

THE HAND OF ETHELBERTA

Revision 1

Written by

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Based on,
Thomas Hardy's Novel

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Mrs. Ethelberta Petherwin, a beautiful, and richly dressed young woman of around twenty one years old, exits the front door and saunters out for a late afternoon walk, carrying her parasol.

Two men are watching her as she walks past them, and down the road. One man, sweeping the straw away, is a middle-aged hostler, and the other is Michael, an elderly milkman in his shirtsleeves, waistcoat and long white apron. Michael is carrying two milk buckets on a yoke, which he puts down.

MICHAEL

Dang me, if she bain't be a pretty piece!

The hostler looks faux-shocked at the milkman.

HOSTLER

Michael!.... Pouncing upon young flesh like a carrion crow be a vile thing in an old man!

The young woman, Ethelberta, has stopped to peer into a shop window.

HOSTLER

That figure of fashion a-standing there, be a widder, though she be no more un twenty one years, I'll bet.

He stops sweeping and leans on his broom to gaze, also at the young woman.

MICHAEL

Well, then, 'er can easily wed another, wi 'ER looks!

HOSTLER

Aye, but 'er Mother-in-Law, Lady Petherwin, might have some say in that.

MICHAEL

What's the widder's own family?

HOSTLER

Dang me if I know.....but it's a funny thing, see, cos the other night, she said "Good Evening, John", as she walked past me.

Michael looks at the hostler in disbelief, picks up his pails, and nods a farewell to the hostler.

2.

MICHAEL

Well.....More know Tom Fool than Tom
Fool knows!

Michael walks off.

The hostler stands and looks mystified.

He repeats the saying to himself

HOSTLER

More know Tom Fool than Tom Fool
knows!
(uncertainly)
.....Hahaha!.....

He goes back to his sweeping, shaking his head.

HOSTLER

That's a good 'un!....hahaha!...Tom
Fool!....Tom Fool knows!

Mrs. Petherwin walks gracefully on down the lane, with her
jewelled silks glowing in the afternoon sun.

2

EXT. ANGLEBURY/HEATH - DAY

2

Ethelberta Petherwin wanders, in her walk, across some
meadows near a river and then follows a lane that leads out
onto an open heath.

It is that early dusk when, in summer, the air is golden and
still.

Suddenly a duck flies past very quickly and quite low, chased
by a hawk.

Ethelberta stares, fascinatedly, as the duck flies down into
the gentle valley, below, heading towards a whitely shining
oval of still water.

Ethelberta starts off after them, at a run.

The duck hits the pond and dives under, and, as Ethelberta
runs up, after making one or two desultory circuits in the
air around the pond, the hawk flies away.

Ethelberta sees the poor duck over the far side of the pond.

She walks over towards it, but it flees into some reeds.

Ethelberta looks around at the beautiful scene, sighs at the
beauty of the scene, and then sets off, back up a small
valley.

She walks for a while, and then stops, looks around, and
perceives that she has gone the wrong way.

The twilight is deepening, now, although there is still enough light to see.

Ethelberta comes around a corner and almost bumps into a handsome young man in his mid twenties, in holiday walking clothes and gaiters, with an open necked shirt.

She starts back, not seeing his face, properly, due to his hat brim.

ETHELBERTA

Oh!..... Good evening....Um, could you tell me the way to the Red Lion, please?

CHRISTOPHER

Yes....It's just up that small valley and then turn left at the top and follow the path.

ETHELBERTA

(Surprised)

Ah!.... Mr. Julian!

CHRISTOPHER

(Embarrassed and diffident)

Mrs. Petherwin!....Um,yes.I AM Mr. Julian, although I suppose that matters very little after all these years, and after...you know...hum what's passed.....

Ethelberta looks a little embarrassed, as well, and looks downwards

CHRISTOPHER

Shall I put you in the path?
It's just up there.

ETHELBERTA

(Quietly downcast)

If you please.

CHRISTOPHER

Come with me then.

He sets off up the little valley.

They walk in silence with Christopher leading.

Christopher points down the hill and then stares fixedly at her.

Ethelberta's face is turned a little away.

4.

CHRISTOPHER

That is Anglebury. ... This path goes around that hill, there, and then you will see the town.

She looks up to see him staring at her.

He embarrassedly looks away

ETHELBERTA

Thank you.

CHRISTOPHER

(Sighs) Good Evening, then.

He turns a little away.

ETHELBERTA

Well, goodbye, then - if.....if you're not going to say any more!

CHRISTOPHER

What can I say?..... You aren't mine, now!.....I could forgive a woman doing anything to me except perhaps for well, for marrying for spite...or was it the money?

ETHELBERTA

Christopher.....You knew me only as a governess. You knew little else of me: my background and my motives, so you have no excuse for bitterness.

CHRISTOPHER

(Smiles) Well, PERHAPS I'm bitter, but you are CERTAINLY married, so there's no way, now, that I'm going to discover your background, anyway.....although I do think that I know a lady on hard times when I see one..... I suppose, though, that I can hardly blame a woman born into a wealthy home from attempting to regain that position.

He gives a short laugh.

Ethelberta gives a strange smile.

Christopher holds out his hand.

CHRISTOPHER

Could we, could we,er, perhaps part friends....I... I hope that we may meet again some day.

5.

They shake, briefly.

CHRISTOPHER
Good evening, Mrs. Petherwin.

ETHELBERTA
(Quietly)
Good evening, Christopher

He walks off and Ethelberta, after looking wistfully after him for a second, sighs, and walks off in the direction of Anglebury.

4 INT. ANGLEBURY/RED LION - NIGHT

4

As Ethelberta enters the hallway of the inn, she passes her lady's maid, in an old black silk gown, who has come out of one door and is just about to go into the kitchen area.

Ethelberta nods.

ETHELBERTA
Good evening, Menlove.

Menlove stops.

MENLOVE
Oh, good evening, Ma'am.

ETHELBERTA
Menlove, did you see if any gentleman observed and followed me when I went for my walk, this afternoon?

MENLOVE
(Pertly)
You once told me that I was not to go staring out the window at you, after I had dressed you, as if you were a doll I had just made and sent out for sale.

ETHELBERTA
Oh...um, yes.....(Suddenly)Then did you hear any gentleman arrive here by train, last night?

Menlove looks pertly surprised

MENLOVE
Oh, no, Ma'am.....How could I? I was rinsing the smalls!

A smart, elderly lady passes and looks with shocked disgust at this public reference to smalls.

Ethelberta acts quickly.

ETHELBERTA
(Loudly) Yes, yes!...There ARE some
SMELLS from the drains.

The departing lady looks back, suspiciously at them, as she goes up the open staircase.

Menlove smiles, nods and vanishes through the services door.

5 INT. RED LION/LADY PETHERWIN'S SITTING ROOM - EVENING 5

Lady Petherwin is sitting writing at a desk, as Ethelberta hurries in.

Lady Petherwin looks up.

ETHELBERTA
Hello, Mama! Sorry I'm late.

Ethelberta goes over and kisses Lady Petherwin on the cheek.

LADY PETHERWIN
Where on earth have you been child?
You look quite heated!

ETHELBERTA
Oh, I saw a hawk chase a duck and followed it, and then I became rather lost on the heath.

Lady Petherwin lifts up her hands in horror.

LADY PETHERWIN
Mercy, Child! What a tomboy you are! You might have drowned in that swampy place!.....

Ethelberta is taking off her scarf, hat and jacket.

ETHELBERTA
Oh, a man told me the way, so I was alright, in the end.

She sits down and Lady Petherwin sighs, and frowns, disapprovingly, and starts to write again.

ETHELBERTA
Mother..... You know when you sent me to that finishing school in Bonn, after my husband's death...

LADY PETHERWIN
Um?

ETHELBERTA

Well, then you wrote to me to say that some family we knew had their household broken up, after the father's death...

LADY PETHERWIN

...Do you mean the Julians?

ETHELBERTA

(Disingenuously)

Oh, was that the name?

LADY PETHERWIN

Yes, of course you know!Their boy, Christopher, had a day, or two's fancy for you, just before that summer (soppily smiling)when my poor boy and you became so desperately attached to each other.

ETHELBERTA

Oh, yes.....I remember his sister, Faith, now....His Mother died soon after, in childbirth. It was her thirteenth, I think..... poor woman!.....I wonder where they live, now?

LADY PETHERWIN

I have a dim notion that the son who had not been brought up to a profession, moved to a country town, somewhere, and now works as a music teacher...piano, and that sort of thing....Music was his hobby, you remember.

ETHELBERTA

Oh.

She resumes her writing and Ethelberta gazes at the fire.

LADY PETHERWIN

Ring for cocoa, dear.

Ethelberta looks up

ETHELBERTA

Yes, Mama.

Ethelberta enters her room and rings the bell cord.

She walks up and down in thought until her lady's maid, Menlove enters.

ETHELBERTA

Menlove, will you go down and found out if any gentleman named Mr. Julian has been staying in this inn, please?...And find out his address, will you.

MENLOVE

Yes, Ma'am. ...I'll just tell the landlady yer interested, then.

ETHELBERTA

What?!...No!!..No, don't mention anything..... directly as such, Menlove.....just, just make enquiries, um.. um.. INdirectly.

MENLOVE

Ah, yes.....I'll be sure to tell her as I'm not asking for you, but for someone else.

Ethelberta collapses, irritably into a chair.

ETHELBERTA

(SIGHS)Menlove!...I'm sure you know what I mean!...Don't go to the landlady, at all!Just ask one of the....the under servants...you know!...

ME LOVE

...And don't mention you, Ma'am!

ETHELBERTA

Yes!...I mean, No!...
(Angrily)
Oh!..

Menlove nods, smiles and whisks out.

Ethelberta gets up and paces the room a while, and then Menlove reappears.

