

RNIGHT

to
Q
QUEEN

PEACE IS ON THE BOARD



KNIGHT to QUEEN

SYNOPSIS

KNIGHT TO QUEEN (7 MIN 30 SEC, USA)

1417, France. After years of mediating a bitter civil war, Queen Isabeau is a prisoner in her own kingdom. Gambling on the Duke of Burgundy, a ruthless warlord, the Queen searches for a divine sign as the pieces move into play. Based on events described in the 'Chroniques d'Enguerrand de Monstrelet'.



"Focusing on a key but little examined moment of Isabeau of Bavaria's career, Lotfi's visually stunning film shows the queen moving decisively to deal with an impossible situation. Isabeau has so often been faulted for switching sides throughout the war. But by plunging us into the action, the film gives us a new perspective, showing us Isabeau's courage at a time when information was scarce and the government could have been overthrown at any moment."

- TRACY ADAMS, author of *The Life and Afterlife of Isabeau of Bavaria*

FOR FESTIVAL CONSIDERTAION IN ENGLISH AND FRENCH

AVAILABLE FOR EXHIBITION IN ANAMORPHIC CINEMASCOPE

2K DCP

STEREO / 5.1 SURROUND SOUND

4K UHD

STEREO / 5.1 SURROUND SOUND

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

2020 was a surreal year. A text from our DP, David Grauberger with a call to action for a stylized period drama period in anamorphic CinemaScope was even more surreal. At the time, I was two years into research on the civil war dividing 15th century France for a novel. The mystery surrounding Queen Isabeau's captivity and pivotal decision to pick a side offered a rich narrative to compliment David's cinematic quest to test the limits of the newly released RED KOMODO.

Chess and the moving image go hand in hand. Ingmar Bergman's classic *THE SEVENTH SEAL*, centers on a knight playing chess with Death. Netflix's *QUEEN'S GAMBIT*, renewed appreciation for chess in younger audiences. While the classic board game has evolved numerous times over the centuries, strong metaphors of war and strategy remain inherent to the game. In late medieval France, chess was a pastime of the elite. The parallels between the powerful pieces on the board and their real life counterparts is central to *KNIGHT TO QUEEN*.

In *KNIGHT TO QUEEN*, we evoke a crisis of conscience for Queen Isabeau over the moves she instigates. True to the contemporary account, Queen Isabeau schemes to visit Marmoutier Abbey on the Loire River when the Duke of Burgundy arrives in force and turns the tables on her captors. David Grauberger and I were influenced by the cinematography of Adam Arkapaw in *MACBETH* and *THE KING*. We challenged ourselves to tease 'epic' out of every frame, while working with a reduced cast and crew on a Covid-compliant set.

Although *KNIGHT TO QUEEN* was originally conceived as silent film, I still wrote a point of view voice-over for Queen Isabeau to be the cerebral heartbeat of the film. Nearly a year after shooting, Julie Sweum reprised her on-screen role as Queen Isabeau voicing the Queen's unease for English language audiences. With the French translation by Corentin Donneaux, I reunited with a dear filmmaking partner and native-French speaker, Anastasia Cummings, casting Elsa Pérusin to voice Queen Isabeau in French. In a remote recording session over Zoom between France and the US, Elsa performed and recorded her lines in real time. In post, David Baud colored the film in antique gold palette with the color green representing the Queen's tension. My long-time composer, Daniel Vendt, wrote a score filled with haunting tones filled with riveting solos from many period instruments of the era.

The journey of making *KNIGHT TO QUEEN* has been 'illuminated' by strong collaborations at every stage of production. I owe a deep debt of gratitude to the historians and medievalists who have informed and advised our production from around the world, as well as to the cast and crew of old and new friends who have leant their expertise and critical eye to help me realise my vision for *KNIGHT TO QUEEN* or *LA REINE DÉPOUILLÉE*.

SARAH R. LOTFI
WRITER / DIRECTOR





LA REINE DÉPOUILLÉE

The film's French language title is a play on words to the French term for 'the bare king' when only one other chesspiece remains on the board.



@KNIGHTTOQUEENFILM

SARAH R. LOTFI
WRITER/DIRECTOR



DAVID GRAUBERGER
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY



JULIE SWEUM
AS
QUEEN ISABEAU

VOICED IN FRENCH BY
ELSA PÉRUSIN



EVAN CANNON
PRODUCER



LEO ROBADEY
AS
'JOHN THE FEARLESS'
DUKE OF BURGUNDY



DANIEL VENDT
COMPOSER

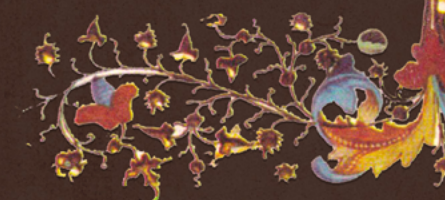


DAVID BAUD, CSI
COLORIST



FRENCH TRANSLATION
BY
CORENTIN DONNEAUX

ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF
'LE LIVRE DU CHEMIN DE LONG ESTUDE'
COURTESY OF
KEVIN BROWNLEE



WWW.KNIGHTTOQUEEN.COM