

Bess of Hardwick's Letters

Letter ID: 142 (URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=142>)

From: Arbella Stuart;

To: Bess of Hardwick;

Date: [29 January?] 1602/3

Summary: A copy of letter ID 141. Sir Robert Cecil's copy of Arbella Stuart's letter to her grandmother, Bess (dowager countess of Shrewsbury), regarding clandestine dealings to do with a match between her and the young Edward Seymour, Lord Hertford; and a fictional lover.

Archive: Hatfield House, Cecil Papers, 213, fol. A88

Delivery status: to Bess, not sent (i.e. a draft or contemporary copy)

Letter features: Seal intact - no. Ribbon/floss – no.

Other version: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=141>)

Hands: unknown scribe | archivist |

Version: 1.0

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People Associated with Letter 142: Arbella Stuart

Arbella Stuart (1575-1615) was the daughter of Charles Stuart, earl of Lennox (1555/6-1576), and his wife, Bess's daughter, Elizabeth (née Cavendish; 1554-1582). By birth Stuart was cousin to King James VI/I and a potential heir to both the Scottish and English thrones. However, by 1582 both of Stuart's parents were dead and her inheritance passed to Elizabeth I. It is at this point that she moved in with Bess, her grandmother, who petitioned on her behalf (especially to do with her allowance from the queen) and had her highly educated in multiple languages. As she became a young woman, on house arrest for most of her life, Arbella proved a resentful and troublesome resident at Hardwick Hall, from which she devised several bizarre plots of escape (including the fabrication of a fictional lover) - a situation which caused Bess much unwanted stress in her later years (early 1600s). After Bess's death (1608), Arbella married William Seymour in 1610, against King James I's wishes, and she was banished to Durham. She attempted escape, but ended up in the Tower of London, where she fell ill and died in September 1615.

Other letters associated with Arbella Stuart:

8 February 1587/8 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=106>)

[29 January?] 1602/3 (Author)(URL: <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=141>)

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People Associated with Letter 142: Bess of Hardwick

Born Elizabeth Hardwick (in c.1521/2, d. 13 February 1608), the woman known to posterity as Bess of Hardwick married four times during her life, as a result of which her name changed from Hardwick to Barlow (or Barley), Cavendish, St Loe and then finally (when she was countess of Shrewsbury and then dowager countess) Talbot. As one of the five children of John Hardwick (1495-1528) of Hardwick, Derbyshire, and his first wife, Elizabeth (née Leake), Bess had three sisters (Mary, Jane and Alice) and one brother (James). The Hardwicks were established Derbyshire gentry who had inherited a modest manor house and c.400 acres in and around Hardwick. But when John died in 1528, and their lands were seized by the crown, Bess faced hardship. Bess's mother quickly remarried but her new husband, Ralph Leche of Chatsworth, Derbyshire, brought little land or money to the marriage, and three more daughters were born (Bess's half-sisters Elizabeth, Jane and Margaret). Little else is known of Bess's childhood but, while still young, she was married for the first time, to Robert Barlow (or Barley) of Barlow, Derbyshire, sometime in or before 1543. Barlow died in 1544 and Bess received a small inheritance. In 1547 she married the twice-widowed Sir William Cavendish, treasurer of the king's chamber. Bess and Cavendish had eight children, six of whom survived: Frances (1548), Henry (1550), William (1551, from whom the dukes of Devonshire are descended), Charles (1553, from whom the dukes of Newcastle and Portland are descended), Elizabeth (1554) and Mary (1556). Probably due to a mixture of affection and shared social ambition, Bess's second marriage was happy and fortuitous. She was now moving in courtly circles and experiencing (for the first time) considerable wealth. In 1549 Cavendish and Bess bought the estate of Chatsworth, which was held jointly in both their names and which he and then Bess, following Cavendish's death in 1557, ambitiously rebuilt. Soon after her second husband's death, and sometime before Elizabeth I's accession (in 1558), Bess married Sir William St Loe, a wealthy widower of ancient noble pedigree. St Loe was captain of the guard to the young queen and in addition to further improving Bess's finances, he also brought her into the queen's inner circle and she served briefly as a gentlewoman of the queen's privy chamber (in 1559). The marriage seems to have not been without affection; however, the two would have spent most of it apart - he serving the queen in London and Bess mostly at Chatsworth. Upon St Loe's death (probably in 1565), Bess inherited most of the estate. In 1567 Bess married for a final time, to George Talbot, sixth earl of Shrewsbury, one of the richest and most powerful men in England. To consolidate the union of their fortunes, the couple had Bess's eldest son, Henry, marry Shrewsbury's daughter (from his previous marriage), and Shrewsbury's eldest son, Gilbert (later the seventh earl), marry Bess's daughter, Mary. Also around this time, Shrewsbury was appointed to be the keeper of Mary Queen of Scots (from 1568-84). At first, relations between Bess and the Catholic Scottish queen seem to have been amicable; however, relations deteriorated all around as Bess's marriage to Shrewsbury broke down in the 1580s. An infamously nasty and highly public legal battle over estates ensued and finally the courts resolved that Shrewsbury provide Bess with a sizeable income from 1587 onwards (Shrewsbury died in 1590). In 1582, Bess took charge of the upbringing of her orphaned granddaughter, Arbella Stuart (1575-1615), claimant to the English

