



EDMUND CAMPION

An Elizabethan Chronicle

by Peter Hardwick

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[CHORUS 1]

WALPOLE

(wearing a white shirt splashed with red)

I never knew Edmund Campion. Never really met him, never set eyes on him till the end – end of his life, beginning of mine. Until that day he was just a name: brilliant, the sort of man you'd hear about but never expect to meet, the sort of man who was to welcome the Queen herself, when in 1566, together with the Earl of Leicester and her Secretary, William Cecil, she visited the University of Oxford.

During this speech CAMPION appears centre of causeway (where he will be executed), coughs, and waits.

Note: Scene [1] could be presented without stage action, as voice-over

Fanfare

Display of Royal Coat of Arms and Coat of Arms of the University of Oxford descend
Campion's speech as voice-over

Fanfare, cheering

Enter CAMPION in scene [2], smiling

Scene [1]

BEFORE THE GATEHOUSE ST JOHN'S
COLLEGE, OXFORD

FANFARE

DISPLAY AGAINST SCREEN US: ROYAL COAT OF ARMS

QUEEN ELIZABETH, LEICESTER, CECIL and WALSINGHAM enter from the back of the auditorium and halt while CAMPION addresses them from the pulpit.

CAMPION

My Liege Lady, unable as I am, I am charged by this University of Oxford, our Queen of Learning, to welcome you, our most learned Queen, and with you to bid welcome to my Lord of Leicester, our Chancellor, protector and most godly benefactor, and likewise to welcome Sir William Cecil, Chancellor and Protector of our sister university of Cambridge and your Majesty's Chief Councillor.
May God preserve your Majesty and preserve these benefits to us.

KNEELS

SHORT FANFARE

ELIZABETH and PARTY exeunt DL

CAMPION descends

[2] INT CAMPION'S ROOMS IN ST JOHN'S COLLEGE DAY

CAMPION begins to take off ceremonial robes, smiling to himself.

GREGORY MARTIN enters DL, quietly, unseen at first.
CAMPION turns, sees him, stops smiling.

MARTIN

(smiling in his turn)

Very well spoken, very well-turned phrases. Look to be a bishop at least.

CAMPION

There are occasions, Gregory, when total sincerity is not the most appropriate virtue, at least not the virtue expected of one.

MARTIN

Of course. And your reputation will soon stand as high at the Court of St James as it does in the University of Oxford.... But there are higher courts...

(continues quietly, urgently)

Dr Allen has founded a new college, across the channel, at Douai. A college in France for English men, for English men of learning, for English men who would return to England as Catholic priests, bringing with them new hope for the faith in which they and their ancestors were nurtured... The *Old* faith!

CAMPION

I know as much as you about your Old Faith, but it's not simple. At the head of the Old Church, as you call it, is the Pope, and he has excommunicated and denounced the Queen, our Sovereign Liege Lady to whom I have just presented a loyal address – which seemed to find favour – and now I suppose it would be my duty to assassinate her – were I a Catholic.

MARTIN

Which you are not... though I venture to think you liked the old ways best, and twelve years ago you welcomed our Sovereign *and Catholic* Liege Lady Queen Mary to London just as cheerfully and with as many flourishes as you welcomed Our Sovereign and Protestant Lady Queen Elizabeth to Oxford this afternoon.

CAMPION

I was thirteen at the time.

MARTIN

Edmund, can the universal Church of Christ have been mistaken for a thousand years, to be corrected now by Archbishop Whitgift, by the Earl of Leicester, by William Cecil, and, yes, by our Queen? – who doubtless will shortly command you to wait on her at Woodstock, together with Tobie Matthew and other time-servers.

CAMPION looks at him.

Lights dim, and go up DSL on a room in Woodstock.

[3] THE ROYAL MANOR OF WOODSTOCK

Night. Candles on a table DL.

Present: ELIZABETH, LEICESTER, CECIL and. TOBIE MATTHEW,
CAMPION joins them.

ELIZABETH

Et quare nulli in praesenti scriptores praescribetis? Nonne est Latinus hodie digna lectu?

[And why no modern authors? The Latin of today is not worth reading?]

CAMPION

Studiosi contra in Collegio meo Sancti Johannis Erasmi Colloquia legunt. [On the contrary! At my College of St John the students read Erasmus' 'Colloquia']

TOBIE MATTHEW

(smiling ingratiatingly and interposing)

et in futurum fortasse nos Oclandi "Elizabetham" praescribemus. [and in future we may prescribe Ocland's 'Elizabeth.']

ELIZABETH

Flattery!

(she breaks off, laughing, and addresses CAMPION)

and does the study of Greek keep pace with Latin in Oxford?

TOBIE MATTHEW

(intervening)

Oh sine dubitatione!

ELIZABETH displeased: she has switched to English.

That is, of course!

CAMPION

In this one particular I believe our Oxford scholars may lag behind those of our sister university, though in no other.

ELIZABETH

Not in zeal for the reformed religion?

TOBIE MATHEW

By no means!

CAMPION

...I have heard others say that they might. But I feel unfit to judge of such matters in the presence of my Lord of Leicester and of Sir William Cecil, the Chancellors of our two universities.

CECIL

But what do *you* say, Mr Campion? Would you like to see the colleges of Oxford aflame with Protestant zeal as her streets were not long ago aflame with Protestant martyrs?

CAMPION

...I believe that some reform of religion was desirable.

LEICESTER

We are well pleased to hear your thoughts, Mr Campion. The English church is in need of scholars.

ELIZABETH

... who can by the light of reason refute the errors of the Pope and of the Spaniards.

CECIL

And those of Mr Gregory Martin,

CAMPION looks up sharply

known to you, Mr Campion, formerly of your College of St John, but now we hear resident in the *English* College presided over by Dr William Allen, at Douai in the Kingdom of *France*, a place where young Englishmen of good families are taught that the highest service they can render to God is to overturn the civil order of their native land. For certain. We know all that goes on in such places, Mr Campion. We know where the agents of the Pope are to be found over the seas, as well as where they may be apprehended in England.

EXEUNT L save for CAMPION who walks thoughtfully R
Meanwhile:

[4] GREGORY MARTIN is writing at desk, UR, a candle burns. A brazier by the side of the desk.

As he writes he reads aloud.

MARTIN

So at last I dwell again in the daylight of clear conscience and breathe the air of sincerity. Next year I shall be ordained priest in the Church of Rome and shall return to England with Dr Allen's men to restore the old faith to our native land. It cannot be, Edmund, that the Church of Christ has slept for fifteen hundred years, and now peeps out in Canterbury at the bidding of our former king, the father of our Sovereign Lady, who desired only the wealth of the monasteries and the woman forbidden him by the Pope...

CAMPION crosses slowly to the desk and takes up the letter as MARTIN falls silent.

CAMPION TAKES UP THE READING

CAMPION

“... In his church there is no succession from the apostles, no sacraments for our nourishing and our forgiveness, no truth and no beauty.”

No, none! But if none, this new church will die in infancy and we shall be free again to worship in beauty and holiness and till then our part is to wait, to keep our offices, keep our preferment, and keep *quiet!*

“Can you, the flower of our university dwell for ever in this desert? “

(angry now and flustered)

No, not for *ever!* If we wait, stay in place, ready...then when Burghley dies, or Elizabeth marries a Catholic...or the Spaniards land ...or the French ...

(tailing away: he does not believe it)

MARTIN

(resuming)

Come over the sea, come to Flanders, to Douai, and I will meet you and clasp you for ever as my true brother in Christ...”

CAMPION drops slowly to his knees.

CAMPION

...discover your ways to us who seek...

Lights dim.

Silence.

The candle burns.

Then a distant bell chimes. CAMPION rises swiftly, lights the letter at the candle, drops it into the brazier and exits UL, over causeway.

[5]

PALACE OF WESTMINSTER

DAY

BURGHLEY

Then he's gone? One of the diamonds of England. Lost!

WALSINGHAM

Not lost. He'll be back – and we shall hold the diamond in our hands again.

LEICESTER

What makes you so sure he'll be back?

WALSINGHAM

Does none of you understand these Catholics?

LEICESTER

Do you?

WALSINGHAM

Yes! I've seen what they do when they scent power. Eight years ago in Paris, the night of the twenty-fourth of August, Saint Bartholomew's Eve! The Catholic mob, set on by the Duke of Guise, cutting men and women down in the streets ... babies flung from windows, skewered on the soldiers' pikes below because the parents who engendered them would not acknowledge the authority of the Bishop of Rome! And when the Pope pushes for power in England, men like Campion will return as his advance-guard, to prepare the way for the Spaniards and French.

BURGHLEY

And we shall deal with them!

LEICESTER

How?

BURGHLEY

We shall track them down, arrest them, bring them to public trial and public execution.

WALSINGHAM

(smiles, and adds casually)

And we shall break them by torture – which will not be public. Torture is indispensable when we're defending ourselves against men who operate in secret and spread terror in the name of religion, or encourage others to spread terror. That changes everything. Old rules – the just war, persuading by reason, the human body as the temple of the Holy Spirit - they don't apply any more.

DISPLAY CHANGES TO: three hangings descend, depicting in the prosaic C16th manner (1) a man hanging in the gauntlets, (2) a man stretched on the rack, (3) an execution beneath a triple gallows at Tyburn. (They will be the backdrop for the ensuing scene.)

WALSINGHAM

(continues)

We have the right – no, we have the duty - to defend ourselves by all means at our disposal. And these include the rack, the gauntlets and the more complicated devices invented by Sir Richard Topcliffe and applied by Thomas Norton in the Tower.

[6]

DOUAI, FRANCE,

THE REFECTORY OF WILLIAM ALLEN'S COLLEGE

WILLIAM ALLEN (34, a Lancastrian – though it is not necessary for him to speak with an accent – big, energetic, determined and supremely confident, with a certain bluff grimness about his approach) is somewhat breezily conducting CAMPION, round his newly-founded College and explaining its purpose and working. They are accompanied by GREGORY MARTIN, who has been resident at the College for some time.

They consider the hangings detailed in [5]

MARTIN

(wry smile)

Doctor Allen never seeks to keep from his students the fate which most likely awaits them when they close their books in Douai and cross the channel to England.

CAMPION looks at him thoughtfully but does not speak.

He gestures at the scene of the Tyburn execution

ALLEN

Tyburn.

CAMPION

The last act of the drama?

ALLEN

So was the faith planted, Master Campion; so it must be restored.

(CAMPION is impressed with the phrase; he will use it one day himself.)

The plan of William Cecil – personally known to you, I believe, and now we must call him ‘Lord Burghley’ – is quite simple: to starve us out, that is, to deprive us of the nourishment of the sacraments by depriving us of priests. The priests from Wolsey’s time are dead, those from the time of Queen Mary are old and mostly frightened, and the noble lord has sworn we shall get no more. But, Master Campion, that is where you and I and Gregory here shall sound his shallows, shall we not? A hundred and seventy scholars now here in Douai, all training for the priesthood. Twenty a year passing over into England. Not many of them come back...not many of them get very far...some are taken at the port of entry...but so was the faith was planted, so it must be restored. And our novices keep coming, Master Campion, they keep coming. And from the oldest families in England.

CAMPION

It is indeed a wonderful venture, as full of hope as of hazard, and God’s grace will be with it; but for myself I have another course in mind, less *hazardous*, but not, I think, less strenuous nor of less utility.

ALLEN looks his question.

I have resolved to go to Rome and to offer myself to the Holy Father as a postulant to his Society of Jesus. I hope to become a Jesuit priest and to go wherever my superiors choose to send me.

ALLEN

Then you’ll never return to the country where you were born! When he’s spent twelve years training his spiritual warriors, your Jesuit Father General is not going to risk sending them to England!

MARTIN

(thoughtfully)

I honour your choice, Edmund

CAMPION

So I must honour those of Douai who court martyrdom so cheerfully,
but I leave tomorrow for Rome.

ALLEN is troubled: he had seen Campion as a potential leader of his own men.

[7]

ROME: CHURCH OF IL GESU

DISPLAY CHANGES TO: BLACK CROSS ON A WHITE GROUND

THE GENERAL, the Dutchman EVERARD MERCURIAN, and TWO
POSTULANTS for the Society of Jesus enter USR
CAMPION approaches; ALL POSTULANTS kneel before the General.

GENERAL

Are you willing to renounce the world and to beg your bread from door
to door for the love of Jesus Christ?

CAMPION

(and the other postulants)

I am willing.

GENERAL

Are you ready to reside in any country where your superior may send
you?

CAMPION

(and others)

I am ready

GENERAL

Do you consent to put on the livery of humiliation worn by our Lord
Jesus Christ and to suffer as he did and for love of him contempt,
calumnies and insults?

CAMPION

(and others)

I do consent.

GENERAL

And do you swear a particular vow of obedience to the Bishop of
Rome, His Holiness Pope Gregory XIII, and to his successors, to go
where he shall send you and to do his bidding at all times, willingly
and without question.

CAMPION

(and others)

I do so swear.

GENERAL

Are you willing in all things to obey your superior without question and
as readily as if you were a stick held in his hand?

CAMPION

(and others)

I do swear.

While the main stage is being occupied by the Council the litany of question and answer continues in dumb show for a while, then EXEUNT.

[8] COUNCIL CHAMBER, PALACE OF
WESTMINSTER

LEICESTER, BURGHLEY (CECIL), ELIZABETH, WALSINGHAM, OTHER
COUNCILLORS

ELIZABETH

How then does this new Pope's ruling touch the allegiance of our subjects?

LEICESTER

The proclamation of that crazed Ligurian shepherd, venerated by Catholics as Pope Pius V, did your Majesty the favour of cutting you off from his diseased church, and told your Catholic subjects they would be rewarded in heaven if they assassinated you. Now the womanising Tuscan lawyer who has succeeded him, styling himself Gregory, er... the Thirteenth, informs them that they need not slay you at once, but may wait until he tells them to!

ELIZABETH looks for reassurance to BURGHLEY

BURGHLEY

We have news of the Pope's agents, your Majesty, before they leave Rome or are sent over the Channel from Douai.

