

## ACT FOUR

## 4.1

*The sound of a protest throughout the scene.*

*Enter FREE-NEWSPAPER WOMAN, handing out papers to passing COMMUTERS, PROTESTERS, etc., throughout.*

FREE-NEWSPAPER WOMAN.

*Free Standard. Free Standard!*

In times like this a paper feels absurd.

Unless we could reprint the articles

In every second, news contained in here

Is counted history. When King does march

And Parliament is forcibly dissolved

When Labour leader says we should remove

The King, and Tory says he isn't sure.

It's changing every second and my point of view

Is make him sign somehow and then we're done.

But I'm alone. Most people are enraged.

They march at day, and then at night they camp

Outside the Palace, shout against the King.

A MONARCHIST PROTESTER – *wearing country gear – tweed, and a flatcap, enters. She has a placard – 'God Save the King'. She has a bloody nose and is panicked – running away – looking round. Terrified.*

Although there's only a few thousand now,

The numbers grow. And sometimes there's a brave

Supporter of the King who tries to take

Them on and this has sparked some violence –

*A roar of the crowd and a group of ANTI-MONARCHIST PROTESTERS storm the stage. The MONARCHIST panics, throws the banner to the ground and runs away. The ANTI-MONARCHISTS head off, in pursuit.*

*Another ANTI-MONARCHIST watches them go. He's wearing a 'V for Vendetta' mask, carrying a banner: Charles with a Hitler moustache. A slogan 'Charles Out'. He takes out a pre-rolled fag, puts it in his mouth without taking off the mask. A moment to himself.*

But none of this is on page one.

Because in truth it's not much fun.

It takes up two to twenty-five

But visually the public's eye

They know will drift to this instead

A photo of a girl in bed.

*The protester takes off the mask, and we see it's JESS.*

Wait – do I know you?

JESS.

Don't think so –

FREE-NEWSPAPER WOMAN.

Yeah... wait...

*She looks at the front page of her paper. Compares it. A few*

*PROTESTERS walk past and stand in a circle.*

Hang on – I do!

HARRY enters.

HARRY.

Hi.

JESS.

Oh... Oh come on! You can't be here. You might be lynched, on your own.

HARRY.

I'm not on my own.

JESS.

What?

HARRY.

Terry?

*One of the 'protesters' turns to HARRY – lifts up his woollen hat.*

TERRY.  
Yes sir?

HARRY.  
Everything under control.

TERRY.  
Yes sir. For now.

TERRY *pulls his hat back down, undercover.*

HARRY.  
That's how I found you. I know why you left. I saw the story. It's okay.

JESS.  
Harry. None of my friends are talking to me. Every second people recognise me and laugh. And I never wanted any of it. I don't want to be famous and I don't want anything to do with that. Or you. Not any more.

HARRY.  
You mean that?

JESS.  
Yeah. Just... go home.

HARRY.  
But I don't... I don't know what to do without you.

JESS.  
You'll be okay.

HARRY.  
There must be a way.

JESS.  
No mate. You're a prince. And you always will be.

*She picks up her banner. A growing chant from the crowd.*

TERRY *turns to HARRY.*

TERRY.  
Sir we should be moving.

HARRY.

Jess... I've got an idea. Come with me. Back to the Palace.

JESS.  
No.

HARRY.  
One last chance.

Please.

Give me an hour.

*The crowd getting louder.*

JESS.  
It won't work.

HARRY.  
It might.

JESS.  
I'm a Republican.

HARRY.  
I know. But you're beautiful.

*The crowd scream.*

Please.

JESS *relents and goes with HARRY. TERRY follows.*

*The sound of the crowd gets louder and louder.*

## 4.2

*Buckingham Palace.*

*The sound of the crowd outside.*

*Enter SIR GORDON – Chief of the Defence Staff, and CHARLES.*

CHARLES.

Sir Gordon, thanks indeed for coming here  
At such short notice, would you like a drink?

SIR GORDON.

Your Majesty, I am refreshed, and keen  
To hear how I can be of use.

CHARLES.

The crowds  
Outside. You hear? It's every day.

SIR GORDON.

I know.

CHARLES.

They're passionate, and from what I can tell  
Extremely keen for my untimely death.

SIR GORDON.

They're unemployed and students, all they want  
Is good excuse to make some noise, it's fine.

CHARLES.

I am reminded of that day, the year  
It was that I was married to Diana.  
And on the Trooping of the Colour when  
The Queen was leading, riding out in front  
And trotting down the Mall in glorious sunshine  
There came from somewhere in the crowd six shots,  
Aimed at my mother, echoing around.  
The horse was panicked and reared up at once  
In contrast to the ever-steady Queen,  
Who calmed the beast and simply carried on,  
While round her much too late, the guards did run  
And startled like the horse, did throw themselves

Into the crowd, to find the armed man.  
Of course we learnt he fired blanks that day  
And merely wanted fame. But now I think,  
It's likely when, in time, those shots are aimed  
At me, I'll only get to hear the first.

SIR GORDON.

It's natural sir that you will be concerned  
When constantly this rabble rave and shout.  
But rest assured you are protected well.

CHARLES.

How many guards are standing there outside?

SIR GORDON.

Because you are in residence, we have  
At all times four, in front, and then of course  
There is the royal police within the walls,  
And extra agents that protect yourself.

CHARLES.

It is the guards in front that bother me.  
Please have them tripled, at all times I want  
Twelve men to there be visible to all.

SIR GORDON.

Your Majesty, these men in front are there  
For tourist ceremony, not defence.  
If it's your safety that concerns, may I –

CHARLES.

It is my preservation and I know  
That will be served by what the public see.  
The truth is that my greatest enemies  
Stand not within the crowd outside but there  
In Whitehall, waiting for the slightest glimpse  
Of weakness.

SIR GORDON.

So... I see. You want a show of strength.

CHARLES.