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and Scottish crowns. In 1587, Bess undertook her remarkable building works at Hardwick: the house now known as Hardwick Old Hall was complete by 1591; next to it, the extraordinary building now known as Hardwick New Hall was complete by 1599 and is one of the greatest architectural ventures of Elizabethan England. It was at Hardwick that Bess spent most of the remainder of her life, much of it devoted to caring for and managing Arbella, who came to loathe her existence in Derbyshire and devised several bizarre plans for her escape (to Bess's great distress). Bess also quarrelled with her eldest son, Henry, and disinherited both him and Arbella in her will. She left most of her estate to her beloved and faithful son, William Cavendish, who continued her great dynasty into the seventeenth century.

Normalised view of Letter 142

I acknowledge my self most bounde to her Majesty for her gracious pardon of my offence which appeareth more disgracefull in her Majesties Eyes, your Ladyship's and those two graue and honorable counsellours by whose lettre it pleaseth her Majesty to reprooue my offence then it yet doth in the opinion of many others vppon whose opinion I haue laydd the foundation of all the rest of my life. Pardonne therefore I beseech your Ladyship if without those Ceremonies, which ether through ignorance or anxietye of mynde, yet distracted between feare and hope I sett downe the trew reasons of this my proceedinge To imploy any much more such base and vnworthy parsons in such a matter had been a blott to my reputation, never to be washed away with floods of repentant teares, if my intent had not been to haue it knowne to her Majesty that such a matter was propounded seriously, and by some desyred, by others not misliked, but vtterly neglected or reiected by my self from the first howre I heard of it till the Last, and not more now then at the first, for all my Lord of Hartfords discourteous dealinge with me whoe haue deserved better at his hands, and therefore restrayninge my freinds I respected I sent such as I thought likeliest to displease his Lordship, though I instructed them not to give his Lordship iust cause of offence, and adventured noe more then I was desyrous they should diuuldge soe it weare without my consent, for in truth I cannot fynde in my hart to disclose the Counsell of any stranger or enemy that ether by their consent, or chanceably commeth to my knowledge if it may be, or if I doe but doubt it may be preiudiciall to them And I thanke God it fell out better then I and my dearest and betrusted whatsoever he be could haue devised or imagyned though we haue bett our braynes about it theise three yeares. The ridiculous and contempteous stile I pray you excuse with the reasons which this gentleman which taught it me alledged before he could perswade me to play the foole in good earnest. It was convenient her Majesty should see and beleive what busye bodyes, vntrew rumours, vniust practises colorable and cunninge devises, are in remote parts against those whom the world vnderstands to be in a sort exiled her Majesties presence vnderdeservedly though themselves be never soe wary or vnwillinge any should soe much as speake of them, and as herein your Ladyshipps wisdome and fydelyty hath been at Least comparable with my Lord of Hartfords, soe I haue many good witnesses and more then for their owne sake I would I had had, that I haue been as precise and circumspect in auoydinge all occasions ether of alluringe or incoraginge any to reveile their affection how, great soever, how respectfully soever, how well soever Loued or liked by my self, and whosoever hath made tryall, what would ether perswade the most verteous Lady or the greatest Lady, for by their commandment I must needes tell your Ladyshipe they will needes say and sweare I am the one of their knowledge, and they could wishe me in the highest degree of her Majesties favour, and putt me in hope if ever I may attayne her Majesties presence I shall receaue the like gracious countenance for all this that ever I haue done. They I say whoe haue made most triall what promises, oathes, vowes, threatninges, vnkyndnesses kyndnes, fayre meanes and fowle, neglect of others, with drawinge of Comfort, Counsell, hope of redresse or any thinge in the world, could constrayne or intize one of my sex, yeares, and hetherto vnhappy fortune, can beare me wittnes that I am to stout to request favour, till I be sure I may Command it, and they take it as a favour

