

SLIDERS

"The Once And Future King"

Written by

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TEASER

FADE IN:

EXT. JEFFERSON MEMORIAL HOSPITAL - DAY

Although as technologically advanced as our own, there's an old fashioned look to this world. Architecture favors elegance over efficiency, form over function. We see gardens, not parking lots. Cars look luxurious, not economical. Fashions too are reminiscent of the late 30's, early 40's-- when only laborers wore blue-jeans, and women's clothes and hairstyles were soft and flattering.

Exiting the lobby doors are a man being pushed in a wheelchair as he lovingly cradles a newborn baby. His supportive wife walks alongside, carrying his suitcase and a stuffed animal wrapped in a big bow. Another man crosses past them on his way in, one hand holding his big, pot-belly where he is obviously in pain. We follow him inside...

INT. HOSPITAL LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

...on his way to the admissions desk where nurses react quickly, helping him to a treatment area.

REMBRANDT gets an apple from the vending machine against the wall, and cuts himself a slice with his pocketknife. QUINN and WADE sit in the waiting area. Wade's wearing a flowing summer dress and a wide brimmed hat with ribbons.

WADE

I'm kind of glad we have a whole week on this world. I'd like to take another shot at that picnic.

Quinn leans forward and puts his head in his hands. Surprised and concerned, Wade puts her arm around him.

WADE

Quinn, take it easy. It was just a little sting-- from a really big wasp-- but the Professor's not even allergic. He's going to be fine.

Quinn looks up and we see he's stifling laughter, not tears. Wade mock-gasps and gives him a little slap on the arm.

(CONTINUED)

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QUINN

I know it's terrible to laugh. He just looked so funny, holding his rump with both hands, running around in circles, chanting "ow, ow, ow, ow..."

WADE

You're right. You're terrible.

They share a look and, remembering the image, both completely crack up.

Suddenly the lobby doors fly open as the 5-months-pregnant DUCHESS DANIELLE is rushed in, surrounded by EMTs, Secret Service, and her personal aide, LADY MARY.

Onlookers murmur, "It's the Duchess!" and "The Duchess is in crisis!" As Rembrandt crosses toward Quinn and Wade, he's nearly run over by the speeding gurney. Rembrandt locks eyes with the suffering woman.

REMBRANDT

(awestruck)
Danielle?!

Hearing his voice through the haze of her pain, she reaches out for him.

DANIELLE

Rem...

Rembrandt lunges forward to take her hand. Lady Mary gasps. Guards instinctively restrain the intruder, then upon looking at his face back off apologetically, bowing and addressing him as "Your Grace."

LADY MARY

(shocked)
How did you...?!
(collecting herself, and
with a slight curtsy)
Your Grace.

ANGLE ON Quinn and Wade.

WADE

(re Danielle)
Who's she?

QUINN

I have no idea.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED 2

Quinn and Wade move to follow Rembrandt, but a guard steps in to block their way.

WADE
Rembrandt, wait!

REMBRANDT
(calling as he runs)
Can't! I'll be right back!

GUARD
Forgive me, Your Grace. I didn't
know they were with you.

The guard steps aside, allowing Quinn and Wade through. They share a look which says, "That was weird," and hurry after Rembrandt and the speeding gurney.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR

Rushing alongside the gurney:

QUINN
What's happening?

LADY MARY
The Duchess went into crisis
earlier than expected.
(to Rembrandt)
Thank heavens you've arrived to
take part in the transfer.

DANIELLE
(with difficulty)
See, Lady Mary? I told you he'd
never lea...

Danielle gasps in pain. Rembrandt squeezes her hand.

REMBRANDT
Hush now. I'm not gonna leave your
side.

NURSE
(to Rembrandt)
Forgive me, Your Grace. I need to
know if you've taken any drugs or
alcohol in the last twenty-four
hours.

REMBRANDT
No. Nothing. I didn't even get to
eat my apple.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

As they reach the opening O.R. doors, the guards and Lady Mary drop back and let surgical personnel pull the gurney inside. The nurse stops Rembrandt.

REMBRANDT
(letting go of her hand)
Hang on, Baby. It'll be all right.

NURSE
If you'll follow me, Sir. You'll
be prepped in the adjacent room.

REMBRANDT
Let's go.

Rembrandt is already unbuttoning his cuffs and rolling up his sleeves. Quinn pushes through the waiting guards and takes Rembrandt by the arm.

QUINN
Wait. How do you even know you and
this woman are the same blood type?

REMBRANDT
We were on our world.
(looking him in the eye)
She and I have been through this
before.

Rembrandt disappears into the adjacent room with the nurse. Quinn and Wade share a helpless look. Wade turns to Lady Mary who is staring through a window into the O.R.

WADE
Excuse me.
(off no response)
Um, I was just wondering... how
much blood do you think they're
going to need to transfer?

Lady Mary turns to face Wade, daggers in her eyes. Wade reacts.

LADY MARY
(you idiot)
What blood? They're transferring
the baby.

As this registers on Wade's and Quinn's faces, we

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. HOSPITAL LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

CLOSE ON THE WAITING ROOM TELEVISION

ANCHORWOMAN

We have just received word that Danielle, Duchess of Hemmingshire, cousin of our late Queen Sally, is suffering an early Crisis.

The news cuts to an OFFICIAL PHOTO of Duchess Danielle and Duke Rembrandt (his hair is longer and he has a mustache, but it's clearly Rembrandt's double).

ANCHORWOMAN (V.O.)

Though absent from the public eye for weeks, Duke Rembrandt, a commoner before his marriage, arrived just in time to take on the gestation of the future royal.

Continue over BLACK AND WHITE FOOTAGE (like from a security camera) of our Rembrandt moving with the gurney and holding Danielle's hand, Quinn and Wade following closely.

PULL OUT TO REVEAL ARTURO standing in front of the waiting room TV, watching intently. Quinn and Wade approach.

QUINN
Are you okay?

ARTURO
Fine.

WADE
You're not going to believe...

ARTURO
I already know, Miss Welles. We, apparently, are "live and on the scene."

QUINN
It's weird enough that they think he's the Duke, but what kind of world puts babies in men?

Wade would answer that-- it sounds like a good idea to her-- but their attention is drawn back to:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

ANCHORWOMAN (V.O.)

We go now to Jefferson Memorial Hospital where Deputy Master of the Royal Household, George Stellos is first arriving.

ON TV: GEORGE STELLOS (30, handsome, conservatively dressed, unflusterable) walks briskly through the throng of reporters. He's used to having microphones shoved in his face, and speaks calmly and with a smile.

STELLOS

Of course we're pleased to discover the The Duke already here, but hardly surprised. Their royal graces prefer to keep their private lives private, and are not required to disclose itineraries to their staff or the public.

STELLOS bounds through the lobby doors. Guards close in to prevent the eager press from following. Secret Service men fall in step with Stellos, exchanging information as they keep moving. Stellos checks the time on his POCKETWATCH.

CLOSE ON A GOLD MEDALLION that dangles from the watch-fob, cut in an abstract design and with a set-in ruby.

BACK TO SCENE

Arturo, Wade and Quinn watch Stellos and his men cross through and exit into the corridor.

QUINN

We've got to tell them they've got the wrong guy!

Quinn starts after Stellos, but Arturo grabs his arm.

ARTURO

Are you mad?!
 (off their looks-- sotto)
 Announcing that an impostor has penetrated this far inside the royal system, yet bearing no information on the whereabouts of his double, would hardly get Mr. Brown or ourselves out of trouble. This calls for subtlety.

INT. PRE-OP - MOMENTS LATER

As gowned medical personnel bustle around preparing for surgery, Quinn, dressed in scrubs, enters quietly. He pushes a linen cart and keeps his head down.