She hands Ethelberta a slip of paper.

MENLOVE

It's Upper Street, Sandbourne,
Ma'am!

She nods, raises her eyebrows, implyingly, with a smirk, and Ethelberta glares at the eyebrows.

Whereupon, Menlove looks saucer-eyedly ingenuous, puts her head down, and whisks out again.

Christopher comes into the room, holding a package which he cuts the string from whilst removing his jacket and hat.

He sits down at the table, in the small, homely room, and removes the green book from its brown paper.

He reads the frontispiece: "Metres by E" and looks puzzled.

He quickly reads the poems in the collection and then looks excited.

Christopher looks up and calls for his sister.

CHRISTOPHER

Faith!

Faith comes through from the neighbouring room. She is affectionate, but homely in looks, and around twenty two.

CHRISTOPHER

Have a look at these!

FAITH

Hello, Christopher.

She bends and kisses his cheek.

FAITH

What are they?

CHRISTOPHER

Poems!...And I'm pretty sure that they're from the woman that I was keen on a few years ago...you remember? She married the son of Lord Petherwin.

Faith bends over and starts riffling through the pages.

FAITH

Oh, yes....Well, having cast you aside, all I can say is that it's a bit thick of her to then send you her poems!.....Anyway, how do you know they're hers?

Faith reads the final poem: "Cancelled Words".

CHRISTOPHER

Well, first she was called Ethelberta...as in "E"... , secondly, she was a seriously aspiring dramatist/poetess and thirdly, Well, I bumped into her, again, last summer, in Anglebury, on that short walking holiday I took, remember?

FAITH

Um.....This last one is a very touching poem....Perhaps she still has tender feelings for you...?

CHRISTOPHER

What?...While being married?.....I rather like that last poem,though.

FAITH

So do I!

She smiles up at him.

FAITH

Tea?

8

INT. SANDBOURNE/BOOKSHOP - DAY

8

Christopher is standing at the counter, of a small, old bookshop, talking to a little, elderly man, who is wearing a big, blue apron and has his glasses on top of his head.

BOOKSHOP OWNER

No copy of the book has been sold by me.

CHRISTOPHER

But its packaging tells me that it's been delivered, locally.

The owner looks details up in a big book, running his finger down the lines of information.

BOOKSHOP OWNER

Ummm....The book was only published last week.

He looks up

BOOKSHOP OWNER

Mind you, if it had been published last century, I probably wouldn't have sold it!...Country bookselling is a miserable thing these days.

Christopher looks around at the small, half stocked shop.

CHRISTOPHER

Surely you don't LIVE by your shop?!

The old man leans over the counter and puts his hand flat on Christopher's lapel.

BOOKSHOP OWNER

Sir, I starve by it!

Christopher smiles and nods, sympathetically.

9

INT. SANDBOURNE/POST OFFICE - DAY

9

Christopher comes into the post office on his way to teaching his lessons.

There is a young male clerk putting post into pigeonholes, behind the counter.

The plump, middle-aged postmaster, at the counter, looks up at Christopher who is waving a torn package at him.

CHRISTOPHER

Good Day. Sorry to bother you, but could I ask whose handwriting this is, please? It was sent anonymously to me and I want to thank the giver.

Christopher smooths out the packaging on the counter and the postmaster and his clerk peer at it.

POSTMASTER

No.....Never seen this hand before, sorry.

CLERK

I have.She comes into town every day!

CHRISTOPHER

What does she wear?

CLERK

Uhhh....A white wool jacket..... wi' zig zags of black braid...Dunno 'er name, though.

Christopher smiles

CHRISTOPHER

Thanks...Thank you.

He turns away.

POSTMASTER

Do you want to settle that bill for the special delivery?

CHRISTOPHER

Well, I'm late for the lessons I'm supposed to be giving, so, if you'll forgive me, I'll pop in again later this week...Thank you.

He goes out.

10

EXT. SANDBOURNE/NEARBY MEADOWS - DAY

10

Christopher is returning home at the end of the day. His collar is unbuttoned and his neckerchief hangs loose around his neck.

A pretty young woman comes towards him from the Sandbourne direction. She is wearing a white jacket with black zigzags.

Christopher smiles and nods and the girl does too.

Each goes on their ways.

Christopher looks back, and smiles, with puzzlement. The girl is not Ethelberta.

11

EXT. SANDBOURNE/RIVER FOOTPATH - DAY

11

The same girl, wearing another jacket, comes towards Christopher, who is just getting out a book, from his left pocket.

Christopher smiles, stops, and raises his hat.

The girl, Picotee, seventeen, and diminutive, with a fresh, rosy complexion, stops, smiles briefly and then looks down.

CHRISTOPHER

Excuse me, but have I the pleasure of addressing the author of a book of very melodious poems sent to me the other day?

Picotee rapidly twirls a bit of braid on her costume.

PICOTEE

No, Sir.

CHRISTOPHER

The sender, then, perhaps?

PICOTEE

Yes.

Christopher smiles and nods.

CHRISTOPHER

Ah, yes..... Such an atmosphere as the writer of "Metres by E" seems to breathe would soon spoil cheeks that are fresh and round as lady-apples - eh, little girl?.....But, are you disposed to tell me that writer's name?

Picotee draws herself up, offended by his light tone...and the reference to her plump cheek which she touches, tentatively, in confirmation.

She responds in high dudgeon, with her chin raised.

PICOTEE

No!.....I am NOT disposed to tell the writer's name.

She steps around him and walks away, while he turns around, and, in surprise, watches her leave.

12

EXT. SANDBOURNE/MEADOWS - DAY

12

Montage of accidental meetings along the wide meadow footpath:

Christopher sees Picotee and raises his hat. Picotee nods, coolly and walks on.

Christopher is reading a book and doesn't see her. Picotee has a quick look at him, then looks away, embarrassedly.

Christopher standing looking into the river, while Picotee passes, blushing, unobserved.

Christopher is reading and Picotee, is breathing fast and looks discomposed. She doesn't know where to look as they pass at around four meters distant. He doesn't see her, though.

Christopher isn't reading, so he sees Picotee, but, as he approaches, she is so overcome with embarrassment, that she has to turn around and stand with her back to him, so that he doesn't witness her discomposure. Christopher is a little puzzled, but walks on.

13

EXT. SANDBOURNE/HOUSE THRESHOLD AND MEADOW - DAY

13

Christopher comes out of a door, followed by a middle-aged woman and her late teenaged daughter.

The ladies remain standing on the threshold as Christopher shakes their hands and takes a step down, to descend the front steps.

The girl offers a small posy to Christopher, to thank him.

MOTHER

Well, thank you for Celia's lessons, Mr. Graye. We're sure she'll do well in her auditions for music college, with all of the work you put in.

14.

CELIA
Yes....Thank you.

Christopher takes the flowers and smiles.

CHRISTOPHER
You're very welcome....You have been
a pleasure to teach, Miss Jones....

He bows.

CHRISTOPHER
Thank you, Ladies...Good Afternoon.

LADIES
Goodbye!

He walks away

LADIES
Good bye!

Christopher turns and waves.

Christopher crosses the road, turns into the field and walks
along the footpath, home.

Christopher looks up to see Picotee who, when she sees him,
becomes rigid with embarrassment, which Christopher doesn't
notice.

He bows to her and holds out the posy

CHRISTOPHER
Will you allow me to present these
flowers to you by way of a peace
offering for...for my being so
indelicate as to compliment your
cheeks...um...to your face...um, as it
were....

Picotee takes the posy, lowers her head and mumbles something
inarticulate into it.

CHRISTOPHER
(Heartily)Well, Good Afternoon,
then!

He nods and smiles, then strides away.

Picotee sniffs the posy and then, furtively turns around to
see him go.

She sighs, wistfully, and looks with adoring eyes after him.

Picotee sees a movement, out of the corner of her eyes, and
turns to see the weir man attending to the handle of the
sluice of the river's weir,near to his house.

It is pouring down and two smart young, urban men are sitting, immaculately attired in tweeds, near a fire belonging to the weir man who is sitting a little further away.

A meadow is visible through the wet window and a path goes along it to meet a crossroads.

YOUNG MAN

I say! It's jolly decent of you letting us invade your home fires, and all! We don't want to put you out, you know.

WEIR MAN

Not at all, gentleman. You wouldn't be leaving a dog out in this weather!

YOUNG MAN

You wouldn't happen to have a little grog, or such, would you?

WEIR MAN

Happen I would.

He gets up and fetches a half-opened bottle of whiskey which he deposits on the table and proceeds to dole out.

YOUNG MAN

Oh, good oh!

They see a young woman, Picotee, approach the crossroads near where she often sees Christopher. She stands there, already sodden through, looking anxiously up and down the road.

The weir man nods at her, though the window.

WEIR MAN

Now gentlemen, you be gettin' the chance to see a love-lorn maid await 'er lover....She's a been 'ere several days this last week, but 'e don't come....'e don't come at all.

The young man drinks his whisky.

YOUNG MAN

Sounds a bit of a rotter to me!....Eh, Ladywell?...What do you think?

Ladywell turns from the window

LADYWELL

She'd make an excellent subject for another of my academy paintings...

YOUNG MAN

...And she'd be famous, too, for they all sell!

He turns to the weir man

YOUNG MAN

I say, you wouldn't have any eggs and bacon would you...and perhaps a few mushrooms?

The weir man looks put out and rolls his eyes in exasperation at the demands of the young man.

LADYWELL

(Looking out at Picotee)
Forget food. The rain seems to be lifting. Let's be off for Wyndham House, a change of clothes, and dinner....I'll just give the poor little girl another minute, and then we don't disturb her.

The young man smiles brightly, and looks at the weir man

YOUNG MAN

Oh, well!..... Perhaps just time for a cup of tea, then?