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done to them and not to me of whom they craue not soe much as thanks; I assure your Ladyship nor any thinge but loue in such honorable and Christian sort as I weare to be condemned by your Ladyship especially, if for your Ladyships Comfort and my owne advancement I should still haue reiected or like a deafe Aspe stopped my eares agaynst his voyce whoe never requested any thinge, but was more for my good and honour then his owne. All the iniuryes he could he hath done me, and his creditte beeing as he right well deserves great with her majesty and his friendes may I impute even all my wronges to him, and freely forgive them all whoe haue been his (vnwittinge I am sure) perchance vnwillinge Instrumentes and if they had knowne by whom to what end they weare employed, (as I thinke verie feaw did if any; for secrecy is one of his vertues and I thinke he hath as many as any subiect or forrayne Prince in Europe or more. The only request that I ever made vnto him (many other thinges I haue in rude and vncivill manner bidd him doe and he can take nothinge ill at my hand, but as he protesteth, and I am as sure, as one can be of any mortall creature that he knoweth the vallue of an oath and esteemeth it as the pawne of his sowle, that he would procure my remove from out of your Ladyships Custody, not that I would not thinke my self most happye, to spend all my life vnder your Ladyships governement, but that I cannot rule Loue and ambition in others, as I thanke God I can doe both verii well in my self, and in truth am not infected at all with the Later, nor soe apt to beleive and sodaynly to resolue in soe important a matter, as I was content I should seeme to my Lord of Hartford of purpose and not by errour I protest As I may compare the Loue of this worthy gentleman which I haue already vnrevoubeably accepted and confirmed and will never deny, nor cannot nor will repent whatsoever befall) to gold which hath been soe often purified, that I cannot fynde one fault to vrge iealousye only excepted, soe I haue dealt vnkyndly, shrewdly, prouedly with him, and if any Livinge haue cause to thinke me proude or shrewde it is he whom I haue Loued to well even since I could Loue to hyde any thought woord or deed of myne from him vnlesse it weare to awe him a little when I thought his Loue converted into hate, for I did him the wronge to thinke soe a great whyle, or to make him weary of his iealousye by lettinge him see it was the only way to make me fall out with him, and anger him in the highest degree I could imagyn[e] with my Lord of Hartford I haue dealt soe precisely that it hath nether been in his power to doe me more hurt then reveale all he knew by me, or should haue cause or colour to take any thinge soe kyndly to keepe my Counsell. When I writt I weept and I mervayle it was not perceaued for I could nether forbear weapinge at meale tymes nor in truth day nor night till I had performed my and sett downe in good and orderly sort some of the sevrall[l] devises, and shiftes, which more then one had devised and practised without ether my knowledge, till it was past, or allowance ether for what was past or to come, and this Party whoe trustes me with more then ever I would haue been even the secretest thoughtes of his hart, hath not nor never had soe much as a promise, that I would keepe his counsell. He taught me by the Example of Samuell that one might pretend on errand, and deliver an other with a safe conscience By the Example of Sampson that one might, (and if they be not to foolishe to live in the world) must speake riddles to their friendes, and trye the truth of offered Loue, and vnsuspected friendes in some matter, if they deale vnfaythfully it shall but make their ridiculous mallice appeare to their owne discredit