BURGHLEY looks to WALSINGHAM

WALSINGHAM

And we keep the closest eye on those who have fled your realm to join the Society of Jesus, the pope's chosen men, sent to do his bidding throughout Europe and the world. None of these "Jesuits" has yet returned to England; but they will, and we shall be ready to receive them.

Robert Persons, for example, is assisting his General in Rome, and Edmund Campion is in Prague, teaching boys to construe Latin sentences and to act little plays of his own devising, in which I'm told, he sometimes takes a part. Quite harmless, as yet, but we are watching.

[9] A ROOM IN THE JESUIT COLLEGE AT PRAGUE
SOUND OFFSTAGE:

CAMPION

(as St Polycarp)

Ego beatus in fide mori

In qua beate vix' ero, quo mors modo

Ventura cunque sit.

[I shall be happy to die in the faith in which I have happily lived, in whatever shape death comes.]

PROCONSUL

(played by a boy)

Istum legatum fert'abhinc et illius

Abolete corpus impium!

[Bind him! Take him away and destroy his impious body!]

Boys' cheering, some laughter, some clapping – the end of a school play

ENTER ROBERT PERSONS, large-built, animated, laughing at the confusion he has just witnessed on-stage. He is accompanied by a smaller white-haired man, THE RECTOR of the Jesuit house in Prague.

RECTOR

Fr Campion's plays are always dramatic but sometimes the Latin is a little too fine for our boys so today he had to take over a part and play the martyr himself.

CAMPION follows on, wearing a stage halter, which he takes off.

Admirable, Father Edmund! You stood in boldly for our tongue-tied young hero of the faith!

PERSONS

Oh, you stood by it heroically! On stage, of course!

RECTOR

Edmund, Father Robert Persons, one of Our Men, who arrived at Oxford shortly after you left.

PERSONS

Just before, in fact. I began my studies just before Edmund Campion disappeared beyond the seas, and I heard him much talked of, and observed that he was much followed.

CAMPION

And as far away as Bohemia we heard the heretics ringing their bells as they chased Robert Persons out of Balliol College!

PERSONS

And with the help of God the Catholics will ring them louder when we return! And the enterprise is ripening! William Allen has at last overcome the resistance of our General and we English Jesuits are bound again for our native land, once the dowry of the Queen of Heaven and now the prey of the Protestant wolf-pack set on by Henry VIII and presently led by Burghley and Walsingham, while the Earl of Leicester nods approval and blows kisses at the Queen.

CAMPION

(doubtful but concessive)

I would give much to restore the Mass to England.

PERSONS

(quieter, more confidential)

And there's more to it than that: strategically, England is the only country now standing between Spain and the reconquest of all Europe for the Catholic Church!

CAMPION

(thoughtful)

I have no great love for Spain – for Spanish pride and Spanish gold and the Spanish rack, and I do not know that I want to deliver our countrymen to the mercies of the Spanish Inquisition.

PERSONS

A *Catholic* inquisition, Edmund. And in the Tower of London the windlass turns on the English rack, an instrument entrusted by Her Majesty to the special care of one Thomas Norton, Rack-Master to the Queen of England. Now that's a proud title! Rack-Master to the Queen of England! Edmund, they are pulling Catholics apart, limbs from trunk, tearing out the Old Faith, banishing the Mass, and starving our people for lack of priests to consecrate the host!

(pause)

RECTOR

And that is why, Father Persons ...

PERSONS

And that is why our General has sent me to bring you to Rome, and from there to call on William Allen at Douai and from there - over the sea, for England!

(pause)

CAMPION

(thoughtful still)

For England...

[10]

THE GARDENS AT HAMPTON COURT

DISPLAY: ENGLISH COAT OF ARMS: the lions of England quartered with the lilies of France.

SUNLIGHT

MUSIC

LEICESTER, BURGHLEY and WALSINGHAM follow at a respectful distance behind ELIZABETH and ANJOU as they walk among the knot-gardens and yew hedges. Flowers in full bloom. Unseen music of a concert of viols with a single singing voice comes from behind the clipped hedges.

SINGING VOICE

Whoso list to hunt, I know where is an hind,

But for me, alas! I may no more.

The vain travail hath wearied me so sore...

At this point the dialogue between ELIZABETH and ANJOU takes over, but the voice may be continued as backgrounded counterpoint:

I am of them that furthest come behind.

Yet may I by no means my wearied mind

Draw from the deer, yet as she flees before

Fainting I follow. I leave off therefore

Since in a net I seek to hold the wind....

ELIZABETH and ANJOU are talking, initially in French.

ANJOU has taken ELIZABETH'S hand. He puts it to his lips, murmuring:

ANJOU

Cette petite main blanche!

(he takes off her glove and plays with her long fingers)

Aux doigts fuseles. White hands – so slender – like lilies! Je les adore!

(he puts her hand to his lips, then looks around)

Look! I hold a lily in my hand! The only lily in this English garden. In England you do not love lilies?

ELIZABETH

We love them so much we crop them for our shields - the slender, white lilies of France quartered with the roaring lions of England!

(she indicates the royal coat –of-arms and laughs)

Your brother the King does not like that! That we wear his lilies on our shield.

ANJOU

Ah, ca! But perhaps it is a sign that our two countries will one day be one country...

ELIZABETH

(laughing; faux-naïve)

But how could your country and mine ever become one country, my Little Frog?

ANJOU

Pourquoi pas? Cela se peut...

They go laughing off, musicians emerging and scrambling after.

CECIL and WALSINGHAM follow at a distance.

LEICESTER

How could she – how *can* she – consort with that misshapen fop? After the men she's known! "My little Frog!"

WALSINGHAM

(quiet and confident)

The Virgin and Protestant Queen of England won't marry a pox-ridden Catholic suitor from France!

CECIL

She could do worse. We could all do worse.

WALSINGHAM

She could not do worse! You didn't see!

CECIL

Oh, Saint Bartholomew! But if his brother dies he'll be King of France one day. If *she* dies without marrying, who'll rule here? Mary of Scotland? Isabella of Spain? England could do worse.

LEICESTER

Her Little Frog!

CECIL

With his help she might just give us a son, an heir to the English throne at last!

LEICESTER

At forty-five? The House of Tudor has not produced durable male heirs and it won't do now!

WALSINGHAM

They've not given us heirs, but they've taught us to be determined and ruthless, to be English in a hostile world. That's the Tudor legacy, not a long-lived dynasty. And to survive these rough times, determination and ruthlessness are what we need.

Their talk is dissolved in laughter and the music of stringed instruments as the lovers return.

Not love talk!

LEICESTER, BURGHLEY and WALSINGHAM withdraw.

ELIZABETH

(laughing)

Then if it be love, tell me how much.

ANJOU

Ah, ma belle Majeste, I am your slave, but I joy in my slavery!
Command me what you will!

ELIZABETH

Then back to France !

ANJOU

Ah, non ca, non ca, ca emporterait la mort de la Petite Grenouille!

[11]

ROME: THE JESUIT HEADQUARTERS

PERSONS and CAMPION are standing slightly uneasily when THE JESUIT GENERAL enters. They approach him, fall on one knee, and as they kiss his hand, Persons says:

PERSONS

Father General!

GENERAL

(acknowledging them)

Father Robert... Father Edmund Campion, back from Prague, *en route* for Dover?

They sit.

And after Dover, London, Oxford, the north of England? And then: back here to Rome, Fathers. And I shall look to see both of you, alive and in health.

PERSONS

As God wills, Father General.

GENERAL

Most certainly, Father, but also as I, God's servant and your Superior, will.

He looks at them with penetration.

Please consider, that I am sending you to England not as spiritual heroes or political adventurers, but as priests, to work as priests, that is

to administer the sacraments, to hear confessions, ease consciences, consecrate the host and give communion.

GENERAL (cont.)

Your mission is the salvation of souls, not personal heroism and not treason. I am not, and you will remember this, sending you out to become martyrs and I am not sending you out to meddle in affairs of state. You are vagabond parish priests, working in unusual circumstances, that is all. You are to take great care always and risks only when you must. And to that end I am appointing you Robert, as superior of the mission, and you,

(smiling)

Edmund, will be as a stick in his hand.

CAMPION, relieved, smiles and bows his head.

CAMPION

Sicut baculum...

[12] HAMPTON COURT: THE QUEEN'S AUDIENCE CHAMBER

QUEEN ELIZABETH, BURGHELY and OTHER COUNCILLORS talking at table.

BURGHELY

So the Pope has got what he wanted! Spain and the Duke of Florence have joined him in a Catholic League against Your Majesty and Spanish troops, together with some from Italy, are reported at sea and are by now probably nearing the coast of Ireland...

QUEEN ELIZABETH

So, my Lord Burghley, we must look about us.

BURGHELY, grave, inclines his head.

WALSINGHAM enters hurriedly.

WALSINGHAM

...and Father Edmund Campion and father Robert Persons, we hear, are returning to their native land to rouse the people for the old religion, and for Spain!

BURGHELY

Then Campion's turned traitor, and all who succour him are traitors!

(regretfully)

A jewel of Your Majesty's realm!

ELIZABETH

He was! It is matter for weeping when good men turn to evil courses.

BURGHELY

(to WALSINGHAM)

But they must be plucked out, Master Secretary.

WALSINGHAM

By the roots, Master Secretary!

[13]

ENGLISH COLLEGE AT DOUAI

DISPLAY: MARTYRDOM PICTURES FROM [6]

We are back in the refectory of the English College of [6] with the same engravings displayed, which all three men are considering.

ALLEN

As Father Gregory told you, we believe in preparing our young men for what they are to face in Protestant England.

CAMPION

(quietly)

Their Catholic Majesties of Spain have inflicted through their Inquisition no less suffering on Moors, Jews and Protestants...those too have been stretched, skinned, spitted, mutilated, burnt alive...

PERSONS

But that was violence done to the body for the good of the soul, not for reason of state.

CAMPION

(quietly still)

Perpetrated by Catholic on Protestant or Protestant on Catholic, whether in the Tower of London or in the cellars of the Inquisition. these are outrages inflicted on the image of God which dwells in all men.

PERSONS looks thoughtful.

ALLEN

Doubtless St Thomas would agree, Father, - "the faithless man is to be brought to faith by reason and not by force", we know - but the King of Spain has favoured our cause of late and has become our patron...

(confidential)

and is in the act of giving us very material assistance. Our good friend the Cardinal of Como has persuaded King Philip that the time is now ripe for the Great Enterprise, and as we talk Spanish troops are on the seas making for Ireland, where the invasion force is to be assembled, bound for England! So we shall have them in a two-pronged attack – the Spaniards coming over from Ireland and your Jesuits and our seminary priests raising the Catholics of England for the old religion!

CAMPION

(earnestly, to ALLEN)

The Society of Jesus is not available for use as a "prong" in some wild military assault on our native land, William! England - God forbid - may be conquered by Spain and then we shall burn Protestants again as Queen Mary did; or she may be brought back to the Faith by the fair arguments and the love of such as Robert and myself and those that will surely follow us. But she cannot be won in both ways at once. They are clean contrary. If the invasion force has sailed, then Robert and I should abandon the mission and return to Rome.

ALLEN

Abandon the mission! In its short history, Fr Campion, has your Society ever abandoned its mission?

CAMPION

Our mission is always practical, Dr Allen. We do what both needs to be done *and can be done* for the greater glory of God. We do not throw away the lives God has given us in attempting the impossible, nor do we dedicate ourselves to furthering the plans of princes.

ALLEN looks apprehensively and beseechingly at PERSONS.

PERSONS

Edmund, our mission is spiritual, but the spiritual and the material, the religious and the political, are woven together in this world's fabric. The strands can't always be separated...and sometimes those of us dedicated to the work of the Spirit must take advantage of favourable political – or military - circumstances when they offer, may even try perhaps to bring them about...

Exeunt, still arguing.

[14] A CLOISTER IN THE PALACE OF WHITEHALL
BURGHLEY and WALSINGHAM walking and conferring.

BURGHLEY

What's his name, your man at Calais?

WALSINGHAM

Charles Sledd. Having recently abjured his Roman ways, he is once again the Queen's loyal subject, and useful, because the papists still think him a papist.

BURGHLEY

And his report is material?

WALSINGHAM

Most material. He says that in the town and waiting only for a fair wind are Robert Persons and Edmund Campion, both Jesuits, both bound for England as the advance guard of the King of Spain's army.

BURGHLEY

Does he know what they look like?

WALSINGHAM

Campion, quiet and well-favoured...

BURGHLEY

Yes, we all remember Campion. What of this other?

WALSINGHAM

Not quiet, not well favoured, a big blustering fellow, imposing on anyone who will accept him at his own estimation...

[15]

THE PORT OF DOVER

[During all the subsequent action which takes place in England there is an uneasy atmosphere: few people are to be trusted, searchers and pursuivants may be anywhere, and London is clutched tight between the Tower in the East and Tyburn in the West.]

A SEARCHER stands below watching PERSONS descend, preceded by his sea-chest carried by a porter down the gang-plank. THE SEARCHER is clearly mistrustful but is bullied out of his suspicions by PERSONS, with plumed hat, sword, buff jerkin, red sash and breeches – a peacock of a man.

PERSONS
(to SEARCHER)

Bear a hand there! I've not come home from fighting for the Queen and true religion in Holland to carry my own chest from an English ship onto English soil!

SEARCHER, surprised, gives hand with the chest.

And what will the likes of you do when King Philip's fleet sails up the Channel? Turn tail like beaten mongrels? Turn and become Romans again? God's wounds you don't deserve a soldier's sword to defend you! But by God you'll need one...

As PERSONS is leaving the harbour area SECOND SEARCHER approaches with some trepidation.

SECOND SEARCHER
Harbour-Master says you can't leave the quay until he's seen you, Captain.

PERSONS
I'll wait on him, my little fellow,
[to PORTER]
but where I go, my chest goes before me.