The weir man sighs, melodramatically, and gets heavily to his feet, heading for the cups on the dresser, while giving a backwards look of disgust at the young man.

15 EXT. SANDBOURNE/OUTSIDE OF THE JULIAN'S LODGINGS - EVENING 15

As Christopher returns from a walk, he sees a horse, wagonette and coachman waiting outside of his house.

Faith, his sister rushes towards him.

FAITH

Oh, Christopher! They want us to play for a dance at Wyndham House.....whatever our going rate is!

CHRISTOPHER

Oh!

He turns and looks up at the coachman on the wagonette.

CHRISTOPHER

Hello. Why have you come for us, when there are nearer musicians?

COACHMAN

Oh, one of the guests a-staying at the house, said they was to call for you as you was a gentleman musician and 'ad a sister who was an 'arpist.

FAITH

Which guest asked for us?

COACHMAN

A Mrs. Petherwin, Miss.

FAITH

Ah!

She turns to Christopher with wide eyes.

Then

FAITH

Well!...Go and grab some dance music, Chris! I have my own parts here.....Christmas is overtime rates!!

She smiles up at him

Christopher kisses her forehead and races off upstairs.

Faith turns back to the coachman

FAITH

Please could you go and give him a hand with my harp. We're on the third floor. I'll wait here with the horse.

The coachman nods and starts to descend.

Christopher and Faith exit a dark servants' passage into a dizzying, brightly lit saloon. The footman conducting them, shows them along the wall to a raised dais which has a trellis of ivy and green boughs woven through it, so as to form a screen.

On the dais is a grand piano and two other footmen follow behind bringing Faith's harp.

Christopher and Faith have no sooner seated themselves than the guests come tumbling and laughing into the room. There are around thirty of them.

Faith leaves her harp and comes up to the screen, which is immediately next to Christopher's piano stool.

Faith peers through the screen

FAITH

Which one is Mrs.Petherwin?

CHRISTOPHER

The one with her skirts looped up
with convulvulus flowers, dancing
with that perfumed piece with the
high eyebrows they call Ladywell.
He's an artist, apparently.

The dancers form up into a line and start to look expectantly
at the screened bower, so Faith hurries to her harp, opens
her music and nods to Christopher.

They start playing.

17

INT. WINDWARD HOUSE/SALOON - EVENING

17

Mrs. Petherwin dances with a variety of young men and does
not look at the dais screen.

Finally, she snaps and, in a conversational knot, takes a
break from talking to peer half behind her, through the
screen.

She sees Christopher peering out at her and quickly looks
away, embarrassed at having been caught peering.

Ethelberta is asked to dance, again, and she takes Ladywell's
hand as the dancers start to form sets for quadrilles.

18

INT. WYNDWAY HOUSE/DAIS - EVENING

18

During a break from the dancing, while the dancers are
breaking their old sets up, and slowly reforming a line,
Faith leans forward, smiles and addresses Christopher.

FAITH

Are you remembering when you were
once a dance goer, instead of a
dance player?

CHRISTOPHER

Not really, Faith..... I was
wondering who that little girl was
whom Ethelberta.....Mrs. Petherwin,
sent along to deliver her book to
me....I believe that she's a pupil-
teacher, locally.

FAITH

Hum...We're never likely to find out.

They start the music, again, as the dancers are looking expectantly at the dais.

19

EXT. WYNDWAY HOUSE PARK - DAY

19

Christopher and Faith are being conveyed back to Sandbourne in the wagonette. They are sitting next to the coachman and Christopher is talking with him.

Faith suddenly points to two young women a little distance away.

FAITH

Look! There is one of the dancers!
I think it is your acquaintance,
Christopher. The lady with the red
hair.

Christopher looks at the two ladies, at a little distance in the park.

CHRISTOPHER

Ah, yes. Ette.... Mrs. Petherwin. I
see the morning glory flowers on
her gown.

FAITH

How strange to be chatting at this
hour! One would have thought that
she would collapse in bed, after
dancing all night.

The coachman looks.

COACHMAN

Oh, aye! That be the widder, Mrs.
Petherwin. She be wonderful able to
talk to anyone and she do..... that
one.

CHRISTOPHER

A widow?

COACHMAN

Aye and she lives wi 'er mother-in-
law in London.

CHRISTOPHER

A widow!...

COACHMAN

But she's off, tomorrow, to spend
New Year at Rookington.

CHRISTOPHER

Rookington?

COACHMAN

Rookington Park - about three miles
from Sandbourne.....t'other way un
this.

CHRISTOPHER

(Musingly) A widow!

Faith looks at him, concernedly and squeezes his arm,
affectionately.

FAITH

That makes no difference to us,
does it Christopher?

Christopher smiles and raises his eyebrows.

20

EXT. THE SHORE BY WYNDHAM HOUSE - DAY

20

Ethelberta and Picotee are walking along.

PICOTEE

You shouldn't have come if you've
been up all night.

ETHELBERTA

I couldn't go without seeing you,
Picotee! Besides, I have a couple
of packages, one for you and one
for Mother.

She hands them over.

ETHELBERTA

There's some money in them, too, to
cover your expenses.

Picotee puts the small packages in her reticule and she and
Ethelberta then walk with their arms around each other's
waists.

PICOTEE

Thank you, Ethel.

ETHELBERTA

Well, thankYOU for delivering my
poems to Mr. Julian....Did you like
them?

PICOTEE

Yes, although, naturally, I didn't
understand all of the experiences
which you mentioned....You live in
another world, Ethel!.....Will the
title of Lady Petherwin descend to
you, when your mother-in-law dies?

ETHELBERTA

Of course not! She's only a knight's widow!.....Now be careful not to talk with anyone on the journey back, my dear..... Especially if any man on the train shall try to get familiar.....Has anyone ever tried to pay attentions to you, yet, Picotee?

Ethelberta smiles and peers into Picotee's face.

PICOTEE

No.... Well...that is....(Suddenly bursting out)I am in love with a man!

ETHELBERTA

Why?!.....What has he done?

PICOTEE

That's just it!.....(Mournfully) He hasn't done anything.

ETHELBERTA

(Jocularly rebuking)Picotee!..... You mustn't let him see your interest. No man is ever interested in a woman if he has already got her heart for nothing!

PICOTEE

(Sighs) I know, Ethel.....I know.

She hangs and shakes her head.

She looks up

PICOTEE

Have you a lover?

ETHELBERTA

Well..... I used to have one, and I recently saw him again...I must admit that I have never seen a man whom I hate less.....He was in that carriage that just drove over the hill.

PICOTEE

Ah! A great lord, then.

ETHELBERTA

No. He's only a commoner, as yet. He was the musician that played, last night.

She smiles

ETHELBERTA

It's that Mr. Julian to whom you delivered that book.

Picotee gasps and puts her hands on her chest.

Ethelberta stops.

ETHELBERTA

Are you alright, my dear?

They sit on a log, nearby

PICOTEE

Oh...yes..... I'm just a bit..... overtired.....(Timidly)So you.....you have met Mr. Julian and gone walks with him?

ETHELBERTA

Oh no! Nothing like that. I just accidentally had a few accidental words with him. I am not actually attached...as such.

Picotee nods

PICOTEE

(Sadly)'Tis a delightful middling mind to be in....I, however, had gone way beyond it, before I even realized I was IN it!

ETHELBERTA

You must shake yourself free, my dear...Courage, mon brave!

She smiles, stands up and holds out her hand to her younger sister.

ETHELBERTA

Are you feeling rested, now, Picotee?.....Come on! Let's collect some shells for the little ones, before you have to get the train!

Picotee smiles, takes her hand and stands up.

Mr. Chickereel, the butler, Ethelberta's father, is setting out his writing materials on his little desk. There are the sounds of coming and going of people and faint carriage wheels, outside.

A footman comes in.

FOOTMAN

Did you say "the best silver in the silver cupboard and the second best in the back kitchen dresser, Mr. Chickerel?

CHICKEREL

For the third time...main kitchen dresser!

FOOTMAN 1

Ah!..... Yes!

Footman goes out.

Footsteps. Pause.

Footsteps come back, door reopens and footman's head reappears.

FOOTMAN 1

...And the main kitchen dresser is the one behind the big table...?

CHICKEREL

(Ironically) No. It's the one on the top shelf of the larder!

FOOTMAN 1

IS it?

Chickerel stands up, angrily and shoves his chair back, so the footman hurriedly flies away.

Chickerel sits down again, sighs, and starts writing.

CHICKEREL (V.O.)

My Dear Ethelberta,
The guests are just leaving the dinner party, here, at Mr. Neigh's uncle's house.
The talk was all of your poems. You are famous, my dear, but the funny thing is that they all seem to think that you are older than you are!
This letter is just to say that you are not to pressure, Lady Petherwin to remove the rules on which you live with her. She is quite right: she cannot keep us, and to recognise us would do you no good, nor us either. We are quite content to see you secretly, since it is best for you.

(MORE)

CHICKEREL (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 You will surely get some hard blows
 when you are found out, but your
 youth and health are your power, my
 dear.
 I had better go, now, and
 supervise the tidying up after this
 dinner. I wish that I had a footman
 with half an iota of your common
 sense, Ethelberta. Good Bless you.
 Your affectionate father,
 R. Chickerel

22

INT. THE JULIAN'S LODGINGS/LIVING ROOM - EVENING

22

Julian is seated at the piano playing a lyrical slow,
 beautiful piece.

Faith comes through and stands near to the piano.

FAITH
 What IS that piece, Christopher? You
 sound like you've finished it,
 now?.....It's beautiful.

CHRISTOPHER
 Thank you.....It's that poem, "When
 Tapers Tall".

He stops playing and looks up at her.

