  
(stops reading)  
Signed by the King's own hand.

OLIVARES  
Negotiations are  
(beat)  
Clogged, it is true.

BUCKINGHAM  
It has been months!

OLIVARES  
What are days when the betrothed  
couple have all of eternity?

BUCKINGHAM

We have agreed to every possible concession.

OLIVARES

Deeds must precede words.

BUCKINGHAM

We have done everything,  
everything, you have asked!

OLIVARES

As soon as word reaches us from  
King James that the liberties to  
English Catholics have been  
removed, then the Infanta might  
accompany her bridegroom.

BUCKINGHAM

You know that would require  
approval from Parliament, which we  
would obtain upon our return.

Buckingham fans himself with the King's commission paper  
still in his hand.

BUCKINGHAM (CONT'D)

The heat is already insufferable.  
We cannot delay our departure any  
longer.

OLIVARES

True, our summers are intolerable.  
Alas, there is nothing to be done  
for it other than a conversion of  
the Prince.

PRINCE CHARLES

My lord, you h-have broken your  
word to me. I will n-never break my  
f-faith with God.

Olivares suppresses a smile. Buckingham looks furious.

EXT. THE PORT LATER - DAY

A huge gathering. The English on one side. Archy is there in  
a gorgeous new suit and heavy gold chain. The Spanish  
contingent of the other. King Felipe and Prince Charles face  
each other.

BUCKINGHAM  
 (to Archy)  
 New suit, buffoon?

ARCHY  
 (preening)  
 Courtesy of the King, such is his  
 admiration for me.

BUCKINGHAM  
 You look ridiculous.

ARCHY  
 The apparel oft proclaims the man.

BUCKINGHAM  
 Pity you are only half a man.

Archy rocks back and forth on his heels, looking very pleased  
 with himself.

ARCHY  
 He granted me a pension as wull.

Buckingham sighs and looks disgusted.

BUCKINGHAM  
 Your fools luck will not last  
 forever.

ARCHY  
 Luck runs oot fur dukes, tae.

King Felipe addresses Prince Charles.

KING FELIPE  
 You have our eternal love and  
 friendship, your highness.

PRINCE CHARLES  
 We return the s-s-sentiments, your  
 Majesty. You have welcomed us most  
 g-g-graciously. Your generosity  
 will never be f-f-forgotten.

A number of servants approached with caskets. They opened  
 them to reveal a number of rich jewels.

He took one casket and approached the King. It contained a  
 elaborate sword.

PRINCE CHARLES (CONT'D)  
 This sword b-b-belonged to King  
 Henry.

The King bowed deeply.

He took another casket and approached the Infanta. Her face looks hard. He opens the casket. It contains a very long length of huge pearls.

PRINCE CHARLES (CONT'D)  
I give these to y-y-you to show you  
my h-h-highest esteem.

Her face softens. She looks genuinely touched.

INFANTA MARIA ANA  
Your Highness is most gracious.

Spanish servants approach with a large chest.

INFANTA MARIA ANA (CONT'D)  
I, too, have gifts for you.

The servants open the chest. It will filled with embroidered leather gloves.

Charles picks up a pair and wafts them delicately under his nose.

PRINCE CHARLES  
Ah, scented. The fragrance will  
always remind me of you.

The two parties begin to part.

Buckingham passes by Olivares. He stops to speak into his ear.

BUCKINGHAM  
(hissing)  
I will be an everlasting servant to  
the King of Spain. As for you, I  
will always be your most lifelong  
enemy.

OLIVARES  
(hissing in return)  
I accept the challenge.

BUCKINGHAM  
It is just a matter of time until  
you fall.

OLIVARES  
If you are to England as you have  
been to Spain, you will make as  
many enemies there as here.

They both glare at each other, then walk away.

EXT. THE SHIP LATER - DAY

Charles and Archy are on the deck railing, looking out.

Porter and Cottington in the background.

PRINCE CHARLES

I s-s-see now they had no intentions of agreeing to the m-match.

COTTINGTON

I fear not, your Highness.

PRINCE CHARLES

Such a p-pity. I was s-smitten with the Infanta.

PORTER

The English would not likely welcome a Catholic as queen and never their King.

Charles sighs.

PRINCE CHARLES

You may have saved me from a disastrous match, Master Archy.

ARCHY

Saved by a buffoon once agin'.

Charles chuckles. Porter and Cottington whisper to each other.

PORTER

Thank Providence England is safe from the threat of Popery.

COTTINGTON

I fear the worse is yet to come.