Sir Gordon, these are, in truth, strange days.  
And so, when timely pressed, you'll need to know

Precisely where, to whom your loyalty lies.  
 If Government, of course, I'd understand.  
 But possibly you think, like me, that King  
 Can on occasion ask the Parliament  
 To reconsider what they mean to do.  
 For that is all I ask. To think again.  
 Sir Gordon, in the end it's up to you.

*Beat.*

SIR GORDON.

My loyalty?

*Beat.*

Perhaps I can suggest Your Majesty  
 That in these times of severely heightened threat  
 It would be wise not only to increase  
 The armed guard that stand outside the gate  
 From four to twenty-eight, from day to night  
 But in addition maybe we should park  
 Upon the terrace at the front, a tank.  
 Or similar large and armoured vehicle.  
 It is important that we send a message out  
 That makes it clear the King's supported well.  
 Because you're right, indeed, that when we join  
 The forces we all swear that come what may  
 We shall protect the King, and so we will.

*Enter BUTLER.*

BUTLER.

The Leader of the Opposition sir.

CHARLES.

Send him in.

*Enter MR STEVENS.*

MR STEVENS.

Your Majesty, Sir Gordon, greetings both  
 I promised to ensure you were updated  
 On how the House of Commons does respond  
 Toward the intervention of the King.

CHARLES.

Yes. Well?

MR STEVENS.

It is a mixed bag, of course  
 There are those on both sides who strongly feel  
 That we as signed-up members of the House  
 Did swear we would obey the law as written down  
 And not, like children, wait until the day  
 It didn't suit, and then decide in fact  
 We'd rather not. I'd say that is how we  
 Conservatives do feel. That we should go  
 Back to the people and, as you've decreed,  
 Seek re-election to the House, and then  
 If we're successful, think about a change.

CHARLES.

Or not.

MR STEVENS.

Or not, precisely right indeed.  
 Unfortunately those of Labour, and  
 For what they're worth, the other parties too  
 Are resolute that we should not dissolve  
 And should instead in contravention of  
 The royal decree continue with the House,  
 And make a legislation that will stop  
 The King from interference in the State.

*Enter CAMILLA.*

CHARLES.

Then Mr Stevens take the message back  
 The King is stubborn and he will not move.  
 The surest and the smoothest course would be  
 To make a new election and thereby  
 We'll ask the people to resolve our spat.

MR STEVENS.

This is what I will press on all of them.  
 A steady course to chart through rocky seas.  
*He goes.*

SIR GORDON.

Your Majesty, if there's nothing else I will  
Go organise the extra troops outside.

CHARLES.

Before you do, there's just one question more.  
Despite the nineteenth-century uniform  
And strangely soaring bearskin hats they wear,  
I wondered if the soldiers' antique guns  
Did carry ammunition that was live.

SIR GORDON.

The men that stand so still outside the gates  
Do practise with their rifles every week.  
The funny hats are just a way to fuzz  
The brutal fact the army's on the streets,  
And answerable not to the police  
Or to the politician's changing whims,  
But only to their officer, and so,  
By ladder of command, to you, the Crown.  
Whatever comes to pass we will be there.

SIR GORDON goes.

CAMILLA.

What's all this talk of arms and loaded guns?

CHARLES.

The Parliament refuse to budge an inch,  
And like a horde of squatters, occupy  
A house that they are not entitled to.

CAMILLA.

But all these people, generals, judges,  
Mr Stevens, none of them would be the men  
That you in normal circumstance would trust.

CHARLES.

The very air tastes strange these last few days.  
But having made a move I now must stick  
And see it through, even if I must make  
Fair-weather friends, who only seek the sun.

*Enter JAMES.*

JAMES.

Your Majesty, forgive me bursting in  
But news has broken out today: there is  
Another problem –

CHARLES.

Yes? What problem now?

HARRY enters with JESS.

CAMILLA.

Oh Harry! We don't see enough of you.

HARRY.

Camilla, Father, here's my friend, her name  
Is Jess, she studies at St Martin's College

CHARLES.

St Martin's College? Good, so you're in art?  
JESS.

Yeah

JAMES.

Sir, if I can interrupt –

CHARLES.

Oh yes, James says a crisis looms once more  
So good to meet you Jess, but we –

HARRY.

I think  
That James's crisis stands within this room.

JAMES.

You are correct.

CHARLES.

What do you mean, this room?

HARRY.

Please Dad, if I can be allowed to speak?  
For reasons you don't need to understand  
A picture made of Jessica that is  
Quite intimate has made its way onto  
The cover of the London paper and  
Will no doubt grace the nationals as well.

There is attack toward her worse than I  
 Have seen, 'gainst Kate, or me, or Mum, or you,  
 I think because of class, the public's not  
 So comfortable with someone like themselves  
 But let me tell you she is something else  
 To anything our family has known  
 I suddenly can see my life before  
 Was full of stupid idiocy to so  
 Distract me from a sadness kept within  
 Distract me cos I had nothing to love,  
 And although yourself and William are  
 Most loving in familial ways, I had  
 No one to share thoughts with, no one who spent  
 The time to work out who I was, and what  
 I really needed. She has done all this,  
 And still does more. A force of nature, makes  
 Me laugh and think and grow. She's free, so free!  
 But now she wants to leave me cos of this.

CAMILLA.

I've never heard you speak in such a way  
 With passion, strength and rhythm too.

CHARLES.

My son has spoken, but the lady's quiet  
 Please Jessica, come tell me what you think.

JESS.

He's right, that in the last few weeks, we have  
 Formed a relationship that is unique  
 I do not want to leave your son, but now  
 Each hand in London touch on me tonight  
 I feel such shame it is unbearable.

JAMES.

Sir please, if I can add perspective to  
 This well-intentioned but ill-fated match –

CHARLES.

I know what you will think dear James.  
 I need not hear it now.