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and noe manner of hurt to others. He assured me her Majesties offence would be converted into Laughter, when her Majesty should see the honest cunninge of the contriver, to such an end as wilbe highly to her Majesties likinge and your Ladyships and my good many wayes He tould me he would haue me enter into some great action to wynn my self reputation, try her Majesties Loue towards me though nether of vs doubted of it, try what my freindes would doe for me, and how I could imploy my freindes and, servantes, and make strangers to me effect my desyres without beeinge behouldinge to them: and buyldinge my hopes vppon the Rocke lett the wyndes and billowes and tempestes shew that though my buyldinge be Low, yet it is not buylded vppon the sand for then I had been ruyned; but like the wise Architect, who first draweth his plott, and afterwarde make an estimate of his charges givinge some allowance more then he thinkes wilbe needfull, and then fyndinge him self able to goe through cherefully setteth his woorkmen to their severall workes. Soe we did first deliberately consult and after speedily execute that which we knew would for a short tyme be offensive to her Majesty, your Ladyship, the Erle of Hartford and divers others and woorke an effect which I am most assured will be most acceptable to her Majesty and it is even the best service that ever Lady did her Souveraigne and Mistresse. I am more desyrous her Majesty should vnderstand every part and parcell of the devise, every Actour, every action, every woord and siliable of that her Majesty hath vnder my hand or Ihon Goods, then your Ladyship is, because I know more then your Ladyship doth or shall (because it is most for your Ladyship's honour and good it should be soe) till her Majesty be acquaynted and fully satisfied, that I have donne nothings foolishly rashely or falsely, or vnworthy of my self. Therefore I doe humbly thanke her Majesty for that liberty it pleased her Highnes to allow me, by the which I may conferr with my freinds without which I could not discover the truth soe soone and soe well to her Majesty as I trust to doe if it [doe please] her Majesty to allow me the space of one moneth to cleare ... my self in, and liberty to send to any privy counsellour, I will be accomptable to her Majesty but not to your Ladyship, for all that ever I did in my life or ever will doe. And I will reveale some secrett of loue concerninge my self, and some others which wilbe delightfull to her Majesty to vnderstand I will send some to complayne of themselves, I will informe her Majesty of some matters whereof her Majesty hath yet noe manner of suspicion. I will offend noone but my vncler of Shrewsbury, my Aunt and my vncler Charles, and them I will anger, as much as ever they angred me, and make my self as merry at them as the last Lent they did at their owne pleasant device (for soe I take it of the Gentleman with the redd eyes. And if they will as they ought in duty reconcytle themselves to your Ladyships your Ladyship shall command me to forgett all Iniuries they haue done me, one only excepted, and that is the wronges they have done this most worthy Gentleman, for whom I haue already forsaken Parents, kynn and all the world her Majesty onely excepted For I vow as I shall be saued he tells me playnly, he will not offend her Majesty for my sake, and will rather forsake me for ever then incurr her Majesties displeasure, though the tyme be never soe short And therefore though I haue kept his counsell these many yeares, and will doe whylst I liue, if it may be the least hurtfull to him or any of his (for I never did acquaynt any of myne one or other I take God to wittness) soe I thinke it longe till I may lett her Majesty know his name, whoe soe farr exceedeth