FAITH
 Do you think those poems WERE
 Ethelberta's?

CHRISTOPHER
 I've no way of knowing for certain.

Faith goes to the fire and sits down

FAITH
 Well, whosever they were, I think
 that, if they were a woman's, she
 must be rather..... 'fast'...you know.

Christopher comes over and sits down, too.

He looks displeased

CHRISTOPHER
 What?..... You mean, "bold", or
 "forward"?

Faith leans forward and puts her hand upon his knee.

She smiles

FAITH

Christopher...you're not...you're not
falling in love again with that
lady, are you?

Christopher sits back in his armchair and smiles

CHRISTOPHER

Well, if I am, it's as well that I
fall in love with someone whom I
can't marry, isn't it?

Faith frowns and looks into the fire.

FAITH

I don't like to hear you speak
slightingly of what poor Father
did...He still found Mother, didn't
he?

Christopher picks up and starts reading his manuscripts,
nearby.

CHRISTOPHER

Well, whoever I marry, Faith, there
will always be a corner of my heart
left for you!

She smiles up at him.

23

EXT. SANDBOURNE BEACH - DAY

23

Christopher is walking along.

Faith comes hurrying up to him, with a basket, reticule and
two brown parcels.

Christopher takes them off her and she takes his arm.

FAITH

Sorry I took such a time, but the
draper is so slow!...Have you been
waiting long?

CHRISTOPHER

No. I just went to the post office
to post a copy of my music to Mrs.
Petherwin.

They walk back home along the sand.

FAITH

Oh, you know that it's her, now, do
you?

CHRISTOPHER

Yes. It was in the Wessex Reflector, this morning. Apparently, she lives with her mother-in-law, Lady Petherwin in Exonbury Crescent, in London.

FAITH

I hope that she appreciates your song as much as I do.

CHRISTOPHER

Well it seems that 'tall tapers' must be in her blood, anyway, because, apparently, she was the Bishop of Silchester's daughter left in straightened circumstances, after he died.

FAITH

Good grief! Those were passionate effusions for a bishop's daughter!

Christopher smiles and pats Faith's hand, on his arm, as they walk.

24

INT. A BAYSWATER HOUSE/DRAWING ROOM - EVENING

24

Ethelberta is being seated at the piano and is chatting with a couple of ladies.

Two men in their early thirties are talking whilst leaning on the wall.

There are about a dozen people in the room, in evening dress, having finished dinner and talking amongst themselves.

NEIGH

Who is that damned pretty woman at the piano?

COMPANION

Oh, that's Mrs. Petherwin, the poetess. Have you read her stuff, Neigh?...She's a widow, you know and goes about with her mother-in-law, Lady Petherwin.

NEIGH

No....not a poetry reader, myself!

COMPANION

I admire her more reflective pieces.

A middle-aged lady, Mrs. Belmaine, leans over Ethelberta and rootles through several sheets on the piano.

MRS. BELMAINE

So you like this version the best,
dear?

Another middle-aged lady interrupts, picking up some
manuscript from the stand.

LADY 1

This one is in manuscript.....the
others are actually published,
already!

Ethelberta smiles

ETHELBERTA

Oh, this latter is by far the best.

She takes the manuscript back and then plays and sings the
song, When Tapers Tall.

The room falls silent, listening.

NEIGH

(Whispering to companion) By jingo!
The woman is magnificent!

His companion raises his eyebrow.

After the song, Ethelberta rises and joins Mrs. Belmaine on
her large sofa, who is talking with another middle-aged
woman, on an arm chair, next to her.

MRS. BELMAINE

We were just saying, dear, that far
too many people indulge their
servants....what do you think, Mrs.
Petherwin?

Ethelberta smiles

ETHELBERTA

Oh, I think that someone should
have written a pamphlet called "The
Shortest Way with Servants".

MRS. BELMAINE

Like the one the dissenters wrote?

Ethelberta nods and tries to hide a rogueish grin.

ETHELBERTA

Indeed!...Just so!

She turns to take a glass of wine from a tray, proffered by a
footman.

She smiles, sympathetically, at him.

25

INT. EXONBURY CRESCENT./ETHELBERTA'S BEDROOM - EVENING

25

Ethelberta is in her dressing gown with her hair down.

She is seated at her desk and lays down her pen.

She takes up the letter, which she has just written, and reads it.

ETHELBERTA (V.O.)

Dear Mr. Julian,
This is just to thank you,
infinitely. I played your piece,
this evening. and everyone thought
it wonderful. I prophesy great
things of you!
You must allow a woman of
experience, however, to say that
your talent will do you no good,
unless you mix it with a degree of
ambition. I write to stimulate you
to this.
Also, I write to say that I will
energetically avoid meeting you
again, as there never can really be
a friendship between man and woman,
who are not of one family.
Some women might have written
distantly and wept at the
repression of their real feeling;
but it is better to be more frank,
and keep a dry eye.
Yours, Ethelberta.

She sits back and sighs, wistfully.

26

EXT. LONDON PARK - DAY

26

Lady Petherwin and Ethelberta are taking their walk.

LADY PETHERWIN

I asked you here, Ethelberta, as I
wished to be out of our house with
its servants, before I expressed my
disapproval of those, those....
'poem things' that I have just
heard that you have written.

ETHELBERTA

Oh, I'm sorry, Mama. I didn't tell
you of them in case you didn't like
the idea of my publishing.

LADY PETHERWIN

You should have left them unwritten
and showed more....more fidelity!

ETHELBERTA

What has fidelity got to do with it?

LADY PETHERWIN

My poor boy is dead, now, and you, you, his relict, are showing.....levity!

ETHELBERTA

Levity?

LADY PETHERWIN

If I am to keep you, you should have some feeling of loyalty and show obedience to me.....and, and... you should be mourning!

ETHELBERTA

I HAVE shown obedience! ...For nearly four years!.... I wore black for two years, instead of one, and then grey for one year, instead of 6 months, and then lavender...

LADY PETHERWIN

.....There is only one thing that women of your sort are as ready to do as take a man's name, and that is, to drop his memory!

ETHELBERTA

We were only just out of childhood, Lady Petherwin, and he died on our honeymoon! ...I didn't go out into society for over two years!

LADY PETHERWIN

Those verses are RIBALD and demonstrate your unfeeling nature....Will you withdraw them?

ETHELBERTA

I am not ashamed of them and will not cancel them..... I spent a great deal of work upon them, Mama!

Lady Petherwin comes to a halt and regards Ethelberta, severely.

LADY PETHERWIN

Then you may go back. I shall continue my walk, alone....You have greatly disappointed me, Ethelberta!....Greatly!

She turns and walks off and Ethelberta stands staring after her, distressed.

27

INT. JULIAN'S LONDON FLAT/LIVING ROOM - DAY

27

The Julians have just moved house into a small London flat.

There is a large, working man, just putting a box of chattels, down on the floor and Christopher comes out of the kitchen, rolling his shirt sleeves up.

Faith looks up from unpacking a vase, at the man.

CARTER

That it, then, Miss?

FAITH

Yes, thank you. Please tell Mr. Barkiss thanks for the delivery and I'll send the payment on.

The man touches his hat.

CARTER

Thank you, Miss. I will.

He goes out and Christopher starts selecting a box which he starts to take through to the kitchen.

Faith arranges her vase and photographs on a small stand table, by the wall.

FAITH

Do you think you WILL get more pupils here, Christopher?

CHRISTOPHER

In LONDON?!...Of COURSE!. And, also, I should be able to get a couple of organist appointments, which should help matters, greatly.....Are you coming out a walk, soon?

FAITH

Oh, there's FAR too much to do here, Chris!...YOU go.....

Christopher nods and walks across the room with his box, in the direction of the kitchen

FAITH

.....Not, um.....going in the direction of Exonbury Crescent, by any chance...?

She smiles, provocatively.

Christopher turns and shrugs, nonchalantly.

CHRISTOPHER
Just thought I might take a little
look.....

Faith turns back to her photos

FAITH
Ummm.....Well, if a love-lorn lad can
remember to bring some biscuits,
back, he can have some with his
tea!

CHRISTOPHER
I'm not LOVE lo...

Faith waves her fingers, saucily

FAITH
Tata!

Christopher frowns and goes into the back kitchen with his
box.

28

EXT. EXONBURY CRESCENT/PETHERWIN'S HOUSE - DAY

28

Christopher walks past the house and reads, yet, again, the
sign on the lower window of:

House To Let for 6 Month Period.

He sighs with disappointment.

Montage of Christopher walking past in different outfits and
regarding the notice.

Christopher, finally walks past and notices, with surprise,
that the sign is gone, the shutters are open and he sees
movement of people across the windows.

Christopher knocks on the front door and the footman answers.

CHRISTOPHER
Could I see Lady Petherwin, please?

FOOTMAN
I am afraid that the house has been
let to us in the Petherwin's
absence, Sir.

CHRISTOPHER
Oh.....Do you know where they are?

The footman takes a card from the hall table, nearby.

FOOTMAN

Lady Petherwin died last winter,
Sir, but I believe that Mrs.
Petherwin resides at this address.

He hands the card over to Christopher.

Christopher thanks him and walks back down the steps, reading the card:

CHRISTOPHER

"Arrowthorne Lodge, Upper
Wessex"!.....Good grief!...Not far
from Sandbourne!

He heaves a big sigh and rolls his eyes.

29

EXT. A LARGE, NEW COUNTRY HOUSE - DAY

29

It is a beautiful, rural summer's day as Christopher walks up the drive and knocks at the door.

A servant answers the door

CHRISTOPHER

Is Mrs.Petherwin at home, please?

SERVANT

There is no-one of that name here,
Sir.

CHRISTOPHER

Is not this Arrowthorne Lodge?

The man shakes his head and gives directions while waving his arm indicatively about.