*Beat.*

If I defend the freedom of the press  
 It's with the knowledge they will never live  
 Up to a higher standard. Naked girls  
 And boys will illustrate their pages.  
 Horrific murders will be made still more  
 Atrocious by intrusion, and they'll make  
 Hypocrisy an art, insisting that  
 They stand chief moralist while making cash  
 As base pornographer. I know this much.  
 So all that we can do is stand our ground.  
 For if they're free to print this dirt, then we  
 Have liberty as well, to answer back.  
 Dear Jessica, you have done nothing wrong.  
 I understand the picture causes shame,  
 And there is little we can do 'bout that.  
 But Harry is bewitched by you, and though  
 I once did question what love meant I now  
 Can see it standing here, so desperate,  
 Begging you stay. So now you have my word,  
 You have the royal protection and respect.  
 Whatever we can do to help we will.  
 You will be welcome in our family.

JESS.

But sir that's not –

HARRY.

It isn't that we want.

CAMILLA.

Come Harry, now it's done, your father has  
 Been generous with time and inclination.

HARRY.

I do not want her noble princess made  
 Instead descend myself into the mass  
 Cast off the princely burden of my birth  
 And for my life be Harry, man and friend  
 With job, and house, and car and maybe wife.  
 I want to go with her into the world  
 Not trap her here inside these regal walls.

CAMILLA.

It isn't possible.

HARRY.

If King approves it can through boredom work. We make no fuss 'cept that I have moved, got job. And will no longer take the civil list I'll have no role official and not Prince, I'll live a life of normalcy, within This country, rather than atop the mound Unearned and with a target on my back.

CHARLES.

You would not be a prince?

HARRY.

I'd be your son, But no, my love for Jessica comes first Because like you, I don't believe that born A prince must mean I sacrifice my soul, My hopes, desires, all that makes me, me. Instead I should be free to choose my path We all should! William, yourself, young George Should be allowed an unpredicted life.

*He looks at them.*

CHARLES.

You are like opposites, in every way, But dissimilarity instead does make a match. So Harry, yes, you may do as you wish.

JAMES.

If I can interrupt, whatever you May do, this story is distraction when The throne itself is in dispute. Perhaps At least postpone this alteration to When you are safely crowned King

CHARLES.

Alright,

Then after coronation yes?

HARRY.

Okay?

JESS.

Okay.

CHARLES.

And James, in case the press persist You'll see the lady is defended yes?

JAMES.

...

CHARLES.

You have something to say?

JAMES.

Your Majesty... no.

I'll do as you command.

CHARLES.

Well good. For though my problems are the same Through Harry's love, I'm driven on again! *They go.*

#### 4.3

*Kensington.*

*Enter KATE, reading the Evening Standard.*

KATE.

It is bewildering that even now These little rooms of power are stocked full With white, and southern, likely Oxbridge men. Without the Queen, the bias is more stark The King's a man, Prime Minister as well Combine the front benches of both sides You'll have a female total of just four. And so despite emancipation we must look Towards the harder sex to find the power. But I know nothing, just a plastic doll Designed I'm told to stand embodying A male-created bland and standard wife, Whose only job is prettying the Prince, and then

If possible, get pregnant with the royal  
 And noble bump, to there produce an heir.  
 Or two. And oft I'm told I don't have thought  
 Or brains to comprehend my strange position.  
 But being underestimated so  
 Does give me what these men could never have  
 Since no one asked me what I think, I can  
 Observe and plan and learn the way to rule.  
 For I will be a Queen unlike the ones before  
 My mother's dad was in the north a miner born  
 My father came from Leeds, and both of them  
 When young and inexperienced did risk  
 Their house and all they had to try and make  
 A business of their own. But it's not just this stock  
 I bring to these most distant regal realms  
 But something more important and precise  
 I have ambition for my husband yes  
 And hope my son will grow the finest King  
 But if I must put up with taunts, and make  
 So public everything I am, then I  
 Demand things for myself, I ask no less  
 Than power to achieve my will in fair  
 Exchange for total service to the State.  
 Yes this is what, enthroned, that I will do.  
 Not simply help my husband in his crown  
 But wear one of my own.

But here's my husband, he's been on the phone.

*Enter WILLIAM.*

How did it go?

WILLIAM.

I asked him of his plans.

KATE.

His plans?

WILLIAM.

Of what he did intend to do.

Now that there's violent protest up and down  
 The country 'tween supporters of the Crown  
 And those who want its swift complete demise.

KATE.

And what said he?

WILLIAM.

He simply said

The strength of public voice in strong support  
 Did give him solace that he wasn't wrong.

KATE.

This is an answer clear enough to me.

Charles is stranded, using what's to hand

Does smile and say this was always the plan.

But what he hopes is that from out the blue

There'll grow a noise, a chopping engine sound

And through the clouds a helicopter comes.

And lowering down its harness, scoops him up,

And quickly lifts the tired reckless man

To safety from the bleak and troubled rock.

*A BUTLER enters.*

BUTLER.

Your Highness. The Prime Minister.

WILLIAM.

Prime Minister – I didn't ask him here –

KATE.

I know.

*Enter MR EVANS. Also SIR MICHAEL, Head of the  
 Metropolitan Police, in shirt-sleeves.*

Prime Minister –

MR EVANS.

Duchess, you asked to see

Sir Michael.

KATE.

You are kind to come attend  
 On us when you must be distract indeed.

SIR MICHAEL.

Distract is right

KATE.

Please tell us latest news

SIR MICHAEL.

Last night saw violence spark across the land.  
 In Liverpool, a protest made towards  
 The Mersey, lifting effigy they'd built  
 Based on your father, burnt it bright, then dropped  
 It in the sea. In Oxford marches have  
 Formed on both sides and even as we speak  
 They clash. In Edinburgh, the same, Belfast.  
 In Norfolk one poor man was pushed through glass  
 And now does lie in most intensive care.  
 But London is the worst –

KATE.

The worst?

SIR MICHAEL.