He looks off into the distance.

EXT. RIDING SCHOOL MONTHS LATER - DAY

A large brick building, a few people on the balconies, a courtyard, there are many people about. Olivares is there.

A groom is holding the reins of a saddled horse.



OLIVARES  
(to Baltasar)  
You are long overdue in mastering  
the horse, your Highness.

Baltasar looks terrified.

OLIVARES (CONT'D)  
You are not afraid, are you?

Baltasar looks like a deer in headlights.

Sebastián watches this scene.

INFANTE BALTASAR  
It is so big. It will hurt me!

OLIVARES  
(growing impatient)  
Nonsense! Now mount up.

Baltasar shakes his head. His lower lip trembles, his eyes  
fill with tears.

OLIVARES (CONT'D)  
Get on!

Sebastián's eyes narrow. He steps forward.

SEBASTIÁN  
My lord, with your permission,  
perhaps I can help.

Olivares throws up his hands in defeat, and waves Sebastián  
forward.

SEBASTIÁN (CONT'D)  
(to Baltasar)  
Let us take a walk.

Sebastián takes the reins and leads on a horse. They walk  
away from the group.

SEBASTIÁN (CONT'D)  
(to Baltasar)  
It is alright to be afraid. But  
usually it is best to face one's  
fears head on.

Sebastián strokes the muzzle of the horse.

SEBASTIÁN (CONT'D)  
You just do not speak horse.

INFANTE BALTASAR  
(almost laughs)  
You speak horse?

SEBASTIÁN  
I understand animals. And you can  
too. God gave us dominion over the  
beasts. You just need to learn.

Baltasar timidly pets the horse. The horse nuzzles Baltasar.  
He giggles nervously.

SEBASTIÁN (CONT'D)  
You see, he likes you.

Baltasar is starting to look more comfortable.

INFANTE BALTASAR  
It just that he is so big.

SEBASTIÁN  
He is even bigger than me.

INFANTE BALTASAR  
This is true. Everything is bigger  
than you.

Sebastián gives him a sideways look.

SEBASTIÁN  
I see your fear has not displaced  
your humor.

INFANTE BALTASAR  
I never tire of teasing you.

SEBASTIÁN  
Now how about you just sit the  
horse? I will hold him.

INFANTE BALTASAR  
If you promise to hold him still.

SEBASTIÁN  
I promise.

EXT. THE RIDING SCHOOL A LITTLE LATER - DAY

Baltasar is on the horse now, trotting like a champ.

King Felipe rides into the scene. A groom rushes over with a stool and he dismounts his horse. Olivares and Sebastián are watching this.

KING FELIPE  
I say, you have worked wonders,  
Conde-Duque.

Olivares looks pleased.

OLIVARES  
You honor me, Your Majesty.

KING FELIPE  
You are a good teacher.

OLIVARES  
He favors his father in  
horsemanship.

Sebastián looks furious. Baltasar rides up to the trio.

KING FELIPE  
It seems the Conde-Duque has taught  
you well!

INFANTE BALTASAR  
He did not teach me. Don Sebastián  
did!

The King and Olivares turn and look at Sebastián. Now  
Olivares looks furious.

SEBASTIÁN  
I have a way with animals.  
(under his breath)  
The four-legged kind.

INT. BALTASAR'S ROOM LATER - DAY

Sebastián enters. Baltasar is sitting at a desk with pen and  
paper in hand.

INFANTE BALTASAR  
Don Sebastián, have you heard. My  
father has betrothed me to the  
Archduchess Mariana.

SEBASTIÁN  
Your cousin, yes. You have my  
congratulations.

INFANTE BALTASAR  
My father directs me to write a  
letter to Sor Maria.

SEBASTIÁN  
(reading the letter)  
She sends her blessings.

INFANTE BALTASAR  
But I do not know what to say.

SEBASTIÁN  
So you need my natural charm and  
eloquence.

Baltasar raises his eyebrows. Sebastián paces a little.

SEBASTIÁN (CONT'D)  
Very well. Write this...

Baltasar dips his quill into the inkwell.

SEBASTIÁN (CONT'D)  
Mother...

Baltasar scribbles, his brow furrowed by the effort.

SEBASTIÁN (CONT'D)  
My father gave me your letter  
congratulating me the marriage he  
has made for me.

Baltasar writes.

SEBASTIÁN (CONT'D)  
I am most pleased to have taken  
this state, especially with my  
cousin, who was the one I wished  
for ever since I had use of my  
reason; and it seems impossible to  
me that I could have come across  
any other woman so much to my  
taste.