PERSONS comes DSL to two chairs and a table, the HARBOUR-MASTER'S OFFICE.

PERSONS
(produces bottle from his doublet, unstoppers and offers it)
Well, now! That's your finest spirit of Geneva! Geneva or gin it's called, but it's Holland it come from.

HARBOURMASTER
Where you've been fighting, Captain?

PERSONS
For the Prince of Orange and the Protestant people against their Spanish oppressors under the Duke of Parma, who will be here in England next Tuesday if we don't look sharp. And then we'll have to

fight like dogs! Gin, jewellery and good fighting Protestant sailors!
That's what we get from Holland.

(pause)

PERSONS (cont.)

Now I've got a friend, merchant, waiting for a wind to cross from
Calais.

(confidentially)

Jewellers' stuff, gew-gaws for ladies. Dangerous, these times...

(a whisper)

diamonds! He'll want good speed through to London will my friend
Edmunds, Mr Edmunds.

THE HARBOURMASTER nods, and drinks.

And now I need a horse and cart to get this box to Gravesend, and then
a tilt-boat up the river to London Town!

HARBOURMASTER

I can find you a horse.

PERSONS

And if you do the same for Mr Edmunds, when he gets across, he'd see
you didn't lose by it, would Mr Edmunds. And Captain Roberts here

(he indicates himself)

will be your grateful servant!

Exeunt.

[CHORUS 2]

WALPOLE

And so Robert Persons reached London town, extending from St
Paul's in the East, where Catholic priests were proclaimed traitors, to
Tyburn in the West, where on the imputation of treachery they were
hung, cut down alive and disembowelled, then hacked into four.

[16] THE STEPS OF OLD ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL

A HERALD, US CENTRE reads a royal proclamation.

PERSONS joins the small crowd listening.

HERALD

Our Sovereign Lady, Elizabeth, Queen of England, calls on her liege
subjects to show their loyalty inasmuch as the Bishop of Rome,
joined with the King of Spain and the Duke of Florence, has made a
league against her and is sending into the land ahead of their armies
sundry Catholic priests and Jesuits to remove our people from their
true allegiance and to subject them to the same Bishop of Rome,
wherefore it is declared high treason to succour any such, or knowing
of their presence, to fail to disclose it.

Furthermore, all English students studying abroad are hereby called
back to their native land...

[17]

GEORGE GILBERT'S LODGINGS

DISPLAY: RED CROSS ON WHITE BACKGROUND

Four young men from England's leading Catholic families are talking of the proclamation..

GEORGE GILBERT (Aged 25, enterprising, imaginative, magnanimous and rich), ANTHONY BABINGTON (19, young emotional, passionate, impulsive, devoted to Mary Queen of Scots; executed 1586), JOHN STONOR (25, courageous and somewhat stolid younger son of a strongly Catholic family; executed 1586), FRANCIS THROGMORTON (26, a zealot and another passionate champion of Mary Queen of Scots; executed 1584).

BABINGTON

High treason to succour any such!

STONOR

So if Edmund knocks on the door and we admit him...

BABINGTON

... we are traitors to the Queen! Off on a hurdle to Tyburn Tree!

THROGMORTON

Well, I for one would sooner be dragged by the heels to Tyburn rather than stand by, watching, while the Church of Christ and his apostles is destroyed by Burghley and Walsingham and their creatures.

STONOR

The New Men!

BABINGTON

And sooner than be dragged by the heels to Tyburn, *I for one* would shake them in their places! But how? How? What can we do?

STONOR

Nothing. Endure it.

THROGMORTON

But if a French army led by the Cardinal of Guise...

BABINGTON

No good without Spain.

GILBERT

Babington, Throgmorton,– these are my rooms, the pursuivants are next door, and we are met not to consider encompassing the ruin of the Queen's government but how best to welcome and protect the first members of the Society of Jesus to hazard themselves on these shores.

A confident knock on the oak door: the talk ceases. GILBERT crosses to the door, looks round at the others, who are now all standing, and opens it to admit PERSONS.

And pat he comes!

PERSONS

So, my old pupil, Mr George Gilbert at home to-day - and receiving company!

GILBERT

Robert! You got past the watchers! We were fearful! What news from Douai? from Rome? How is Doctor Allen?

STONOR

But where is Edmund, is he not with you?

PERSONS

On his way. And now, since all Catholic London seems to know we were coming, all Protestant London must shortly know it too! So we'd better talk fast and low!

GILBERT

No, no! You're safe with us. This place is safe. It belongs to the Chief Pursuivant! He snatched it from the good Catholic family of Gilbert, and now leases it back to me at a rate of twice its annual purchase. And this same Chief Pursuivant, whose abilities and industry he tells me are insufficiently recompensed by Sir Francis Walsingham, has to make a little fortune of his own, to which I am glad to contribute. So we are safe –

(he takes in the others, who bow)

John Stonor you know, and here are Francis Throgmorton and Anthony Babington, all Recusants and all safe. For the time being.

PERSONS

The great Catholic families of England here assembled!

GILBERT

In their younger representatives. They call us "Recusants" because we refuse, refuse to go to their churches, to hear their sermons, use their prayer-books. Instead we pay their fines and lodge in their jails.

PERSONS

So, we're the Refusers are we? The Refusers of the new way, the Protestant way!

GILBERT

Yes, and we – Babington, Throgmorton and the rest of us – have formed an Association for helping and protecting all Catholic priests and especially those who come over from Douai. And now you Jesuits!

PERSONS

Well, gentlemen, I'm a Catholic priest and if you can help me in setting up a press, distributing books, publishing proclamations, hiding my Jesuit brothers in Christ and bearing messages to what's left of our religious communities, we can set about the work of rebuilding the Church of God!

STONOR

But what of Edmund?

PERSONS

Mr Edmunds? In this fair weather, Henry, he should have shipped from Calais yesterday and you can hope to see your old teacher tomorrow, or the next day.

[18]

THE COUNCIL CHAMBER

LEICESTER

So they've eluded you, Sir Francis, both of them slipped past your hundred and fifty spies and watchers?

WALSINGHAM

A hundred and fifty men, though costly for a private citizen to maintain - for the benefit of the realm - cannot be disposed in sufficient density round the shoreline of England to command all ingress! But in the end we shall catch these Jesuits. Our net is spread and they will entangle themselves. They're all journeying towards the Tower and Tyburn. At present Campion is making a little detour, that's all.

LEICESTER

And sowing dissension as goes, recruiting men in the service of His Most Catholic Majesty of Spain, and devising the death of our Sovereign Lady...

BURGHLEY

I think we can let Francis have six months to bring them in. They can't just lie low. They're no use unless they're working among the people, preaching to them, confessing them, persuading them, and among those people are Francis' hundred and fifty watchers, maintained as he reminds us at his own expense.

LEICESTER

What do you think they'll do?

WALSINGHAM

They might begin by getting in touch with some of William Allen's men, or they might try to put some life into the old men who were priests twenty years ago in the reign of Bloody Mary. Or they might begin with the young malcontents, Babington and Throgmorton and their friends - the hotheads. Or go North into Catholic Lancashire for recruits ...But in the end, they'll all hang...unless her Frog persuades her that since he is a French Catholic, it would not be friendly, not loving, not an act of sweet dalliance to hang English Catholics while he's making love to her, even if they're proved traitors.

[19]

GEORGE GILBERT'S ROOMS

A fire is burning. PERSONS and CAMPION are sitting with GILBERT, THROGMORTON, BABINGTON and STONOR. Some are seated at a long table. Some are drinking wine.

PERSONS

So it seems there 's no chance of an open debate on religion and all we can do is to say mass, hear confessions and try to keep out of the Tower?

GILBERT

That last above all Since the Queen gave Sir Owen Hopton authority there and he employed Thomas Norton.

BABINGTON

Norton plies the rack, the Little-Ease stands open to receive Catholic guests and they've brought Scavenger's Daughter back to life.

THROGMORTON

The Tower of London is no longer a royal palace, it's the government's torture-chamber, driving a brisk trade. The persecution has never raged so before.

STONOR

But there's still hope that she will marry the Duke of Anjou...

PERSONS

Elizabeth will never marry a Catholic!

BABINGTON

And Gloriana won't be bedded by a man with pock-marks and a big nose!

STONOR

Burghley seems to think she will... Burghley seems to want it...

PERSONS

Then he must think Anjou will turn Protestant.

STONOR

He might, but at present he's the only protection we can get against Walsingham and Hopton and Norton and their instruments.

THROGMORTON

(breaking in)

Butchers! Terrorists! Fear merchants! These men are destroying the Catholic faith by spreading fear. Fear of being discovered, of being betrayed, fear of torture and fear of death. Everywhere! England's a dark place now.

CAMPION

There is darkness indeed when a man's spirit is quenched in his body's anguish.

BABINGTON

If we wait for her to marry her French fop, or for Burghley or Walsingham to change their ways we'll all perish and the faith will perish with us. They all depend on her, everything: reformed church and tyrannical state, and she's only a woman, with one life. She's the first link in the chain and she's the weakest link. Finish with Elizabeth Regina and the whole persecuting Protestant structure collapses like a canvas castle hit by a cannon-ball.

PERSONS

These things do not concern Father Edmund and myself, Anthony. The case may not be as bad as you portray it, and I have good hope that things won't go as hard with us as you fear. At least, not if we're prudent.

(looking hard at CAMPION)
Remember Father General, Edmund: “I am not sending you out to become martyrs...vagabond parish priests, that is all...come back to Rome in two years....”

A knock on the door. Talk stops again. Gilbert gets up, opens door, relaxes, admits THOMAS POUNDE, tall, bald-headed and whimsically courageous, dressed in worn but once elegant clothes. He announces himself:

POUNDE

(somewhat apologetically)

Pounde! Mr Thomas Pounde, on leave from Her Majesty’s prison of the Marshalsea and visiting his friends and fellow-believers!

GILBERT

Thomas, do you know who we have here?

POUNDE

(sorry to spoil the surprise)

Well yes, no, not for certain, but word *has* got round the ’Sea – Marshalsea - that George Gilbert was harbouring – entertaining – two gentlemen from Rome, and that’s why I hurried round, as soon as the gate was opened, to give you my idea.

PERSONS

(pause)

Well, Mr Pounde...?

POUNDE

Gentlemen, Reverend Fathers, you may be taken at any time. The pursuit is hot. And if taken, you may be shut up in the Tower and your life ended without any chance of your saying what is the *purpose* of your coming back to England - telling men why you are here. And so I thought it best if now, tonight, while you are free and at ease, you set down the true ends of your coming, so that the Queen and her Council may know what you are about.

CAMPION

That would be prudent.

PERSONS

Then we should put it in execution!

CAMPION

Forthwith!

CAMPION and PERSONS move to the end of the table, one on either side. Pens and ink and paper are brought. Meanwhile:

GILBERT

Thomas, why do we have to go to the Marshalsea for such necessary and obvious ideas?

POUNDE

Well, inside the ’Sea we have time to think, and since we’re in prison already, our minds aren’t troubled by fear of being sent there. Prison’s a very good place for thinking. It’s a good place for being good...

BABINGTON

It must be horrible!

POUNDE

Well, there are prisons and prisons. Now Newgate! that's a death sentence. You either die of gaol-fever or go mad, which is a sort of gaol-fever of the mind... But the Marshalsea is really like a very bad and expensive hotel which you can never quite leave...

[CHORUS 3]

WALPOLE

And so while the rest of them talked and the fire flickered and the Level of wine sank in the glasses, Edmund Campion and Robert Persons set down the purpose of their mission to England.

PERSONS and CAMPION exchange documents. PERSONS reads CAMPION'S statement and chuckles.

PERSONS

Edmund, this is a most unconscionable brag!
He gives Campion's sheet to POUNDE and sets about sealing his own document.
POUNDE starts reading CAMPION'S with absorbed interest.

CAMPION

(quietly)

But unlike brags in general, wholly true.

PERSONS

(to POUNDE)

You will take these papers, and keep them close. Do not show them to anybody unless we are taken. And do not copy them.

POUNDE

But...

PERSONS

We don't want the Council to see them yet.

POUNDE looks crestfallen, nods in grave assent but reads on, pleased and chuckling.

[20]

THE QUEEN'S COUNCIL CHAMBER

Seated at the table are QUEEN ELIZABETH, LEICESTER, BURGHELEY, WALSINGHAM. LEICESTER is reading aloud from a document and expostulating:

LEICESTER

(not pleased; not chuckling)

"My charge is, of free cost to preach the gospel, to minister the sacraments, to instruct the simple, to reform sinners, to confute errors – in brief to cry alarm spiritual against foul vice and proud ignorance, wherewith many my dear countrymen are abused." Alarm spiritual! Proud ignorance! Such insolence was never published in this island till the Jesuits came! "I never had mind and am strictly forbidden by our Father that sent me to deal in any respect with matters of state or policy in this realm, as things which appertain not to my vocation..." Deals not in state or policy! Rank Jesuitical juggling: he knows, wherever he

is, as we round this table know, that matters spiritual *are* matters of state. And these bragging lines are everywhere! Where will he and his converts be when King Philip sends the Spaniards in? On whose side will *their* swords be drawn?

(LEICESTER slams the paper down. BURGHLEY takes it up.)

QUEEN ELIZABETH

To be a Catholic is not treasonable, My Lord.

LEICESTER

But to *make* a Catholic is, and that is what these men are about: making Catholics, which is levying soldiers for Spain!

BURGHLEY

And listen to this: "I would be loath to speak anything that might sound of any insolent brag or challenge, especially as being a dead man to this world, and willing to put my head under every man's foot..."

He will one day count himself lucky if he can put his head on the block! we shall use it to hang him by.

WALSINGHAM

...before fixing it on Temple Bar with the heads of other traitors.

LEICESTER is beside himself, and BURGHLEY takes the paper from him, and reads:

BURGHLEY

(reading)

"And touching our Society, be it known to you that we have made a league..."

Silence. All round the table, including THE QUEEN, grow tense.

"...whose succession and multitude must overreach all the practices of England..."