Your Highness, much too stretched.  
 We are

WILLIAM.

Then find reserves

To flood the streets.

SIR MICHAEL.

Reserves are out. No more  
 To come. We'll maybe last another day.

*Beat.*

KATE.

Then we should let you carry on. Our thanks.

SIR MICHAEL *goes.*

MR EVANS.

The Speaker will not open up the House  
 Because he fears it is illegal as things stand.  
 And so the Members of the Parliament  
 Do sit, just as four hundred years ago  
 In Westminster Hall instead. But because  
 We've only half the House, we can't make laws

WILLIAM.

We should stay calm, for still you are in charge.  
 This is the way it works until there's new  
 Prime Minister, the old fulfils the task.

MR EVANS.

Already Mr Stevens has questioned  
 My right to make decisions.

WILLIAM.

Are functioning well, the schools, transport, health?  
 Services

MR EVANS.

No sir, the schools have closed, doctors are stretched.  
 The bloodshed worsens every day we wait  
 And while we in the House attempt to calm  
 The King has generals round to tea, and parks  
 A tank in Buckingham Palace grounds.  
 Perhaps exaggeration but there is talk  
 Of civil war.

WILLIAM.

A joke.

MR EVANS.

It's not at all.

KATE.

The British stock, which was considered safe  
 Has in two whole weeks completely crashed.

WILLIAM.

Prime Minister, in private, I, of course,  
 Wholeheartedly do give my full support.  
 But this is for the Parliament to solve

KATE.

Oh William, they can't! Parliament is impotent.  
 And just become a meeting house of men.  
 The time has come to go and halt this mess.

MR EVANS.

Your Highness, please, your wife is quite correct.

WILLIAM.

I can't.

KATE.

For George!

WILLIAM.

You must not make me.

MR EVANS.

Then sir I think you will be Prince no more  
And none that follow will be King again.

*Pause.*

WILLIAM.

You are a man of serious intent.  
Throughout our recent troubles you have shown  
My father great respect and courtesy.

*Beat.*

Prime Minister go back to Number Ten  
You can leave it to me. I'll bring an end  
To this unnecessary episode.

MR EVANS.

I thank you sir. An intervention's what  
We need.

MR EVANS, *and party, leave.*

WILLIAM.

You set me up.

KATE.

I lifted you, my one.

To where by right of birth you ought to be.

*He looks at her a moment.*

WILLIAM.

Then if it's done, it's done at once.

ATTENDANTS *go.*

KATE.

But husband wait. I know the way.

WILLIAM.

The way?

KATE.

We're told the world's a play of surfaces  
Where meaning's made through only what is shown  
You must then focus 'pon the public eye  
You dress your best. And so, of course, shall I.  
*She goes.*

WILLIAM *follows.*

4.4.

*Enter JAMES and a TELEVISION PRODUCER.*

TELEVISION PRODUCER.

And so we thought this room might serve us well.  
A neutral colour, good acoustic and  
The space to house the country's journalists.

JAMES.

Not just the country, all across the world  
The people wait to hear directly from the King.

TELEVISION PRODUCER.

Of course, that's true.

*A pause.*

JAMES.

Would you be one of them?

TELEVISION PRODUCER.

You mean a king?

JAMES.

I mean a man or woman standing there  
In front of camera's gaze, instead of you  
Or I, who seek to do the best we can  
While hidden from the public's view.

## TELEVISION PRODUCER.

This may seem strange, but sometimes I wake up  
 From nightmares where I have been on TV  
 And something's happened, just by chance, perhaps  
 A light has blown, or chair collapsed, but I  
 Am shocked, and jumping look ridiculous.  
 And then that clip goes viral and from then  
 Forever more, I am the girl who jumped  
 It is the matter of my life, and when  
 I die it will be what is writ, not all  
 I did, and wanted, and achieved, but that:  
 A captured idiocy stuck on repeat.

*Enter CHARLES.*

Your Majesty. Welcome. Here's the microphone  
 Into which you'll speak, the autocue is there

CHARLES.

It's good. Thank you. How long do we now have?

TELEVISION PRODUCER.

Perhaps we'll let them in, in oh, five mins?

JAMES.

In that case let us have a moment to prepare?

TELEVISION PRODUCER.

Of course, I'll be next door, just let me know.

*The TELEVISION PRODUCER goes.*

CHARLES.

I'm still not full persuaded of the need  
 To speak like this.

JAMES.

Every night,  
 Prime Minister, and politicians of all creeds,  
 With nothing else to do, now that their normal  
 Auditorium is shut down,  
 Do hop to television, and once there  
 They make the case in detail, all the time  
 Against Your Majesty. My fear is that

Without your voice in contest heard  
 The public mood will turn away. And so  
 Although I know it's your idea of hell.  
 You must here stand, and meet the press.

CHARLES *stands in the right place.*

Remember that they are, near to a man  
 Surprised that you have leapt to their defence.  
 And thus will be most generous to your views.

CHARLES.

I hope that's right, we've never been that close.

*Enter WILLIAM, with KATE.*

But William, what's this? I didn't know  
 You would be here, I thought you disapproved.

WILLIAM.

I'll always serve the interests of the Crown.

KATE.

As family, we should be seen as one.  
 James says it's what they will expect of us.

CHARLES.

So it was James persuaded you to come?

WILLIAM.

It was in conversation yes, we thought  
 It would be best to come along like this.  
 How are the arrangements James, you spoke about?

JAMES.

As often with TV, a scrambled mess  
 But all should be sufficient for our needs.

CHARLES.

I don't know how to thank you James.  
 It will be now with pride and strength of clan  
 I stand my ground and state my case.

WILLIAM.

We'll stand indeed.

*The TELEVISION PRODUCER enters.*

## TELEVISION PRODUCER.

Your Highness, Duchess.  
Yes, ma'am you will be standing there, and sir,  
Just to the right hand of His Majesty.