Rembrandt, wearing a hospital gown and a net over his hair, lies on a gurney with an IV in his arm. The nurse standing over him injects something from a needle into the IV line.

REMBRANDT

Seems like an awful lot of fuss for
a little transfuse... transfoozh...

Rembrandt touches his lips, trying to figure out why his mouth isn't working right.

NURSE

Transfer, Your Grace. That's just
the sedative doing its job. We'll
be starting in a moment.

She steps away, giving Quinn a chance to move in closer.

REMBRANDT

(stoned)
Q-Ball! How you doin'?

QUINN

Ssh! I gotta get you out of here.

Quinn unhooks the IV bag from its pole, lays it on the gurney next to Rembrandt and kicks unlocked the brakes.

REMBRANDT

Come on in. The water's fine.

QUINN

This is serious, man. They're
about to cut you open and insert
a person. Didn't you think
something was up when they started
calling you Your Grace?

REMBRANDT

Your Grace... Cryin' Man... Who
cares what my fans call me on this
world? As long as I've got my
Danielle back again...

Rembrandt passes out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

QUINN
 Oh, no. Stay with me, Man.
 (shaking his shoulder,
 whispering frantically)
 Remmy. Rembrandt! Your Grace?!

The nurse approaches.

NURSE
 (condescendingly)
 Thank you, Orderly, but I'll see to
 the Duke myself.

As she steps in toward Rembrandt's gurney, she's struck by something about Quinn.

NURSE
 Where's your badge?

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

CLOSE ON QUINN'S FACE, pressed up against a wall.

QUINN
 You don't understand...

REVEAL guards holding Quinn at Stellos' command.

STELLOS
 (menacing)
 If torture would help you confess
 your identity, it can be arranged.

Arturo and Wade rush up, not sure what their next plan is, but Lady Mary gets there first.

LADY MARY
 George, let him go.

STELLOS
 Stay out of this, Aunt Mary.

LADY MARY
 He and the girl are friends of the
 Duke's. I heard them speaking.

ARTURO
 (floating this)
 If I may explain, I am Professor
 Maximillian Arturo, personal...
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

ARTURO (CONT'D)
 assistant to the Duke. This is his
 ...nutritionist and... flattened
 like a pancake on the wall... your
 men have his... fitness instructor.

STELLOS
 (suspicious)
 Since when? The Duke barely
 tolerates the mandatory attendants.

WADE
 Well, parenthood changes people.

Wade turns to give Arturo a private look-- that sounded lame even to herself. At Stellos's signal, the guards release Quinn and fall back a couple feet, but this is not over.

ARTURO
 No harm done. And I'm sure the
 Duke will be pleased to hear of
 your quick and thorough actions to
 ensure his safety.

QUINN
 (rubbing his face,
 irritated)
 So are we clear now?

STELLOS
 For the time being.

ARTURO
 Thank you, my good man.

Still not fully convinced, Stellos moves away to give his guards further instructions. A glance at the Sliders tells us the instructions have to do with keeping an eye on them.

Wade smiles at Lady Mary as a thanks for her help, but Lady Mary ignores her and turns away. Wade reacts.

ARTURO
 (to Quinn)
 Well?

QUINN
 Rembrandt passed out, and I
 couldn't do anything to stop them.

The Nurse bursts through the Pre-Op doors, removing her mask, pleased as punch.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED 2

NURSE

It's a boy!

CUT TO:

ESTABLISHING - EXT. ROYAL MANSION

INT. ROYAL MANSION - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE ON A TV SCREEN

ANCHORWOMAN

At three o'clock this afternoon, the Duchess was safely delivered of a healthy male fetus, which was then successfully placed inside the Duke. Birth is scheduled within the week, as is customary.

REVEAL Wade and Arturo watch a TV that's inside an armoire.

ANCHORMAN (O.S.)

His Majesty King Thomas sent a hearty congratulations to the parents of his new nephew, fourth in the line of royal succession. Long live the King!

ON REMBRANDT, wearing an old fashioned, long nightshirt, asleep under yards of silk and satin in an ornate bed across the room. Quinn sits in a chair near the edge of the bed.

QUINN

I think he's coming out of it.

Arturo crosses to the bed. Wade turns off the TV and shuts the armoire door and follows.

REMBRANDT

(foggy)
Mmm. Hey, guys.

REMBRANDT'S POV as he scans the smiling faces surrounding his bed, starting with Quinn to his left.

QUINN

Welcome back, Man. A lot's gone on since you faded out on me at the hospital.

REMBRANDT'S POV continues across the hillscape of expensive linens to the foot of the bed where Arturo is seen only from mid-chest up (Rembrandt's tummy fills the frame to there).

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

ARTURO

This world is remarkable, Mr. Brown. Two decades ago an epidemic destroyed the female population's ability to gestate beyond the second trimester. Physicians brilliantly devised a way to save mankind with a concept called "shared pregnancy." An artificial womb...

Arturo begins to disappear behind Rembrandt's closing eyelids as the unexpected medical history lesson lulls him back to sleep. Wade takes Remmy's hand and he turns to her at his right.

WADE

The thing is, they think you're your double, and before we could stop them...

REMBRANDT'S POV suddenly shifts back and down to the hill that is his tummy (which should "read" about 6 months here).

REMBRANDT

What the...?!

Rembrandt tries to sit up, but he can't bend in the middle and falls back against the pillows with a head rush. Quinn and Wade help him and put a pillow behind his back.

QUINN

Easy, guy. You've just had major surgery.

REMBRANDT

Tell me that's not what I think it is. Tell me I'm dreaming.
(looking down the front
of his nightshirt)
Tell me that's fat. I beg of you.

ARTURO

I assure you sir, that is a human being, ostensibly conceived by a member of this nation's royal family and your double whom, I might add, is nowhere to be found.

WADE

If you hadn't shown up when you did, this baby would have died.

As this sinks in, Rembrandt looks at and feels his tummy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED 2

REMBRANDT

The child we never had.

QUINN

At the hospital, you said something about you and Danielle having been through something like this on our world...?

REMBRANDT

(avoiding their eyes)

Let's just say we were close... and I don't want to talk about it.

The others react-- that's not like Remmy. But it's clear that the subject is closed.

QUINN

The good news is, gestation accelerates once the male takes over. The doctors say you should be ready to deliver in less than a week. That's plenty of time to make the Slide.

REMBRANDT

(deadly serious)

What do you mean by deliver? There's nothing about that word that sounds like "good news" to me.

There's a knock at the door as it already opens. Danielle enters in a wheelchair pushed by Lady Mary.

DANIELLE

May I come in?

She doesn't have to ask. Arturo bows and Quinn and Wade follow suit. Rembrandt's face relaxes and brightens at the sight of her, he's momentarily forgotten the larger problem.

REMBRANDT

I can't believe it's really you.
(remembering hospital)
Are you okay? Did you get what you needed?

DANIELLE

Of course I did. I got you.

If Rembrandt weren't already in bed, his knees would buckle under him. Danielle addresses the others.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED 3

DANIELLE

I'd like to speak to my husband in private.

Lady Mary curtsies and holds the door open for the others. Quinn, Wade and Arturo exchange looks, uncomfortable about leaving Remmy alone just yet.

REMBRANDT

It's okay. I'll see you later.

Arturo would speak, but is interrupted by Lady Mary clearing her throat as a signal for them to move it. The Sliders reluctantly exit as Danielle and Rembrandt hold hands.

INT. MANSION - ROYAL LIBRARY - NIGHT

It's dark except for the glow from the lit fireplace. Shadows dance on the wall. The SHADOW of figure holding a sword lunges into frame.

QUINN

En garde! Don't toy with me, you saucy wench, lest I slice the bodice right off you with my trusty blade.

WADE

Kinky.