Christopher thanks him and leaves.

30

EXT. COUNTRY LANE - DAY

30

Christopher is walking along, in a puzzled fashion, looking around.

He sees a little girl of around eight years old who is picking plants at the foot of a small path, entering upon the lane.

She stands up and regards him, solemnly.

CHRISTOPHER

Can you tell me the way to
Arrowthorne Lodge, please?

The girl points up the path.

GIRL

It be up there, Zur.

CHRISTOPHER

Arrowthorne Lodge, where Mrs.
Petherwin lives, I mean?

GIRL

Yes, Zur. She lives there along wi'
Mother and we. But she don't want
anyone to know it, Zur, on account
of she be famous, like... T'wouldn't
do at all.

Christopher steps up the path and knocks at the door.

The latch lifts and the door starts to open.

CHRISTOPHER

Does Mrs. Petherwin, the poetesss
live here?

PICOTEE

She does, Sir.

Christopher looks up in astonishment at seeing the blushing,
embarrassed pupil-teacher of Sandbourne.

CHRISTOPHER

This is a surprise! I'm glad to see
you, Miss...?

PICOTEE

Chickerel, Sir. I'm home for the
holidays...My sister, Ethelberta, is
in the plantation with the
children.

She points at a path through the shrubs.

CHRISTOPHER

Thank you.

He nods and smiles as she closes the door and then sets off
through the shrubbery.

31

EXT. WOODLAND GLADE - DAY

31

Christopher pushes through the undergrowth along a grown-over
path and while he does, he hears alarming snatches of a tale
being told.

ETHELBERTA

...but he came towards me, as I
backed away..."You don't escape me,
now, woman!" He roared.

Christopher enters upon the edge of a glade where there are five children and two young artisans sitting on the floor, listening to their sister, Ethelberta as she tells her tale.

Ethelberta is standing upon a tree stump.

The children and youths are listening in fascinated horror.

ETHELBERTA

I felt for my useless knife, and my feet were starting to slide away in the grass at the edge of the cliff. Would no-one.....

Christopher hurries out into the glade, itself and calls out in great concern

CHRISTOPHER

.....Good Heavens, Ethelberta! Where did you meet with such a terrible experience as this?

The audience shriek and leap to their feet at this sudden appearance.

Ethelberta looks up with amused surprise.

ETHELBERTA

Mr. Julian!

She steps down and moves towards him.

She turns towards the two young artisans.

ETHELBERTA

Will you walk on with the children, please, you two? Mr. Julian wishes to talk with me about business.

The young men nod and take the children back the way that Christopher just came.

Ethelberta turns back to Christopher and smiles, indulgently.

ETHELBERTA

I was merely telling a story, Sir.

Christopher is embarrassed

CHRISTOPHER

Ah!.....Sorry.....was a bit of an idiot!

Ethelberta shrugs and walks further into the wood, following another path, with Christopher, walking by her side.

ETHELBERTA

You weren't to know.....My poetry isn't exactly fitting itself to my pen, at the moment, and so I have decided to earn some sort of living as a story teller.

Christopher looks uncomfortable

CHRISTOPHER

As anactress?

ETHELBERTA

Oh no!...I don't intend to lose caste, just because my benefactor has now died. "Mrs Petherwin the Professed Storyteller" will be performing in the top London salons.

She assumes a comic air of faux superiority.

Christopher is silent, and when she looks sideways at him, she discovers him looking intently at her.

ETHELBERTA

What?

CHRISTOPHER

I was just thinking of how I used to know you and then lost sight of you and then found you famous and how....now....we are under these trees..... alone.....

Ethelberta becomes business-like and she turns off in to another path.

ETHELBERTA

....Oh, (cough) yes...well...I think it must be tea-time.Tea is a great meal with us here. You will join us, will you not?

She smiles up at him and ploughs on, ahead.

Ethelberta's siblings are seated around a large table, and a fifteen year-old girl, Emmeline, is bringing in a teapot from the kitchen to the table with its tea things, its scones and butter, and a large currant cake, which she starts to hand around.

Emmeline sits down.

Christopher is seated near to Picotee and Ethelberta, between two little girls. Ethelberta is seated sideways on to the window, from where you can see the big estate gates.

Picotee is wildly embarrassed and cannot meet Christopher's enquiring eye. She talks only, and in an undertone, to the little children, near to her, when they transgress: manners-wise.

There are Ethelberta, Picotee, the two artisanal youths, Emmeline, an eleven year-old boy: Joey, two little girls and a small boy.

Ethelberta smiles at Christopher who is buttering his scone

ETHELBERTA

Our mother is bedridden, and papa works away, so Emmeline attends to the household, except when Picotee is home and Joey attends to the estate gate...

She smiles and shrugs

ETHELBERTA

...for which we have our grace and favour home.

She indicates around the room with her eyebrows.

ETHELBERTA

We also have another couple of sisters, but they are out at service.....Gwendoline and Cornelia.

A carriage appears at the gates and Joey springs up and opens them.

The carriage rolls through

EMMELINE

There's a tremendous large dinner party at the House, tonight. That was Lord Mountclere's carriage. He's a wicked old man, they say.

Ethelberta looks at the carriage, while leaning back behind the net curtains.

ETHELBERTA

Lord Mountclere!....I used to know some friends of his.....Why "wicked"?

EMMELINE

Don't know.....S'pose it's cos he breaks the Ten Commandments.

She leans over and shouts through the window

EMMELINE

Hook back the gate, Joey! There's more to come!

Joey complies and returns inside.

Another light gig appears at the gate.

EMMELINE

And that's Mr. Ladywell, the artist....He once gave me a sixpence for picking up his gloves.

Ethelberta draws back even more behind the nets.

ETHELBERTA

(Sighs) What shall I live to see?!

CHRISTOPHER

(Resentfully ironic) A great friend of yours?

Ethelberta shrugs

ETHELBERTA

I hardly know him and certainly don't value him.

Christopher smiles and nods, relievedly at her.

Ethelberta looks away and speaks to a small child which is stuffing its cake in with both hands.

Picotee notices with distress, Christopher looking with spooney regard at Ethelberta as the tea progresses and the room starts to darken with dusk.

Christopher rises to leave and the two artisans arise with him. They put on their headwear and the two youths kiss their sister and leave, along with Christopher.

33

EXT. COUNTRY LANE - EVENING

33

The two young men walk abreast with Christopher.

SOL

We be thinking of changing jobs and coming up to London, ourselves, soon, Zur.'Ow d'yoo think we should set about that, then? I be a carpenter and Dan be a painter.

Christopher smiles and shrugs

CHRISTOPHER

Oh, then you must both
specialize....in London.You must
know to a nicety how to turn a
screw...but not to drive a nail, Sol!

He then turns and smiles at Dan

CHRISTOPHER

And you, Dan, must specialize in
painting blue, but be quite in the
dark about green!

Sol strikes his stick on a rock in delight.

SOL

Haha! A wink is as good as a nod,
Zur! We be keeping this in
mind.....If we do come up, though,
we won't be noticing Mrs. Petherwin
in the street, cos that's how she
wants it.

CHRISTOPHER

I'm sure that Ethelberta is always
delighted to see her brothers!

DAN

Mebbe.....but she wants none of that
public recognition stuff, and only
ever goes out at night, at
Mother's.

SOL

But not Picotee!.....No! Picotee
sticks fast to us and allays wants
us to visit her in Sandbourne.

CHRISTOPHER

Shall I see you both in Sandbourne?

SOL

Naw, naw! We know how unpleasant it
is for a high sort of man to have
rough chaps like us hailing him...no
offence Mr. Julian!

Christopher laughs

CHRISTOPHER

You're just as proud, yourself, you
know. I talk to everyone and would
be most pleased to have your
acquaintance if you chose to give
it.

They reach a crossroads.

SOL

Well, your station is down there,
anyways, and we mun be away in this
direction.

Indicating with his head, the other way.

CHRISTOPHER

Well, I still hope to see you both
around.....Good Evening Sol...Dan.

He smiles and shakes both of their hands.

34

INT. ARROWTHORNE LODGE/MRS.CHICKEREL'S BEDROOM

34

Mrs. Chickereel is seated up in bed and Ethelberta, and
Picotee are seated on chairs, while Joey is sitting at the
bottom of his mother's bed.

ETHELBERTA

If we are all together in town, I
can better look after you all.....We
must give up the lodge.

MOTHER

(Timidly) Shall we not interfere
with your plans for keeping up your
connections, dear?

ETHELBERTA

Not nearly so much as staying here.

PICOTEE

But if you let lodgings, won't the
ladies and gentlemen know it?

ETHELBERTA

I can advertize in Mother's name,
and in Continental journals where
we will found foreign gentlemen,
with few acquaintance in London.

PICOTEE

So if Gwendoline is to be your cook
and Cornelia your chambermaid,
hadn't they better soon give
notice?

ETHELBERTA

Yes...Everything depends on them...and
when we've put Joey in buttons,
he'll do very well to answer the
door...

She looks at Joey

ETHELBERTA
..With a little training!

Joey pulls a silly teasing face

JOEY
But what if the visitors they see
the lodger leaving?

ETHELBERTA
They won't know that he is a
lodger.....besides I shall let people
know that my mother is an invalid
and so she can't receive visitors.

JOEY
But what if Sol andn Dan call?

ETHELBERTA
They can go down the area steps.

MOTHER
And Father?

ETHELBERTA
He may enter any way he chooses...I'm
sure he will be glad to have us
near to him.

Her mother shakes her head, slowly

MOTHER
I'm not sure this is a good idea,
Ethelberta....The children will be
stuck up in the attic a lot of the
time....

ETHELBERTA
No...Cornelia can take them to the
park, regularly!