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all examples of her Highnes best favoured, that he dare not see nor but by stealth send to her that he loues as well as ever they did any And if it please her Majesty soe to accept of him, I shall thinke my self most happy if her Majesty will grace him with her favour and wynn his hart from me if it be possible, and I will dayly pray for her Majesty and him, that he may dayly deserue her Majesties favour, more and more as I know he will endeavour and if it please her Majesty to give me but libertye to send to him and hear from him (which in truth) I must doe and he will doe, though it offend your Ladyship, and can doe whosoever oversee vs, I will shew your Ladyship every letter of his I shall hereafter receaue, and be content your Ladyship shall reveale all that to your Ladyships knowledge passeth betwixt vs not only to her Majesty but to all the world, for I am soe farr from beeinge ashamed of my choyce, that even for my owne honour sake I could fynde in my hart to reveale him, but that in truth I dare not, without his consent, and he dare not till he haue his pardon for him self and his freinds, signified vnto me by her Majesties lettre, which after I am to send to him and heare from him agayne, and then he shall ether himself by what meanes pleaseth him acquaynt her Majesty with his fearefull presumption, or I will tell your Ladyship vppon condition, it may please your Ladyship to ioyne with me in begginge her Majesties most gracious Pardon to certayne offendours whose pennance shalbe to make confession first to her Majesty and after to your Ladyship how gladly they would haue offended your Ladyship, and how farr they haue offended her Majesty for my sake, and if they receaue the sentence of death out of her Majesties mouth I dare answere for them they shall dye content, but I trust her Highnes will with a smile deryde their follyes, and at one of their hands accept a poore present, I am in hand with for her Majesty give another leaue to deliver a lettre or secrett message to her sacrid Majesty from me her then fully absolued handmayde and give vs all leaue to impart our ioy at her Majesties pardon to vs all, one to an other, and devise the best manner how to represent to her Majesty the ioy we conceaue thereof, and make our selves merry with makeinge our selves perfect in our parts, which for want of conference we haue partly forgotten, and partly vnderstand not, and her Majesty more merry if it please her Highnes to keepe our counsell, and I will instruct them and send them to her Majesty one after an other, and noone livinge shall vnderstand my drift but her Majesty, the noble gentleman (whose name I conceale) and whom it pleaseth them two to aquaynt with out lymitation. One only sute will I make to her Majesty, wherein I most humbly craue your Ladyship to assist and further me, that it that it that it may please her Majesty to suspend her Highnes iudgment of me, till her Majesty see the end, which cannot be soe soone, as I could wishe, for I thinke every mynute longe but shalbe hastned as much as may be, I assure your Ladyship on my fayth, and surcease her displeasure to my selfe, and all those with whom I doubt for my sake her Highnes is offended, and suffer noone of them whose names her Majesty hath vnder my hand to come or send to me, vnles I send for them, and whoe soever come to me at my request or vnsent for, ether I will acquaynt your Ladyship or send them vpp post, or cause them to advertise some privy counsellour, what they doe at my request, to what end I trust I haue fully satisfied your Ladyship that I am nether soe disobedient nor inconsiderate as your Ladyship might thinke me, and because I report many thinges which to your Ladyship seeme impossible your Ladyship next vnder her Majesty shall

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censure all my proceedinges, when your Ladyship by her Majesties gracious lettre or messenger vnfoldeth these darke speaches, which (lett others doe as please them) I will never reveale but to her Majesty, neyther will I presume to present my vnworthy service to her Majesty till it shall please her Highnes., to command it, for some reasons wherewith I will with all speed, advertise her Majesty Whom the Lord blesse and prosper for ever every way.

Arbella Stuart

Lady Arbellas Stuart her first Declaration

A.

Diplomatic view of Letter 142

[Letter Text]

[Letter Text: Notes]

Date

of 1st Declaration [Later editorial note, hand: archivist]

a88 [Item number, hand: archivist]

135/139 [Later editorial note, hand: archivist]

