

“Relax, breathe in... and out... Focus on the white puffy clouds or a beach as waves gently arrive. Feel your tension leave your body.” Dr. Grayson observed Jackie, for signs which indicated her relaxed and tranced state. “Great Jackie. You’re doing great. When I count backward from five, you will completely relax. Five... Four... Three... Two... One.”

Jackie’s breath slowed and deepened. With her eyes closed, they darted with rapid eye movement.

“Jackie, where are you?”

“I’m in a grand palace. Richmond Palace, I remember living here in fifteen fifty-eight.”

“What do you see?”

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The Richmond Palace overlooked the Thames River and considered by all the favorite of Queen Elizabeth I, her favored residence. It lay upstream nine miles and across the banks from the Palace of Westminster.

Inside the Palace walls held a majestic ambience with stone walls, mammoth chandeliers and expensive furniture.

Every hall represented the throne – the Queen’s throne – the grandeur unmatched.

Queen Elizabeth I, a beautiful woman with light brown eyes regally sat at the head of the extended dining table. Her red updo wig, accentuated her porcelain skin. She wore a magnificent black and white gown hand embroidered with colored thread and embellished with rubies, pearls, diamonds and sapphires. Jewels also formed a crown in her elaborate wig.

Beneath her gown, a corset stiffened with wood, a farthingale and stockings, although uncomfortable, set the Queen apart from the other woman in the room. Neck and wrist ruffs just as elegant as her gown complimented her attire.

None could match the gown she chose for the gala.

Her makeup appeared strange from modern times as she painted her face with white lead and vinegar to cover her smallpox scars. A blush color rouge made from red dye and egg white highlighted her lips and cheeks.

The Queen fanned herself with a pomander in full control of her audience seated at the table. The jeweled rings on her fingers glistened beneath the candlelit chandeliers from above.

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On the outskirts of the room several guardsmen in royal red velvet cloaks stood watch as the state dinner took place. Everything about this evening equated to pomp and circumstance and represented her authority as head of the church. Every slightest detail, from setting the table to serving the meal signified her religious ceremony and presentation.

Kat leaned over to Blanche and whispered in her ear which caught the Queen’s attention from the corner of her eye.

The Queen, in conversation with Robert glared at her Lady’s in Waiting. “Do not tell secrets to those whose faith and silence you have not already tested.”

“Yes, my Queen.” Kate nodded apologetically. “That advice I shall take to thy grave. I express my deepest regret if thy have offended thee your majesty.”

The Queen nodded her head in forgiveness. “I pray to God that each of you shall have safe passage back to your homeland. Our alliance shall be fruitful for all.” The Queen stood as one ruby fell from her dress landing at a maid servant’s feet.

The maid servant knelt, retrieved it and put the ruby into her pocket.

“Your Majesty.” Robert Dudley stood and bowed his head two inches.

“Prior to your departure, I have a gift to bestow to thee. Shall I present it to you, my Queen?”

“Proceed with your presentation Earl of Leicester.”

The Earl retrieved a ruby and diamond ring which portrayed a miniature enameled portrait of the Queen’s mother, Anne Boleyn, along with a portrait of herself. He handed it to the Queen who shone a dignified smile.

“It gives thy sincere pleasure to be on the receiving end of thee smile. It is not often that I am graced by it.”

“Though the sex to which I belong is considered weak, you will nevertheless find me a rock that bends to no wind.” The Queen’s tone strong and fierce filled in with an authority no one could question. “However, I accept your gracious gift and shall cherish this ring throughout eternity. Farewell to you all and shall you go in peace.” The queen glowered toward the maid servant as she extended her hand. Her eyes burned with anger upon her

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