LEICESTER

(through his teeth)

Now we come to it! Another Holy League!

BURGHLEY

(continuing)

"...we have made a league - cheerfully to carry the cross you shall lay upon us and never to despair your recovery while we have a man left to enjoy your Tyburn, or to be racked with your torments, or consumed with your prisons. The expense is reckoned, the enterprise is begun; it is of God, it cannot be withstood."

QUEEN ELIZABETH gestures for the paper, meanwhile:

WALSINGHAM

(quietly)

I think we might withstand it, with a little circumspection - and with the resources of the Tower and Tyburn, and the help of my hundred-and-a-half men.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

(reads the conclusion of the paper)

“and may Almighty God set us at accord before the day of payment, so that at last we may be friends in heaven, when all injuries shall be forgotten.”

ELIZABETH sits brooding, then rises and leaves, disconsolate. LEICESTER follows, angry.

WALSINGHAM

She loves Campion but at last she scents the danger. We may soon be free to prosecute the traitors with rigour.

BURGHLEY

Not if she marries her Frog.

WALSINGHAM

Anjou! She must not! The Council must stop her.

BURGHLEY

When has the Council ever stopped her from doing anything she wanted to do? And England needs an heir, just as much as it did when her father divorced Catherine and married Anne. She could do worse.

WALSINGHAM

She could not do worse! French Catholics are like Spanish Catholics, and like Italian Catholics. When they get power, they slaughter those who won't accept their own dark superstitions. Saint Bartholomew! The game of skewering the children, tossed from windows! And the woman who set the butchers on was Maria di Medici, this Anjou's mother, whose religion he imbibed with her milk! He must not marry our Queen and he must not stand between us and the traitors we hunt!

BURGHLEY

(giving up the argument in the face of this vehemence)

Where do you think they'll go now?

WALSINGHAM

(pause, quieter)

I don't know. Now they're here, they'll probably stay in London for a bit and try to put some life into the old men, the left-overs from Mary's reign... but they'll go North eventually, where all good Catholics go.

[21] A ROOM INSIDE A HOUSE IN SOUTHWARK

Several Catholic priests, including FATHERS GEORGE BLACKWELL and NICHOLAS TYRWHITT and FATHER WILLSON (the oldest), all dating from the days of Queen Mary, twenty-two years ago, are assembled to hear the Jesuit newcomers, PERSONS and CAMPION, and to determine the best course of action.

As the scene opens the priests are standing in a circle, eyes closed, fingering rosary beads:

GEORGE BLACKWELL

“Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost...”

ALL OTHERS

(responding)

“As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end, Amen.”

GEORGE BLACKWELL

Fathers, we are overjoyed to welcome Father Robert and Father Edmund, both of the Society of Jesus, and we know too well what perils they have braved to come here to England, to London, and to be with us in Southwark today.

WILSON

(he is older than the others and grave of manner)

They not only enter into peril, they bring peril with them. Since they came among us the persecution has never raged so hot. Before they came, Englishmen were learning to live together in spite of their differences in religion. We went to their Protestant services when we had to, and to our Catholic masses when we could, and they let us be. Now we are like to be ruined by fines. We are imprisoned at their pleasure; the pursuivants took two of our fathers here in Southwark today, as they were coming here; some of us have been sadly abused in the Tower, and now if we miss their services and are caught at mass, they talk of treason and threaten us with a traitor’s death.

NICHOLAS TYRWHITT

And they don’t stop at common folk. Lord Paget and Sir Thomas Tresham have both been committed for having dealings with the Jesuits. There is some general stir of agreement.

PERSONS

(looks at CAMPION, then begins)

So you were living at peace with your Protestant masters, and life was bearable, and now these fellows come from Rome and tell you to stop conforming, to stand out, to confess the true religion and pay the heavy penalties.

Why? Because without your knowing it, the religion of Christ and of the apostles, your religion and the religion of the Church through the ages, is dying within you, coming to an end. You say you conform now when you have to, and you go to mass occasionally, when you can; and as time passes it gets easier to conform, less of a trouble to your consciences; and as the old priests die out it gets harder to go to mass. And one day you will go to your last mass and then stop going for ever. And that is what they want. That is what William Cecil and Francis Walsingham and the Earl of Leicester and all those who rule you, that is what they want! That is what they bank on, and Father Edmund and I are here to see that they don’t get it and that you remain strong in the Faith, the Old Faith, *your* Faith. Our Lord told us that persecutions

would come and that we must be strong. The persecution is here; trust to Our Lord for strength!

TYRWHITT

But how many of us priests are that strong, and can we ask our people, labourers and boatmen and draymen and cobblers and their wives and children, can we ask them all to be that strong? If you really want to help Catholics in England, Fathers, then go back to Rome!

Some general stir of agreement.

CAMPION

(gently)

Reverend Father Tyrwhitt, Father Persons and I did not come to England for our own adventure and pleasure, nor to satisfy our own sense of duty, but because we were sent here by our Holy Father, Pope Gregory. If he recalls us, we will gladly depart, but until he does, we shall stay.

[22]

WALSINGHAM'S HOUSE

WALSINGHAM is debriefing SLEDD, with ELIOT in attendance.

WALSINGHAM

So you went to Southwark where half the massing priests in England were holding an unholy synod and you arrested two tottering old clerics left over from the time of Bloody Mary, men who will soon be dead anyway, and *for the second time* you let Campion get away!

SLEDD

Well, I didn't know he'd be there, and I thought we'd make certain of the other two... And now you've got them, they might tell you something about where he is?

(sniggers, then silence, then bitterly:)

I won't let him get away again, Mr Secretary!

WALSINGHAM

You won't get the chance! You may not be sufficiently competent to arrest the most dangerous man in England, but at least you know what he looks like, so I'm sending you after Campion once more, but this time you will be under the authority of Robert Eliot, one of our more successful priest-hunters.

ELIOT smiles.

WALSINGHAM takes a document from his desk and proffers it to ELIOT

Who will bear with him the Queen's commission to search all houses without let or hindrance and using whatever means he sees fit in the pursuit of Jesuit priests lately come over the sea for the overthrow of the Commonwealth of England.

[CHORUS 4]

WALPOLE

The overthrow of the Commonwealth of England was no part of the purpose of Edmund Campion, but it was purposed by Pope Gregory and by Philip of Spain, and by the time Campion came to England in peace, Spanish soldiers, with papal blessing, had landed in Ireland.

[23] HOUSE OF ANTHONY BABINGTON, NORTH OF LONDON

In a corner of the room CAMPION is kneeling before PERSONS, who is wearing a stole. He is making his confession before the two priests part. We see his lips move but do not hear his words. PERSONS raises his hand to make the sign of the cross in absolution, and we hear him saying,

PERSONS

...and I absolve you from your sins, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and may whatever good you do and whatever evil you suffer bring you to everlasting life.

CAMPION remains in prayer for a moment. PERSONS rises. CAMPION rises. They embrace, for what each of them thinks might prove the last time, and move to join THROGMORTON and BABINGTON, seated round a table with cups of wine.

THROGMORTON

So Raleigh butchered them all?

BABINGTON

Every Spaniard who landed in Ireland, every Italian, all the Irish, all the priests, all the women. It was the Queen, or else Cecil, saying to the Catholic countries of Europe: "Expect no mercy in England if you come against us."

THROGMORTON

Spain has failed us. We shall never be delivered until we deliver ourselves.

BABINGTON

But we can still get help from France. And Scotland. The Old Alliance. Once we can get Mary of Scotland out of Sheffield Castle, then the Scots will come down over the border, the French land in Devon and English Catholics take up arms at last! We'll acclaim Mary Stuart our rightful queen and Burghley and his crew can slink off to Holland or Saxony, or be shut up in their own Tower!

PERSONS and CAMPION join them.

PERSONS

Treason, gentlemen! This is not for our ears. And anyway, you can't trust Edmund with a secret.

CAMPION amused. PERSONS now speaks to CAMPION.

Oh, I trust you to preach rousing sermons and comfort the afflicted and give the sacraments and stay up all night writing, but I don't trust you to keep out of trouble. You have no proper sense of self-preservation. As soon as some old Catholic lady asks you to stay just one more night and preach one more sermon, or a pursuivant asks you for Christ's sake to hear his confession because he's sorry he's sent so many priests to the

gallows, you'll smile and absolve him and be taken next day. And then don't trust to your own patience in suffering. They'll get our secrets out of you and we'll all be taken! Be prudent, Edmund be careful. For our sakes as well as yours.

CAMPION

I shall forget nothing of my instructions and in all things obey my superior.

PERSONS

(firm, admonishing, reminding him)

Sicut baculum! So then, where will you be six months from today?

CAMPION

Seated at this very table, probably listening to you upbraiding me and hearing of all your amazing - though prudent and well-conducted - adventures; and just possibly reading my own "Ten Reasons" as printed at Stonor's house by the high-treasonable Persons Press...

PERSONS

All right. But don't stay anywhere more than three days and don't go further north than Hoghton Tower. And be back here by the first day of July! Meanwhile Stonor will get your "Ten Reasons" printed.

STONOR

Ten reasons for what?

CAMPION

Reasons why the faith professed by Europe for fifteen hundred years can't be set aside by the lust, impatience and greed of King Henry VIII, nor by the attempts of Mr Secretary Cecil to found a new commonwealth of yes-men and land-robbers on the ruins of the monasteries. Reasons which brought Robert and me back to England, and reasons why I am impatient to argue with the Protestants, and confident of success when I do.

PERSONS

They are also, of course, ten good reasons why they'll never let you! You won't get your argument. If they lay hands on you they'll argue by rack and rope, their preferred arguments.

STONOR

But we'll get the books printed. And given out!

[CHORUS 5]

WALPOLE

And given out they were, in the Church of St Mary the Virgin, with a newly-printed copy waiting on the seat of each member of the Council of the University of Oxford at the commencement of the summer term of the year of Our Lord 1580. And when Bishop Tobie Mathew rose to speak he found his words drowned by the silent voice of Edmund Campion speaking from the page his Ten Reasons.

[24]

THE UNIVERSITY CHURCH

DISPLAY: the three crowns of Oxford University
QUIET ORGAN MUSIC

Early morning. An academic procession to mark the beginning of term. LEICESTER, as CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY, is there together with TOBIE MATHEW as VICE-CHANCELLOR, TWO PROCTORS, and sundry PROTESTANT CLERGY and THEOLOGIANS including CHARKE. As the procession files in we see the little books of the “Ten Reasons” reposing on the choir stalls. MATHEW takes his place at the lectern. All sit. In sitting first one, then another, picks up the little book on his stall.

TOBIE MATHEW

(going formally through the ritual)

At the commencement of this Trinity term at our University of Oxford we pray that through the grace of God we may prove true in our faith, diligent in our offices, and firm in our discipline...

Interest in the little book is now general. MATHEW’S’S speech from here onwards is intercut with the voice of Campion, proclaiming the text which the assembled clergy are reading.

VOICE OF CAMPION

(either VO or spoken from DSL or if in a church from the organ-loft)

My Lords, since the only platform you will allow me is the gallows, I must perforce give the heads of the discussion I would have with you in this little printed book.

TOBIE MATTHEW looks up, begins to notice the pre-occupation of his audience, and continues with some access of energy:

TOBIE MATHEW

(cont)

...firm in our discipline and we may always and everywhere support uphold and vindicate the true reformed religion as set down in the Thirty-Nine Articles of Convocation...

CAMPION (VO)

All heretics confess their heresy by mutilating scripture: suppressing all that bears witness against them, twisting whatever might be distorted into supporting them.

TOBIE MATHEW

...dwell in the discipline laid down in the Book of Advertisements. Thus may we avoid alike the repudiation of sound doctrine by the Presbyterians and Anabaptists and the superstitions of the Bishop of Rome and his followers ...

CAMPION (VO)

All the Fathers of the Church bear witness against you and you quote them as a man holding a wolf by the ears: not much to be feared. What the Fathers affirm, we Catholics affirm; the conclusions they draw are our conclusions.

At Oxford I once questioned Tobie Mathew, now your greatest preacher, and asked him to tell me how a man who so studied the Fathers could take the reformed religion as true, to which he replied, “Ah! You would have reason to ask if as well as reading them I believed them!”

MATHEW

...touching consecration, confession, penance, indulgences and the efficacy of good works...

The voice of the TOBIE MATTHEW is gradually drowned beneath the voice of CAMPION, proclaiming:

CAMPION

“Listen, Elizabeth, most powerful Queen, I tell thee one and the same heaven cannot hold Martin Luther and King Alfred, Edward the Confessor and Henry V, the great Christian kings who went before you. Follow them, for there will come the day which will show thee, Elizabeth, which have loved thee best, the Society of Jesus or the offspring of Luther.”

ONE OF THE CLERICS shows a copy of the *Ten Reasons* to TOBIE MATTHEW, who ceases for a moment to speak, glances at the booklet, and proclaims:

TOBIE MATTHEW

Romanism! Heresy!

(pause)

Treason!

All rise to their feet and put down the books, save for one or two who secrete copies in their sleeves etc. The assembly breaks up in disorder.

[25]

A ROOM IN WALSINGHAM’S HOUSE, LONDON

WALSINGHAM is commissioning ELIOT and SLEDD. A map of England lies on his table.

WALSINGHAM

(addressing himself chiefly to Eliot)

The fact that Campion’s books were found in St Mary’s does not of course mean that he was ever in Oxford himself. And remember Robert Persons may prove the more dangerous in the end. We are tracking two men not one, two men who *may* stay together but are more likely to break up and go their separate ways but one of them will go north from here, most probably through Oxford, Stratford, where the town fathers are suspect and the school was till recently a breeding ground of papistry, then up through Warwickshire, into Cheshire and then doubtless they will rouse the Catholic families of Lancashire:

He points repeatedly to the map; ELIOT comes to pore over it.

WALSINGHAM

(cont.)

The Stanleys of Knowsley, their cousins the Heskeths of Rufford, the Tempests of Broughton, and Richard Hoghton of Hoghton Tower.