Baltasar writes.

SEBASTIÁN (CONT'D)  
So I hope His Divine Majesty will  
let us be very happily married,  
which is all I can hope for. I ask  
you to pray for this. Our Lord keep  
you.

Baltasar stops writing, looks expectantly.

SEBASTIÁN (CONT'D)  
Sign it.

BALTASAR  
(writing)  
I, the Prince.

Sebastián takes the letter from his hand and reads it.

SEBASTIÁN  
You have spelled "Prince" wrong.

Baltasar snatches the paper from Sebastián's hand and reads.

Sebastián eyes crinkle with humor. Baltasar realizes Sebastián is teasing him and laughs.

EXT. PALACE GARDENS LATER - DAY

Sebastián and Baltasar are ambling in the garden. Soldier #1 is standing guard in the background.

SEBASTIÁN  
(eyeing the guard)  
So I stabbed him the leg.

Baltasar laughs.

BALTASAR  
You did not!

SEBASTIÁN  
I did.

They both look at the guard.

BALTASAR  
(addressing the guard)  
Is that true?

Soldier #1 just scowls. They both suppress laughter.

INT. HALLWAY THE PALACE SOMETIME LATER - DAY

Sebastián is walking. Soldier #1 finds him.

SOLDIER #1  
Don Sebastián!

SEBASTIÁN  
Now I have a name?

SOLDIER #1  
The Infante is very ill.

Sebastián eyes widen, he looks worried.

SOLDIER #1 (CONT'D)  
He is asking for you.

INT. BALTASAR'S ROOM MOMENTS LATER - DAY

Baltasar is in bed. He looks terrible. He has spots all over his face, chest and arms. His eyes are closed, his breathing ragged. Doctors, priests, attendants are quietly at work.

The King is there, by his bedside.

KING FELIPE  
My son. We have sent for the relics  
of Saint Isadore. They healed me  
when I was ill.

The King sees Sebastián.

KING FELIPE (CONT'D)  
Ah, here is Don Sebastián.

Baltasar slowly opens his eyes and sees Sebastián. He holds out his hand to Sebastián. Sebastián moves forward and takes the boy's hand.

INFANTE BALTASAR  
(his voice is raspy)  
Don Sebastián. I have written my  
will. I have left you my second  
best dagger.

There are tears in Sebastián's eyes. He swallows hard.

SEBASTIÁN  
I shall not have it then, for you  
will outlive me.

INFANTE BALTASAR  
Pray it be so. But no one knows  
God's will.

SEBASTIÁN  
(under his breath)  
God's will.

INFANTE BALTASAR  
I never finished the book, Don  
Sebastián.

Sebastián sees the book sitting on a table next to the bed.

SEBASTIÁN  
Shall I read it to you?

Sebastián wipes tears from his eyes and picks up the book.

SEBASTIÁN (CONT'D)  
In a village of La Mancha, the name  
of which I have no desire to call  
to mind, there lived not long since  
one of those gentlemen that keep a  
lance in the lance-rack, an old  
buckler, a lean hack, and a  
greyhound for coursi

Baltasar's eyes close. He smiles just a little.

INT. BALTASAR'S ROOM MOMENTS LATER - DAY

Baltasar is dead. King Felipe is on his knees before the bed, head buried in the sheets, his fists gripping the sheets his hands. Women are weeping openly. Then looked pained. The priest whispers a prayer. Sebastián stands in a corner in the back of the room. A tear rolls down his cheek.

INT. EL ESCORIAL PALACE PANTHEON OF THE KINGS LATER - DAY

The room is an elaborate crypt, where all the Spanish royal family have been laid to rest.

King Felipe kneels on the floor in front of the crypt of Baltasar Carlos. He prays quietly.

INT. VELÁZQUEZ' STUDIO LATER - NIGHT

The Kings sits in a leather chair. A fire burns low in the fireplace. Sebastián and Velázquez are there. The mood is somber, melancholy.

KING FELIPE  
I have had more troubles than I  
bear.

VELÁZQUEZ  
You have suffered the trials of  
Job, to be sure.

KING FELIPE

Am I being punished for my sins?

VELÁZQUEZ

Surely not, Señor. You are the most devout of men.

KING FELIPE

You are always free with your words, Don Sebastián? What are your thoughts?

SEBASTIÁN

(contemplatively)

We are taught that it is God's will. I too wonder why God would allow so much suffering.

He thinks for a moment.