Her mother shrugs, slowly

MOTHER
Well, if you think it's for the
best, Ethelberta....Joey, pour me
another glass of water...there's a
dear.

Joey gets up and goes to a tray on the chest of drawers, and
and Ethelberta sits back in her armchair and looks in the
fire.

Picotee looks at Ethelberta.

ETHELBERTA

Of course, if I succeed at my attempts at story-telling and poetry readings, we won't have to have lodgers.

PICOTEE

Can I come to London, as well?

ETHELBERTA

No, you has better stay put, in Sandbourne, and attain your teaching diploma, Picotee.

PICOTEE

Oh!

MOTHER

She's right, dear...you MUST finish what you've started.

Picotee nods and looks, sadly into the fire.

35

INT. A LONDON HOUSE/LARGE SALON - EVENING

35

The room is crowded with chairs in rows which are fully occupied, and some of the gentlemen are standing around the walls. There is a small dais at one end with an armchair.

Ethelberta comes onto the 'stage' and there is a little ripple of applause.

She bows.

Ladywell, foppishly dressed, leans over and speaks to Neigh.

LADYWELL

It was my idea, you know, Neigh!

NEIGH

What, story-telling?

LADYWELL

Well sort of...I DID tell her that her ideas for novels ought to get out there, more publicly.

NEIGH

You know Mrs. Petherwin, then?

LADYWELL

A little.

NEIGH

Could you introduce me?

Ladywell demurs

LADYWELL

Not THAT well..... I'll have to see
I'm...

Ethelberta seats herself, carefully, sweeping her skirts to one side.

Christopher and Faith are seated towards the back

CHRISTOPHER

I wish you knew her, Faith.

FAITH

Ah, we live in such a plain way,
that would hardly be desirable, at
present, Chris.

CHRISTOPHER

Perhaps it would be better for us
both if Ethelberta and I had never
seen each other. Ethelberta has a
heart, which will tend to get in
the way of what she intends.

FAITH

And what's that?

CHRISTOPHER

Well, she's horrified at the
thought of having to have hundreds
of children, like her mother.

FAITH

I can't say that I blame her!

CHRISTOPHER

And she wants to be a dramatist and
poet, instead of a housewife.....

FAITH

.....Sshhhh...she's starting!

Ethelberta leans, dramatically over towards her audience,
from her chair.

She almost whispers

ETHELBERTA

It was a very..... stormy...black.....
night!..

She raises her head, slowly and stares at her audience who
are immediately rapt.

36 INT. EXONBURY CRESCENT/DRAWING ROOM AND REST OF HOUSE - DAY 36

Joey comes into the drawing room and announces Christopher who comes in.

Ethelberta smiles, is coolly pleased to see him and shakes his hand.

They chat a minute and then she indicates out of the door, interrogatively, to ask if he wishes to see the house.

He does and so they travel through the house, seeing Sol and Dan doing carpentry in an upper room, and the children being taught by Emmeline, up in the attic.

37 INT. EXONBURY HOUSE/DRAWING ROOM - DAY

37

Ethelberta comes in and rings for tea; then gives the maid the order, who exits.

Christopher and she sit down, either side of the fire.

ETHELBERTA

It is my duty to educate and provide for the children. I keep my two French lodgers for the sake of them.

CHRISTOPHER

Do your lodgers know of all of your relationships?

ETHELBERTA

Oh, no! My mother is supposed to let the ground and first floors to me, a young widow, and the next two to them.....Still....I may be discovered, yet!...

CHRISTOPHER

...I think you'll succeed!

ETHELBERTA

Well, I hope that YOU succeed with your new location, too.

CHRISTOPHER

Ah, but success means getting what you want.

ETHELBERTA

And why should you not get that?

Christopher sits forward and looks intently at Ethelberta

CHRISTOPHER

It has been forbidden
me.....Ethelberta, you have my
whole heart! You have had it ever
since I first saw you....I suppose,
however, that, after being married,
you no longer care for it,
though.....?

Ethelberta colours and shrugs, slightly.

ETHELBERTA

You have all of me that you care to
have, Christopher, but I...

Joey comes in

JOEY

.....Please, Berta, Mr. Ladywell has
called and I've showed 'im into
the libery...

ETHELBERTA

"Library", Joey...Library!

Joey smiles and nods.

ETHELBERTA

Sorry, Christopher, will you excuse
me...Do stay...I won't be long!

She glides out and Joey follows.

He turns back to Christopher, grins, impishly, gives a big
wink and points his thumb at Ethelberta's retreating back.

Christopher nods and smiles.

Christopher then walks up and down for ages, getting
impatient.

He repeatedly looks at the mantle clock.

It is getting darker and Christopher sighs, and lights a
couple of candles from the fire, putting them back on the
mantelpiece.

Ethelberta finally returns and Christopher is boot-faced, by
now.

ETHELBERTA

I'm sorry, Christopher. Ladywell is
painting me.

CHRISTOPHER

Huh....You'd be better advised to get
painted by someone who can actually
PAINT!

ETHELBERTA

He CAN paint...He's been hung in the academy!

CHRISTOPHER

HE can be hanged, for all I care!...I thought you said he was a mere nobody to you...

Ethelberta shrugs, impatiently

ETHELBERTA

How provoking you are!

CHRISTOPHER

Yes, well, I have work that I have to be getting on with, and can't go dangling round here, all day...Good Evening, Ethelberta.

He shakes her hand, perfunctorily and leaves.

Ethelberta gives a little shrug and carelessly mouses.

38

EXT. SANDBOURNE/MOOR - DAY

38

Picotee is going her walk and looking pensive on a beautiful day.

She gets out a letter from Ethelberta and reads it.

She half reads it aloud, inaudibly, and when she comes to the final paragraph, she stops walking and stares, angrily at it.

ETHELBERTA (V.O.)

So you really must stay there, dear and finish your training. I don't see why Sandbourne is such a trial to you.

I look forward to seeing you soon. bear up, little sister. Your affectionate, Ethelberta.

Picotee crumples up the letter in her fist and addresses the lonely sky.

PICOTEE

It's a trial cos he's THERE!...And though he loves YOU and not ME (quieter voice) I still want to see him.....a bit.....occasionally!

She walks away across the moor and we see her exasperated clenching of fists, from her head, into the air.

PICOTEE

Ohwu!!!!

39 INT. EXONBURY CRESCENT/HALLWAY - DAY

39

The bell goes and Joey goes to the door, affecting a great air of arrogance and aplomb, in his many-brass-buttoned jacket.

He slowly opens the door and looks down to the person on the stairs. It is Picotee.

Joey's face lights up and he leans out and grabs her, dragging her inside.

JOEY

Pixie!...Pixie!...Wot YOU doin' 'ere?

Picotee bends and kisses his cheek, which he embarrassedly rubs a bit, with his hand.

Joey grabs her bag and sets off towards the stairs.

JOEY

Oi'll tell Berta wot you've come!

Picotee sees the umbrella in the nearby stand.

PICOTEE

No, no!...She has company, doesn't she?

JOEY

Na!...It's just Mr. Julian. E's quite one of the famly, now!

Picotee suddenly looks distraught

PICOTEE

I'll...I'll just go down to the kitchen.

She sets off to the servants door and Joey comes towards her.

PICOTEE

Does he come very often, then?

JOEY

He's allays comin'!...Reglar BORE to me!

PICOTEE

A boar?

JOEY
 Ah!..... Oi fergot!.... You dunno our
 Lunnon words!.....Hey!....Aren't
 you NOT supposed to be here?

Picotee rubs his ruffles hair and smiles

PICOTEE
 (Joking)Yes..... I "aren't"!!

Joey grins at her and turns to lead the way down to the kitchen.

He suddenly stops and puts her bag down by the wall of the entrance hall.

He looks up in eager mischief.

JOEY
 Egh! Such a lark,Pixie!...Berta's a-
 courting of her young man....D'yoo
 wanna 'ear 'ow they carries on, a
 bit?

Picotee looks consternated

PICOTEE
 (Sigh) Dearly I should!

Joey starts to hare off, quietly, up the stairs.

He turns, half way up and looks back at her.

JOEY
 Come on, then!....Quick!....And be
 quiet!

He puts his finger on his lips and hares off.

Picotee, with dread in her heart, follows him.

40

INT. EXONBURY CRESCENT/TOP HALLWAY - DAY

40

They creep along the passageway and listen at a door.

Picotee hears a soft male and a soft female voice.

Picotee gasps and leans faintly against the opposite wall

Joey looks up from his listening.

JOEY
 Wot's the matter?

PICOTEE
 Oh...um, just....um, indigestion.

JOEY

(Whispers)Huh! You ain't had indigestion till you've 'ad these ten course meals!.....They 'ave to sleep all the following morning, an' then crawl about all the aternoons,in the park, so they can eat agin, in the evening!

PICOTEE

I think I'll go down n....

Joey listens, again and waves his hand

JOEY

Shhh....Listen!

The voices are raised. There is an argument.

Then there is an exclamation from Mr. Julian.

Silence...and the eavesdroppers look at each other, in suspense.

There is a final curt sentence,and then footsteps walking determinedly across the room.

Picotee and Joey dive into the opposite bedroom.

They hear Christopher walk angrily down the hall and stairs, and then slam the front door.

Picotee comes timidly out into the hall.

PICOTEE

I don't much like biding her and listening!

JOEY

Oh, it's 'ow fings are done, in the West End, here! 'Tis yer ignorance of town life that makes it seem a big thing to yer!...(Superiorly)Me!....I'm in on fings!

Picotee looks reprovngly at her brother

PICOTEE

You can't make much boast about town life; for you haven't left off talking just as they do down in Wessex, yet!

JOEY

Well, oi'm not one o' them great
footmen, yet, cos me wages is so
small that they hardly covers the
tobacco oi consumes!