So you might go North, looking in at Stratford and Oxford on the way

[CHORUS 6]

WALPOLE

Sir Francis knew and partly understood the Queen's Catholic subjects, and the pursuivants set off in the right direction, though two days behind their quarry. On the third day of their journey northwards, and near to Oxford, they passed above Lyford Grange.

[26]

COUNTRYSIDE NEAR LYFORD GRANGE

DISPLAY: YATE FAMILY CREST (five yellow gates, irregularly arranged on a blue field)

ELIOT and SLEDD looking down on Lyford Grange as they pass by on their way north.

SLEDD

What's that on the flag?

ELIOT

They're yates...yates...

SLEDD puzzled

gates! It's the shield of the Yate family. Francis is in prison. His old mother's looking after the place.

SLEDD

What about there then? If it's a Catholic house.

ELIOT shakes his head

ELIOT

(the expert, pityingly)

No one on the tower...no look-out...drawbridge down. Nothing going on...We may look in on the way back.

They pass on.

[27]

A ROOM IN HOGHTON TOWER

RICHARD HOGHTON looks uncertainly at CAMPION ...

HOGHTON

Have I the honour of addressing as Mr Wainwright?

CAMPION

I think so...if I remember rightly! I don't know if these frequent changes mislead our pursuers, but they certainly confuse me.

HOGHTON takes CAMPION'S hand in two of his.

HOGHTON

You have come in time, Father, but only just in time. No mass has been said in this house for over a year. No confessions heard, no sermon preached.

CAMPION

Then I shall be busy during my – necessarily brief – stay at Hoghton.

A makeshift chapel is fitted out while WALPOLE quotes from Campion's Brag:

[CHORUS 7]

WALPOLE

Edmund had written: “My charge is of free cost to preach the gospel, to minister the sacraments, to instruct the simple, to reform sinners, to confute errors – in brief to cry alarm spiritual; against foul vice and proud ignorance, wherewith many of my dear countrymen are abused....”

CAMPION

(from before the altar, reads)

“Pilate, to please the crowd, released Barabbas to them, and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.”

(preaches)

But why was Jesus flogged when he was shortly to be executed? The Romans tortured the victims they were about to kill in order to disgrace and humiliate them.

Consider that it is men alone who can be disgraced and humiliated. You cannot disgrace a horse, or humiliate a dog. But you humiliate a man when you reverse God’s order of creation within him; for men alone bear in their conscience and awareness the image of their Creator and it is God’s image imprinted on the soul of man that the torturer would desecrate. For our conscience is God’s voice within us, unique in each of us and sovereign in all of us, as the Queen is sovereign in this realm of England and God is sovereign through all Creation. But the torturer would seek to cast down this sovereign authority, to reverse the order of Nature, to make the body in its agony clamour so that the voice of God within us is strangled, and we say what we know we should not say, we do what we will *not* to do. To procure this reversal of our nature is the work of Satan. It is our work to pray for the grace to withstand it and for the grace of repentance for those who practise it...

In nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritui Sancti

All cross themselves and disperse save for HOUGHTON. Who brings forward the young – seventeen-year-old - TUTOR.

HOGHTON

Edmund, here is someone who wants particularly to talk with you. Our young tutor – and Master of Revels - recently appointed. John Cottam brought him up from Warwickshire.

CAMPION

Young tutor certainly, and *very* young Master of Revels.

TUTOR

(smiling, pleasant, at ease but watchful)

Yes.

CAMPION

(also smiling)

And is there much revelling to master at Hoghton these days?

TUTOR

Not much, but we acted a Latin play at Shrovetide, about two pairs of twins, and I played Menaechmus from Syracuse...

CAMPION

(over-acting the part of someone astounded by what he's heard)

"Quae haec fabulast? Tu es Menaechmus?"

TUTOR

(over-acting the asseveration of someone whose word has been doubted)

"Me esse dico, Moscho prognatum patre!"

[The lines are from Plautus. Comedy, "The Twin Menaechmi", later turned by Shakespeare into "The Comedy of Errors". They mean: "You're making this up! You're telling me you are Menaechmus?" "I tell you I am, Moscho's son, Menaechmus".]

CAMPION and TUTOR laugh, pleased with their shared learning, and at ease.

HOGHTON

If further communication is going to be in Latin, I shall go and talk English with my steward.

Exit

CAMPION

So, you like teaching?

TUTOR

Yes, but acting's better. Jollier!

CAMPION

Is it? Well since coming to England I've been a bit of an actor myself. I've done a diamond merchant – no stock-in-trade of course – a vintner ditto, a lawyer, an apothecary, and servant to my good friend, Robert Persons. And once I was pushed into a pond, which you'd call improvised clowning, I suppose. One man, many parts.

Pause. TUTOR considers this.

And I expect I'll be invited to take on more roles in the future, but the question is, is there anyone behind all these parts, someone whom I'm *not playing*, but simply *am*? I sometimes think we're all trying to find our true role.

Pause.

I was a teacher once, and put on little plays in Latin, and at times I wish that I had stuck with that. Is that what you want to do with your life?

TUTOR

I wouldn't *mind* sticking with teaching, but there are other things... I think I'd like to be moving around more...like you... and I like getting people to do plays ...like you.

CAMPION

Well, yes, I move around quite a lot.

AT THIS POINT ELIOT & SLEDD cross the causeway US, uninvolved in the scene below (ie they are seen to be approaching Hoghton Tower.

TUTOR

...going to London and that...

CAMPION

Now that's somewhere I'm *not* anxious to go at present. But what about you?

(pause: CAMPION considers TUTOR closely and kindly)

You could study the Law. You might one day become secretary to an important man, a member of the Council, say. Or you could join a troop of strolling players who would probably get you to London...

(quieter and serious)

...or you could take a risk and go and join William Allen in Douai.

TUTOR

(slightly flustered)

Yes, I've thought of that, but...

CAMPION

At the English College in Douai you wouldn't be playing in a comedy, or in a tragedy, you wouldn't be playing at all: you'd be acting out the part God has given you in real life.

TUTOR

I'd like to think about it...but in the event of...

CAMPION

A man may think too precisely on the event. Sometimes you have to act. Take the tide...

They look one another in the eye, the TUTOR uncertain, CAMPION smiling but knowing he is losing him.

During the following action at Hoghton, the KITCHEN SCENES are played DSL and the CAMPION scenes USR

[28] KITCHEN AT HOGHTON TOWER

ELIOT, SLEDD, HOUSEKEEPER & WATCHMAN

ELIOT

George Eliot and Charles Sledd, gentlemen, coming from Mr Hesketh's at Rufford and going on to Mrs Tempest's at Broughton and hoping to find lodging on a dark night.

HOUSEKEEPER

And how was Mrs Hesketh at Rufford? And how was Mrs Baines?

ELIOT

Mrs Hesketh I didn't see myself and Mrs Baines...?

HOUSEKEEPER

Her housekeeper.

ELIOT

Yes, her housekeeper was in rosy health and asked me to bring word of yourself - Mrs ...when I return.

HOUSEKEEPER

Mrs Baines would do well to be rosy.

(she looks at the silent WATCHMAN)

EXIT WATCHMAN

ELIOT

Yes, and she said you might be able to direct Master Sledd here and me to a service of worship in this house. I mean a real service in the old fashion, not a Christmas game.

[29] ROOM AT HOGHTON TOWER

USR: CAMPION & TUTOR

ENTER HOGHTON accompanied by WATCHMAN
HOGHTON
(controlled haste)

Our revels are now ended! The pursuers are here! Incognito, they think. We've got half an hour to get you away. You'll get to the Walmesleys tonight, wet but safe.

EXEUNT

[30] KITCHEN AT HOGHTON

ELIOT and SLEDD have begun to drink, watched closely by the HOUSEKEEPER.

HOUSEKEEPER

No, I don't think I can help you to the sort of service you want. Here we're the Queen's loyal subjects. Try over in Yorkshire.

ELIOT

Pity! Anyway, we've got important business which we'd better pursue....

[CHORUS 8]

WALPOLE

And now, one day ahead of his trackers, CAMPION reached Lyford Grange, the home of the staunch and suffering family of Yate, with its moat, its drawbridge, its little gatehouse and its two priests and three nuns.

[31] A SMALLER ROOM IN LYFORD GRANGE

Candle-lit, dark-panelled room. CAMPION is seated at a table, on the other side of which is ELIZABETH SOMERS, a young nun, wearing sober lay costume. She is tense and anxious.

CAMPION

Death is what we all fear, and yet it touches the resurrection, beyond which is no more fear.

ELIZABETH SOMERS

But before...

CAMPION

For what comes to us before death, all we can do is trust. Our Master entered his Kingdom with much suffering and we may be asked to follow him, but he will not ask of us what we cannot give, never test us beyond our strength. We must believe that.

A light knock at the door. ELIZABETH looks round, nervous; then CAMPION recalls her attention:

And now I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

ELIZABETH crosses herself and stands up.

Go in peace!

As MRS YATE enters and comes forward and sits. ELIZABETH stands beside her chair.

MRS YATE

So tomorrow you must leave when mass is ended?

CAMPION smiles and acknowledges.

Then we will start early. And tonight you may sleep secure in your bedroom, and we will pray that you have no cause to enter our hiding-hole, which is little better than the Little Ease, and contrived with equal ingenuity, though with more love!

EXEUNT

CAMPION remains, sits at a desk, lit by two candles, and begins a letter to Aquaviva, the new Jesuit General:

CAMPION

[VO]

Reverend Father General, here in England the danger increases daily. I cannot long escape the hands of the heretics, the enemy have so many eyes, so many tongues, so many scouts and crafts. In the clothes I wear I feel very ridiculous and am now very tired...

BLACK OUT

LIGHT COMES UP SLOWLY

[CHORUS 9]

WALPOLE

The following morning the pursuers passed once more above Lyford.

[32]

COUNTRYSIDE NEAR LYFORD

ELIOT AND SLEDD look down from Causeway. ELIOT strains his eyes.

ELIOT

The drawbridge is up!

SLEDD

And there's someone on look-out. We'll never get in!

ELIOT

We'll get in all right! I know the cook. And don't forget, while we're at Lyford, we're true sons of St Peter and children of the Church of

Rome – for all they know!

[33] THE LONG ROOM AT LYFORD GRANGE

The household is still assembled. CAMPION is preaching from a chair near the altar. He reads from a bible:

CAMPION

“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those who are sent to you! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wing, and you would not! See, your house is left to you desolate!” Today, and always, we in England are the people of Jerusalem. And our Lord is calling again through the voice of his prophets whom we have slain, through the Fathers of the Charterhouse, through Blessed Thomas More, through Father Cuthbert Mayne, Father Robert Johnson, Father Cottam and so many other priests who have died on the scaffold, and our house is left desolate, at Godstow, and at Oseney, at Evesham, at Abingdon, at Thame...

ELIOT and SLEDD enter and sit at the back, uncomfortably.

and at three hundred other ruined abbeys and churches where once the praises of God were sung.

CAMPION

[VO]

as he surveys his audience, resting for a moment on the half-recognised figure of ELIOT, who smiles.

“the enemy have so many eyes, so many tongues, so many scouts and crafts...”

CAMPION

(resuming his sermon)

But God is sending more, living prophets into our land, and though some may be slain, yet more will follow, and the hearts of the men and women of England will turn again to the holy Catholic Church, and the houses of Godstow, of Oseney,

As Campion is speaking, ELIOT fingers his warrant for arrest, looks at the number of people assembled, realises he will need help, and slides from the room. His going is noticed by Mrs Yate, who stands up.

of Evesham and of Abingdon will rise again in the beauty of holiness...and we shall see and rejoice in the Great Day of the Lord!

Immediately, under Mrs YATE's directions, the room is returned to normality, the altar dismantled etc. CAMPION divests himself and the vestments are carried away. Herbs are burned.

[CHORUS 10]

WALPOLE

The pursuivants were recognised as they left and in two minutes the vestments and altar furniture were hidden, the travelling altar packed away, herbs burned to cover the smell of incense, Fr Campion was taken to the hiding-hole, and all resumed their family occupations. Meanwhile the priest-hunters sped away from Lyford to rouse Edward Fettiplace, the Queen's Magistrate, and stir him to his duty of searching the house of his neighbour and friend and arresting and bringing to London any who had there assisted at the Roman liturgy. And they did search freely, but without any great desire to find, for Oxfordshire in those days was still half-Catholic and though Fettiplace's men went through rooms and down passages and into cellars and up into lofts sounding and measuring and rapping and listening, by the end of the day they had found nothing, and Campion still lay cramped but secure, his hiding-place undiscovered.

This speech to be accompanied by stage-action (possibly under strobe lighting) and sound effects of a house-search carried out by FETTIPLACE and his men: looking, knocking, listening, measuring, spying etc. All methodical, measured, routine.

[34]

LYFORD GRANGE
(continued)

Enter to FETTIPLACE, ELIOT, WILLIAM, a searcher

ELIOT

Well, what have you found?

WILLIAM

Not a trace, sir. George Barnes found a little wooden cross and a picture of a ...

FETTIPLACE

(getting annoyed)

Mr Eliot, I do not intend to keep Mrs Yate awake and watching any further, nor to keep my men from the fields.

ELIOT

You don't know the prize you're throwing away! I've sworn to get him!

FETTIPLACE

I would remind you that you are a poursuivant, that is a constable with special duties, and that I am the Queen's Justice of the Peace in the county of Oxfordshire and that in accordance with my will we are leaving this house now, I myself and you yourself and all the others.

They move off, over the causeway in silence.
As they go:

MRS YATE

(a whisper)

Gratias agamus Domino!

ELIZABETH SOMERS

Laus tibi, Christe!

ELIZABETH SOMERS mounts the causeway and looks after the retreating posse.

MRS YATE

Are they gone yet?

ELIZABETH SOMERS

Yes, they're gone from the house.

MRS YATE

Thank God and Saint Peter!