LIGHTS go on revealing Quinn goofing around with a sword. Wade and Arturo stand in the doorway-- loving this. Beet red with embarrassment, Quinn replaces the sword in the wall display whence it came.

QUINN

I, uh, studied fencing in high school.

Wade looks around, and makes herself comfortable on the soft leather sofa. Arturo crosses to admire the portrait of the King hanging over the fireplace. More than thirty years old (there's a date under the signature), it shows a dashing, arrogant, bejeweled monarch at the height of his power. He wears a sword at his belt, and from a ribboned pin hangs a MEDALLION bearing his personal crest.

WADE

Nice digs.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

ARTURO
 (somewhat jealously)
 One does tend to live well when one
 is royal.

QUINN
 (sarcastically)
 Don't get too comfortable. Remmy's
 pregnant with the child of a Duke
 who might show up at any minute.

WADE
 (to Arturo)
 Hear that? Errol Flynn thinks
 we're wasting time.

ARTURO
 News of the transfer has been
 broadcast continuously for the past
 eleven hours. If the Duke were at
 all interested, he would have made
 contact by now.

QUINN
 How do we know he hasn't?

ARTURO
 Because we're still alive.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Danielle's regal bearing is dropped now that she's alone
 with Rembrandt. She speaks quickly and a little nervously
 as she hands him soda crackers to chew one by one. Remmy's
 eyes are closed; he doesn't look good.

DANIELLE
 Morning sickness is normal in the
 first few hours after the transfer.
 You're lucky-- mine lasted two
 months!

REMBRANDT
 (mouth full of crackers)
 I fink iff paffing.

DANIELLE
 (gently)
 I told you it would.

Rembrandt locks eyes with her again.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

REMBRANDT

You're still so beautiful. Just like I remember you.

DANIELLE

Next time don't go away for so long. There's nothing we can't work out together. When the crisis came early and Lady Mary said you wouldn't come back from the camp, I wanted to die.

REMBRANDT

(touching her face)

Danielle, there's something you don't understand. I'm not the man you think I am. And amazing as you are, I know you're not really the girl I once loved...

DANIELLE

(emotionally)

No, Rem... I know this was just supposed to be until the baby's safe, but please, let's try again. I love you!

Before Rembrandt can get a word in, Danielle embraces him and they dissolve into kisses.

CHURCH BELLS are heard in the distance, almost as if they're in the lovers' heads.

A KNOCK at the door.

STELLOS (O.S.)

Your Grace, forgive me.

So moved by the kiss, Rembrandt didn't hear the knock and doesn't know why Danielle is stopping. With a sigh, Danielle shifts back into her royal demeanor.

DANIELLE

(demanding)

Yes, what is it?

Stellos enters and bows.

STELLOS

My apologies, Your Grace, but there is grave news.

INT. ROYAL KITCHEN - NIGHT

PAN along a Dagwood Bumstead-like spread of food covering the long kitchen table, at the head of which is Arturo, in bathrobe and nightcap, gnawing on a turkey leg like Henry VIII. Quinn appears at the doorway, desperation in his face.

ARTURO

Rembrandt?

QUINN

Worse.

Quinn spots the kitchen TV and crosses to turn it on.

CLOSE ON TV SCREEN

Chyron indicates this is a live, emergency broadcast.

ANCHORMAN

The plane went down on return from a goodwill mission to the recently settled Middle East. Bodies of the King, Princes and most of the flight crew have been recovered. The bodies of the pilot and co-pilot have not been found.

(removing his glasses)

I repeat, His Majesty King Thomas and the three immediate members of the royal family are dead.

Quinn and Arturo bolt from the kitchen.

INT. HALLWAY - LOOKING INTO MASTER BEDROOM

Quinn and Arturo pull to a stop near Wade who is watching from the doorway. Staff, guards, Lady Mary, Stellos, all bow to the Duchess and stunned Rembrandt.

ANCHORMAN (O.S.)

The new King of America is the unborn male currently in secondary gestation inside Rembrandt, Duke of Hemmingshire.

Rembrandt looks up helplessly from amid the subjects, locks eyes with the Sliders, points to his big tummy.

REMBRANDT

The King!

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - MORNING

Empty room. A KNOCK at the door. Quinn opens it, peeks in, enters with Wade and Arturo, and closes it behind them.

QUINN

The Crying Man pregnant with a King. This world is too weird.

WADE

This world is great! It's about time men shared the burden as well as the joys of childbearing. It took courage and sensitivity to accept that responsibility.

ARTURO

Yes, nothing like the threat of extinction to make men rise to the occasion of nausea, heartburn and stretchmarks.

We hear a TOILET FLUSH. Rembrandt comes out of a door within the bedroom wearing a silk robe over his nightshirt. His stomach seems to have grown overnight (read 7 months now). He walks toes-out, one hand on his lower back for support.

REMBRANDT

Over here fellas.

(re bathroom)

Maybe I ought to just move the bed in there, but then I wouldn't get any exercise at all.

WADE

Where's the Queen Mother?

ARTURO

(with a look at Wade)

She means Danielle.

REMBRANDT

She shoo'd everybody out of here around three a.m. so I could get some sleep.

QUINN

All I could find out about the real Duke was that he and the Duchess were having marital problems.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

WADE

There's a scullery maid who says.
Lady Mary started a rumor that she
and the Duke were having an affair.

REMBRANDT

My double and that sourpuss?
(off their looks)
Oh, with the maid. I get it, I get
it.

QUINN

This shared pregnancy thing still
gives me the willies, but what kind
of guy would take off right before
his kid was due?

REMBRANDT

I know I used to take long-- and I
mean long walks when relationship
stuff got hairy. Maybe my double's
doing the same dumb thing.

QUINN

It's not so dumb. Royalty is a lot
to take, especially if you weren't
born to it. Remember how tense it
was with Princess Diana and Prince
Charles on our world?

WADE

Yeah, but that was two years ago.
I'm sure they've patched things up
by now.

Rembrandt picks up a framed photo from the nightstand and
hands it to Quinn.

REMBRANDT

Look at this.

CLOSE ON PHOTO

Rembrandt 2 and Danielle in happier days. On a beach with
their arms wrapped around each other as they smile for the
camera. In the background is a large, cabin-style house,
beautiful, surrounded by a second story terrace (deck) and
shadowed by a leafy, green forest. The inscription on the
photo reads:

QUINN

(reading)
Honeymoon at Camp Muir.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED 2

REMBRANDT

Danielle mentioned something about my being at "the camp." You know, the other me.

ARTURO

It's a place to start.

QUINN

Wade and I will check it out. You stay here and look after the little mother.

REMBRANDT

Watch it, Q-Ball.

(beat)

You know, there's one option we haven't considered. I could tell Danielle the truth.

WADE

Excuse me. Does the word "beheading" ring a bell? She's a Duchess, she probably has the authority to do it herself.

REMBRANDT

She's not like that. She'd be upset, but she wouldn't go nuts on us. Not my Danielle.

ARTURO

That's precisely the point. She is not your Danielle because this is not your world. You don't know how she would react to the news that her husband is as untrue as the tabloids make him out to be, and the man carrying her child is an impostor. You don't know...

REMBRANDT

I know Danielle. On this or any other world, I know her.

EXT. PRIVATE GARDEN - MORNING

Danielle sits on a beautifully carved and cushioned love-seat suspended from a huge, flowering tree. She looks out over the luscious royal gardens which stretch out for acres (CGI) including a maze of tall hedges. When Rembrandt sits down beside her, she relaxes into his arms like it's the most natural thing in the world.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

REMBRANDT

I knew if this place had a garden
I'd find you in it.

DANIELLE

If? I guess everything does seem
strange now that our baby has the
top job.

REMBRANDT

I'm still adjusting to the idea
of our baby. It's all happening
so fast.