PICOTEE

You wicked boy! If only Mother knew
you smoked!

Joey gurns

JOEY

She won't!

Picotee walks off, back down the corridor, towards the
stairs.

Joey sticks out his tongue, pulls a funny face and squints at
her back.

41 INT. EXONBURY CRESCENT/DRAWING ROOM - EVENING

41

It is late dusk and Picotee is standing by the window, looking
out, whilst Ethelberta sits staring into the fire, anxiously.

Picotee comes back to the fire, and sits down in the opposite
armchair.

She picks up and resumes her sewing of a shirt of Joey's.

PICOTEE

Why don't you go out?

ETHELBERTA

Oh...(Sigh)....I've been expecting
someone.

PICOTEE

When she comes, I must run away, up
to Mama, hum?

ETHELBERTA

It's a 'He'....I may as well tell
you....It's Mr. Julian. I suppose, in
plain English, that he's my
lover....whom I'm NOT going to marry
until he gets rich.

Picotee drops her sewing onto her lap.

PICOTEE

Ah!....How strange!....If I had such a
lover, I would marry him whether he
got rich, or not!

ETHELBERTA

I don't doubt it, Picotee! Just as you threw up your teacher training and came to London, without caring for the consequences!.....Someone in the family must take a practical view of affairs, or we should all go to the dogs!

Picotee looks down, humbled.

PICOTEE

Yes, Berta.....Do you love him?

ETHELBERTA

Oh, he's very gentlemanly, except when he's rude and will not come and apologize.

Picotee looks spoonily wishful

PICOTEE

If I had a lover, I should ask him to come, if I wanted his company.

ETHELBERTA

I HAD been intending to keep him on until I got tired of his attentions and then finish them by marrying him.

PICOTEE

Oh!

ETHELBERTA

He has hardly declared himself, before he has now forgotten my existence, it seems!

PICOTEE

When did you get to care for him, dear Berta?

ETHELBERTA

(Airily) Oh, when I'd seen him, once, or twice....Women don't need to know a man well, to love him. That's only necessary when we want to leave him off!

PICOTEE

Oh, Berta, you don't believe that!

ETHELBERTA

If a woman did not form an opinion of her choice before she has half seen him, and love him before she has half formed an opinion, there would be no tears and pining, in the whole feminine world and poets would starve for want of a topic.

PICOTEE

Would they?

ETHELBERTA

Um.....I must say, though, that I haven't learnt much from my own observation, there...especially, as I intend to spend my days writing poetry, and NOT starving.....or having babies..... or cleaning the house!

PICOTEE

(Wistfully) I wish I was as strong-minded as you, Berta! I wish I could help Mama and Papa with the little ones, as well!

ETHELBERTA

You can! You can spend your mornings up with Emmeline, in the loft, teaching the children, and showing Emmeline how to teach.....and being of some use!

Picotee looks down

PICOTEE

Yes, Berta.

She resumes her sewing and Ethelberta sighs and stands up.

ETHELBERTA

I'd better start getting ready for my performance....See you later, Pixie.

She smiles at Picotee and walks out.

Ethelberta walks out of the door, into the street and meets a little knot of people who shake her hand and enthusiastically praise her.

She smiles and turns to walk to her carriage at the end of the rear passage, when Mr. Ladywell hurries up, in evening dress.

LADYWELL

Mrs. Petherwin! You left this notebook behind!

Ethelkberta stops, turns, and recognises Ladywell.

She smiles and takes the proffered book.

ETHELBERTA

Oh, hello, Mr. Ladywell. Good grief, I left it behind, again...thank you.

LADYWELL

(In a lowered, impassioned voice)
I take any opportunity to show my circumspection and devotion to you.....

ETHELBERTA

...Well, thank you again, Mr. Ladywell.

LADYWELL

Your triumph, tonight was very great and it was quite as much a triumph for me...

Ethelberta turns to go

ETHELBERTA

.....Oh, very kind....

LADYWELL

...I cannot express my feeling!...If I might only...

ETHELBERTA

....I have to return home, Mr. Ladywell.

LADYWELL

May I accompany you?

ETHELBERTA

I'm afraid not, as my maid is waiting for me in my carriage just there.

She points

ETHELBERTA

Thank you again, Mr. Ladywell. That was very kind of you....Good evening!

She hurries off down the passageway, towards the coach and Mr. Ladywell looks lovingly after her.

Ethelberta comes in to the room carrying a visiting card. She is followed in by Picotee who removes her own bonnet and jacket and sits down in an armchair.

ETHELBERTA

...As I said, though, Ladywell is just a simpleton.

PICOTEE

Why did you choose him as your artist, then?

ETHELBERTA

I didn't.....He chose me.

PICOTEE

Well, you needn't have worried about Mr. JULIAN not coming, to hear you, tonight, now you know that he visited you here, while we were away.

Ethelberta goes over to the desk, removes her hat and jacket, sits down and picks up some paper and pen.

ETHELBERTA

Ha!....Well!..... Now I'm going to punish him for staying away so long.

Picotee looks up, in surprise

PICOTEE

But I thought that honesty was the best policy!

ETHELBERTA

It is as bad to show constancy in one's manners, as fickleness in one's heart, at such times as these.

She starts to write

ETHELBERTA

I'm going to ask him not to visit in future, as people are talking about us.

PICOTEE

But they're NOT talking about you!

Ethelberta raises her eyebrows, superiorly

ETHELBERTA

Shh!!

She continues writing, whilst Picotee sighs and pokes the fire.

ETHELBERTA

Of course, he's so far in love,
that I suspect that he WILL come,
after all!

PICOTEE

I don't think that he WILL, Berta.

ETHELBERTA

Oh, he will!.....Men just need a
little taming!

44

INT. EXONBURY CRESCENT - DAY

44

HALLWAY

Ethelberta comes in at the front door, which is opened by Joey. She is taking off her gloves.

Picotee is coming down the stairs.

Ethelberta raises a brow at her, but Picotee shakes her head.

Ethelberta carelessly shrugs

KITCHEN - DAY

Ethelberta is talking with Gwendoline and Cornelia in the kitchen, and they are showing her their latest red petticoats.

The front door bell goes and Ethelberta looks up and listens.

Joey appears at the top of the kitchen stairs, and shakes his head.

Ethelberta looks away

DINING ROOM - DAY

Ethelberta and Picotee are eating their salad, when the door rings and Joey comes in, shortly after.

He shakes his head.

Ethelberta looks a bit upset.

HALLWAY - DAY

Ethelberta comes in the door, with Picotee and Joey is there.

Joey crosses his eyes and elaborately shakes his head, slowly.

Ethelberta scowls, lightly boxes his ear and walks off up the stairs, followed by Picotee, who silently admonishes Joey, for his cheek.

Joey then drags himself, in ridiculous mime play across the hallway, gurning, with his arms dangling, in a display of utter depression.

Picotee, seeing him, suppresses a titter and looks to check that Ethelberta didn't see.

45

INT. EXONBURY CRESCENT/DRAWING ROOM - EVENING

45

Ethelberta is lying down on the sofa and Picotee is reading by the fire.

Joey comes in

JOEY

Mr. Julian is downstairs and be wanting for to see you, Berta.

Ethelberta sits up

ETHELBERTA

He WANTS to see me.

JOEY

Aye, that be wot oi said.

Ethelberta tuts and rolls her eyes

ETHELBERTA

Picotee, go down and say I am asleep, but if.....if, upon enquiring, he seems particularly urgent, you have my permission to admit that I MAY be able to rise.

PICOTEE

How will I know if he is enough worried, Berta?

ETHELBERTA

Listen, silly.....

She goes on to outline the behaviours of men to Picotee who seems rather reluctant to go and keeps asking questions.

The evening wears on and it starts to go dark.

Picotee eventually nods, in agreement, and slowly and reluctantly goes out.

Joey shrugs and 'slowly' follows her, in reluctant dumbshow.

Christopher has fallen asleep in the final embers of the fire. There are no candles.

Picotee slowly comes in at the half open door and very reluctantly advances, slowly towards him.

She touches Christopher on the shoulder

PICOTEE
Mr. Julian, I....

Christopher awakes with a start, sees what he thinks is Ethelberta and seizes her hand.

He covers it with kisses

CHRISTOPHER
.....I knew you'd come!.....I knew you'd
forgive me!....My love!....My angel!

PICOTEE
Oh!.....It's ME!....I'll get a, a
light!...Ohhhhh! (Repeated sobbing)

CHRISTOPHER
What the...?

He leaps up, and then draws Picotee towards the light of the fire.

CHRISTOPHER
Picotee!.....I thought you were in
Sandbourne!

He drops her arm and leaps back, upon perceiving which, Picotee redoubles her sobs.

CHRISTOPHER
Oh!...Huh...Yes, I see.....It was done
for a joke.

PICOTEE
Noooooooo...(sobbing)

CHRISTOPHER
Then why are you here?

Ethelberta can be seen through the half opened door, listening in.

PICOTEE
Ethelberta doesn't know that we
used to meet in, in Sandbourne and
that's the reason I ran away and
came here an.....

Christopher looks dumbfounded

CHRISTOPHER

.....You 'ran away' because of m.....I
 didn't 'meet' you, in
 Sandbourne!...I arranged
 nothing!.....Good Heavens! You
 think that I.....Well..... This IS a
 strange business: you follow me, I
 follow Ethelberta and she follows,
 goodness knows who.....

He gets hold of Picotee's arm, gently and lowers her down
 onto the other armchair.

He sits down, facing her.

PICOTEE

...Mr. Ladywell.

Christopher shoots, angrily to his feet again.

CHRISTOPHER

What?..... She's in love with Mr.
 Ladywell?

He starts to pace around the room

Picotee is alarmed

PICOTEE

Oh, no!...No....