SEBASTIÁN (CONT'D)

It is not the falling into the pit of despair that matters. It is the climbing out. Saying "it is God's will" only teaches us to hate God. God does not bring us troubles. We foolish humans bring them upon ourselves.

Pacing now. He is getting angry.

SEBASTIÁN (CONT'D)

People are starving. Yet you do nothing. Maybe God is trying to tell you something.

VELÁZQUEZ

I fear the wine has loosened his tongue, your Highness. He means no disrespect.

The King stands. The others stand.

KING FELIPE

(quietly to Sebastián)

I need your eyes and ears, Señor. Less so your mouth.

The King exits the room.

VELÁZQUEZ

You feel the loss of the Infante greatly.



SEBASTIÁN  
I not a book to be read.

VELÁZQUEZ

INT. A ROOM IN THE PALACE DAYS LATER - DAY

The King is there with a few courtiers, including Olivares, Sebastián is in a corner, unseen. The King has a letter in his hand.

KING FELIPE  
I have received a letter from the  
Emperor condoling me for the loss  
of my son, and at the same time  
offering his daughter to be my  
wife.

OLIVARES  
A brilliant suggestion, Your  
Majesty! A king without an heir is  
too easy prey for his enemies.

Olivares smiles. Sebastián's head pops up. He looks  
horrified.

KING FELIPE  
I have no interest in marrying  
again.

OLIVARES  
With respect, Señor, perhaps if you  
put your mind to it, you may warm  
to the idea.

The King ruminates.

KING FELIPE  
It was my father's dearest wish to  
unite the two branches of the  
Austrian empires.

OLIVARES  
The Archduchess is nearly fifteen,  
marriageable age. Surely potential  
for many strong children.

KING FELIPE  
I have no enthusiasm for the  
prospect.

OLIVARES

It is my greatest sadness that I  
have not been blessed with sons.

Sebastián shows he is shocked the King is considering this.

He can hold his tongue no longer.

SEBASTIÁN

She is your niece!

The King is nonplussed.

KING FELIPE

My grandfather married his niece.

OLIVARES

Might it not ease your melancholy  
to have a part of your sister with  
you?

SEBASTIÁN

But surely the consanguinity would  
require a Papal dispensation.

KING FELIPE

Rome is dependent on Spanish gold.

OLIVARES

Let lay with his daughters.

SEBASTIÁN

When they thought they were the  
only people left on Earth!

OLIVARES

Abraham's brother married his  
niece.

KING FELIPE

It is in the Bible.

SEBASTIÁN

Spain is not ancient Canaan!

KING FELIPE

You are right, Conde-Duque. I have  
warmed to the idea. I will write to  
her father immediately.

Sebastián looks astounded by this course of events.

The King leaves. Olivares trailing. He stops and lowers his  
head close to Sebastián's head and speaks lowly into his ear.

OLIVARES  
 You seem to have found your voice a  
 little too well, enano.

SEBASTIÁN  
 I cannot stand idly by and say  
 nothing while you...

Olivares stands up to his full height.

OLIVARES  
 (sharply)  
 While I what?

From outside the room, the King can be heard calling.

KING FELIPE (O.S.)  
 Conde-Duque?

OLIVARES  
 You may have the King's favor. For  
 now. But the tides can turn for  
 anyone, enano.

Olivares walks away.

SEBASTIÁN  
 Including you.

INT. TAVERN SOMETIME LATER - NIGHT

Sebastián and Don Diego are sitting in a quiet corner,  
 drinking.

SEBASTIÁN  
 Why does the King not see that  
 Olivares has decimated the country?

EL PRIMO  
 Olivares guards the King like a  
 jealous lover. No one can get past  
 him.

EL PRIMO (CONT'D)  
 Have you not noticed he is always  
 with the King, watching, waiting?

SEBASTIÁN  
 Olivares encourages the King's--  
 weaknesses.

Don Diego is eyeing the pretty Señoritas.

EL PRIMO  
I cannot fault him for that!

Sebastián can't help but smile at Don Diego's mirth.

Sebastián drinks for a beat.

SEBASTIÁN  
But no one dares to tell the King  
the truth.

EL PRIMO  
Would he listen?

SEBASTIÁN  
He would to us.

Don Diego's face show he takes Sebastián's meaning.

EL PRIMO  
I have been in the service of the  
Conde-Duque for many years. I  
cannot risk my position.

Sebastián sits and thinks.

EL PRIMO (CONT'D)  
I can see what you are thinking and  
I warn you not to do it.

SEBASTIÁN  
The dwarfs are the only one's who  
can.