DANIELLE

I know this is your worst nightmare
come true, but I promise not to let
it hurt our family. It won't be
easy, but we owe it to ourselves
and to our son... the King.

REMBRANDT

Our son the King.
(it hits him again)
Oh, Danielle. Of all the dreams
I've dreamed of you and me, this
one never crossed by mind.

DANIELLE

(clinging, in a whisper)
Don't leave me again.

REMBRANDT

I have to...

Danielle gasps and pulls away. Rembrandt gently holds her
arms and looks her in the eye.

REMBRANDT

... not for the reason you think. I
know it's terrible timing, but--
(slowly)
I am not your husband. I look like
him because I'm his double. This
sounds crazy even to me, but I am
from a parallel dimension. There
are lots of worlds, and on mine,
you and I...

DANIELLE

(pulling away)
How can you play these games with
me?!

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED 2

DANIELLE (CONT'D)

(a new thought)

Is it...? Maybe it's the hormones making you feel this way.

REMBRANDT

No, Darling. I know it's hard to accept, but I have no cause to lie. You think I want to give you up again?!

DANIELLE

Stop it! You're sick and you're cruel and I won't listen anymore!

Danielle jumps off the swing and runs. Rembrandt tries to follow but can't pull himself out of the now swinging seat.

REMBRANDT

Baby, wait!

EXT. GARDEN - ANOTHER ANGLE - CONTINUOUS

Danielle runs past the maze of hedges on her way toward the mansion. As she exits frame, leaves rustle and out steps LADY MARY, revealing she'd been listening the whole time.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Quinn and Wade pull a rowboat far enough up for it not to float away. Wade consults a map.

WADE

This has to be it. This whole area is marked "Private property of the Crown."

QUINN

On our world it would have been loaded with tourists. It's good to be the King.

EXT. CAMP MUIR - DAY

Quinn and Wade make their way up a path to the cabin from the photo. Wade climbs the porch steps and knocks on the door. No response, but the unlocked door swings slightly open. Wade steps inside.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

WADE

(calling)
Your Grace? Anybody home?

Quinn looks at the woods that stretch behind the cabin.

QUINN

(calling to Wade)
Maybe he went for a walk in the
woo--

Quinn turns back to find himself nose to nose with a RIFLE, at the end of which is REMBRANDT 2.

REMBRANDT 2

You're on private property-- but I guess you already knew that. Well, paparazzi aren't welcome, so take your wristwatch cameras and hidden microphones and row your ass away.

QUINN

I'm not a reporter. I--

Rembrandt 2 COCKS THE TRIGGER. Quinn gulps.

REMBRANDT 2

If there's one good thing I've gotten out of marrying a Duchess, it's diplomatic immunity. I know, how'd you like to try rowing with one arm?

Rembrandt 2 lowers the gun to Quinn's shoulder. Suddenly an OAR comes down onto the Duke's head. He goes down, REVEALING WADE holding the unlikely weapon.

WADE

(shrugs, to Quinn)
He wasn't in the mood to talk.

INT. ROYAL LIBRARY - DAY

Arturo sits in a high backed, winged, leather chair with his feet up on the matching ottoman and puffs on a cigar. A uniformed maid pours cream into his Limoge cup from a silver creamer. A nearby tray is loaded with dome-covered dishes.

ARTURO

... and some of those exquisite roses from the west garden. Yes. Oh, and if you'd be so kind as to
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

ARTURO (CONT'D)
ask the upstairs maid to replace
the pillows on my bed. I am
sensitive to goose feathers and
would prefer eiderdown.

The maid curtsies and exits, revealing Rembrandt on the
sofa, eating ice cream from a huge bowl which rests on his
ever growing tummy.

REMBRANDT
Do you realize you didn't even say
thank you?
(becoming emotional)
You had that poor girl milk one of
the family cows herself so your
cream would be fresh,
(crying now)
and you didn't even tell her how
much you appreciate her hard work.
(abruptly harsh)
And put out that smoke stack around
my baby!

Arturo hides his amusement as he stubs out his cigar.

ARTURO
Mood swings are quite common in the
third trimester, which in your
accelerated state is the equivalent
you have now reached.

REMBRANDT
Shut up and give me some pretzels.

Arturo passes the pretzels, which Rembrandt crumbles up and
sprinkles over his ice cream. Arturo begins lifting domes
on the serving tray, checking out the various goodies.

ARTURO
And let me also give you some
advice about the royal help. Most
have been born and raised in
service. They know no other life.
They love to serve, indeed they
live to serve and would be confused
and hurt if their superiors did not
behave in a superior fashion.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED 2

REMBRANDT
 You know, you're full of...
 (spotting a just
 uncovered dish)
 Strawberries! Ooh, pass me some of
 those.

Arturo does. Danielle enters purposefully, heading for the desk, and stops in her tracks when she sees Rembrandt.

REMBRANDT
 Sweetheart.

Her icy look cuts him off. Arturo rises and bows to the Duchess, then sits back down and sips his tea. Too ensconced in luxury, Arturo is oblivious to the tension between Danielle and Rembrandt.

DANIELLE
 (continuing to the desk)
 I left some documents here.

Never taking his eyes off Danielle, Rembrandt holds his ice cream and pretzel concoction out to Arturo.

REMBRANDT
 Professor, I'd like you to take
 this to the kitchen, please. And
 have them save it in the freezer, I
 may want to finish it later.

ARTURO
 But there are servants to...

Danielle looks up, surprised to hear anyone talking back to her husband. Rembrandt shoots Arturo a look.

ARTURO
 Yes, Your Grace.

Arturo exits, hoist on his own superior petard. Rembrandt turns back to Danielle who gathers papers from the desk.

REMBRANDT
 Will you come sit with me?

DANIELLE
 I have work to do, and you need
 your rest.

Rembrandt takes her by the wrist as she tries to leave.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED 3

REMBRANDT

(gently, but firmly)
You're going to hear this. You
need to hear this.

Danielle sits, prepared to listen but trying to maintain emotional distance.

REMBRANDT

On my world, you and I met when we
were nineteen. I'd never seen
anything so beautiful as you in my
whole life. And I haven't since.

(this is difficult)

One time when we were fighting, you
took the car keys and-- you were
trying to show me how it felt when
I walked out on you. I shouldn't
have let you go. You couldn't even
see through your tears.

Danielle is engrossed. Rembrandt puts his head down for a moment, overwhelmed by guilt-- we know the story gets worse.

REMBRANDT

Praying for you at the hospital,
I still had the boneheaded idea
that we could make it all right.
But it was too late. After you got
well, you couldn't look at me. I
started crying and I didn't stop
until it became a career.

Rembrandt laughs bitterly. Danielle strokes his face, more touched by Remmy's pain than in actual belief.

DANIELLE

I know this story never happened to
us, so why does it make me so sad?

REMBRANDT

(quoting)

As one beneath the starry sky,
you've said and I agree, my sweet,
without you near me I will die
a hundred deaths in each
heartbeat...

DANIELLE

(suddenly spooked)

How do you know that poem?! I
wrote it the first time you walked
out on me, but I changed my mind
and ripped it up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED 4

REMBRANDT
 (driving it home)
 On my world, you mailed it.

A beat while Danielle's mind reels. As the truth sinks in, Danielle puts her hand on Rembrandt's round tummy.

DANIELLE
 (shaky voice)
 Then... where is the father of my child?

EXT. MANSION GATES - NIGHT

Two horses pulling an open carriage bearing the royal insignia arrive at the gate. We see that it's Wade driving, Quinn at her side. A blanket covers whatever's in back.

Inside a guard-booth, the CAPTAIN, who's been on the phone, hangs up and steps outside, signaling the other guards to position themselves in front of the gate, swords ready.

