

This is an abridged version of THE DESIRES OF A KING, a story about the often forgotten romances in the life of James I, one of England's most beloved monarchs.

"Apollo with his songs
Debauched young Hyacinthus...
...It is well known that the King of England
Fucks the Duke of Buckingham."

-Theophile de Viau, poet (1590-1626)

FADE IN:

INT. JAMES' BEDROOM- NIGHT

The trappings of the extravagant room are mostly shrouded in the darkness of night, save an elaborate desk covered in papers that hide its true grandeur. JAMES I, an aged but handsome English monarch in his late 30s, is frantically writing a letter with a quill pen.

JAMES (V.O.)

I desire to live in this world only
for your sake.

He pauses.

JAMES (V.O.)

Is that a little much? No, no.

He continues writing the letter.

INT. JAMES' BEDROOM- DAY

James lies comfortably sleeping in a lush and humongous bed, one befitting the most powerful monarch in Europe. Light is streaming in from the windows revealing the abundance of exquisite leather furniture, gold trappings, and portraits commissioned from the finest painters. All evidence of last night has been scrubbed from the desk. The EARL OF SUSSEX, a young man and member of his royal guard, enters the chamber.

EARL OF SUSSEX

Your majesty, it is half past seven.
The Privy Council wishes to get a jump
on things.

JAMES

(fatigued)

May I tell you something, Thomas, if
you're okay with me abridging your

royal title.

The Earl nods, and James gets up and sits on the edge of his bed, silently stretching and gazing towards the light of the window.

JAMES

My boy, the government of England has been the greatest blessing and the greatest curse ever cast on my person. Do you know why that is?

EARL OF SUSSEX

Why would that be, your majesty?

JAMES

(jovial)

Thomas, you scarce need prostrate yourself with the usage of my titles like the rest of my court.

EARL OF SUSSEX

Then why has the crown been a curse?

The smile faded from James' face.

JAMES

A great many reasons, Thomas. No words can describe the weight of responsibility I bear, the king of two countries.

As the Earl laid out James' clothes, James chuckled.

JAMES

One thing is for sure, the Scottish nobility would give me the courtesy of sleeping in before we talked politics.

As quickly as it had vanished, James' wry smile returned as he prepared to face the difficulties of court life.

INT. THE MEETING CHAMBER

Dressed in proper royal attire, James saunters down to behold another of the elaborately decorated rooms in Apethorpe Palace. It was not a big room, but a quiet one, and one that felt a bit cramped due to the size of the giant hearth and abundance of statues lining its sides. All of the Privy Council is standing beside their seats, save one empty for James and one to his right which had no claimant.

JAMES

Has the chief minister returned from Wales yet? It is difficult to hold a meeting without his fair guidance.

Everyone bowed for the king. WILLIAM SUMMERS, the middle aged Exchequer, was the first to rise and looked uncomfortable.

WILLIAM SUMMERS

Your majesty, we have no knowledge on the comings and goings of the Duke. It seems he opts for his own pleasure over duty, more often than not.

Some members on the council find this comment amusing, but are careful not to make their reactions known.

The DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM, late 20s, suddenly enters the Meeting Room with more swagger and poise than the King. He is the epitome of handsomeness, chivalry, and beauty.

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM

I apologize for my tardiness, your majesty. It was a difficult ride from Cardiff. Your son is well, and sends his regards.

After a quick look around at other council members, the Duke walks up to the king, kisses his hand, and then takes his seat next to him. The rest of the council sits down, following his lead.

JAMES

Your absence is most keenly felt here. So, how is the state of things in Wales? Not too much trouble, I hope.

WILLIAM SUMMERS

Your majesty, if I may please interject-

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM

(interrupting)

-Your majesty, things in Wales are most assuredly splendid and prosperous. Your rule is as strong as our fortifications.

JAMES

Excellent. And tell me, how are our affairs in the New World?

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM
 Jamestown, it is a center of wealth
 and growth. They thrive in their
 continued search for mineral wealth.

WILLIAM SUMMERS
 (agitated)
 With all due respect sir, I called
 this meeting. I would like to run it-

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM
 (interrupting)
 -There is no need to fret James, beg
 pardon, your majesty.

The Duke knows he slipped up by referring to the King by his
 real name. This error is observed by the rest of the council.

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM (CONT'D)
 This is all very abrupt considering
 the present hour. Would your majesty
 be more disposed to go for a brief
 hunt?

JAMES
 Wonderful idea. Indeed, it is too
 early for politics on this beautiful
 day, Mr. Summers.

James stands up, followed suit by the rest of his Privy
 Council with a humiliated William Summers at the rear.

EXT. THE DUKE'S BEDROOM BALCONY- NIGHT

The Duke of Buckingham had been granted a bedroom that was
 perfectly adequate, and featured a balcony covered from the
 outside world by the trees adjacent to the palace. He was now
 shirtless, taking advantage of a rare warm English summer
 night, and reading the newly published King James Bible.

JAMES (O.S)
 You'll catch your death of cold out
 here, George.

James, also donning loose fitting nighttime attire, walked
 over and sat next to The Duke, forcing him to make room.

JAMES
 (teasing)
 It is a relief to forgo your formal
 title. The "Duke of Buckingham." A

little much for me, I think.

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM

If you liked the name George Villiers so much, it was silly to give me all the land.

JAMES

Then what noble would lead my Kingdom? That fool, William Summers? I'd prefer someone I can trust.

The two move closer, the Duke sets down the Bible.

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM

Our behavior is no secret in court. Aren't you afraid?

JAMES

I am their king. Liked or loathed, they know that. I've done what every king must do, I've married and produced children. Heirs.

James clasps the Duke's hand.

JAMES

My duty is done. I have loved my wife, but I have loved a great many more that would make men like William Summers very displeased.

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM

You're referring to me, I suppose?

JAMES

We are on this world but once, George. They will not chronicle our love, it will be remembered as a rumor or a lie spread by our enemies. Gossip.

James wraps his arms around the Duke's head.

JAMES (CONT'D)

But we know our love is anything but a lie.

The two share a passionate kiss.