## CHARLES.

As always James you've foreseen everything.  
The picture here, like this, is now complete.  
The family will be my backdrop and the news  
Will say, the country's safe, and clear united.

## TELEVISION PRODUCER.

So are we ready now?

## CHARLES.

We are, proceed.

## TELEVISION PRODUCER.

Okay then, hurry up!

CHARLES stands. *The TELEVISION PRODUCER opens  
the door and in floods the PRESS, to find CHARLES waiting  
for them.*

## CHARLES.

Good afternoon, I'll give you all some time  
To get arranged I know you like to barge  
And jostle for position. Hi Nick! And... John.

## TELEVISION PRODUCER.

We'll make a start in sixty seconds' time  
Is everyone arranged where they can see?  
That's good, so thirty, twenty, ten...

CHARLES goes to move forward, when suddenly –  
WILLIAM walks quickly in front of him, to the podium.

CHARLES, confused, stands to the side. JAMES tries to  
guide him to a chair, but he refuses.

Live in five, four...

Bright light – on WILLIAM. CHARLES to the side, behind  
him, in full view.

## WILLIAM.

Good afternoon. And gosh, there's quite a few  
Of you.

*A laugh.*

So thank you all for coming here today,  
And for the people listening in at home,  
Across the country and the Commonwealth.  
My wife and I have been so shocked  
By scenes unfolding, here and overseas.  
My father has, through noble conscience said,  
As is his right, he will withhold assent,  
And furthermore, as is legal too,  
He has dismissed elected Government.  
Of course this has resulted in disquiet  
Not just in homes and streets, or in the House,  
But in our family too. My wife and I  
Respect my father's choices, but, do wish,  
It could have been avoided. And so.  
Today I do announce that I, as Prince  
Of Wales, from now will try to mediate  
Between the King and House of Commons.  
I'm convinced there is a way to move on this.  
Without the need for further violence, and  
Respecting both democracy and the  
Ancient British power of anointed King.

I have my father's blessing in this role.  
He is as keen as I to see an end  
To this destructive and divisive time.  
I'm also lucky to have Catherine too.  
For all of this was actually her idea.  
Turns out she's cleverer than all of us!

*Some laughter.*

She'll sort us out!

*More laughter.*

CHARLES turns to face WILLIAM.

*Looks at him for a moment. Furious.*

*A camera flash, then CHARLES turns, walks off the platform and out of the door.*

*Flashing of photographs.*

My father's finding this quite difficult.  
As you'd imagine, so he needs support.  
Forgive me if I don't take questions now  
But once we're up and running, I will speak  
Again. Perhaps we'll just do photographs?  
Thank you, thank you Nick, and John.

*He stands back and smiles. KATE joins him.*

*Photos are taken of the family – shouting – adulation.*

## ACT FIVE

### 5.1

*Buckingham Palace.*

*The sound of the crowd outside.*

CHARLES enters with a book.

CHARLES.

I have been through the archive many times  
But read as King each word seems made afresh.  
I have been seeking moments which relate  
Precisely to the current state of play  
Our English law is based on precedent  
And when I'm called to make my case I must  
Have all the facts to hand, examples of  
When monarchs in the past have also done  
The same as I, or very near. And so.  
Here's Walter Bagehot, eighteen sixty-seven,  
Explaining changes to balance of  
The Crown and State. I read it as a child.  
One line stands out: Bagehot explains that now  
The monarch's mostly ceremonial  
And only can expect, from hereon in:  
The right to be consulted (which I've not)  
The right to encourage (which is all I do),  
And most importantly the right to warn.  
'The Right to Warn' so warning is the thing  
It's only what I do, I warn, but even that  
I'm told's too much and so must tolerate  
This constant fuzz of bright white noise  
That emanates from out the mob.

*The sound of the crowd continues.*

*The BUTLER enters.*

BUTLER.

Your Majesty.

CHARLES.

Roberts?

BUTLER.

James Reiss waits outside.

CHARLES.

The traitor's at the gate. What does he want?

BUTLER.

To see you sir. He'll say no more than that.

CHARLES.

Allow him in.

*The BUTLER goes. Enter JAMES.*

The silver lining when someone defects

Is you don't have to see them any more.

JAMES.

I wanted to explain.

CHARLES.

You knew what William would say to them?

JAMES.

Indeed I made it possible for him to speak.

CHARLES.

You ambushed me.

JAMES.

It was, just as he said,

The Duchess's idea. And William, knowing

Not just that I desired the bill

Against the press to pass, but that I thought

Your current course of action fatal to

The strong continued influence of the Crown,

Did suggest this plan, which although I knew

Would cause you pain, I did believe would when

It all was weighed, be thought of as the best.

CHARLES.

It matters not. It will not work. For I

Am not in need of mediation here.

There is no common ground, no compromise.

Anointed not by man, but God, I don't

Negotiate but issue my commands.

So here I'll sit, and wait for what I want

To come into existence. I can wait,

A very long time, I have my books to read.

JAMES.

But sir, you must –

CHARLES.

You're surely not intending still to work,

For me, not after treachery like this?

JAMES.

Your son has offered me employment.

CHARLES.

So leave. You've said your bit. And no, before

You ask, you're not forgiven. Actually

I hope you fail in everything you do.

JAMES.

Then sir, farewell.

*He goes.*

*A roar from the crowd outside.*

CHARLES *goes to the window.*

CHARLES.

Be calmed! Your King commands you now to cease!

And yet they do not hear, another case

Of this, the disproportion of the features.

When unlike me, their ears, so rarely used

Are shrivelled up and tiny, but their mouth

From making constant noise, is swollen up

And when not talking fixes in a grin

Of no emotion, Botoxed into place.

Be quiet all! Some silence here! But no.

Although they say it's anger on the news

They danced around a fire lit within

The fountain and seemed happy there last night.