WADE
 We're back! Your directions were great. We found the health food store and got everything we need to satisfy the Duke's cravings without damaging the future king's weight or cholesterol.

The lump beneath the blanket lurches. Quinn reaches a hand back and holds it down.

QUINN
 The fish is really fresh!

WADE
 Yeah, so uh, better let us in so we can get it to the kitchen.

CAPTAIN
 I regret to inform you that you have been denied further access to the mansion by order of the Deputy Master of the Royal Household.

QUINN
 Stellos? Why would he do that?

CAPTAIN
 There was no further communication.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

The Captain returns to his booth and shuts the door, leaving the armed guards ready to stop Quinn and Wade should they try to crash the gate. The blanket lurches again. THUMP!

QUINN

Ow!

Quinn retracts his arm from the back of the carriage and examines and rubs his hand.

REMBRANDT 2 (O.S.)

(from under the blanket)

Smile, pull away, and take a left at the end of the drive.

QUINN

(smiling for the guards,
through gritted teeth)

Oh, now you're on our side?

REMBRANDT (O.S)

(from under blanket)

I have always been on my wife's side.

Wade picks up the reins and backs up the horses.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

The room is dark except for moonlight coming through the curtains. In bed, Rembrandt sings in his sleep.

REMBRANDT

Sleep pretty darling, do not cry.
And I will sing a lullaby-ee....

A BEAM OF LIGHT falls across the bed as the DOOR OPENS.
GLOVED HANDS hold a PILLOW down tight over Rembrandt's face.

EXT. ROYAL GROUNDS - NIGHT

Quinn and Wade follow the Duke through the thick greenery surrounding the mansion.

REMBRANDT 2

If Stellos is against you, you must be okay. That robot manages this house like it's a champion dog kennel. And his witch of an aunt, Lady Mary, never misses a chance to badmouth me to Danielle.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

WADE

She kind of has good reason. I mean, leaving your wife while she's pregnant-- especially here, where she actually needs you physically as well as emotionally.

REMBRANDT 2

Hey, leaving wasn't my idea! It broke my heart! But Lady Mary said Danielle needed to be alone and would send for me when the time came. And what do you mean, "especially here?"

QUINN

We didn't get a chance to tell you everything.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE MASTER BEDROOM

Arturo strolls past carrying more midnight snackery with him. As he passes Rembrandt's doorway, he smiles at the sound of Remmy singing contentedly in his sleep.

REMBRANDT (O.S.)

Rockabye Kinglet, wearing a crown,
don't even know your pop's
Rembrandt Brown...

Arturo is about to move on when the sound becomes MUFFLED, and then changes to CHOKING.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM

Wood splinters and flies as the door crashes in, kicked open by Arturo. A cloaked and hooded figure standing over Remmy drops the pillow and runs, disappearing through a panel in the far wall.

ARTURO

(bellowing)
Quickly, guards!

Arturo rushes to Remmy and makes sure he's breathing. Lights go on all over the mansion. Guards in uniform and others in their nightclothes come running.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

ARTURO

Someone's tried to assassinate the
Duke!

(more quietly, realizing)
And the king!

EXT. WALL

Quinn and Wade and Rembrandt 2 frantically feels around for the secret trigger spot on the ivy covered stone wall.

QUINN
Where is it?!

WADE
Hurry!

REMBRANDT 2

It's here somewhere. Danielle
showed it to me so I could sneak in
to see her before we were married,
when her folks were still alive.

A SLAB OF STONE FLIES OPEN, hitting Rembrandt 2. The dark figure races out, knocking Wade down.

Quinn throws a tackle, taking the figure down. Quinn clearly outsizes the assassin, and it looks like Quinn has him, until the assassin delivers the heel of his boot, full force into Quinn's stomach, and runs, disappearing into the maze of hedges, leaving Quinn curled up in pain.

CLOSE on a GOLD CHAIN hanging from Quinn's clenched fist.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. DUKE'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Rembrandt is sitting up in bed, breathing hard, but okay.
Danielle rushes in, terror in her face.

ARTURO
He's all right, Your Grace.

Danielle brushes past Arturo. In a flash, she's looking
into Remmy's face, feeling his tummy, checking for damage.

REMBRANDT
I'm all right, Baby. I'm okay.

Stellos appears in the doorway, scans the room, then steps
out into the hallway, blocking the door with his body.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Stellos addresses the oncoming staff and guards.

STELLOS
(with a smarmy smile)
False alarm. Their Gracees are
fine. Can't be too cautious when
one is carrying the King, can one?
(to the guards)
You might stand post at either end
of the hallway, just to insure the
Royals' privacy until the door can
be repaired.

The guards acknowledge the order and move off in opposite
directions. Others murmur with relief as they drift back to
their own rooms. Alone, Stellos' smile fades into fury.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Danielle holds Remmy, relieved he's okay. Thinking they'd
never be this close again, Rembrandt breathes her in.

DANIELLE
What happened?!

REMBRANDT
I don't know. I slept through the
whole thing.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

REMBRANDT (CONT'D)

(feeling his tummy)

But I think the baby got in a lick
or two.

Arturo clears his throat on the chance that they've
forgotten they're not alone.

ARTURO

Having grown accustomed to his
Grace' nocturnal vocalizations, I
became concerned when the singing
stopped. Finding the door locked,
I realized the Duke was in danger
and broke it down.

REMBRANDT 2 (O.S.)

I am the Duke.

Rembrandt 2 stands before the hidden panel. Wade & Quinn
stumble out behind him. Arturo immediately moves to the
bedroom door to check the hallway. It's empty. He smiles
and waves to the guards, clearly too far off to see inside
the open bedroom.

ON REMMY, disappointed his double came back. He turns to
Danielle who is already in motion toward her husband.
Before he can speak to her, POW-- she decks him. The
sliders react-- they can't help but be a little impressed.

ARTURO

Not that I approve of that sort of
thing... but she's good.

INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

Stellos stands behind the desk, surrounded by guards who
leave one and two at a time as they receive their orders.

STELLOS

Just to quell staff paranoia, seal
the outer gates and post guards
every fifty feet.

(to another guard)

Should this leak to the press, the
official position is that we have
no idea what they're talking about.

Quinn and Wade enter and wait for the last guard to leave.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

WADE

You're certainly calm for someone who nearly lost his employer, not to mention the future King of America.

QUINN

Yeah, George. You lied to those guards pretty easily without even knowing what's really going on. Or do you?

STELLOS

I beg your pardon. You're the newcomers here. You have the Duke's ear, access to private chambers-- all without my clearance.

WADE

Is that why you tried to keep us out?

STELLOS

Out of where? When?

QUINN

Cut the crap, George. I saw this on you at the hospital.

Quinn holds up the chain he ripped from the assassin's throat. At the end dangles the abstract, rubied medallion we saw earlier on Stellos' watch-fob. Stellos pales.

STELLOS

Where did you get that?

QUINN

From the neck of the assassin. Where did you lose it?

STELLOS

I didn't. It belongs to my aunt.

Stellos produces his medallion, attached to his watch, just where it ought to be. Quinn and Wade are stumped. Stellos takes advantage of the momentary distraction to grab the chain and medallion out of Quinn's hand.

QUINN

Hey, that's evidence!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED 2

STELLOS

Indeed. And I'll keep it until I
know who to trust.

Stellos exits, shaken, staring at the medallion in his hand.
Quinn and Wade suddenly remember.

QUINN/WADE

Double trouble!

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY

Quinn and Wade race to head off Stellos.

QUINN

Wait! There's something we need to
tell you.

WADE

Why don't I go in first and make
sure they're ready for visitors.

Too late. Stellos stops at the open doorway, stunned.

QUINN

(taking a breath)
We can explain.

