RICHIELIEU
So he's gone – and with him any chance I had of catching him with the Queen.

ROCHEFORT
All is not lost. My spies were able to give me other useful information – information, which if made public, would completely discredit Her Majesty.

Go on.

ROCHEFORT
Before he left, the Queen gave Buckingham a parting gift – a token of her love.

Which was...?

ROCHEFORT
The diamond set the King gave her as a birthday present. Twelve glorious diamonds attached to a sash. Imagine how angry the King will be when you tell him she gave it away to her lover.

RICHIELIEU
I cannot bludgeon the King with this news. It must be revealed delicately.

How?

(A spotlight comes up on LOUIS looking at himself in a handheld mirror.)

RICHIELIEU
Your Majesty!

(RICHIELIEU crosses to LOUIS's light. ROCHEFORT watches.)

Cardinal Richelieu.

May I have a word with you?

RICHIELIEU

(Still preening)
Is it important? I'm busy...
RICHELIEU
It’s about the Queen, sire.

LOUIS
What about her? Is she ill?

RICHELIEU
No sire, not that I’m aware of – but she does seem a bit… sad.

LOUIS
Sad? Mon Dieu! What does the woman have to be sad about? She’s married to me!

Yes, but…

LOUIS
She’s the Queen of France!

RICHELIEU
Yes, sire, Nevertheless she seems disconsolate. Perhaps she is homesick?

LOUIS
For Spain?

RICHELIEU
I hear Madrid is quite exciting at this time of year. Lots of parties and balls.

LOUIS
I hate balls. Dancing musses my hair.

RICHELIEU
And yet a ball may be just the thing to lift the Queen’s spirits.

LOUIS
Why should I care about the Queen’s spirits?

RICHELIEU
Sire, if you hope one day to have an heir to the throne, you must pay attention to the Queen’s spirits.

LOUIS
Oh. Right. Is that all?
RICHIELIEU

A ball would also allow the Queen an opportunity to wear the diamond set you gave her on her birthday. Such an exquisite gift. You have such good taste, sire. I have no doubt the Queen would love to show it off.

LOUIS

Very well, Cardinal – I shall throw a ball for my Queen.

RICHIELIEU

And the diamond set?

LOUIS

I shall insist she wear it.

(Special out on LOUIS. RICHIELIEU crosses back to ROCHEFORT.)

ROCHEFORT

Well done. But preparations for a ball take time – time that the Queen will use to send a message to Buckingham asking for the diamonds return.

(RICHIELIEU takes a few steps, considering. Then...)

RICHIELIEU

Wait one moment – Milady!

(Special up on MILADY.)

MILADY

Milady is still in London...

ROCHEFORT

Oui, monsieur – awaiting your orders...

RICHIELIEU

...which are these: she is to host a ball of her own – soon, very soon – and her guest of honor will be none other than the Duke of Buckingham...

(The sound of a ballroom – music, chatter, etc. BUCKINGHAM enters the special wearing the diamond set across his chest.)

BUCKINGHAM

Buckingham, to honor his love, will no doubt wear the diamond set. Milady will dance with him...

(MILADY and BUCKINGHAM begin to dance.)