

# MARY STUART

## Lighting Treatment

- Overall:

This script treatment is intended to give you a general idea about how I see the play from scene to scene, and has been revised to include your ideas as well. I welcome notes and feedback so we can continue to be on the same page for this work.

This is a history play. The driving forces of this play must be the characters and their relationships with each other. The lighting should enhance the emotions in these relationships but not pull focus from the characters themselves. This is not to say that we should be set in one look the entire time, but the use of subtlety must be employed. This story needs to be set in reality, a reality accentuated by the emotions of the characters and scenes, but reality nonetheless. Natural coloring should be used. Richer, warmer colors for Mary Stuart's romantic world. Colder colors for Elizabeth's industrial one.

This is a world that is not black and white but grey (morally speaking, not in terms of color). We have two sides to this story and both at times seem right. The audience is frequently torn between allying with Mary or allying with Elizabeth. The lighting, I think, can help hint at this ambiguity by taking these emotional moments and having them hint at several different meanings. Isolating characters when they are more alone, or equally in positions of dominance for example; using the strength that backlight can lend to accentuate both violence and strength. This is a play of interpretations and the audience should feel that.

- ACT I: The Castle of Fotheringhay. A room

This act is set in Mary Stuart's world. It is warmer colors, roses and ambers. The looks are more intimate, built with softer light, and softer angles, focused in tightly, speaking to a more confined setting.

- Takes place on the lower level of the set
- Area of the platform on either side likely used
- Entrances and exits from the midlevel of the stairs
- The scene opens abruptly in the middle of the action. The realistic setting of the interior is of an apartment in a castle, nice, but not the nicest. It's warmly lit, but bleak. The emotion taints the room, there is an edge to the entire look, but subtly so.
- There is a slow build to a singling out of Mary Stewart, picking her up with the sweeping, highlighting angle that a diagonal back can

provide, as she addresses the departing Paulet. We're in the look by the time he tells her to make peace with Heaven.



*Imagine if this room had been roughly stripped of all its trappings. What once was elegance, soft lighting, a sense of regal comfort is now a shadow of it's former self. There is still that feeling about the room in the lighting but it's lost the nice furniture to reflect off of*

- The look can cool as Paulet leaves, lose some of its edge, taking out some of the steeper angles and making the look more intimate. It should retain the same coloring as the previous scene, because we do not change location.
  - Focus in on Mortimer for his speech.
  - Tension increase when Mortimer approaches the subject of her execution, casting Mortimer and Mary in a sharper light.. This scene between them is intimate and chilling, but not without hope. There is a lot at stake. These shifts should be subtle, slow fades, not really noticeable to the audience.
  - Tension releases when Kennedy enters the room again.
  - When Burleigh enters, the room can take on a foreshadowing of the execution light. Stronger back lighting giving the players a slight halo about them.
  - When Burleigh and Abbot are left alone, the foreshadowing back light can fade away in a pull down to the two of them conspiring. The look should be very isolating by the time they reach the lines about 'unspoken orders'
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- ACT II: The Palace of Westminster  
This act is set in Elizabeth's world. It is harsher ambers, perhaps with some cool tones mixed in, like a space lit by candles but too large to be fully basked in their warmth. The angles of the light are steeper, speaking to higher windows, royalty, and tension.

- In keeping with the parallels of softer colors to the romanticism of Mary's world, Elizabeth's industrial world is bathed in icier colors. There is a less intimate feeling to the scenes, more spacious and empty.
- If Elizabeth enters from the top platform, there should be a touch of imperialistic, haloing light about her, a feeling of power from the first moment we see her.
- There can be a similar highlight as in the first act (When Mary is awaiting her death sentence) when Elizabeth examines the ring. These are the moments when the women are drawing inward, seeing their own mortality and weaknesses.
- For the 'counsel' moment, Elizabeth is slightly highlighted on her throne the majority of the time. There is a chill to the entire scene.



*"Elizabeth's industrial world is bathed in icier colors. . . more spacious and empty"*

*The light sources for these two locales would have likely been the same but the way I picture bringing a colder feeling to Elizabeth's world is by simulating the candles, etc, spaced further apart, making the room appear less warm.*

- The tension mounts when Burleigh says 'the head of a Stuart'. Perhaps more of the execution foreshadowing if staging permits.
- Look expands when Mortimer and Paulete enter
- Pull down on Burleigh and Paulet while the Queen reads the letter
- Focus shifts back to Elizabeth as she finishes reading the letter. Queen should be isolated subtly as the lords try to persuade her this way and that concerning Mary's fate.
- Look can be intimate when it is just Mortimer and Elizabeth.
- When Elizabeth leaves there is a strong isolation on Mortimer. He is speaking to himself and it is acceptable to stretch the limits of the fourth wall a little bit here in how theatrical the look is.
- Look withdraws when Paulet enters. There is a return of some of the harsher steeper angles in this scene.
- Dissolves into a softer, more reminiscent look as Mortimer hands over the letter. This entire rise and fall should be very, very subtle.

- The edge can return when Earl says “What? How?” It is here that they begin to get into a confrontation over the Earl’s devotion. The look is reminiscent of the conspiratorial one for Paulet and Burleigh.
  - The scene between Dudley and Elizabeth, for the first time this location can take on a touch of romance, softer, more sweeping angles than the harsh ones of earlier. The coloring of the scene is still icy. This is not the ideal romance.
- ACT III: A park.
 