Quinn and Wade catch up and also stop, stunned, reacting to
what Stellos sees.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

No movement except for the curtains billowing around the
open door to the secret passageway. They're all gone.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CAMP MUIR SHORE - DAWN

Two guards help Lady Mary, Arturo, Danielle, Rembrandt and
Rembrandt 2 off a small boat (just large enough for them to
have been hiding below en route, nothing fancy, no royal
insignia). It takes several people to guide Remmy to safe
footing on the sand. He's bigger than he was the last time
we saw him-- figure eight months here.

REMBRANDT

I still don't feel good about
leaving Wade and Q-Ball behind.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

LADY MARY

They'll be fine. Besides, we had no choice. My lord and lady, the future king... and you, of course, had to be gotten to safety.

Arturo gives Lady Mary a look for failing to mention him.

ARTURO

I concur. We can rely on our companions to help secure the mansion for our safe return.

DANIELLE

Professor Arturo, we are most grateful for your brave and timely aid on behalf of...

(not sure what to call Remmy anymore)

...on our behalf.

REMBRANDT

Yeah, thanks man.

Lady Mary starts up the beach toward the cabin.

LADY MARY

We need only wait for the danger to pass. When the culprit is caught, my nephew will send for us.

REMBRANDT 2

I'm not so sure about your nephew. If he hadn't barred the gate, we might have been there to prevent the murder attempt altogether.

LADY MARY

Don't question my George!
(catching herself)
It's difficult to say what might have been.

Remmy stumbles, Rembrandt 2 moves to help Arturo carry him up the beach. Danielle hangs back to speak to Lady Mary.

DANIELLE

I realize we're all under the greatest strain, but please mind the manner in which you address my husband, the Duke.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED 2

LADY MARY
 Forgive me, Your Grace. I fear
 that even in the current chaos, I
 cannot forgive him for abandoning
 you in your most vulnerable hour.

DANIELLE
 (confiding, with new
 hope)
 I suspect the Duke and I will reach
 a new understanding.

Lady Mary fumes.

LADY MARY
 (pretending to have just
 remembered)
 His Grace's back pillow and rolling
 pin-- that is, the false Duke's--
 They're still on board.

Danielle continues toward the the cabin, the Duke returning
 part way to guide her. We follow Lady Mary back to the
 shore as the Captain jumps down from the boat-- the SAME
 Captain of the Guards that kept Quinn and Wade from entering
 the mansion gates. Lady Mary looks over her shoulder to make
 sure the others are far enough away not to hear.

LADY MARY
 You and your men meet me on the far
 side of the island at noon.

CAPTAIN
 That's six hours. Are you sure
 it's enough time?

LADY MARY
 More than enough.
 (bitterly)
 This task has taken far too long
 already.

Lady Mary looks evilly over her shoulder in the direction of
 the cabin.

INT. CABIN

The two Rembrandts face each other from opposite chairs,
 with Danielle on the sofa in between. Further back, Lady
 Mary sets up tea service. A stairway leads to the upper
 level. Arturo paces, he looks wiped.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

REMBRANDT

Are you all right, Professor?

ARTURO

I should be asking the same of you.
We've been through a hellacious
night, yet you look... radiant.

DANIELLE

It's true. I'm about to drop, and
you seem to be positively glowing.

During the following, Lady Mary quietly pours tea from an elegant pot into cups and hands one to each person in the room. She takes none for herself.

REMBRANDT

I have had some amazing experiences
since I drove my car into that
liquid doughnut. But not one bit
of it compares to the sense of
absolute connectedness that
carrying a baby brings.

Rembrandt rests his hands on his big belly and heaves a contented sigh. The others can't help but giggle as they drink their tea.

REMBRANDT

What?

REMBRANDT 2

I don't know if I'm jealous or
grateful that you're going through
this for me.

REMBRANDT

(been holding this back a
long time)

Well, I advise you to figure it out
soon. 'Cause if you can't treat
this fine woman with the love and
respect she deserves, it's not too
late to disappear permanently and
leave the job to me.

The tension level jumps as Rembrandt 2 rises and crosses the room. With some difficulty, Remmy works his way to the edge of his chair and boosts himself up onto his feet.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED 2

REMBRANDT 2

You hold on now. You may have temporary custody of my child but don't forget for one minute that Danielle is my wife!

Arturo freezes as the two Rembrandts go nose to nose. Lady Mary looks almost hopeful they'll fight. Danielle steps in.

DANIELLE

(to Remmy)
You just sit down with the baby,
(to Rembrandt 2, pointing
him to his chair, also)
and you quit throwing the word "my"
around.

The two Rembrandts obey, but a look between them tells us this isn't over.

DANIELLE

People are trying to kill us and you two want to do this?
(sitting, suddenly tired)
You're acting like a couple of two year olds.

ARTURO

Having nothing to do but wait brings out the worst in everyone. And it has been a long night.
(yawning)
Perhaps it would be best if we all retired for a nap.

LADY MARY

Take your tea with you. It's chamomile. Very soothing.

Teacups in hand, the group starts to move, helping Remmy up the stairs. Danielle turns to address Lady Mary who remains at the bottom of the stairs.

DANIELLE

You take such good care of us.

LADY MARY

(with a deep curtsy)
That is the privilege to which I was born...

Lady Mary remains bowed forward until they're out of frame, then slowly lifts her head and looks up from the bottom of the long staircase.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED 3

LADY MARY

(venomous)
...and the curse.

INT. LIBRARY - DAY INT. MANSION LIBRARY - DAY

Stellos hangs up the desk phone. Wade stands behind him, arms folded. Quinn's perched on the arm of the sofa opposite the desk-- They're not letting Stellos out of their sight.

STELLOS

The carriage was seen leaving the grounds. The police have been alerted. There's no keeping it from the press now.

WADE

Geez, you're more worried about the press than you are about the victims.

QUINN

(wincing, softly)
Don't call them that, Wade.

Wade realizes how ominous the word sounds.

STELLOS

Don't you think I'm concerned too? Whoever took your friends took my aunt, as well.

(looking at medallions)

My Aunt raised me-- I never knew my parents. When I was five, she put one of these around my neck and the other around hers. She said one day it would remind me who I am.

Though still wary of Stellos, Wade steps closer to look at the medallions.

WADE

That's beautiful. They actually fit together to make a new design, so you never forget you're part of something and someone else.

QUINN

Can I see them for a minute?

Stellos hands them to Quinn, who is still sitting on the arm of the sofa, the King's portrait over the fireplace directly behind him over his shoulder.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

Quinn places one medallion directly over the other, and holds the combination up and out at arm's length.

QUINN
 (half to himself)
 Why does this look so familiar?

CLATTER as Stellos' watch and chain fall from his hand and hit the desk. Quinn and Wade turn to see him staring at the combined medallion Quinn holds in the air. Stellos' eyes go wide and the color drains from his face.

WADE
 What is it?

In silent disbelief, Stellos takes the combined medallions from Quinn, and continues past him toward the fireplace.

CLOSE ON THE KING'S PORTRAIT, as Stellos raises the medallions up to it and we see that combined, they're identical to one worn by the king.

QUINN
 The King's personal crest.

WADE
 But I thought only the king himself was allowed to wear that. Or his wife, or his...

Wade "gets it." She looks at Quinn, who nods.

QUINN
 (to Stellos, seriously)
 Or his son.

Stellos is stunned, paralyzed by the sudden, overwhelming realization that his whole life has been a lie, and what this implies about Lady Mary.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CAMP MUIR - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - DAY

The cabin is dark except for a little daylight peeking through the shuttered windows. Lady Mary silently backs out of a room-- a last look inside tells us someone is sleeping there-- and gently closes the door behind her.

She checks up and down the hallway-- all the doors are closed. She opens a closet and removes a large jug.