ELIZABETH SOMERS

They're crossing the courtyard. Mr Fettiplace is going across the bridge and they're all following. No! They've stopped – just the other side of the drawbridge. The one with the dagger, the angry one, is talking to Mr Fettiplace, showing him something... waving something at him. They're turning round. They're coming back!

ELIZABETH SOMERS RUNS BACK, DOWN THE CAUSEWAY

FETTIPLACE, FOLLOWED BY THE REST, RE-ENTERS

FETTIPLACE

Mrs Yate, I have learned that Mr Eliot here holds a commission directly from the Queen's Council to institute and persist in a search in whatever houses he suspects of harbouring the Queen's enemies and by whatever means he chooses, in the face of which I must I fear resign my authority to him. He now conducts the search.

ELIOT looks with animosity at MRS YATE and gestures to initiate the second search.

ELIOT

(frenzied)

He's here! Edmund Champion is here! Listening to me, laughing at me as I talk. But he's not going to get out of here! He's waiting to assassinate the Queen and he's here in Lyford Grange. But he's not going to get free! I want the floorboards up, the panelling smashed,

every bed thrown over! And when I say ‘I want it,’ I mean Sir Francis Walsingham wants it, the Queen’s Council wants it! So do it! Now!

Strobe-lighting (or darkness) and sound-effects attest a more violent, destructive search while MRS YATE & ELIZABETH SOMERS stand DS Centre, looking out, DS.

HEAVY HURRYING FOOTSTEPS
CRIES OF HOUSEHOLD DWELLERS CAUGHT UP IN THE FURY
THUNDEROUS KNOCKING
SMASHED GLASS SPLINTRERING WOOD
OVERTURNED FURNITURE

RETURN TO NORMAL LIGHTING
SILENCE

MRS YATE

Well, Mr Eliot, with your sledge-hammers and crow-bars you have brought the family house of the Yates close to ruin, and now pray tell me what have you found?

ELIOT

I know he’s here! And I’ll show you how I’ll use this priests’ den of a house and its papist family! Yates! Yates! Gates! Gates! I’ll open ’em with this!

He seizes a sledgehammer and approaches the Yates family crest deliberately, and then smashes it with the hammer.

Sound of splintering wood and a cry of pain.

ELIOT, amazed, leans into the hiding-hole and pulls out the cramped body of CAMPION.

ELIOT

Gratias agamus Domino!

CAMPION

(struggles to feet)

Laus tibi Christe!

ACT II

[35] THE WARDEN’S ROOM IN THE TOWER

DISPLAY: either BLACK AND WHITE OUTLINE OF THE TOWER
or BLACK AND WHITE OUTLINE OF A RACK

CAMPION stands guarded before SIR OWEN HOPTON, Warden of the Tower, who has THOMAS NORTON, Rack-Master, at his side.

HOPTON

So, the famous scholar! The elusive priest! The far-travelling traitor!
Well, you won't travel far from here, Campion! And the Council say
you are to be pent up "closely". We can fit you for that in London's
Tower, eh Norton?

CAMPION, watched by NORTON, is stripped to shirt, stockings and breeches. He
does his best to cross himself and is crammed by TWO GUARDS into an iron cage
[in the space under the causeway] in which he can neither stand nor lie nor sit.
A curtain is drawn across.

[36] BABINGTON'S ROOMS IN LONDON

BABINGTON, THROGMORTON, STONOR, PERSONS

PERSONS

So he'll have been three days in the Tower by now. Seventy-two
hours...

BABINGTON

Then we can only pray for him.

STONOR

Edmund will be steadfast.

THROGMORTON

How do you know that anyone – you, Edmund, any of us - would be
steadfast when they've got you in the Tower. They can do anything they
like, and no one will know, no one will hear...

PERSONS

Jesuits know what to expect when they land in England.

THROGMORTON

Do they? Edmund came ready to debate, to argue in front of the Privy
Council, to tell the Queen she'd do better to change her religion!

BABINGTON

The Rack-Master's the only one they'll let him argue with now.
Gilbert's in France and would to God Edmund were back in Bohemia.

THROGMORTON

(to PERSONS)

You didn't expect this savagery, did you? The mission's not what you
thought it would be. Not what we all thought it would be.

PERSONS

We knew it would bring suffering.

BABINGTON

Sending priests to England is tossing them on Protestant pikes, and
there are more pikes than priests. We must find a surer way....

PERSONS

Perhaps I should return to Rome and consult with Father General.

[37] THE GARDENS AT HAMPTON COURT

THE QUEEN is walking amid the flower-gardens with LEICESTER and
BURGHLEY.

DISPLAY: ROYAL COAT OF ARMS

QUEEN

So he was brought to London three days ago, and he has been lodged with Sir Owen Hopton since?

BURGHLEY bows acknowledgement.

LEICESTER

The jewel of Oxford...he might have brightened your court!

Music, as in [15], begins to steal upon the air. LEICESTER and BURGHLEY hear it with some dismay. ELIZABETH, abstracted, does not at first notice it.

QUEEN

(to LEICESTER)

Have him taken to your house, Robin, and let us bring him to his senses.

She turns a corner and there halfway down the alley is ANJOU, smiling, with his CONCERT OF VIOLS.

(delighted)

Francois! Tu es revenu!

(to Burghley)

Gently, if possible.

EXEUNT QUEEN and ANJOU

[38]

A ROOM IN LEICESTER HOUSE

LEICESTER and BURGHLEY ascend upper stage R and sit behind table. WALSINGHAM joins them.

CAMPION is brought in by NORTON and HOPTON and taken to sit on a stool before the commission.

LEICESTER

Mr Campion, you know William Cecil, Lord Burghley, whom you met at Oxford so many years ago. You may not yet know Sir Francis Walsingham

WALSINGHAM bows slightly

Though you can be assured he knows you.

CAMPION

A man cannot travel through Europe as I have done without hearing of Sir Francis' envoys, though you never seem to meet them till they arrest you.

LEICESTER

Sir Francis' men are very helpful, though your companion, Mr Persons, seems able to slip through their net at will. He arrived in Calais three days ago, en route for Rome, we presume. But I am sorry for your condition, Mr Campion. Sir Owen is not always a discriminating host, though he means well.

CAMPION

No doubt he does as he is told, without added malice. But I am touched that you care for my person though you mistrust my mission.

BURGHLEY

Now you come to it, Mr Campion. Precisely what is that mission? How closely does it touch her Majesty's authority and the policy and state of this realm?

CAMPION

Our mission is purely religious and spiritual: it is to save the souls of Englishmen.

BURGHLEY

But if your spiritual mission succeeds, if Englishmen become Catholic once again, will it not bring down the Protestant state, will it not change the distribution of wealth and power in England and the balance of power in Europe, and is not that a political end?

CAMPION

(pause)

We are charged not to touch matters of state of England nor the authority of her Majesty, to whom we are loyal servants, owing her temporal allegiance as we owe our spiritual allegiance to His Holiness the Pope.

LEICESTER

(he is smiling)

Allegiance to Her Majesty, allegiance to His Holiness! not worthy, Mr Campion, not worthy of the orator we heard at Oxford, fourteen? – fifteen? years ago.

BURGHLEY

(he is not smiling)

How can that be when your Pope, to whom you owe allegiance, has excommunicated your Queen, to whom you say you also owe allegiance, told her subjects she is queen no more, called for her overthrow by rebellion and in Ireland supported the invasion of her realm?

CAMPION

(hesitates, then slowly)

We have been told by his Holiness' successor that the bull is not operative at present ...

LEICESTER

But there it lies, Mr Campion, quiet but waiting only for a signal from Pope Gregory to charge and catch us on its horns. And when it charges, whose side will you be on, you and your fellow priests? Will you defend your country or will you champion the Spanish invaders, who come not, as you say you do, with prayer and preaching but with

sword and pike at the command of an Italian prelate to restore Roman domination over free Englishmen?

As he is saying this THE QUEEN has entered the room quietly. All rise and bow. THE QUEEN sits.

QUEEN

Mr Campion, do you acknowledge me your Queen?

CAMPION

(earnestly)

You are my Queen and my most lawful governess, my sovereign Liege Lady, you and none other, whom it is my happiness to serve.

QUEEN

Then, Mr Campion, may the Pope lawfully excommunicate me or no?

CAMPION

(pause)

I confess myself an insufficient umpire in so high a controversy between your Majesty and the Pope.

QUEEN

(pause)

Mr Campion, we once met merrily, at Oxford. If you will acknowledge me also as your spiritual head we may part now in agreement and meet again merrily.

BURGHLEY

(senses a crisis and a possibility)

The Reformed Church has few scholars...

LEICESTER

And we are hard put to find bishops with learning enough to answer their Romish opponents...

THE QUEEN

Mr Campion... Edmund Campion..., we offer you once more liberty and preferment if you will lay aside your allegiance to my mortal enemy, the Bishop of Rome, and come home in spirit, as you have come home in body, to England, your birthplace, where you belong.

CAMPION

(quietly)

My lady, I cannot, and never shall. I glory that you are my Queen, but my spiritual allegiance is my greater glory and it is to the Pope in Rome.

ELIZABETH turns and leaves quietly. All stand. BURGHLEY looks at LEICESTER, who nods to NORTON, who takes CAMPION back to the Inner Stage area.

LEICESTER looks after him, then sits at the desk. BURGHLEY joins him.

WALSINGHAM stands behind them. LEICESTER writes, [The text would be: "To Sir Owen Hopton at the Tower: Examine Edmund Campion by the rack."]. He signs it and passes it to Burghley, who signs and gives the document to HOPTON, who follows NORTON & CAMPION.

LEICESTER, BURGHLEY and WALSINGHAM remain on-stage, static, USR.

[39] TORTURE CHAMBER IN THE TOWER

DISPLAY (POSSIBLY) BLACK SILHOUETTE OF TRIPLE GALLOWS
or of RACK

The scene should be played out in silhouette, Rear-Centre Stage, against the background of the alcove, whose curtains stand open.

CAMPION'S hands, tied by ropes, to a windlass at one end of the rack; his feet tied to the windlass at the other. By each windlass stands a TORTURER. The action is directed by NORTON, a professional in love with his profession and presided over by HOPTON, energetic, good-humoured, enjoying the occasion. Slightly in the background stands WALSINGHAM, saturnine.

NORTON nods. THE TORTURERS bear on the handles which turn the windlasses. Two quick staccato sounds of a wooden ratchet.

CAMPION

(gasps)

Mrs Yate of Lyford!

HOPTON

We *know* you were with Mrs Yate at Lyford. We arrested you there!

(pause)

CAMPION

Richard Hoghton, of Hoghton Tower!

HOPTON

(smiles)

Mr Campion! Sledd and Eliot tracked you to Hoghton Tower and told us of how you entertained the household as they deposed before you. Sir Francis and I want to know the *other* Roman Catholic houses you visited, dens of sedition and treason not yet known to us.

Silence. NORTON nods twice: four sounds of the ratchet.

CAMPION

(a whisper, teeth clenched)

O God be merciful to me a sinner! Be merciful *now*!

[40] A ROOM IN LEICESTER HOUSE

LEICESTER, BURGHLEY, WALSINGHAM, HOPTON and NORTON

HOPTON

He confesses only what we already know.

NORTON

(confident in his craft)

He can be racked again, and again! Between each stretching his limbs will stiffen...

WALSINGHAM

We know your preferences, Norton, but there are other ways of augmenting our information.

(to Burghley)

Let it be noised abroad that he has told all...that all Catholic houses he has stayed at are in immediate expectation of our visitation and see how the conies run from their burrows!

BURGHLEY

But we need some public discrediting, some refutation of all that he has come to do.

LEICESTER

When I first saw him, at Oxford, he was arguing the case about the moon and the tides...He likes arguing. Now if we staged another argument - the great Jesuit Edmund Campion against one or two of our own doctors and bishops, and if we so arranged the circumstances...

CHORUS [11]

WALPOLE

And so preparations were made to hold the great debate in the Chapel of St Peter ad Vincula in the Tower. A dais was raised at the east end, from which the Earl of Leicester presided. Seated at a table below him were ALEXANDER NOWELL, Dean of St Pauls, now an old man, EDWARD CHARKE a young divine from Cambridge, glad enough to have a famous scholar at a disadvantage and eager to win himself reputation. And Bishop TOBIE MATTHEW, once Edmund Campion's rival and friend at Oxford.

[41]

THE CHAPEL OF ST PETER AD VINCULA
WITHIN THE TOWER

A formal dispute. LEICESTER presides from a raised chair. There is a table with chairs and books for the Protestant disputants. Downstage is a low stool with a bible on the ground beside it for CAMPION.

STONOR among those attending

LEICESTER, NOWELL, CHARKE, MATHEW take their seats.

WALSINGHAM in attendance.

HOPTON leads CAMPION in.

Hush as CAMPION enters, slowly, limping, dazed by the sudden enlargement of the scene. LEICESTER motions him to a low stool, drawn up in the middle of a space, facing the two disputants at their desks.

CAMPION kneels for a moment with great difficulty, crosses himself, and sits on the stool.

LEICESTER

Mr Campion, you have long wished for a dispute with the divines of the Church of England, and here we have for you Dr Alexander Nowell, Dean of St Pauls, and Dr Edward Charke, of Peterhouse. And Bishop Tobie Matthew, already known to you, from your Oxford days, and recently elevated to the see of Durham, while you have been inside the Tower.

CAMPION

(smiling)

Yes, we were together at Oxford, since when our careers have diverged.

CAMPION bows to his three opponents. NOWELL smiles, MATHEW inclines his head, CHARKE does not respond.

(to LEICESTER)

I thank you, my Lord, for your office in this, but I am all unready at present, having no books about me, no pen, none to second me, and am scarce able to walk again after my entertainment at the hands of the rack-master.

HOPTON

Fie man! That was no racking. I would call it a pinching, or tweaking.

(Some laughter)

CAMPION

I think I who bore the smart may best judge of the severity, Sir Owen. I think hanging, which I am like to suffer, will prove the lesser pain.