EL PRIMO  
We cannot say, or do, anything we  
like! The Inquisition does need  
much to condemn anyone for heresy.  
Small bodies burn faster than large  
ones.

SEBASTIÁN  
Perhaps the death of one is worth  
saving the lives of many.

EL PRIMO  
You are no martyr. Let me tell you  
the story of Francesillo de Zúñiga,  
jester in the court of Charles the  
Fifth.

He drinks.

EL PRIMO (CONT'D)

He spoke too freely and lost the protection of the king. He was promptly stabbed in the streets, possibly by one of the courtiers he angered. No one was ever caught for the crime.

Sebastián eyebrows raise.

EL PRIMO (CONT'D)

He was carried home, mortally wounded, and his wife asked what happened. Francesillo, his wit intact until the end said, 'It is nothing Madam. It is just that they have killed your husband.'

SEBASTIÁN

I am not married. And even I can outrun Olivares.

He suppresses a smile.

EL PRIMO

For someone who does not like being a buffoon, you surely jest like one.

INT. KING FELIPE'S BED CHAMBER LATER - NIGHT

A fire is burning in the fireplace. A few candles are burning but the light is dim. The king sits on sofa, holding Olivares letter in his hand. He looks weary and pensive.

KING FELIPE

The Conde-Duque has begged me leave to let him retire to his estate in Andalusia.

SEBASTIÁN

Then you must let him.

KING FELIPE

There is no one to replace him.

SEBASTIÁN

Ask and it will be given to you.

KING FELIPE

He has served me faithfully since before I was a barely more than a child.

Sebastián couches his language carefully.

SEBASTIÁN

He has been the most loyal subject  
of your Majesty's.

The King's face shows nothing.

SEBASTIÁN (CONT'D)

The realm is being squeezed dry of  
money, the copper coin is  
worthless. Quevedo wrote the letter  
you found under your napkin and  
Olivares imprisoned him!

The King looks sad at these revelations.

SEBASTIÁN (CONT'D)

The agony and desperation of the  
people are intense and utter  
despair consumes the hearts and  
lives the people. Your people.

KING FELIPE

His principles are my principles.

SEBASTIÁN

It is not his principles that are  
the cause of his disastrous  
results, but his methods.

KING FELIPE

I can not remember a time when I  
was without his service.

SEBASTIÁN

You have an army of ministers ready  
to help you. Allow him to retire.

KING FELIPE

In time, perhaps.

SEBASTIÁN

The time is now, your Majesty.

KING FELIPE

Sometimes I feel my burdens are  
more than I can bear.

SEBASTIÁN

Your people needs its King.

The King is silent for a beat.

KING FELIPE  
Your tongue has loosen again, Don  
Sebastián, and this time the wine  
is not to blame.

The King stands.

KING FELIPE (CONT'D)  
I will pray on it.

He leaves the antechamber, goes to the bedchamber and closes the door. Sebastián stands in front of the fire and looks into the flames.

INT. KING FELIPE'S BED CHAMBER NEXT MORNING - DAY

The King is at his writing table. Sebastián is standing near.

The King picks up his quill, dips in into the ink well and sighs heavily.

He puts pens to paper and writes slowly.

He hands the now sealed letter to Sebastián.

Sebastián walks carefully and deliberately with the letter.

INT. OLIVARES' OFFICE MOMENTS LATER - DAY

Olivares is at his desk. He reads the letter. His face drops.

He sags under the weigh of the realization of the message.

His arm shakes, the letter floats to the floor. Is it signed in large signature, "Yo, El Rey."

EXT. STREET LATER - NIGHT

Bonfires are burning. People are in the street celebrating.

Olivares rides away in a unmarked carriage, shades draw. No one in the crowd notices him inside.

EXT. MONASTERY PRISON MUCH LATER - DAY

The heavy outer door of the monastery where Quevedo is imprisoned opens. He steps out a broken man. Ragged clothes, unkempt hair and beard, journals under his arm. He adjusts his signature round black eyeglasses and looks up, squinting at the sky.

INT. MARIA'S ROOMS - DAY

A simple room. Bed, chairs, tables. Sebastián is there.

SEBASTIÁN

The King is to marry again.

Maria is shocked. She has to sit.

MARIA CALDERÓN

He thinks I am pregnant with his child.

SEBASTIÁN

He needs an heir.

MARIA CALDERÓN

He said he loved me. He told me he would marry me!

Sebastián takes her hands in his.

SEBASTIÁN

(gently)

Querida, you know that can never happen.