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not nor never had soe much as a promise, that I
would keepe his counsell. He taught me by the Example
of Samuell that one might pretend on errand, and ~
deliver an other wth a safe conscience By the Example
of Sampson that one might, (and if they be not to foolishe
to live in the world) must speake riddles to their friends,
and trye the truth of offered Loue, and vnsuspected friends
in some matter, if they deale vnfaithfully in it shall but
make their ridiculous mallice appeare to their owne
discreditt and noe mat manner of hurt to others. He
assured me her Ma^{ts} offence would be converted into
Laughter, when her Ma^{ty} should see the honest cunninge
of the contriver, to such an end as wilbe highly to her
Ma^{ts} likinge and your La^{ps} and my good many wayes ~
He tould me he would haue me enter into some great action
to wynn my self reputation, try her Ma^{ts} Loue towards
me though nether of vs doubted of it, try what my freinds
would doe for me, and how I could imploy my freinds and,
servants, and make strangers to me effect my desyres
wth out beeing behouldinge to them: and buyldinge my hopes

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vppon the Rocke lett the wynds and billowes and tempests ~
shew that though my buyldinge be Low, yet it is not buylded
vppon the sand

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for then I had been ruyned; but like the wise Architect,
who first draweth his plott, and afterwards make an estimate
of his charges givinge some allowance more then he thinkes
wilbe needfull, and then fyndinge him self able to goe ~
through cherefully setteth his woorkmen to their severall
workes. Soe we did first deliberately consult and after
speedily execute that w^{ch} we knew would for a short tyme
be offensive to her Ma^{ty}, your Ladyship, the Erle of Hartford
and divers others and woorke an effect w^{ch} I am ^{^most^} assured ~
will be most acceptable to her Ma^{ty} and it ^{^is^} even the best
service that ever Lady did her Souveraigne and Mistresse.
I am more desyrous her Ma^{ty} should vnderstand every part
and parcell of the devise, every Actour, every action, every
woord and siliable of that her Ma^{ty} hath vnder my hand
or Ihon Goods, then your La^p is, because I know more
then your La^p doth or shall (because it is most for your La
honour and good it should be soe) till her Ma^{ty} be acquaynted
and fully satisfied, that I have donne nothings foolishly rashely
or falsely, or vnworthy of my self. Therefore I doe
humbly thanke her Ma^{ty} for that liberty it pleased her Highnes
to allow me, by the w^{ch} I may conferr wth my freinds wth out
w^{ch} I could not discover the truth soe soone and soe well
to her Ma^{ty} as I trust to doe if it ... her Ma^{ty} to
allow me the space of one moneth to cleare ... my self in, and
liberty to send to any privy counsellour, I will be accomptable
to her Ma^{ty} but not to your Ladyship, for all that ever I
did in my life or ever will doe. And I will reveale some
secrett of loue concerninge my self, and some others w^{ch}
wilbe delightfull to her Ma^{ty} to vnderstand I will send some
to complayne of themselves, I will informe her Ma^{ty} of some
matters whereof her Ma^{ty} hath yet noe manner of suspicion.
I will offend noone but my vncler of Shrewsbury, my Aunt

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and my vnclē Charles, and them I will anger, as much as
ever they angred me, and make my self as merry at them
as the last Lent they did at their owne pleasant device (for
soe I take it of the Gentleman wth the redd eyes. And
if they

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will as they ought in duty reconcyle themselves to your La^{ps}
your La shall command me to forgett all Iniuryes they haue
done me, one only excepted, and that is the wronges they
haue done this most worthy Gentleman, for whom I ~
haue allready forsaken Parents, kynn and all the world
her Ma^{ty} onely excepted For I vow as I shall be saued
he tells me playnly, he will not offend her Ma^{ty} for my
sake, and will rather forsake me for ever then incurr her
Ma^{ts} displeasure, though the tyme be need never soe short
And therefore though I haue kept his counsell these many
yeares, and will doe whylst I liue, if it may be the ~
least hurtfull to him or any of his (for I never did
acquaynt any of myne one or other I take God to wittness)
soe I thinke it longe till I may lett her Ma^{ty} know his name,
whoe soe farr exceedeth all examples of her Highnes best
favoured, that he dare not see nor but by stealth send
to her that he loues as well as ever they did any And
if it please her Maty soe to accept of him, I shall thinke my
self most happy if her Maty will grace him wth her favour
and wynn his hart from me if it be possible, and I will dayly
pray for her Ma^{ty} and him, that he may dayly deserue ~
her Ma^t's favour, more and more as I know he will endeavour
and if it please her Ma^{ty} to give me but libertye to send
to him and hear from him (w^{ch} in truth) I must doe and
he will doe, though it offend your Ladyship, and can doe whosoe==ever oversee vs, I will shew
your Ladyship every letter of
his I shall hereafter receaue, and be content your Ladyship
shall reveale all that to your La^{ps} knowledge passeth ~
betwixt vs not only to her Ma^{ty} but to all the world,
for I am ^{^soe^} farr from beeinge ashamed of my choyce, that
even for my owne honour sake I could fynde in my hart

