

ELIZABETH. You. Want to go?

CONSTANCE. More than anything

ELIZABETH (*beat*). But then why. You indicated otherwise

CONSTANCE. I'll indicate what I like

ELIZABETH. It's the date then, your anger, that we're flying out on Sunday –

CONSTANCE. There is no anger. Do you want me to be angry? Do you do it to annoy me?

ELIZABETH. Of course not! I do it to honour the Old Mother

CONSTANCE. You do it to honour the New Mother. Whoever that may be

ELIZABETH. So you think you could do a better job? (*Beat*). Yes you do. I'm sorry, sister. She never picked you

CONSTANCE. No. But then. She never picked you

ELIZABETH (*pause*). This was a mistake

CONSTANCE. What was?

ELIZABETH. We shouldn't fight today, the darkest day of our calendar –

CONSTANCE. What is this meeting about?

PHILIPPA and THERESA enter. PHILIPPA is *unwell*. THERESA is *upset*.

PHILIPPA. Sorry we're late –

ELIZABETH. There's nothing, we're no longer meeting –

PHILIPPA. Theresa was upset so I let her finish my fish fingers

ELIZABETH. What's wrong Theresa?

PHILIPPA. She was under the, misapprehension, she could drive us to the airport

CONSTANCE. Drive us?

THERESA. I didn't realise there was an exam!

PHILIPPA. And she won't sit one in time

THERESA. But I know how to drive now, I know how to drive. I want to be useful

CONSTANCE. Theresa, no offence, I wouldn't get in a car with you to save my life

ELIZABETH. Never mind Theresa. Perhaps an early night will do us good –

CONSTANCE. You called us here for a general council

ELIZABETH. It was just a spiritual, uh, nothing that matters this evening –

PHILIPPA. Is it about Ecuador?

MARY enters, *wheeling in a wooden ballot box*. *It is on the same trolley as the tea and cakes from the first scene*.

THERESA. Mary!

ELIZABETH. No no, not now Mary –

PHILIPPA. What is this?

ELIZABETH. What's what?

MARY. I have brought the ballot box as requested, Acting Mother –

ELIZABETH. No Mary! Thank you. Are you sure I asked for –

MARY. Yes

CONSTANCE. Did you instruct her to. You're planning on holding –

ELIZABETH. A vote. And if we're, all here, good, good

CONSTANCE. You cannot be serious

ELIZABETH. We can't deny, since the, the loss of our Mother, this house has become, disordered. In disarray. If we struggle as sisters, we will struggle even more as pilgrims. And I believed, still believe, we should commit to a new leader –

Run: Wednesday 25th March to Saturday 28th March.

CONSTANCE. No

ELIZABETH. Sooner than we originally intended –

CONSTANCE. On Good Friday?

ELIZABETH. I wrote to the Holy See on Monday and last night I received a reply. We are permitted a vote

CONSTANCE. On Good Friday!

ELIZABETH. These are exceptional circumstances – we fly in two days –

CONSTANCE. And that's hardly an acceptable time either –

ELIZABETH. You told me just now you had no problem with it!

PHILIPPA. But the issue of Sister Patricia –

ELIZABETH. Is no longer an issue. Mary is our solution

CONSTANCE. How is this thing –

ELIZABETH. 'No one may vote in place of another.' But Mary, is no one. She is, no person

CONSTANCE. Disgraceful

ELIZABETH. Yet the Holy See accepts my interpretation. The spirit of the law is to prevent human interference. And Mary, isn't human. She is a conduit. A vessel. She cannot, will not, interfere

CONSTANCE. One of the most important rites of this convent and you want, this thing, to be a part of it

PHILIPPA. Sister Constance. We would need to check with Sister Patricia –

ELIZABETH. I have done so. She approves

CONSTANCE. She's in no right mind –

ELIZABETH. She has passed her vote to Mary

CONSTANCE. Then I vote we put a stop to this

ELIZABETH. So you do permit a vote on Good Friday?

(Beat.) I don't mean to, spring this on you all, but as the Old Mother lay there, as the angels bore witness, we promised, I promised, that the new Mother would take you to Ecuador. Let us cease thinking of Ecuador until a new Mother is chosen

PHILIPPA. What are you saying?

THERESA. Will we not go to Ecuador?

ELIZABETH. Now I didn't say that –

CONSTANCE. You said it just then –

ELIZABETH. I said let's cease thinking of Ecuador until –

CONSTANCE. But we are thinking of it. You've made us think of it all through Lent, all through Holy Week, when our thoughts and prayers should be miles elsewhere. And now you're saying –

ELIZABETH. Fine, yes, we mustn't go till we sort ourselves out

PHILIPPA. We leave in – no

ELIZABETH. So let's sort ourselves out! And I offer myself. To you, to this household. But if there is anybody else who'd like to be considered for the position, they should speak, now

ELIZABETH *stares at* CONSTANCE.

CONSTANCE *stares back. And says nothing.*

Mary, put the box in the centre please

MARY *does so.*

The question that stands before you is, whether I will lead you

THERESA. I've never done it before. Am I, a part of this?

ELIZABETH. Of course you are Theresa! The process is simple. We take turns approaching the box. This side is full of white balls and black balls. If you wish to vote yes, you take a white ball, push it through to the next compartment. If you wish to vote no. I'm sure you can figure that out