But wait, there's movement, noise, a grinding sound

The tank below, its engines started up  
 It's moving round, what's happening now?  
 The tank was there for show, it should not act  
 And I should be aware of any change  
 And yet – it doesn't move towards the crowd  
 Instead it's off the other way, and out of sight.  
 I should be told if things have changed, Roberts!

ROBERTS! Where is that man – some butler he, who's never here!

WILLIAM *enters*.

William – Where's Roberts gone?

WILLIAM.

I said to take an hour off.

CHARLES.

You said –

WILLIAM.

That's right Your Majesty we need to speak.

CHARLES.

'Your Majesty'? But William, it's me.  
 Despite the horrid things you've done, it's me.  
 So call me Dad, or Father if you like,  
 But not Your Majesty, like all the rest.

WILLIAM.

I call you that for that is what you are  
 Before my father, long before all else  
 You are the King, and that's to whom I speak.

*Pause.*

CHARLES.

But William come look at this, a book  
 It's Bagehot from the ancient archive here  
 It does enlighten on the changing way  
 The monarchy has influence over  
 The State. It is a thing of quiet beauty.

I'm like a book myself, stuck on the shelf  
 For years, ignored and waiting, only judged

By one small sliver of the cover whole,  
 And sitting thus unopened and unused,  
 The outer surface gathers dust and fades  
 But if the moment comes to read the tome,  
 And it's removed and rarely opened up  
 The words and thoughts inside are here  
 As fresh and potent as the day of print.

WILLIAM.

What did he write?

CHARLES.

That I can warn the State  
 And more expect to fairly be consulted

WILLIAM.

They did at length consult the Queen before –

CHARLES.

My mother's dead, and we must start again.

WILLIAM.

You think too much on books and history.

CHARLES.

But what is power held if never used?

WILLIAM.

Our duty's not to simply sit indoors  
 And hope it is resolved, but to engage  
 All parties and attempt to find a way –

CHARLES.

'Engage all parties'? King's no such duty

WILLIAM.

A duty royal. That's shared amongst us all.

CHARLES.

I will speak harshly William that I  
 Do not request your counsel, I do not need  
 Another view. Instead it is support  
 Expected and support that you must give.  
 I know that at your age you'll have a sense  
 That in the prime of life, you shouldn't be  
 Attending on an old and feeble parent,

So there's temptation then to patronise  
Ironically the ones who gave you birth,  
To roll your eyes, and make a joke about  
The modern things they do not understand.  
But doing this is seen by all around  
As juvenile, the mockery of age  
As easy humour, and actually it's wise  
To listen well, respect those older, and  
Most subtly to learn and grow beside  
To draw upon their strength while standing close  
And offering support to deal with age.

WILLIAM.

It's not about a father and a son  
It is the title I address today  
And not my father who of course I love

CHARLES.

You cannot make distinction 'tween the two  
When both of us are born and grown towards  
A single purpose from our opening breath  
To final gasp, our whole existence, all  
Relationships and yes our family,  
Is every atom crowned and every cell  
Within our bodies built by monarchy.

Your action yesterday was infantile  
And does not alter anything at all.  
You should apologise for such betrayal.  
But I will put it down to youth, and nerves.

Now help me and go fetch good Roberts here.  
The tank is still remiss, and all those guards  
Sir Gordon kindly put in place have gone.

WILLIAM.

I know.

CHARLES.

You know? What do you mean you know?

WILLIAM.

Sir Gordon came to Kensington. We spoke.  
I said with the unrest and violence that  
Has spread across the country we should not

Be stoking it with these provocative  
Militaristic shows.

CHARLES.

And what said he?

WILLIAM.

That it was not a show and swore he had  
In consultation here with you agreed  
It was important that the Palace is  
Defended from attacks within the crowd.

CHARLES.

Exactly, you should not have questioned it.

WILLIAM.

But having heard his answer I went on  
That in an hour I would head towards  
The Palace in the car, the same I drove  
That sunny day I married my fair wife.  
Escorted by police I'll drive straight down  
The Mall and enter through the guarded gates.  
I then intend to go around the yard

And if, I said, there is a tank, I'll ask  
My men in blue that they do move it off.

Because it is a danger, having such

A deadly weapon aimed towards the crowd.

Sir Gordon stared, he stopped and thought.

And then he asked if I was really serious?

Would I incite a clash between the troops

Who all held guns and the unarmed police?

I stared at him, just as I stare at you,

And said I'm looking forward to my drive.

*Beat.*

And when as promised I drove down the Mall

Police on either side, expecting that

The crowd would see me and attack the car,

Instead they saw who steered and parted there

To let us through, and as we went between,

The mob, a silence fell upon them all.

It was most strange, they stopped and watched us go.

*Beat.*

There was no tank, or military might.  
And just two guards stood to attention there.

*Beat.*

And as the gates began to close, one girl  
Called out 'You tell him Will' and so I must.

CHARLES.

Must tell me what?

WILLIAM.

You can't go back from your decision now.

CHARLES.

Agreed, retreating now would be the end.

WILLIAM.

And yet you can't progress, the Parliament  
Will never hold elections as you wish.

CHARLES.

We'll see.

WILLIAM.

So I propose on coronation day,  
We have two thrones upon the dais placed,  
And sat on cushions next to them are  
Two crowns awaiting royal heads to rest.

CHARLES.

Two thrones, two crowns, it is not possible  
For Britain and the Commonwealth to have  
As you suggest two kings in tandem rule.

WILLIAM.

No not two kings. A King and Queen.

CHARLES.

You mean Camilla, oft we have discussed –

WILLIAM.

Camilla no.

CHARLES.

Then what do you intend?

WILLIAM.

...

CHARLES.

Cos if it's what I think then you must speak  
The words of treachery yourself and shank  
Your father with a full and clear betrayal.

WILLIAM.

I mean myself and Kate are crowned instead.

*Beat.*

CHARLES.

And what of me? I simply stand aside?

WILLIAM.