This act is set outdoors. The light is a completely different quality than either of the previous. Brighter, more expansive, and textured.

    - Soft, dappled light. Beautiful and open. We should try to set this as much as bright as possible for a February in the UK but I imagine it to be more cloudy and murky than the average afternoon but still lovely.
    - It’s set in late afternoon, so perhaps we can play with bringing in some reds later in the scene to really highlight the tension.
    - There is a regal sense about the light when the queen enters, as though a cloud has moved and the sun hit her just right, from behind, framing her in light.
    - We should try to stay even more realistic in this scene. The shifts should be even more subtle than they were in the interiors.
    - Following Elizabeth’s exit there is a slow fade back into the original look, perhaps more sweeping and triumphant, with impending doom. We can bring in touches of the sun setting here. Nothing says doom like a red, red, sunset.
    - The scene between Mortimer and Mary can be intimate and beautiful. The focus is on their world, or specifically how Mortimer dreams of their world. This is only Mortimer’s viewpoint though. Mary wants nothing to do with him.
    - The scene can become more dramatic, doomed lovers instead of just the promise of romance when Mortimer says that Mary must be free before morning. Again, this is entirely in Mortimer’s head.
    - With a slight color shift, more reds, this scene can go from dramatic savior to obsessed lover as fast and smoothly as Mortimer does.
    - The remainder of the scene can resolve into the previous dramatic look, with less reds, and more unnatural edge, full of tension. The sun is set, perhaps.
  - ACT IV:
 

Both scenes are set in Elizabeth’s world so both speak of the earlier setting. There is more sharp, sculpting light than in the second act.

    - Scene 1: Ante-chamber.
      - We have seen the women’s side of things, regal, sweeping angles, varying levels of soft and harshness. The men’s world for this brief scene is all harshness. Their sentences are

snappy and lack the eloquence of the Queens. The lighting should reflect that, harsh angles, chilly colors,

- The scene between Leicester and Burleigh is more intimate but still retains that same icy feeling.
- When Mortimer enters there is an undertone of that haloing backlight that we've come to associate with violence and foreshadowing of more.
- It intensifies when he is left alone, facing the guards.
- There is an isolation on him, but not strong when he is stabbed. His death is more sad and pathetic than anything. We're searching for a reaction of 'well, life goes on' from the audience.

○ Scene 2: Apartment of the Queen

This scene is set in her private quarters and is, therefore, warmer than the usual color palette for Elizabeth's world, but only slightly. There is still that sharp sculpting light from the previous scene.

- Elizabeth's apartment is richly lit but still retains that chillier, more industrial feeling.
- When the Queen asks for the death warrant, bring in the haloing, violent back light
- As the intensity of this scene builds, the lighting can become more dramatic, with more shadows on their figures, making everyone seem more flurried and dangerous.
- The previous look contrasts sharply with the momentary reflection that Elizabeth grants herself, this is a deep look into Elizabeth's mind, we should be entirely focused on her. A strong pull down, isolating the queen, making her look more powerful and alone than ever.
- Tension released when Davison is called back in. Look is a sharp return to the normalcy of the beginning of the scene.
- There should be a slight shift, infusing the scene with a more dramatic feeling when Elizabeth explodes.



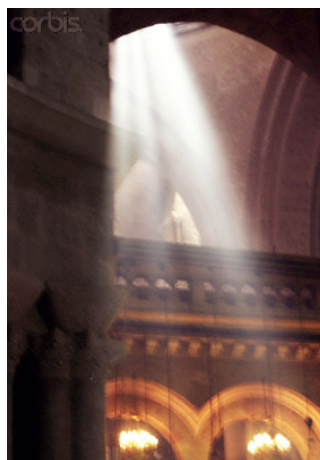
*“A strong pull down, isolating the queen, making her look more powerful and alone than ever.”*

- ACT V:

This would be the act where we really see the stretch in reality. Stronger isolations, scenes lit stronger and more dramatically than realistic lighting calls for.

- Scene 1: Jail cell

- The scene begins on the lower level of the stage and proceeds upwards for Mary’s execution. Predawn to dawn. The light coming through the ceiling structure should be as sharp as can be when she’s
- We should see if we can use practicals, handheld candles
- There should be a sense of strength in this scene when Mary enters, sweeping light if setting permits, to get that elegance that a higher angle light might not provide as readily.
- A holy, haloing back light, different in intensity/color from our violent back light when Mary takes communion.



*“A holy, haloing back light... when Mary takes communion.”*

- Fades out as she finishes up her last silent prayer.
  - We can abandon subtlety for these last moments, from the moment the sheriff enters we should feel a shift to colder, starker looks
  - Pull down to Leicester as Mary leaves.
- Scene 2: Apartment of the Queen
    - This is staged on the highest platform.
    - Isolating light through the ceiling piece.
    - The Queen's apartment is as richly lit as before but there is a sense of solemnity about the room. A twisted version of the beginning of Act II
    - As her world falls down around her, we can pull in on the Queen
      - Davison sent away, less light, Talbot quitting, even less, when she is told that Dudley is on his way to France we must feel like the Queen is totally alone. Regal and aggressive, but alone.