Maria chock back sobs. She's pacing, ringing her hands.

MARIA CALDERÓN

What am I to do Sebastián? He will take the baby and force me into a convent, like all the women before me.

SEBASTIÁN

I want to marry you, Maria.

MARIA CALDERÓN

Can we go to Rome? Or Flanders?

SEBASTIÁN

There is no place were I will not attract attention. Not even New Spain.

MARIA CALDERÓN

New Spain? There is nothing but savages there!

SEBASTIÁN

I would be recognized.



MARIA CALDERÓN  
You could wear a costume. Shave  
your beard. Dress as a child!

SEBASTIÁN  
(to himself)  
More costumes.

Sebastián is considering it.

MARIA CALDERÓN  
I can sell the jewelry the King has  
given me.

SEBASTIÁN  
Keep your jewels, my lady. You have  
earned them.  
(ruminating)  
I have money.

He is thinking. Boldly, he makes a choice.

SEBASTIÁN (CONT'D)  
Tomorrow then. Midnight.

Maria's face brightened.

SEBASTIÁN (CONT'D)  
I will be here.

Maria is relieved. She takes his hands in hers.

MARIA CALDERÓN  
Oh, Sebastián. God bless you. Again  
you are my caballero.

Sebastián eyes grow misty at the display of affection from  
Maria.

SEBASTIÁN  
You know that I would die for you.

He takes her hands in his and kisses them. He can't see her  
face. She is looking off into the distance.

EXT. MARIA'S ROOMS MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT

Sebastián is riding away on his donkey. In the shadows a  
figure is hiding, covered by a black large hat and black  
cape. Close in on his face, it is Soldier #1.

INT. SEBASTIÁN'S ROOM LATER - NIGHT

Sebastián is in his room. He has a rough cloth bag on the bed. He is packing. He sees his velvet doublet and cape, fingering the cloth gently for moment. He leaves the garments where they are and chooses plain dark clothing and stuffs them in the bag.

He picks up Baltasar's dagger, turning it in the candlelight.

He puts it into his belt on his back.

Just then a KNOCK is heard at the door. Sebastián freezes for a moment.

SEBASTIÁN

Who is it?

ELENA

It is I, Señor.

He stuffs the bag under the bed. He opens the door.

SEBASTIÁN

It is late.

ELENA

I saw the candlelight under the door.

SEBASTIÁN

Yes, erm, I was about to go to sleep.

ELENA

Is there anything you need before bed?

SEBASTIÁN

No. Thank you, Elena.

She turns to leave.

SEBASTIÁN (CONT'D)

Wait.

He pulls out a coin bag. He fished out a gold coin.

SEBASTIÁN (CONT'D)

Elena, you have been the kindest person that I have know here. Please. Take this.

Her eyes light up.

ELENA

Oh no, Señor. I could not!

He presses the coin into her palm.

SEBASTIÁN

You can. Please? It would please me more than you can know.

Elena's hand closes over the coin.

ELENA

I am most grateful, Señor. Thank you.

SEBASTIÁN

Good bye, Elena.

She exits.

EXT. HALLWAY A SECOND LATER - NIGHT

Elena looks at the coin in her hand. She looks off into the distance. Her brow furrows. When out of the shadows a hand grabs her wrist, holding it tight. She gasps. It is Soldier #1.

INT. BARN MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT

There is a donkey there. Sebastián is putting on its bridle.

A stray dog approaches him. He gets down to pet him.

SEBASTIÁN

(cooing)

Hello pup. Where have you come from?

He fishes out a chunk of cheese from his bag.

SEBASTIÁN (CONT'D)

You look hungry.

The eats the cheese. He pets the dog.

Then he flinches. He looks at his hand and sees a flea there.

He squishes it. There is a red welt on his hand. He scratches at the mark. He takes the donkey and cart and quietly leaves the barn.

EXT. BARN A SECOND LATER - NIGHT

Sebastián closes the barn door, when out of the darkness a voice is heard.

SOLDIER #1  
Little late for a ride, is it not?

Sebastián is startled.

SEBASTIÁN  
I am on the King's business.

SOLDIER #1  
No you are not, for he is with his mistress.

Sebastián's eyes narrow.

SEBASTIÁN  
What does that matter to me?

SOLDIER #1  
Because you have the same destination.

Soldier #1 grabs a hold of the reins.

SEBASTIÁN  
Nonsense. I am going to...a brothel.

Sebastián tries to wrest the reins from Soldier #1.

SOLDIER #1  
You do not go to brothels.