NOWELL

On what points of religion were you examined at that time?

CAMPION

On none, but on what houses I had stayed in since my return to England.

CHARKE

And with good cause. Since the Bishop of Rome, whom you call "Pope", excommunicated our Sovereign Lady and called for her destruction, every Roman Catholic whom you convert or succour is a potential regicide, a rebel in waiting, an ally for the King of Spain when he lands on our shores. And you are his harbinger or fore-runner, attempting under the colour of religion to subvert our state!

CAMPION

I have neither will nor commission to meddle in state affairs and if any of you can prove me guilty of any crime except my religion, I will willingly undergo the most extreme torments you can inflict

NOWELL

(quietly)

But your religion is the religion of terror, Mr Campion, of plot and assassination and of foreign invasion, all justified in the name of God. So how would you have us use you?

CAMPION

With justice, and with charity.

CHARKE

Oh you'll get justice at your trial. Here we're trying to make you admit the plain sense of scripture. No easy task since you are so practised in mangling it.

He nods at TOBIE MATTHEW, who continues:

MATTHEW

(assured)

Now, at the beginning of his fifth chapter to the Romans, the Apostle says clearly, "Since we are justified *by our faith* we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." How then can you and the Bishop of Rome assert that good works, as well as faith, are necessary for salvation?

CAMPION

My Lord, I believe that the faith which St Paul himself exemplified, must include good works: do we not act – perform works - in accordance with what we believe? Indeed in that same chapter you will find that Paul promises the redemptive power not only of active works but also of suffering. A promise in which I take present comfort.

CHARKE

(laughs)

Oh well, you are like to put yourself in the way of plenty more suffering if you go on like this, but I don't know whether it will prove redemptive or not in your case!

(turns towards HOPTON)

What do you say, Sir Owen?

CAMPION

For you to inflict further suffering would be needless. I am already so worn with the rack behind me and the gallows before me that that my memory is destroyed and my force of mind almost extinguished.

MATHEW

(after a pause, resuming)

Well, Mr Campion, perhaps you could summon up what remains of your mental resources to tell us whether the Church of God is visibly present on earth, or is, like the angels, invisible...

FADE DOWN ON USR

RECUSANTS discovered DSL

[42]

BABINGTON'S ROOMS IN LONDON

BABINGTON

So they didn't give him a chance?

STONOR

No one to second him. No books, except a bible. And they tripped him up on a Greek word.

BABINGTON

And he thought they would let him debate with them as he used to do at Oxford!

THROGMORTON

Cecil and Walsingham and Norton and Hopton – they'll have their way with us as long as the Queen reigns!

BABINGTON

And how long will that be?

[43]

TORTURE-CHAMBER IN TOWER

The torture is presented USC, immediately in front of the alcove, or inner stage, (which may show a rack suspended or be left blank). It may be enacted in silhouette: dark erect figures grouped round a prostrate, bound body. The sound of a ratchet – an indrawn breath and strangled cry and the calm, reasonable voice of the inquisitor.

Meanwhile Persons enters to a desk in a small pool of light, DSR. He is writing a letter to his General.

CAMPION is brought to the rack whereupon he falls on knees and prays. He is pulled to his feet.

NORTON

Now, Mr Campion, last time we tweaked you a little. This time we may extend your person by some half foot! I can hardly hope in your case for the full foot's length I got out of Bryant.

The torture proceeds in a confused silhouette: CAMPION is bound to the rack, NORTON presiding. The torturers take up their position by the levers...and bear on them. The sound of a ratchet. An indrawn breath. A cry.

MEANWHILE:

PERSONS (VO)
(WRITING)

But now, writing in the safety of Rome, I have so far omitted to speak of the other outrages, which in this Tower of London are perpetrated, and patiently endured. For though they be many and very grievous: yet can they not easily come to our knowledge, by reason of that close and strait ward, wherein the sound of all speech, and mourning of the afflicted is shut up from the ears of them that are abroad.

TWO MORE CLACKS OF THE RATCHET.
ANOTHER CRY

Nay, our adversaries bestow no small diligence in this point: that the afflictions and torments which are there practised within doors, be not brought to the knowledge of them that are without: but buried rather in darkness, and clean hid in blind and obscure dungeons.

A SINGLE SCREAM OF AGONY

[44]

PRIVY COUNCIL CHAMBER

HOPTON

(angry, frustrated)

He will confess nothing material.

BURGHLEY

Then we must put an end to him.

LEICESTER

Must we? Can he harm us from the Tower? I was his protector once.

WALSINGHAM

While his Most Catholic Majesty of Spain threatens to invade our land, depose our Queen and subject us again to the authority of Rome, can we let these Jesuits, these pope's men, spread wildfire among us?

(quietly, with authority)

We must be rid of him!

LEICESTER

But under what law? He insists his charge was purely spiritual and Her Majesty insists she does not make windows into men's souls and does not persecute them for their religion.

BURGHLEY

And she may yet see fit to ally herself with the brother and possible heir of the King of Catholic France.

WALSINGHAM

Then the charge must be of treason.

LEICESTER

To which he will not confess.

HOPTON

One might as soon pluck his heart out of his bosom as rack one word from his mouth that he scrupled to speak... though the nails still grow on his fingers...

[45]

CAMPION'S CELL IN THE TOWER

CAMPION is kneeling in prayer, supporting his head and hands against the wall. He reacts slowly to the noise of a key in the lock. DELAHAYS opens the door to admit ELIOT, and stays present, in the background, observing and moved by what he sees [he subsequently became a Catholic].

ELIOT

You called me "Judas"! I'm not a Judas! If I thought they'd have hung and...hung you... I wouldn't have done it. I thought you'd come over to them, or they'd just keep you in prison.

CAMPION

(very tired now)

If that's true, then God will forgive you, as I did. Long ago.

ELIOT

Yes, you forgive me. You always forgive! I don't suppose you can help it. But there's others will slay me for it. I've been warned.

CAMPION

(smiles)

If they mean to harm you, they're not Christians, not true Christians.

Pause. ELIOT looks at him unhappily, regretfully.

CAMPION considers him gently, and glances at his own hands, now gloved to conceal his loss of finger-nails.

I can no longer write letters, but I can get letters written.

He looks at DELAHAYS, who comes over.

And I can send a letter for you to take with you to a Catholic Duke in Germany...

ELIOT bows with his head in his hands. CAMPION puts his gloved hands on ELIOT's head, in blessing.

ENTER DELAHAYES

He takes CAMPION gently out of his cell and to his trial.

[46] HALL OF THE PALACE OF WESTMINSTER

DISPLAY: ROYAL COAT OF ARMS

[note to director: most of Campion's words here are his own, taken from a transcription of the trial; it is however a long scene and parts of it may be cut]

JUDGE and JURY sit USR

SIR CHRISTOPHER WRAY, CHIEF JUSTICE of Queen's Bench, sitting as JUDGE.

Prosecution led by EDMUND ANDERSON, Queen's Serjeant-at-Law, backed by a team including THOMAS EGERTON, Solicitor-General.

CAMPION is chief among EIGHT DEFENDANTS, including RALPH SHERWIN and ALEXANDER. BRIANT, both to be executed along with him.

WALSINGHAM, ELIOT, SLEDD and other witnesses attend.

Also in attendance is WALPOLE, fashionably dressed, white frills down the front of his shirt and hoping his fine attire will be noticed.

CHIEF JUSTICE

Edmund Campion, Ralph Sherwin, Alexander Briant: you are charged that you did on the last day of March in 22nd year of the reign of our Queen, at Rome in Italy and on divers other occasions, traitorously conspire to cast down the said Queen from her royal state and to put her to death and to incite rebellion against her and to invite the invasion of the land. What have you to say?

CAMPION

(very weak now, but in a voice measured and clear)

I protest before God and his holy angels, and before the world and this bar at which I stand, which is but a small resemblance of the terrible judgement of the next life, that neither I nor any of the accused are guilty of any part of the treason contained in this document, or of any other treason whatsoever.

CHIEF JUSTICE

(looks to ANDERSON)

Mr Serjeant-at-Law...

ANDERSON

These are not the first to have been accused before this court of plotting the destruction of this realm and the heads of those earlier plotters are yet scarcely rotted on Temple Bar. And all these plots, both past and present find their fountain and origin in Rome, in the court of the Pope. And having failed to overthrow our realm by sending Italians, French and Spaniards to invade us, he has now turned to *Englishmen* to work our overthrow. Englishmen, coming secretly into our realm from foreign dens of treason; changing their names and their clothing, and denying their true purpose which is to turn people away from their allegiance to their Queen and reconcile them to the Pope by saying masses, by giving the sacrament and hearing confessions.

CAMPION

In their wisdom, the laws of England do not allow the condemnation of any man in matters of life and death on probabilities and surmises. But there must be

(emphatic and slow)

proof of the crime by sufficient evidence and substantial witness. A man's life cannot be brought in danger by supposition. And if this is so, I do not see to what we have to answer for. What is the charge against us? We fled our country; what of that? So do many. It is not treason. The Pope entertained us; but does he not also entertain the English ambassador? We are Catholics, it is true but we are here on a political charge, not a religious. It is said that we sought to overthrow the rule and authority of our Queen. But we are dead men to the world, we travelled only for souls; we touched neither state nor policy, we had no such commission.

VOICES OF OTHER ACCUSED

"You are charging us with treason, but you will convict us for religion!"

"It's not treasonable to be a Catholic."

"Our Queen said she makes no windows into men's souls!"

CAMPION

I and my brothers who stand here accused have all been offered our liberty – yes and to some of us have been offered preferment - if we will only come to your church, attend your sermons and forego our mass. Are we not then on trial for our religion?

CECIL and WALSINGHAM exchange glances and signal to ANDERSON

ANDERSON

Call Master Sledd!

CAMPION

(to a COURT OFFICIAL standing nearby)

I should be glad of a drink of water.

THE OFFICIAL leaves.

SLEDD

My lords, being beyond the seas I heard of a holy vow made between the Pope and more than two hundred English priests for the restoring of the Old Religion in England and of an army that was to be furnished for the purpose under Sir Frank Shelley.

ANDERSON

This matter is flat! The holy vow was made, two hundred priests were appointed to overturn the religion and due order of this realm, and is it not probable that you made up eight of that number?

CAMPION

(patiently)

What proof, what likelihood that I and my companions here at the bar all met together in Rome and took such an oath? Would you condemn us for that? Is the likelihood strong enough to support the rope from which you would hang us?

THE COURT OFFICIAL has returned with a cup of water. He proffers it to CAMPION who slightly raises his hands, enclosed in black bags, to show he can no longer lift them. THE OFFICIAL holds the cup to his lips. He dribbles slightly.

ANDERSON

In preparation for your return to England, did you not plot in Rome with the Pope, and with Dr Allen in Douai, to cast down the government of this realm and to set up the Queen of Scots as Queen of England?

CAMPION

In Rome I talked not with the Pope but with the General of our Society, to whom I have vowed obedience; and he made me swear to touch no question of English state or policy. And in Douai I walked with Dr Allen after supper one evening in the garden, when our talk was of friends and times past and the cultivation of herbs. These are not matters for which a man should be hung from a gallows and cut into four pieces.

ANDERSON shrugs and gives place to EGERTON

EGERTON

If your intent was honourable what need had you to roister and dress yourself up in a leather jerkin and velvet Venetian breeches, with a velvet hat, with a feather? Are these clothes for a man who professes himself dead to the world?

CAMPION

(drily)

I believe I am indicted for treason, not upon the Statute of Apparel.

Suppressed laughter

EGERTON

Will the Clerk of the Court read out the letter written by Campion in the Tower and delivered secretly to the Catholic, Pound, in the Marshalsea?

CLERK OF THE COURT

(reads)

“It grieves me much to have offended the Catholic cause by confessing some of the names of the gentlemen and friends in whose houses I had

stayed, but I never discovered *any secrets* there confessed to me, and I will not, come rack come rope.”

EGERTON

And what secrets other than the approach of the Spanish army to Ireland and the plotting of the Spanish King with the Scottish Queen, what else do we imagine to have been entrusted to this treacherous Jesuit?

CAMPION

(weary)

By virtue of my commission as a priest, I hear in confession some of men’s most inward secrets, and I am forbidden by solemn oath, importing damnation should I break it, to keep all matters so confided within my own bosom. And these I will not divulge to other men, come rack, come rope!

EGERTON

Do you deny that in several houses you had visited were found copies of oaths to be administered, absolving the taker from allegiance to our Sovereign Lady and submitting him to the authority of the Pope?

CAMPION

I neither deny it nor affirm it, for I know nothing of it.

EGERTON

Is it not evident that you left those papers in those houses?

CAMPION

It would be evident had you proved not only that I visited those houses but also that *nobody else but I* had visited them, without which your charge fails.

Pause. Conference among prosecutors. ANDERSON resumes the charge.

ANDERSON

(gathering himself)

Campion, what say you to the question whether or not the bull whereby your confessed Lord, the Pope in Rome, excommunicated and cut off and condemned our liege Lady Elizabeth, whether this be good or no?

CAMPION

(pause, then speaking deliberately)

Not long since it pleased her Majesty to demand the same, whereupon I answered I was unfit to determine matters of such high state.

ANDERSON

Come, Campion, no prevarication. The matter is urgent and of life or death. If the bull was good and the Spaniards or French invaded our land to enforce it and depose our Queen, then as a Catholic and a Jesuit, you would have to lend them aid. Is not that intention treachery enough?

CAMPION

I will willingly pay to her Majesty what is hers, so I may pay to God what is his. But these are not matters of fact on which a jury might decide but suppositions, bloody questions aimed at my life.

ANDERSON

Now lest there be any doubt left of the manifest guilt of the traitor before you I will call Charles Sledd, who assisted at Campion's arrest in Oxfordshire not three months since.

SLEDD mounts the platform.

Now, Mr Sledd, what did you hear Campion say in a sermon preached at Lyford Grange on Saturday 15th July?