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to reveale him, but that in truth I dare not, wth out his consent, and he dare not till he haue his pardon for ~ him self and his freinds, signified vnto me by her Ma^{ts} Ire, w^{ch} after I am to send to him and heare from him agayne, and then he shall ether himself by what meanes pleaseth

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him acquaynt her Ma^{ty} wth his fearefull presumption, or I will tell your Ladyship vpon condition, it may please ~ your La to ioyne wth me in begginge her Ma^{ts} most gracous Pardon to certayne offendours whose pennance shalbe to ~ make confession first to her Ma^{ty} and after to your La how gladly they would haue offended your Ladyship, and how farr they haue offended her Ma^{ty} for my sake, and if they receaue the sentence of death out of her Ma^{ts} mouth I dare answere for them they shall dye content, but I trust her Highnes will wth a smile deryde their faults follyes, ^and^ at one of their hands accept a poore present, I am in hand wth for her Ma^{ty} give another leaue to deliver a Ire or secrett message to her ^sacrid^ Ma^{ty} from me her then fully absolued handmayde and give vs all leaue to impart [*deletion*] our ioy at her Ma^{ts} pardon to vs all, one to an other, and devise the best manner how ~ to represent to her Ma^{ty} the ioy we conceaue thereof, and make our selves merry wth makinge our selves pfect in our parts, w^{ch} for want of conference we haue partly forgotten, and partly vnderstand not, and her Ma^{ty} more merry if it please her Highnes to keepe our counsell, and I will instruct them and send them to her Ma^{ty} one after an other, and noone livinge shall vnderstand my drift but her Ma^{ty}, the noble gentleman (whose name I conceale) and whom it pleaseth them two to aquaynt wth out lymitation. One only sute will I make to her Ma^{ty}, wherein I most humbly craue your La^p to assist and ^further^ ayde me, that it that it that it may please her Ma^{ty} to suspend her Highnes iudgment of me, till her Ma^{ty} see the end, w^{ch} cannot be soe soone, as I could wishe, for I

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thinke every mynute longe but shalbe hastned as much as may be, I assure your La^p on my fayth, and surcease her dspleasure to my selfe, and all those wth whom I doubt for my sake her Highnes is offended, and suffer noone of them whose names her Ma^{ty} hath vnder my hand to come or send to me, vnles I send for them, and whoe soever come to me

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at my request [*deletion*] or vnsent for, ether I will acquaynt your La or send them vpp post, or cause them to advertise some privy counsellour, what they doe at my request, to what end I trust I haue fully satisfied your La that I am nether soe disobedient nor inconsiderate as your Ladyship might thinke me, and because I report many thinges ~ w^{ch} to your La seeme impossible your La next vnder her Ma^{ty} shall censure ^{all} my proceedinges, when your La by her Ma^{ts} gracous lre or messenger vnfoldeth these darke speaches, w^{ch} (lett others doe as please them) I will never reveale but to her Ma^{ty}, neyther will I presume to present my vnworthy service to her Ma^{ty} till it shall please her Highnes., to command it, for some reasons wherewth I will wth all speed, advertise her Ma^{ty} Whom the Lord blesse and prosper for ever every way.

Arbella Stuart

Lady Arbellas ^{Stuart her} first Declara==tion

A.

Version: 1.0