Sebastián looks murderous. Soldier #1 looks menacing.

SOLDIER #1 (CONT'D)  
Your taste in women lies closer to that of the King's.

SEBASTIÁN  
You seem to know a great deal about my habits.

Soldier #1 holds the reins tigh

SEBASTIÁN (CONT'D)  
Let me go.

SOLDIER #1  
Or what? You will poke me again  
with your tiny dagger?

SEBASTIÁN  
One word from me and you are  
sacked.

SOLDIER #1  
One word from me and your tiny head  
will be separated from your even  
tinier body.

SEBASTIÁN  
What do you want? Money?

Sebastián feigns reaching into his purse. Without warning he pulls the dagger from his waistband and slashes at the Soldier.

At the same time, the Soldier was reaching forward to try and grab the coin bag.

The dagger plunges into the Soldier's throat. The Soldier's eyes widen and he reaches for this throat, gasping.

He falls to the ground.

Sebastián gasps in horror at what he's done. He panics and rides away as fast as the cart will take him.

In his panic, he's left behind the dagger, still sticking out of the Soldier's neck.

INT. MARIA'S ROOMS LATER - NIGHT

A KNOCK is heard on the door. Maria opens the door. It is Sebastián. He is out of breath.

SEBASTIÁN  
We need to leave now.

Maria looks conflicted. She is wringing her hands.

SEBASTIÁN (CONT'D)  
Now, Maria, before the alarm is  
sounded.

Then he see Tomas de Rojas in the shadows.

TOMAS  
There is plague in the city,  
hombrecito.

SEBASTIÁN  
Even more reason to leave right  
away.

Maria face shows conflict.

MARIA CALDERÓN  
Tomas is taking me to Valladolid.

SEBASTIÁN  
No. We are leaving together. Now.

MARIA CALDERÓN  
Tomas can keep me safe.

SEBASTIÁN  
I can keep you safe! I have the  
protection of the King.

Sebastián does not look well. He shivers and doubles over  
with pain.

MARIA CALDERÓN  
(gently)  
Only in Madrid.

SEBASTIÁN  
I am risking my life for you. I can  
keep you safe. And I have coin.

He takes the leather bag from inside his cloak, it JINGLES.

He drops it on the table, it makes a substantial CLINKING  
sound.

MARIA CALDERÓN  
I am so sorry, Sebastián. Truly I  
am.

Just then, a commotion is heard in the hallway.

MARIA CALDERÓN (CONT'D)  
It is the King!

Tomas moves quickly.

TOMAS  
Quick! Out the window!

Sebastián panics.

SEBASTIÁN  
I cannot be found here!

MARIA CALDERÓN

Go with God, hombrecito. I will  
never forget your kindness. I pray  
we meet again.

Tomas picks up Maria and carefully deposits her outside.

TOMAS

Under the bed!

Sebastián scampers to hide once again. While Sebastián is  
distracted, Tomas freezes for a beat. He eyes the bag of  
coins on the table. Then picks it up and stuffs it inside his  
doublet. Tomas climbs out the window.

Sebastián begins to hide under the bed. Then stops cold.

SEBASTIÁN

(to himself)

I am weary of hiding.

There is a tense moment when Sebastián prepares to meet his  
fate. The door bursts open. There are a couple of guards.

Behind him is the King.

The King enters. He sees Sebastián without expression.

KING FELIPE

Don Sebastián. You have no business  
here.

Sebastián draws himself up to stand as erect as he can. He  
lifts his chin and narrows his eyes.

SEBASTIÁN

I do have business here.

(beat)

Your Majesty.

KING FELIPE

The only business you would have  
here is one that I have sent you on  
and I have not.

He takes in a deep breath and balls up his fists at his  
sides.

SEBASTIÁN

My business, Señor is with Maria.  
For I am the father of the child  
she carries.

KING FELIPE  
This is no time for buffoonery.

SEBASTIÁN  
It is true.

KING FELIPE  
(scoffing)  
Everyone knows dwarfs are incapable  
of reproducing.

SEBASTIÁN  
I assure you that is not true. I  
love her, and she me, and we...

KING FELIPE  
Enough.  
(looking around)  
She has fled.

The soldiers stand motionless.

KING FELIPE (CONT'D)  
(impatiently)  
Search the city!

The soldiers rush out the door. The King stands there for a moment, looking around, then leaves. Sebastián is left standing there. He does not look well.

INT. PALACE STAIRCASE LATER - NIGHT

Sebastián climbs slowly, his pain evident in every tortured step.