You offer abdication and explain  
Since taking on the role, you've felt your age.

*Pause.*

CHARLES.

There's something in your face I recognise  
A stern expression, reckless and so bold,  
It was Diana where I saw it last,  
And I had hoped that it had died with her.  
But here it is, in you, ambition lurks.

WILLIAM.

I'm proud of that ambition, proud of her  
Who plucked so young before she knew the world  
And thrust into a den of lions, keen  
For meat, was given no protection, and  
When you decided to make return to one  
You always loved, you threw my mum aside  
Discarded and destroyed her by repute

CHARLES.

I loved your mother at the time and did  
My very best to make sure you weren't harmed

WILLIAM.

And that will be your tombstone – 'Did my best.  
At least I tried!' A plea for effort rather than effect.

That's you as husband, you as son, as father too.  
 And now as King. But all our sympathy  
 Is withered up and dry. This is a job.  
 You should have got it right and you did not.

CHARLES.

Be careful what you say, you've always had  
 My unconditional and total love  
 I said whatever thing you did, my love  
 Would never end, but with those words my mind  
 Does change. I think that I could wash my hands  
 Of you and not look back.

WILLIAM.

Unneeded and  
 Romantic gestures seem to be your fault.  
 You needn't let me go. There doesn't have  
 To be this constant turbulence you've brought.  
 I will as King return to what your mother did,  
 Stability and certainty, above all else.

CHARLES.

I will not abdicate! Ungrateful boy!  
 I'll never give away the crown, for me  
 It's duty and my calling, things to do!  
 I know, don't ask me how, that I will be  
 The greatest King of all.

WILLIAM.

The greatest King? And so you shall.  
 For when they write the history books 'bout this  
 They will tell stories crisis-like about  
 The stormy days after the Queen had died  
 And how for weeks you contemplated hard  
 Upon the right and proper thing to do,  
 And in the end decided for the good of all,  
 Your people and their long-term happiness  
 You'd selflessly stand down and pass it on,  
 To younger hands, more popular and with  
 More time to reign. This move will then be seen,  
 Today and ever more, as when the Crown  
 Did save itself and through a clever choice

An idea of the greatest King we had,  
 Renewed the brand to last another century.

CHARLES.

A nice conceit, but no, I will be King  
 As ruler not as doormat stepped across.

WILLIAM *goes to the door.*

WILLIAM.

Mr Evans.

MR EVANS *enters.*

CHARLES.

No go! I do not wish to see you now.

MR EVANS.

Your Majesty, this is a sorry day  
 But if you cannot sign the law you must  
 Make way for one who can. Your good repute  
 Will be preserved, and monarchy survive.  
 I have brought here, a document to make  
 Official abdication, so we can  
 Achieve a common goal: Stability.

CHARLES.

Who made this thing, this paper here?

MR EVANS.

The Civil Service drew it up today.

CHARLES.

And printed out in haste, there are mistakes  
 In spelling.

WILLIAM.

Will you sign?

CHARLES.

I will not.

CAMILLA *enters. Behind her, following, is KATE  
 and HARRY.*

CAMILLA.

Is it true?

CHARLES.

It is.

CAMILLA turns and slaps WILLIAM. CHARLES meanwhile stares at HARRY.

CAMILLA.

A vile and nasty child.

And what's that document you're holding there? You must do nothing till we have consulted With experts on the constitution and The lawyers that we pay so much money to.

She looks at it.

I thought it Harry who was wild, but you Have now by far surpassed his worst excess

Charles would not sign the bill, he will not this. I realise you and Catherine are the King And Queen of column inches but you're just A Duke and Duchess here. The King is King. He will not sign. Now both of you away.

KATE.

Your thin opinion of us demonstrates How out of touch you are, and jealous too. Our looks don't make us cruel, our youth is not An ignorance, and detail in the way we dress Should not be thought as vanity, but is Part of the substance only we provide. We know the world. Our column inches are The greatest influence that we possess. Majesty, sign. And bring an end to this

CHARLES goes to HARRY.

CHARLES.

My son, your loyalty!  
For your relationship with Jessica,  
Has been a burning light these darkest days.

HARRY.

The people turn to William. This is  
The only way. I am convinced.

Beat.

CHARLES.

Harry. Please.

My boys. My little boys.

Pause.

Of course you're scared. But I know what I do. So sit. Let's talk. If Roberts's gone I will myself go fetch some tea, and someone here Will show me how it's made. That was a joke.

HARRY.

We'll have the tea, and sit and be your sons  
But first you abdicate

CHARLES.

And if I don't?

WILLIAM.

Then we will leave, and wait, and not return  
Yes, us, and Kate, the children. Family all.  
This is tough love, we're all agreed it's best.  
You will not see us till you change your mind.

Pause.

CHARLES.

I will not see my sons? My grandchildren too?

Pause.

I cannot live alone.

CAMILLA.

You're not alone

And even if you were, well better that  
Than father-servant to your shallow sons.  
The man I married will not bend, or break  
Instead, as all the world throws rotten fruit  
He will be firm and tie his life onto  
The stake of principle.

Pause.

You boys should go, and take this spiteful drip.  
He is not worthy of the office that he has.

CHARLES.

I cannot live alone.

*They all look at him.*

The greatest King?

*A pause.*

*He signs.*

So there, it's done, the King is at an end.

I will retreat to bed, and when I wake

To a new dawn, I'll simply be an old

Forgotten gardener, who potters round

And talks to plants and chuckles to himself.

Whilst far away the King and Queen do rule

Over a golden age of monarchy,

That bothers no one, does no good, and is

A pretty plastic picture with no meaning.

*He goes.*

CAMILLA looks at WILLIAM. *Then follows.*

## 5.2

*Westminster Abbey.*

*Before the coronation.*

*To one side, CHARLES and CAMILLA wait. CHARLES is unreadable – watching over the preamble... just watching...*

MR STEVENS enters and goes to CHARLES.

