

SCENE I.-Before Holyrood.

Before Holyrood, a buzzing crowd waits with anticipation. Among them—soldiers, burgesses, and a preacher—engage in speculative chatter about the fate awaiting Chastelard. Questions and judgments are freely exchanged, reflecting the public's curiosity and outrage toward a man accused of entangling the queen in scandalous intimacy.

One citizen questions whether Chastelard will face the gallows with the same tearful sorrow observed in a recent execution, suggesting a disdain for those who entertain through arts but meet their end in disgrace. Another adds fuel to the fire, hinting at Chastelard's rumored affections with the queen, depicted as brazen and unseemly for their public displays.

As the crowd's conversation deepens, a shared distaste for what they perceive as Chastelard's moral corruption emerges. They scorn his poetry, which they believe to be laced with illicit desires, and criticize the queen's participation in creating such 'music' that they deem suitable only for the damned.

Discussion turns towards the potential company of Priest Black at the execution, revealing a broader contempt for religious figures tainted by association with scandal. The citizens express a visceral dislike for hypocrisy within the church, suggesting a desire for eventual divine retribution.

Amidst the collective vilification, a voice of curiosity arises—a woman in the crowd questions the nature of Chastelard's allure that could captivate a queen. Her inquiry signals a slight shift away from outright condemnation, hinting at the complexity of Chastelard's character and his relationship with the queen.

This snapshot before Holyrood captures a moment of public judgment and spectacle, where the community eagerly awaits the downfall of a man caught in a web of love, poetry, and politics. Their conversations reflect the societal norms and expectations surrounding morality, power, and the arts, serving as a prelude to the tragic end that awaits Chastelard.