INT. SEBASTIÁN'S BED CHAMBER NEXT MORNING - DAY

Sebastián is bed. He is clearly ill. A KNOCK on the door is heard. He can't move. The door opens. It is Mari-Barbola.

MARI-BARBOLA  
Why are you still a-bed, dwarf?

She notices the fire is low.

MARI-BARBOLA (CONT'D)  
The servant has not tended the  
fire.

She moves to the fireplace, stirs the embers.



MARI-BARBOLA (CONT'D)  
There is plague in the city. The  
King is leaving for Valladolid.

SEBASTIÁN  
(gasping)  
Water.

MARI-BARBOLA  
Most of the court is to accompany  
him. You must start packing...

It is then she notices how ill he looks. He is shivering,  
ghastly pale. Her brow furrows. She moves to his bedside.

Carefully, she pulls away the collar of his nightshirt away  
from his neck. There is a huge buboe there. Then she sees his  
fingers. The tips are black. She gasps and recoils in horror.

MARI-BARBOLA (CONT'D)  
Plague.

SEBASTIÁN  
Mari-Barbola. I need water.

He looks pitiful. She freezes. She is horrified. She moves  
backwards quickly, bumping into a table.

She panickedly pulls a handkerchief from her sleeve and  
presses it to her mouth and nose.

SEBASTIÁN (CONT'D)  
Help me.

Mari-Barbola steps back in fear. She freezes for a beat. Her  
face shows conflict. Finally, she moves towards the pitcher  
and pours a glass of water. Hands it carefully to Sebastián.

He can't lift his head to drink.

She moves to his bedside, holds his head up so he can drink.

He gulps down the water. She moves to a wash bowl, wets a  
cloth, then dabs his forehead.

SEBASTIÁN (CONT'D)  
Thank you, Mari.

MARI-BARBOLA  
You are very ill, Sebastián.

SEBASTIÁN  
That is the first time you have  
every called me by name.

MARI-BARBOLA

This is the first time you have  
never argued with me.

Sebastián smiles a little.

SEBASTIÁN

Do you hate me so much?

Her tone is soft, gentle.

MARI-BARBOLA

Hate you? No. I am envious of you.

SEBASTIÁN

Envious? Of me?

MARI-BARBOLA

Because while I do what I am told,  
you do what you wish. You have no  
fear.

SEBASTIÁN

I fear God's punishment. I need a  
priest.

MARI-BARBOLA

You need a physician. I will send  
for one.

Sebastián grabs hold of her wrist to stay here.

SEBASTIÁN

No. I need to make confession. I  
have done a terrible thing.

MARI-BARBOLA

What could you have done that is so  
terrible?

Sebastián looks off into the distance.

SEBASTIÁN

I have reached too far, I have  
tried to fly too close to the sun.  
I have questioned God's will.

Her face softens.

SEBASTIÁN (CONT'D)

What is you want, Mari?

MARI-BARBOLA

You know we dwarfs cannot never  
have what we want. We must be  
content with what we can get.

SEBASTIÁN

If you could have anything in the  
world, what would it be?

She looks off into the distance. Her eyes get misty.

MARI-BARBOLA

(wistfully)  
To go home.

SEBASTIÁN

There--in my cloak.

She takes the cloak from the peg on the wall. He fumbles  
about and fishes out one gold coin. He presses it into her  
palm.

SEBASTIÁN (CONT'D)

I am dying, Mari. I am going home.  
You should, too.

Mari-Barbola's eyes soften.

MARI-BARBOLA

Why do you show me kindness,  
Sebastián, when I have been so  
unkind to you?

SEBASTIÁN

Do you know Saint Francis?

She shakes her head slowly.

SEBASTIÁN (CONT'D)

When you leave this earth, you can  
take with you nothing you have  
received--only what you have given.  
A full heart, enriched by honest  
service, love, sacrifice, and  
courage.

He closes his eyes. Mari-Barbola sits and says nothing.

INT. SEBASTIÁN'S BED CHAMBER LATER - NIGHT

A Priest is there, giving Sebastián last rights. Mari-Barbola  
is watching quietly.

A group of the King's Guards burst through the door, including Soldier #2. He is holding the bloody dagger.

It's too late. Sebastián is dead.

INT. VELÁZQUEZ' WORK ROOM LATER - NIGHT

The room is dimly lit by candlelight. Velázquez is there, sitting in the leather chair kept for the King. His painting of Sebastián de Morra is on an easel. Close in on the portrait and Sebastián's enigmatic expression immortalized in the painting.

FADE OUT