SLEDD
(uneasy)

He persuaded his audience to obedience to the Pope and spoke of a great day coming which should destroy their enemies and be to them a day of comfort.

ANDERSON

And what should that great day be but the day when the Spaniard come over the sea with their armies to overturn our state, depose our Queen and set in her place some Catholic puppet. This, Campion, was the final end and purpose of all your journeying hither!

CAMPION

If I spoke of such a day – as well I might, I remember not – I meant that greater judgement day, expected and feared by all, when God shall uncover all that is hidden within our hearts and punish the false and reward with everlasting life the true!

ANDERSON
(to LORD CHIEF JUSTICE)

Where guilt is so apparent no more evidence is needed. Please to call Ralph Sherwin. The accused may step down.

LC JUSTICE

Campion, have you anything further to say?

CAMPION
(faces the jury)

Men of the Jury, this day is but a small and dark reflection of that greater day of judgement wherein all of us shall be defendants and you too shall be called to account for your deeds and for what you say now. But today the lives of all of us accused are given into your hands; you may return them to us, or hand them to the hangman. We have no appeal but to your consciences, so consider now three things. Firstly, all the speech offered against us this day consists only in presumptions and probabilities, not facts; and these are insufficient for taking a man's life. Secondly, all that has been urged against us is properly matter of religion, and in England no man's religion can make him a traitor. Thirdly, consider the honesty of those who witnessed against us, the trust you can put their depositions.

One has confessed himself a murderer, another professed himself atheist, a third that he has taken money to give evidence. They have betrayed both God and man and have nothing left to them to swear by, neither religion nor honesty. Can you so confidently believe their words that on their words alone you would send us to Tyburn to die the deaths of traitors? So God give you grace to determine our cause aright and I commit our cause to your good keeping, knowing that you will have respect to your own consciences.

LC JUSTICE

Do you find the accused, all three of them collectively, guilty or not guilty?

FOREMAN

Guilty, my Lord.

LC JUSTICE

Campion, and the rest what can you say that you should not die?

CAMPION

If our religion makes us traitors, we are worthy to be condemned but otherwise we are, and have been, as true subjects as ever the Queen had. In condemning us you condemn all your own ancestors – all the ancient priests, bishops and kings – all that was once the glory of England, back to her conversion by Augustine, sent by Gregory from Rome. For what have we taught that they did not teach? To be condemned with these great men - men who enlightened not only England but all the world – by their degenerate descendants is both gladness and glory. We refer ourselves to the judgement of God and of

CAMPION

(cont)

posterity, judgements not so liable to corruption as that of those who will now sentence us to death.

LC JUSTICE

You must go to the place from whence you came, there to remain until you shall be drawn through the open city of London upon hurdles to the place of execution, and there be hanged and let down alive and your privy parts cut off, and your entrails taken out and burnt in your sight; then your heads shall be cut off, and your bodies to be divided in four parts, to be disposed of at her Majesty's pleasure. And God have mercy on your souls.

[47] A ROOM IN HOUSE OF THE CARDINAL OF COMO, PARIS

NO DISPLAY

TOLEMEO GALLIO, CARDINAL OF COMO (60's, a papal diplomat, wishing to settle the English question by the murder of Elizabeth and a Spanish invasion, but not eager to express this too directly) is seated at a table. PERSONS is pacing.

CARDINAL

So the harvest is not coming in as it should. An early frost...

PERSONS

One of the jewels of England, Burghley called him, and he'll be dragged through the London mud. Hung, and taken down a living carcase. Cut open and cut up.

CARDINAL

And that rich harvest of souls ungarnered, not yet safe in the barn. Rotting ...Perhaps Father Campion's way was not suited to our rough times...

PERSONS looks up.

Not the most effective. Perhaps some preparation was necessary before England was ready to take back her precious Campion.

PERSONS

Preparation?

CARDINAL

You tell us that the men of England are ready to return to the Old Faith, ready to lay down their lives for the Catholic Church. And that all that stands between them and their salvation is the life of one woman... a heretic, the daughter of an adulteress...

PERSONS

Edmund always said we were dead men to the world, having nothing to do with matters of state, seeking only the salvation of souls.

CARDINAL

And if those souls, for which you have travelled so far, could be preserved for God by one death, the single death of an old woman...

PERSONS

That was not Campion's way.

CARDINAL

But if Campion's way leads to the gallows...

PERSONS considers this, unhappily but without rejecting it. He sits again at the table looking enquiringly at Como, now interested. They confer.

[48] INT

BABINGTON'S ROOMS

NIGHT

BABINGTON, THROGMORTON and STONOR

THROGMORTON

There's no man in England can save him now.

BABINGTON

No English man, but perhaps a visitor from France...

STONOR

Anjou?

BABINGTON

He's back in England, wooing again and playing tennis and this morning I know where we can find him.

THROGMORTON

La petite Grenouille!

STONOR

He's the last hope.

THROGMORTON

But I doubt whether he'll play our game...

[49]

LEICESTER HOUSE

Seated round a table: QUEEN ELIZABETH, LEICESTER, BURGHLEY, WALSINGHAM. It is an informal meeting of the inner Council.

ELIZABETH

(to BURGHLEY)

Are the ordinances for the coinage in execution yet? You said they would be issued in November.

BURGHLEY

They will be put in act tomorrow, Your Majesty, the first day of December.

ELIZABETH

(pause: the date is significant for her)

The first day of December ... Champion?

BURGHLEY

Yes. He suffers tomorrow that others may take warning and your realm may be secure.

ELIZABETH

Won't dragging him through the streets and hanging him by the neck deter others, without the butcher's work?

BURGHLEY

The two other Romanists who go with him will suffer the full penalty.

ELIZABETH

And we must be neat, even-handed, in all we do?

WALSINGHAM

(thinking to end the matter)

I think a man capable of drawing so many after him must be seen to suffer the utmost rigour.

LEICESTER

(cuts him short - decisive)

He'll not be cut down till he's dead.

ELIZABETH looks her thanks; the others submit to his superior sway.

You can do as you like with the other two.

ELIZABETH

(quiet regret)

Edmund Champion!

[50]

BABINGTON'S ROOMS

BABINGTON, THROGMORTON, STONOR

THROGMORTON

So he wouldn't listen and the game was more important than Edmund's life?

BABINGTON

Oh, he listened, screwed up his frog's face, threw the ball into the air and shouted "En jeu!"

STONOR

He's here to make love, not rescue traitors from the gallows.

THROGMORTON

And making love to our Sovereign Lady must absorb most of the energy and all the determination at his disposal.

BABINGTON

Elizabeth! Without her, no parliament, no Council, no persecution. The whole appalling structure depends on that vain vacillating pretender!

STONOR

Now that *is* treason! She's Henry's daughter.

THROGMORTON

By a woman who wasn't his wife! The crown does not descend through the line of bastardy.

BABINGTON

Mary of Scotland has the better title and the nobler heart and half of England would follow her banner and Spain and France would lend succour, if only we could be rid of Elizabeth...

STONOR

But that's not Edmund's way...

BABINGTON

Edmund's way has led to the Tower, which is a stop on the way to Tyburn.

THROGMORTON

And how many can follow him down that road?

BABINGTON

The Jesuit mission has been a gallant failure.

STONOR

(quietly)

It isn't a question of numbers. Our Lord |Jesus came to save each one of us, by name. Could we say Edmund had failed if one, just one, man or woman followed him down the path he chose, followed right to the end?

They consider this, doubtfully.

[CHORUS 11]

DISPLAY is supplied by THE GALLOWS standing central on the Causeway (ie centre-stage rear)

WALPOLE

(finely and elaborately dressed)

The first day of December. Hardly light yet, and the rain falling – a pity because I was wearing my yellow doublet and black hose with a blue feather in my cap and a new white linen shirt with lace ruffs. And I was walking north down the Old Bailey when suddenly from east to west two horses cut across the way, dragging a low frame, and tied to the frame, dragged through the mud, was “Edmund Campion, the Seditious Jesuit”, so the notice said. And behind him, talking away at him, was James Chark, a Cambridge man, followed by a crowd of Londoners, all there for the spectacle – or perhaps not all, because when a compassionate woman of the town stepped forward to wipe Campion's face, Charke told her to let be, and was just saying that a little London mud never hurt anyone when a well-directed lump of the same stopped his outpouring.

As they drew level with Temple Bar, Campion drew himself up on one elbow to salute the statue of Mary the Mother of Jesus, which still stands atop there. I don't think he saw the heads of executed men looking down on the other side.

[51]

TYBURN

The place of execution is the centre of the causeway (USC). The instrument is a frame (it could be simply two uprights and a cross-piece with a dangling noose)

The curtains of the alcove are open to reveal a large cauldron (with glowing fire underneath it if possible).

As the moment of execution approaches, WALPOLE'S reported account merges with the dramatic representation.

WALPOLE

(cont)

And as we drew near to Tyburn we heard the rumbling of the biggest crowd ever assembled there, and it swelled to a roar as the Earl of Leicester and his men entered the place. I fell in behind them and got near the foot of the scaffold before I was challenged.

GUARD

And who are you?

WALPOLE

Henry Walpole, of Gray's Inn, known to the Duke.

GUARD

Not a relic-hunting papist, are you? out to get a bit of the rope, or a handful of the insides to take home?

WALPOLE

No! Henry Walpole, known to the Duke ... and to Lord Burghley.

THE GUARD says nothing but lets him stay in the position at the front which he has secured.

Meanwhile to a swelling cry from the crowd CAMPION ascends the scaffold. The rope is placed round his neck. To him this is a dearly-bought opportunity to preach once more with his last and biggest audience ever. CHARKE, prayer-book in hand, has mounted the steps to stand just below and to the R of CAMPION. LEICESTER stands also on the causeway, a little further off, but prominent in his finery.

CAMPION

"We are made a spectacle unto God, unto his angels, and unto men," says St Paul...

CHARKE

(interrupting)

You've not been brought here to lead us in prayer, but to confess your treason and be hanged!

CAMPION

As to the treasons which you have laid to my charge, I desire all here to bear witness that I am wholly innocent.

CHARKE

It is too late to deny what has been proved in court!

CAMPION

I will not deny that I am a Catholic and a priest. In that faith I have lived and in that faith I intend to die, and if this be treason, then I am guilty of it. But of none other.

The hubbub resumes and CAMPION cannot well be heard as he continues:

As for the jury which condemned me, I forgive them with all my heart, and for myself I ask forgiveness of those who harboured me and whose names I uttered while on the rack.

CAMPION now stands in silent prayer.

THE HANGMAN is now by CAMPION'S side.

CHARKE

(coming forward)

I will direct your prayers!

CAMPION

Sir, you and I are not one in religion, so I pray you content yourself, but I desire all who are of the household of faith to say one creed with me. "Credo in unum Dominum..."

CHARKE

Why won't you pray in English?

CAMPION

I will pray God in a language we both understand well!

"...factorem coeli et terrae, visibilium et invisibilium..."

A RUMBLE as some in the crowd follow him in prayer.

DRUMS begin a slow, rising roll.

CHARKE

Why won't you ask the Queen's forgiveness?

Hubbub quieter

CAMPION

How have I offended her? In this I am innocent. I have and do pray for her.

LEICESTER

raises his hand carrying a handkerchief high in the air, and asks;

For which queen do you pray, Campion?

CAMPION

(a ringing tone)

Yea, for Elizabeth your Queen and my Queen, unto whom I wish a long quiet reign with all prosperity...

Drums reach a climax as LEICESTER suddenly drops his arm and handkerchief.

BLACK-OUT

SIGH FROM THE CROWD

LIGHTS UP.

(CAMPION'S body is not seen)

WALPOLE

(DS, without doublet, and with a crimson splash on his white shirt.)

So the Earl of Leicester, may he be blessed, forbade on his authority that Campion should be dismembered while living. But afterwards he was butchered in the usual way. And the parts were thrown into the seething water and I wanted to see and I peered over the side of the iron cauldron and a bloody gout leaped out and flung itself onto my white shirt. I went to wipe it off – and then I left it.

[52] EPILOGUE 1

PERSONS

They never gave him a chance!

ALLEN

Oh but they did. And he took it!

PERSONS

Such strength and such ... sweetness! But perhaps he was too simple for this troubled end-of-the century. He knew nothing of compromise and casuistry, without which martyrdom may be the only option.

ALLEN

“Martyr” means “witness” and Edmund Campion bore heroic witness to the truth of the Church of Rome.

GENERAL

Our aim in our missions, Father, is success, not the production of martyrs. “The expense is reckoned, the enterprise is begun,” he once wrote; “it is of God, it cannot be withstood.” But so far it *has* been withstood. The question is, will Campion’s mission in the end succeed?

EPILOGUE 2

CHARKE and TOBY MATHEW conferring

CHARKE

... blinded by the obfuscating superstitions of the old church. He wilfully turned away from the clear light of purified religion to Roman hocus-pocus. I’d say he was not so much blind as wilful...and proud!

MATHEW

Oh I don’t know. Campion was an honest man, and able up to a point, but insensitive to the value of honourable service in a great commonwealth.

EPILOGUE 3

THE QUEEN’S COUNCIL

ELIZABETH, LEICESTER, BURGHLEY and WALSINGHAM

BURGHLEY

Those who assist foreign powers are traitors, whether they know what they’re doing or not. But we lost a diamond.

ELIZABETH

Which might have lent lustre to our court, as his good wit might have warmed our deliberations - but the times were against him...

She draws her shawl about her.

WALSINGHAM

The times will always be against men like him, and whatever colour he gave it, he was a regicide in intent and a traitor in fact, working his country's downfall in secret. We paid him his due.

LEICESTER

And he accepted it, but I don't understand what leads a man to follow such a terrible path to the end.

EPILOGUE 4

WALPOLE

I do. You see, I never got rid of that blood, and it brought me to Rome, where I entered the Society of Jesus, and then, of course, back to England. But I wasn't as quick-witted as Edmund, and they caught me on the first day. And at York on 15th April, 1595, they dealt with me as they had with him. So I did follow him, to the end.

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