

Act One
Scene Three

A week later. BEVERLY is up, moving, energized. KYM takes notes, a copy of *2 Henry VI* in her hand. When there are moments, she arranges notes and articles and papers in binders, moving back and forth to her laptop.

KYM

And then Margaret, walking around that scene, holding the severed head of her lover, right in front of her husband.

BEVERLY

It's not about parading Suffolk's head in front of Henry.

KYM

I'm not saying that. I'm wondering how she could have loved Suffolk in the first place? He took her prisoner, he made her marry Henry, had an affair with her. And he was, like, way older.

BEVERLY

There's a name for that.

KYM

Pedophilia.

BEVERLY

No, falling in love with— What is it? Prisoners, fjords—

KYM

Stockholm syndrome.

BEVERLY

How the hell do I remember “fjords” and not— We come to love the thing that oppresses us.

KYM

And that's a weakness in Margaret, falling for Suffolk.

BEVERLY

I wouldn't call it a weakness.

KYM

I would.

BEVERLY

Margaret is not weak.

KYM

At that moment, she— Listen: she's wandering around with Suffolk's head, okay? Then the next time she's on stage, five scenes later, no Suffolk and no head. And also no voice. She's silent.

BEVERLY

Silence is not weakness.

KYM

I agree with that. She lets the men talk.

BEVERLY

No, that's— Margaret is grieving.

KYM

She grieved the scene before, with the head. Now she's—

BEVERLY

Kym, listen. You're just encountering this for the first time and the text is very dense. It's easy to get the wrong impression.

KYM

I know, I know, but just—

BEVERLY

Don't forget: I've taught these plays for a hundred and fifty years and you're just reading them for the first time.

KYM

Of course.

BEVERLY

Good.

KYM

But if you hear me out, maybe you can tell me where I'm going wrong.

BEVERLY

I'm happy to do that.

KYM

My reading is, she's not silent because she's grieving. She's letting the men talk. Because she wants to listen. It's not grief and it's not passive. It has a purpose.

BEVERLY

What purpose?

KYM

Henry's talking about he doesn't want to be king. He's talking about he's gonna throw his own friend Somerset in jail to keep York happy, keep his enemy happy.

BEVERLY

Right.

KYM

And Somerset's like, "Yeah, if it keeps the peace, I'll go to jail, blah blah blah." And at the end, Henry tells Margaret, "Come wife, let's in, and learn to govern better." She's "wife," not "queen."

BEVERLY

That's about power. She's supposed to be subservient, but—

KYM

I completely agree. Only now that Suffolk's dead, she's not in love, so she's not weak. She's silent so she can listen, and they're being stupid, and she figures it out: she can govern better. Better than the Henry. Somerset goes to jail because Henry wants him to, but the next time Margaret's on stage, she walks in with Somerset. She busted him out of jail.

BEVERLY

Yes.

KYM

Henry's still trying to suck up to York: "I put the dude in jail for you." And Margaret walks in, like, "F*** you, Henry; f*** you, York; f*** you, patriarchy. I can govern better and this s*** is mine." She's owning.

BEVERLY

She's what?

KYM

Owning. Like, in charge. She's 20, 21 years old; she's telling everybody what they will and won't do. Her silence was not a flaw, it was a transformation. She puts away her love for Suffolk.

BEVERLY

Puts away the— Fjords.

KYM

Stockholm—

BEVERLY [*at “/”*]

Stockholm Syndrome.

KYM

Her lover was her weakness. Now she owns. That’s how I read it.

BEVERLY

I see.

KYM

So, am I missing something? Because this is, like, one of Shakespeare’s first plays, and it’s already a world that women should run. Once they get rid of thinking love is what they’re after, they can “govern better.”

BEVERLY

What you say... It’s...

KYM

It seems, like, completely clear. And if I’m right, I mean, then we should write some of this down, because it’s huge. I can put some of this—

For a moment, BEVERLY is lost, staring forward.

Beverly, are you okay?

BEVERLY

What?

KYM

You looked. For a minute there—

BEVERLY

I’m fine.

KYM

Okay. Good. I just thought, you know, it’d be good to make a note of some of this discussion, in case it’s gonna be useful for the book.

BEVERLY

It’s, Kym— It’s early in the process to start writing. You’re just getting familiar. You might feel differently after you’ve read *Part Three* and *Richard the Third*.

KYM

I read them.

BEVERLY

When?

KYM

I know we're supposed to be doing one play a week, but I got caught up in the story. I mean, she's so powerful here, then by the end, she's the crazy b**** running around *Richard the Third*, cursing everybody. So, if this is supposed to change the way we tell stories of women—

BEVERLY

She leads armies into battle. She defeats York in battle. What more do you need?

KYM

Results. If a character fails, which Margaret does by the end of *Richard/the Third*—

BEVERLY [at “/”]

Okay, okay. Good, good. See, that's where you're— Don't look at the end. That's a logical fallacy, assuming that the way things end is the way they should be.

KYM

Margaret loses her mind.

BEVERLY

No, no. She leaves. She's done with the men and she chooses to go back to France. To “smile.” That's what she says.

KYM

What, that's supposed to be a happy ending?

BEVERLY

Oh, for crissake, Kym, a happy— There's nobody lives who gets a happy ending. Let's get serious for a minute. Let's— t some point, the proteins are going to get so tangled in my brain I won't connect the dots anymore. That's coming. I won't— I'm going to wander through the house at night; I won't know why. I'm going to forget who you are—the newest memories go first. I'm going to forget you helped me write the book. I'm going to think you're some stranger, come into my house to take things from me. I may fall into some very ugly stereotypes and start calling you names my parents used for people who look like you. That's going to be my ending.

KYM

Aren't there are drugs that slow down the—