MR STEVENS.

Your Majesty, may I personally say that I

Despite my public view of happiness

In fact do think this tragic, and a hard

And bitter end to what you tried to do.  
I'll always think of Charles as noble King  
As man of honour much too principled  
For realpolitik. You may be gone  
In constitution but to me you will  
Remain my king of hearts, of all before  
You are the very best we never had.

*An awkward pause. CHARLES doesn't look at him.*

*He smiles and moves on to his place.*

*Enter MR EVANS. He sees CHARLES and decides not to have a conversation. Instead he walks on to his place.*

*Next, JESS enters. In contrast to everyone else, she's wearing smart jeans and a relatively normal top. She's holding the seating plan, but is confused.*

COOTSY enters. *He sees JESS, unsure of herself.*

COOTSY.

Ah, Jessica. Didn't fancy dressing up?

JESS.

No.

COOTSY.

Couldn't afford it?

*He goes. Enter JAMES.*

JAMES.

Miss Jessica, why do you seem so lost,

And stand unoriented in the Abbey aisle?

JESS.

I'll not tell you, you have no love for me.

The King said help but now it's even worse

There's every picture from my wayward youth

Made weekly fodder for the *Daily Mail*,

And any minor misdeemeanour makes

A banner headline in the *Sun*. From how

They write of what I do, you'd think that art

Was rated worse than brutal homicide.

JAMES.

Well miss, I'm not sure how much art you've seen,  
But it can often feel like one has died.

JESS.

I understood the law was changed for this  
When journalism turns to voyeurs' gawp.

JAMES.

Indeed but somehow nothing has been done.

JESS.

Because you want me gone.

JAMES.

Not true, I've tried my best to help.

These stories do us both no good at all.

JESS.

Your eyes are small, I don't know what to think.

JAMES.

Tell me what's your problem miss.

JESS.

The seating plan, my name does not appear.

JAMES.

Well let me see.

*He looks.*

It's true there is no Jessica. You're sure

The Prince did make his invitation known?

JESS.

I'm sure.

*Enter HARRY.*

JAMES.

Perhaps it would be best,

To find out from the man himself, for here

He comes, so handsome in his uniform.

Your Highness, yes, it's such a happy day.

Although I wouldn't know it from your pale

And cloudy face. Here's Jessica who seems

Omitted from the seating plan. Maybe  
You'll know a little more 'bout this than I.

*He goes.*

JESS.

Okay, so where am I supposed to sit?

Not next to you, it seems, not even near.

In fact I am not found at all. Are you

Alright? I've never seen you grey and stark.

HARRY.

You'll not attend today, as William

And Kate are crowned, you'll have to watch outside.

JESS.

Outside? But why?

HARRY.

I...

JESS.

Harry?

HARRY.

My brother, talking with his wife, and close

Advisers, bearing all the photographs

And stories of your past that do appear,

In mind. Do feel it would be best you not

Attend. You are too big a risk to what

He needs: Stability –

JESS.

But that's –

HARRY.

And furthermore

He's asked me personally if I would stop

All contact with you and resume the way

I was before, a singleton, amusing

Mostly, clownish and unthreatening.

Therefore I'm sat, as previously planned

With Cootsy, Spencer. These most harmless friends.

JESS.

I hope you quickly told him where to go.

HARRY.

He is my brother.

JESS.

Are you fucking joking?

HARRY.

But more than that, he's now anointed King.

*Pause.*

JESS.

So King can tell you what to feel and who  
You love. The King's dictator of your heart.

HARRY.

My heart was made by King, if I betray  
Allegiance then the little that I am is gone.

JESS.

But things have changed. He has to understand  
And if you loved me you'd fight this.

*Beat.*

Or if I have to go, you'd come with me.

HARRY.

I want to.

*Pause. Then he stands to attention, looks away.*

It's starting soon.

*She stares at him for a moment. Then goes.*

HARRY stands alone.

*Music starts and he takes his place.*

*A choir begins singing, and orchestra plays.*

All stand.

*The doors open and KATE enters with ATTENDANTS.*

*She processes in and sits on the throne.*

*The procession of WILLIAM enters with ATTENDANTS.*

*Once settled, the ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY comes forward.*

ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

I here present to you King William your undoubted King.  
Wherefore all you who are come this day to do your homage  
and service.

Is Your Majesty willing to take the Oath?

WILLIAM.

I am willing.

ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

Will you solemnly promise and swear to govern the Peoples  
of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern  
Ireland, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and of your  
Possessions and other Territories to any of them belonging or  
pertaining, according to their respective laws and customs?

WILLIAM.

I solemnly promise so to do.

ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

Will you to your power cause Law and Justice, in Mercy, to  
be executed in all your judgements?

WILLIAM.

I will.

ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

Will you to the utmost of your power maintain the Laws of  
God and the true profession of the Gospel?

Will you maintain and preserve inviolably the settlement of  
the Church of England, and the doctrine, worship, discipline,  
and government thereof, as by law established in England?

WILLIAM.

All this I promise to do.

*A choir sings.*

*The ARCHBISHOP goes and gets the crown.*

*He brings it forward to WILLIAM.*

CHARLES suddenly stands – a consternation. *This isn't supposed to happen.*

*He goes and looks at the crown.*

*The choir stops singing.*

CHARLES reaches for the crown. The ARCHBISHOP is unsure.

Glances at WILLIAM. Then gives the crown to CHARLES.

*A moment.*

CHARLES.

It is much heavier than I thought.

*He looks at WILLIAM.*

*A moment.*

And from the side, bejewelled, it looks so rich  
But turn it thus, and this is what you see

Nothing.

*Beat.*

My son. God save you.

CHARLES puts the crown on WILLIAM's head.

CHARLES slowly collapses and sits on the step. WILLIAM stands.

*A long pause.*

WILLIAM looks to the ARCHBISHOP.

ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

God save the King!

ALL.

God save the King!

*End.*