INT. CAMP MUIR - DOWNSTAIRS - CONTINUOUS

The main room is empty and similarly dark. Lady Mary appears at the top of the stairs, pouring liquid from the jug as she quietly backs down the staircase. We hear the GLUG, GLUG of flowing liquid as she PASSES THROUGH THE FRAME. A MATCH STRIKES off screen. FLAMES tear up the staircase, following the path of the liquid.

ANGLE ON Lady Mary, taking one last, satisfied look at her handiwork. She exits the cabin, closing the door behind her.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. CAMP MUIR - UPSTAIRS - GUEST BEDROOM - DAY

Remmy is tossing and turning in a full sized bed, while Arturo sleeps soundly, though cramped in an overstuffed chaise lounge.

REMBRANDT

(half asleep)

Skip my tea and I still have to pee every five minutes... where's the bathroom...?

(eyes closed, sniffing)

Oh, not again... Professor, put out that damn cigar.

Arturo snorts in his sleep, some part of his brain having heard his name, but unable to wake up.

REMBRANDT

Professor?

Awake now, Remmy sees SMOKE seeping under the closed bedroom door and hears the CRACKLE of the fire outside it.

REMBRANDT

(loud, panicked)

Professor! Fire!

Arturo snorts some more, beginning to respond.

ARTURO

What? Fire? Where?

Arturo sits up, grabbing his head as a wave of pain hits.

ARTURO

Aaagghh!

(seeing the smoke)

Oh dear God!

Arturo leaps up to open the door. FLAMES ROAR and push him back inside the bedroom. He slams the door, looks around for a blanket, and wedges it in the space between the door and the floor.

REMBRANDT

The window!

Arturo runs to help Rembrandt who's already wrestling with the lock on the French doors next to the bed that lead out to the terrace. Arturo holds Remmy back with one arm, and kicks through the jammed door handles. The doors fly open.

EXT. SECOND STORY TERRACE

Remmy and Arturo climb out and run to the next set of French doors. Arturo picks up a wrought iron chair and uses it to smash the doors open.

INT. CABIN - MASTER BEDROOM

This room is already full of smoke. Arturo and Rembrandt rush in to find Danielle and Rembrandt 2 asleep in each others' arms (on top of the covers, fully clothed).

CLOSE ON Rembrandt. It hurts to see Danielle with another man, even if it is his double and her husband.

BACK TO SCENE

ARTURO
Your Grace! Wake up!

REMBRANDT
There's no time for that.

Rembrandt moves to pull Danielle off the bed. Arturo helps him, carrying her out onto the terrace, then heads back for Rembrandt 2.

EXT. TERRACE

Rembrandt kneels over an unconscious Danielle. He shakes her and gently slaps her cheeks.

REMBRANDT
Wake up, Baby. Don't you leave me now!

Arturo deposits the Duke on a chair. He starts to come to on his own, also grabbing his head in a wave of pain.

SMOKE pouring out of the bedroom starts to engulf the terrace. Arturo searches for an escape.

ARTURO
The trellis.

DANIELLE
(coming to)
What... My head...

ARTURO
(instructing Rembrandt 2)
You go first with the Duchess, then together we'll help Rembrandt down.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

REMBRANDT

Aaaagggghhhh!

They turn to see Rembrandt immobilized, doubled over in agony, clutching his stomach and gasping for breath.

CUT TO:

INT. ROYAL MANSION GATES - DAY

Stellos, Quinn and Wade storm out to the Guard booth just as the royal carriage is returning. Stellos accosts the first guard he sees.

STELLOS

(re empty booth)

Why isn't the Captain at his post?

The guard shrugs. Stellos' attention shifts to the carriage driver who steps down and salutes him.

STELLOS

Where did you take them?

DRIVER

Take whom, sir?

Stellos goes for the driver's throat.

STELLOS

Where the hell did my Aunt send you?!

As Wade tries to pull Stellos off the driver, Quinn notices something about the carriage. He runs one finger down the side of it, then licks that finger.

CLOSE ON QUINN

QUINN

I know where they are.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAMP MUIR - A SHORT WHILE LATER

Danielle, coughing a little but basically okay, cradles Rembrandt in her arms on the ground outside the cabin. He writhes in pain, crying, gasping for breath.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

DANIELLE

Look at me Remmy. Look at my eyes.

(He does)

You will make it because I will
not lose you twice.

For a moment we get the feeling that concentrating on
Danielle actually lessens his pain.

Arturo and Rembrandt 2 emerge from the cabin, coughing,
sooty. The smoke still coming from the cabin is thinner and
lighter in color-- the fire is out.

REMBRANDT 2

Why didn't we wake up.

ARTURO

Due to the pounding in our heads, I
suspect drugged tea.

DANIELLE

But Lady Mary made the tea herself.

ARTURO

Precisely, your Grace. And Lady
Mary is no where to be found.

REMBRANDT 2

(to Danielle)

She's the one who sent me here,
saying it was your order, to wait
for word that never came.

As Danielle looks at her husband, realizing their marriage
had been sabotaged, another wave of agony hits Rembrandt.

REMBRANDT

Oooohhhhhh!

DANIELLE

(holding him)

He swallowed so much smoke.

REMBRANDT 2

We all did.

ARTURO

Damage to Rembrandt's lung tissue
must have effected the bloodstream
leading to the unborn child.

(feeling Remmy's belly)

I fear without a surge of fresh
oxygen, the babe will perish.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED 2

Danielle breaks down into sobs, covering her face with her hands. Rembrandt 2, devastated, helpless, holds his wife. Remmy grabs Arturo's wrist. His following lines are through gritted teeth, defying his excruciating pain.

REMBRANDT

No! It's ready. Take... the baby... out!

ARTURO

Mr. Brown. Rembrandt. Even if the fetus is viable, there is no way to deliver it here on this island.

Remmy pulls something out of his pocket. It's the pocket knife he used on the apple in the Teaser. He presses it into Arturo's hand.

ARTURO

(thrown)

I am not a medical doctor... Under the best of circumstances, the chances of your survival...

REMBRANDT

No... time... to argue!

Remmy turns his head toward Danielle and Rembrandt 2. They don't believe what they're hearing.

REMBRANDT

I have felt this baby move inside me... I have felt it's little heartbeat... It's as much mine now, and I have made up my mi--

A new level of pain cuts Remmy off in mid-word. Danielle takes his head in her hands. Rembrandt 2 puts a hand on his shoulder, moved by Remmy's bravery.

REMBRANDT

(to Danielle, re the baby)
Tell him about me.

EXT. BOAT AT SEA - DAY

Quinn, Wade and Stellos hang on to the rails of a speeding motorboat, sea spray drenching their faces, anxiously wishing they could go even faster. They have to yell to hear each other above the motor.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

QUINN

The carriage was coated with salt.
It had to have just come from the
dock.

STELLOS

I should have guessed Camp Muir.

WADE

I still think that's too easy.
Lady Mary knows we found it once,
already.

QUINN

Exactly! Haven't you ever heard
the expression, "to hide in plain
sight?"

As they glide out of frame we see two additional motor boats
are traveling with them.

EXT. CAMP MUIR - DAY

Lady Mary and the Captain trudge through the woods with
their two henchmen.

LADY MARY

(livid)

Why didn't we see the smoke from
sea? Why don't we hear the fire
now?

CAPTAIN

Even if they escaped burning, they
couldn't have left the island.

LADY MARY

I don't care anymore if it looks
like an accident. Find them and
kill them!

They step through the trees to the clearing just as the
motorboat beaches on the sand. Stellos and Quinn leap
overboard along with Wade and several officers (in different
uniforms than the mansion guards). Lady Mary runs out in
front, knowing Stellos won't use force to get through her.

