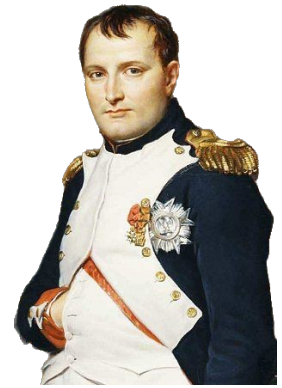




QUEEN TAKES EMPEROR

WRITTEN BY REX MCGREGOR
DIRECTED BY MARGARETA MOIR



Synopsis

After defeating Prussia, Napoleon is imposing a harsh treaty that will halve the size of the kingdom. Queen Louise must exert all her charm to plead for clemency.

Background

Based on the extraordinary 1807 meeting between Queen Louise of Prussia and French Emperor Napoleon I at Tilsit. Queen Louise met with the Emperor to plead (unsuccessfully) for favourable terms after Prussia's disastrous losses in the Napoleonic Wars. She was already well loved by her subjects, but her meeting with Napoleon led Louise to become revered as "the soul of national virtue". Her early death at the age of thirty-four "preserved her youth in the memory of posterity", and caused Napoleon to reportedly remark that the king "has lost his best minister".

Characters

LOUISE, Queen of Prussia, 31
NAPOLEON, Emperor of the French, 37

Place

Prussian headquarters in Tilsit, East Prussia

Time

July 6, 1807



QUEEN TAKES EMPEROR



WRITTEN BY REX MCGREGOR
DIRECTED BY MARGARETA MOIR

LOUISE

You are chopping up our kingdom. Stripping us of half our land. Half our people.

NAPOLEON

A fair summary.

LOUISE

An unfair settlement. Your own minister Talleyrand calls it brutal.

NAPOLEON

Thank you for reminding me. I must replace him.

LOUISE

You are heartless.

NAPOLEON

He'll survive. He always does.

LOUISE

I am talking about your treatment of Prussia.

NAPOLEON

Prussia is getting what she deserves.

LOUISE

For what? Resisting an invasion?

NAPOLEON

I sought peace. You refused. You, personally! I could have handled your weakling husband.

LOUISE

Let us leave Frederick out of this.

NAPOLEON

No chance of mistaking him for Frederick the Great.



QUEEN TAKES EMPEROR



WRITTEN BY REX MCGREGOR
DIRECTED BY MARGARETA MOIR

LOUISE

I ask you as a mother. Would you have us bequeath our son a dismembered inheritance?

NAPOLEON

Save your breath, Madame.

LOUISE

At least leave us our western provinces.

NAPOLEON

No.

LOUISE

At least Magdeburg.

NAPOLEON

With the strongest fortifications around? Do you take me for a fool?

LOUISE

The city means the world to our royal family. I thought you valued family.

NAPOLEON

I do. I've promised to create a kingdom for my brother Jerome.

LOUISE

Out of our land?

NAPOLEON

Everything west of the Elbe.

LOUISE

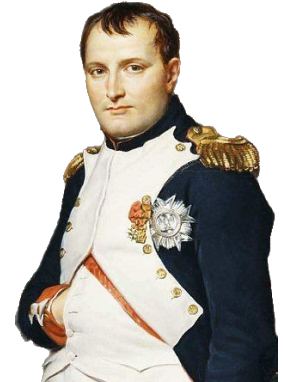
Such an amputation is unheard of!

NAPOLEON

Have you forgotten Poland? Huh? Austria, Russia and your lot carved it up till it vanished.



QUEEN TAKES EMPEROR



WRITTEN BY REX MCGREGOR
DIRECTED BY MARGARETA MOIR

LOUISE

That was before our reign.

NAPOLEON

The Poles still remember.

LOUISE

Your current mistress is Polish, is she not?

NAPOLEON

If one can have a nationality without a nation.

LOUISE

No doubt you also gave her a promise.

NAPOLEON

I may have.

LOUISE

Fine. Take Warsaw. Take Poznań. But leave us Magdeburg!

NAPOLEON

This is no bargaining. I'm already taking Warsaw and Poznań. And a great deal more.

LOUISE

A great deal too much.

NAPOLEON

Count yourself lucky. I'm leaving you Berlin.

LOUISE

You would not dare touch our capital.

NAPOLEON

Wouldn't I? Ha! Ask your friend the Tsar.



QUEEN TAKES EMPEROR



WRITTEN BY REX MCGREGOR
DIRECTED BY MARGARETA MOIR

LOUISE

What do you mean? (Pause.) Sire? What do you mean?

(Pause. Napoleon paces.)

NAPOLEON

When my army marched through your Brandenburg Gate, I admired the chariot statue on top.

LOUISE

So you took it.

NAPOLEON

Sent it to Paris.

LOUISE

This is stale news.

NAPOLEON

Proving I can do what I like with Berlin.

LOUISE

You stole a pile of metal. You could never take our soul.

NAPOLEON

Couldn't I? Couldn't I? Ask your friend the Tsar.

LOUISE

Speak plainly.

NAPOLEON

If you must know, my original plan was to wipe Prussia off the map altogether.

LOUISE

Oh, dear Lord!



QUEEN TAKES EMPEROR

WRITTEN BY REX MCGREGOR
DIRECTED BY MARGARETA MOIR



NAPOLEON

Be grateful your friend dissuaded me.

LOUISE

On his knees?

NAPOLEON

He didn't need to beg. He simply agreed to my demand.

LOUISE

Namely?

NAPOLEON

An alliance. To put the whole of Europe under our control.

LOUISE

So. With this treachery Alexander gains your favour and loses my respect.

NAPOLEON

Negotiating peace is no different from waging war. It's all tactics.

LOUISE

God spare me such cynicism.