LADY MARY

George! Stop! I did it all for you.
King Thomas swore he'd acknowledge
you and then he threw me aside.
With the last of the Hemmings line

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

LADY MARY (CONT'D)
gone, you will be the next heir.
(shaking his shoulders)
It's not too late!

STELLOS
Too late for what? To lie about
who I am? To kill more people?!
Once the new King is safe, I
promise you'll live the rest of
your life without the freedom to
practice your insane version of
love again.
(ordering his officers)
Take them.

The officers make for Lady Mary and her men. She freezes for a moment, shocked that Stellos would turn on her, then--

LADY MARY
(also an order)
NO!

The Captain and his henchmen charge. Fists and swords fly. Stellos forces himself not to look away as it takes two officers to carry Lady Mary, kicking and screaming, onto the boat and below deck.

Quinn quickly knocks out one of the henchmen and takes his sword. The Captain rushes Quinn, sword raised, smiling like he expects this to be easy. But Quinn's skill surprises him. A few thrusts and parries, and Quinn has the lead, forcing the Captain back and back-- over a tree stump.

The Captain lands on his back, the wind knocked out of him, his sword out of reach in the sand. Quinn presses his sword to the Captain's throat. They're both panting.

CAPTAIN
Do it! If Mary's bastard isn't
crowned, my life is over anyway.

Stellos' officers arrive, haul the Captain to his feet and cuff his hands behind his back.

QUINN
Too easy. You deserve a much
slower reward for your efforts.

INT. CAMP MUIR - SECONDS LATER

Rembrandt is laid out on the dining room table, draped in sheets, surrounded by every lamp in the place-- as prepared for surgery as possible in these circumstances. Danielle and Rembrandt 2 stand by to assist, holding Remmy's hands as much to restrain him for what's about to come as to comfort him. Remmy braces himself.

ARTURO

Are you sure?

REMBRANDT

(looking him in the eye)

Save my son.

As Arturo prepares to make the incision, the door bursts open and in flies Quinn-- roughed up, winded, sword still in hand. He calls outside to the others.

QUINN

They're in here! Hurry!

Officers and medics in white race in and take over Rembrandt's care, starting with an oxygen mask.

CHIEF MEDIC

We can stabilize him for now, and perform the delivery in E.R.

Danielle and Rembrandt 2 follow as Remmy is rushed out on a stretcher. Quinn and Arturo lock eyes in triumph.

ARTURO

(relieved)

You cut it awfully close, Mr. Mallory.

QUINN

(re knife still in Arturo's hand)

Look who's talking.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - THE NEXT DAY

CLOSE ON BABY'S FACE, adorable, if possible in mid-yawn. We hear a TV:

ANCHORWOMAN (O.S.)

The nation celebrates the arrival of the new King, Rembrandt the First.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

PULL BACK to reveal Rembrandt, dressed, lying on the bed, holding the baby and looking into his little face with unspeakable joy.

ANCHORWOMAN (O.S.)
Deputy Master, George Stellos-- in return for his unflinching protection of the crown-- has been appointed Lord High Protector until the King is of age.

PULL BACK FURTHER to reveal Danielle, Rembrandt 2, Quinn, Wade and Arturo surrounding Remmy and admiring the baby.

ANCHORWOMAN (O.S.)
Stellos, the Duke and Duchess, and Young King Rembrandt will move into Monticello Palace as soon as they are ready to travel.

REMBRANDT
(singing to baby)
Golden slumbers fill your eyes.
Smiles await you when you rise.
Sleep pretty darling, do not cry,
and I will sing a lullaby...

REMBRANDT 2
You saved my marriage and the life of my child. How, on this or any other world, can I thank you?

REMBRANDT
That's easy. Love, and protect, and cherish them with all your heart. Stay put! And love them enough for you and me put together.

REMBRANDT 2
You have my word.

Church bells ring in the distance.

REMBRANDT 2
Can I ask you for one more thing?
(Off Remmy's nod)
Can I hold our son?

Smiles and laughs all around. Bittersweet, Remmy passes the baby over with a good-bye kiss on the forehead. Danielle puts her arms around Rembrandt's neck and whispers something into his ear. Remmy laughs, a little sadly. Quinn, Wade and Arturo exchange looks and raised eyebrows wondering what that was about.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED 2

Danielle presses something wrapped in a handkerchief into Rembrandt's hand and kisses him on the cheek. Remmy has to close his eyes at having her so close-- and then she moves away and he is alone.

Arturo opens the doors to the balcony off the hospital room (we buy this because they're royalty). The church bells get louder, along with the sound of the cheering crowd. Danielle and Rembrandt 2 step out to show the new King to the people, who go wild.

THE CROWD

Long live the King!

BACK ON OUR PEOPLE.

REMBRANDT

How much longer we got, Q-Ball?

QUINN

Twenty seconds.

(patting Arturo's tummy)

Good thing we're leaving before someone tries to take a baby out of you!

Astonishment is all that keeps Arturo from throttling Quinn.

WADE

He's just kidding, Professor.

ARTURO

Thank you, Miss Welles. How would I manage without you to decipher Mr. Mallory's sarcasm for me?

WADE

What'd I do?

REMBRANDT

(dying inside)

Can we get out of here? Lord, I hate long goodbyes.

Wade moves in to help Remmy. Quinn aims the timer at the TV which shows the Duke and Duchess holding the baby and waving at the crowd. THE VORTEX OPENS. Rembrandt leans on Wade for support, and together they jump into the vortex. Then Quinn. Arturo takes a last look around. It was nice while it lasted. He jumps. WE SLIDE.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Pretty normal looking world, except there are no cars, trains, or any mode of mechanical transportation in sight. There are no airplanes overhead either, although we see some pretty large birds in the distance.

The VORTEX OPENS and the Sliders emerge on their feet, running a few steps until they can slow down to a stop. Quinn and Arturo look up to see Wade trying to comfort Rembrandt who is weeping inconsolably.

QUINN

(concerned)

Did you get hurt on the slide?

Wade shakes her head and steps back, revealing Rembrandt holding the handkerchief wrapped gift from Danielle.

CLOSE ON a locket with the baby's picture.

BACK TO SCENE

ARTURO

You gave life to a son and a King.
You should be very proud.

QUINN

(re locket picture)

Hey, he's crying, Crying Man!

REMBRANDT

(laughing through his
tears)

I guess some of me rubbed off on
the little guy after all.

Rembrandt's laughter turns into real sobs as he breaks down on Quinn's shoulder. Awkward for a moment, Quinn pats Rembrandt's back a couple times and lets him cry. Until...

Their attention is drawn upwards by another sound of crying. Three stories up, a mother appears to be pushing her toddler out the window.

ARTURO

Oh, no!

QUINN

Stop!

REMBRANDT

Are you crazy?!

WADE

I'll call 9-1-1.

Wade runs for a nearby phone booth, but it's too late. The screaming little girl starts to fall.

Rembrandt runs forward, putting himself directly under the falling girl to try and catch her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

QUINN
No, Rembrandt!
She's too high!

ARTURO
You'll only be
crushed yourself!

Rembrandt doesn't budge. As she's about a yard above Remy's outstretched arms (Quinn and Arturo wince, bracing themselves. Wade can't look.) the little girl SPREADS HER WINGS (CGI) and flies upward-- with great effort at first, then more easily.

LITTLE WINGED GIRL
Look, Mommy! No feet!

As she flies past the mother's window and up into the sky. We now realize that those large birds in the distance are other flying people (CGI).

The Sliders are paralyzed with shock. The mother wipes her brow and smiles down at them. This was at least as hard on her as it was on the little girl, but--

MOTHER
(calling down, shrugging)
It's the only way they learn.

On the Sliders' faces, we

FADE OUT.

THE END