Christopher pauses

PICOTEE

...cos she prefers Mr. Neigh.

Christopher sinks down weakly on the sofa

CHRISTOPHER

So!...It's Mr. Neigh, is it?

Picotee stands up, still sobbing

PICOTEE

Oh, no, Mr, Julian. YOU are her
 favourite!...You are, really!

Christopher stands up, again.

Ethelberta hastily withdraws from her listening post.

CHRISTOPHER

Oh! I suppose that that's a good
 thing, is it?.....Well!...Huh!....
 (MORE)

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

I shan't dangle around here, any longer, waiting for her to make up her mind from such a Surfeit of Suitors!...Good Evening, Picotee.

He walks out and Picotee redoubles her howls.

47

INT. EXONBURY CRESCENT/DRAWING ROOM - EVENING

47

Ethelberta is standing, listening at the half open door.

Christopher walks heavily across the hall and goes out.

Picotee starts up the stairs and Ethelberta, hearing her, rushes to the sofa, lies down and puts a scarf over her face, pretending to doze.

Picotee rushes in and kneels down by her sister.

She puts her arm around Ethelberta's chest and lays her forehead against Ethelberta's cheek.

Ethelberta pretends to be half asleep.

ETHELBERTA

Is that you, Picotee?

PICOTEE

Yes, it is!...Oh, Berta!...I'm sorry!..... I didn't tell you that the man I used to meet and who I fell in love with is Mr. Julian!

Ethelberta removes the scarf and sits up.

ETHELBERTA

What? He made assignations with you?!

Picotee slumps with her face, half sideways on, in Ethelberta's lap.

PICOTEE

(Rapid, with no breath pauses)
I should of told you a long time ago but he was YOUR young man and then I didn't known what to do and that's why I came back from Sandbourne, and....and....I'm SO sooooooory (loud sobs)...He, he DIDN'T meet me, it was just that we always passed on our ways to work, an, an...then...an....

Ethelberta puts her fingers under Picotee's chin and lifts her head up.

ETHELBERTA

.....Silly Pixie!.....Chasing a young man to London!...You'll turn his head!.....Still, it'll probably all end happily for you and him.....who knows?

Picotee stops crying and sits up.

PICOTEE

(Sniff)What?!.....Then, then you don't want him, Berta?

ETHELBERTA

(Airily)Oh, no!..... Not at all! I would much rather he paid his addresses to you!

PICOTEE

(Ruefully)Huh!...That's the problem...he kissed my hand in the dark cos he thought it was YOURS!

Ethelberta gets up and goes to the mirror to adjust her hair.

ETHELBERTA

My dear! Men speak of the fickleness of women, when they, themselves, are as reeds in the wind...SHE, today: HER, tomorrow!(Sighs)Now run along and ask Gwendoline if she managed to get that turkey.

Picotee scrambles to her feet and hugs Ethelberta

PICOTEE

Oh, thank you, Berta!...Thank you!...You're SURE?

ETHELBERTA

Of course, silly!

Picotee smiles and runs out and Ethelberta plonks down on the sofa and idly flaps her hand, swishing her scarf from side to side.

She sighs, a bit sadly, and looks blankly around the room.

Ethelberta is sorting out and writing bills at her desk.

Picotee comes in, carelessly, and sits down in an armchair.

Ethelberta doesn't react.

PICOTEE

Berta! I really think that you don't know I'm in the room!

Ethelberta looks up

ETHELBERTA

What?...Oh, hello, Pixie...Sorry, I was trying to pay these bills.....(glumly)There are so many of them.

PICOTEE

Well there are so many of us!

ETHELBERTA

(Sigh) Yes, but I really begin to think that I can't pay them all with only my earnings as a storyteller.

PICOTEE

People LIKE you!...I'm sure they'll keep coming.

ETHELBERTA

Yes, but Marlborough Hall was half empty, the other night and I don't have that many forward bookings, now.

PICOTEE

Don't worry, Bertha.....(Has an idea) Mother and I can take in sewing and you can do translations.

Ethelberta gets up and walks about, stretching her arms

ETHELBERTA

Bless you, child...That won't pay this rent of two hundred pounds a year...never mind everything else.

PICOTEE

I thought you inherited this house.

ETHELBERTA

Good grief, no! Mrs. Petherwin only left me the remainder of the lease for another couple of years....As you know, she left her money to her second cousin, after hearing of my writing poetry..... I shall just have to do what women usually do, and marry.

PICOTEE

Who?..... Mr. Ladywell?

ETHELBERTA

Oh, no!...FAR too young and rather uncertain earnings, as well...No, I shall just have to..... look about me. I dragged Mother and the children away from their comfortable and certain shelter, all the way to London, so it must be me that does something about it.....Having put my hand to the plough, how shall I turn back?

Picotee stands up, while Ethelberta returns to her desk.

PICOTEE

(Seriously)I see it!...So, as you mean to marry high, you will have to marry, before this house is lost....

ETHELBERTA

....well, before my earnings give out entirely. Papa's earnings, as a butler, are certainly not enough for living here, in London!

PICOTEE

I'll go down to the kitchen and ask Gwenny if she has any ideas.

Picotee goes out and Ethelberta fondly smiles at her back.

49

EXT. A LONDON PARK - DAY

49

Ethelberta and Picotee are walking along a path, when, upon rounding a corner, they almost bump into Christopher.

They smile, shake hands and say hello.

CHRISTOPHER

I received your letter, Ethelberta and was just coming to say I accept the breaking off that...that you proposed. It seems that I am likely to be offered the post of organist at Melchester and am not in a financial position to say no.

ETHELBERTA

Oh, I am so glad that you will have a steady income, then, Christopher.

CHRISTOPHER

Well, steady, but small....You're right, though.....I, I have no right to ask you to be my betrothed without having the near prospect of making you my wife.

ETHELBERTA

It is unspeakably generous of you to put it before me so nicely, Christopher...I think infinitely more of you for being so unreserved. I hoped that you would see the sense in what I wrote.....You will....I mean, we must keep in touch, however, Mr. Julian....When do you leave London?

CHRISTOPHER

(Murmurs) I hardly know.....I suppose that I shall not call here, again.

Christopher leans and kisses her on the cheek.

Ethelberta gets hold of Picotee around the waist

ETHELBERTA

Kiss her, too. She is my sister and I am yours.

Christopher kisses Picotee's cheek and turns to go.

Ethelberta calls after him.

ETHELBERTA

I think that Picotee might correspond with Faith, don't you think, Mr. Julian?

CHRISTOPHER

My sister would much like to do so.

He nods, a bit overcome and hurries away.

Ethelberta sighs and the two sisters continue with their walk.

PICOTEE

Will you miss him, terribly, Ethelberta?

ETHELBERTA

Yes, yes, I will.....but not as much
as I should have hated having to
run a music shop while having
fifteen babies and running the
house for them all....single-
handedly!

Picotee sighs, and gives a small smile, wistfully, at the
dream.

PICOTEE

You might have enjoyed it...?

ETHELBERTA

Ergh!...I want to write plays and
poetry..... not spend my days as a
skivvy!...I wouldn't have had a
single moment to write a single
word....What would have been the
purpose of all of my education?

Picotee nods, qualifiedly.

PICOTEE

True....true.....

They walk on.

50

INT. THE ROYAL ACADEMY/A GALLERY - DAY

50

Ethelberta looks up from reading the catalogue to see her two
massive brothers, in their Sunday best and new gloves,
standing in the entrance way and peering reverentially at the
crowd, while holding their hats, nervously.

Ethelberta is dressed in quiet black with a veil for
anonymity.

Ethelberta hurries towards them, tells them to put their hats
back on, which they do and whispers to them.

ETHELBERTA

Now, Sol and Dan, we are going to
continue your arts education, and,
when you see a little painting
which may, or may not look like me,
you are NOT to exclaim out loud
anything about it....do you hear?

SOL AND DAN

Yes, Berta.

Ethelberta takes them around the room, reading from the
catalogue and pointing at the various pictures.

They then arrive at Ladywell's portrait of Ethelberta which has a small knot of people before it..

As the boys gawp and Ethelberta adjudges the picture, Ethelberta then overhears two youngish men, talking, nearby, in the small crowd.

GENTLEMAN 1
You know who's face this is?

GENTLEMAN 2
Yes....Mrs. Petherwin's

GENTLEMAN 1
Welllll..... Mrs. Neigh as will be.

GENTLEMAN 2
What?!..... That elusive fellow caught by a woman at last, egh?...How do you know?

GENTLEMAN 1
Easy....He said to me when we were last in conversation, "I mean to marry that woman"....Just like that..."I mean to marry her!"

The other man smiles, broadly

GENTLEMAN 2
(Gloatingly)Wonderful!

Ethelberta sidles away with the boys following her.

She heads out of the gallery

She speaks quietly to herself

ETHELBERTA
Huh!....MEANS to marry me, does he?

Sol and Dan follow her out.

51 EXT. NEIGH'S ESTATE/CONIFER TREE ALLEY AND FIELD - DAY 51

Ethelberta and Picotee are in dark walking suits, and are walking quickly along a stony track in a conifer plantation.

It is earlyish in the morning and quite grey and depressing.

PICOTEE
Why are we here, Berta?

Ethelberta shrugs

ETHELBERTA
I hardly know.

They hear a sudden doleful, multi-tongued howl and Picotee clutches her sister who keeps walking.

They come out onto a big field enclosure containing lots of starved-looking horses with a ramshackle barn at one end.

There is a large pool, at the far side and a cleared area next to it.

They walk around the enclosure, keeping away from the barn.

PICOTEE

Why are there all these old,
starved horses, here, Berta?

ETHELBERTA

These unfortunate, wretched
creatures here are to feed the
hounds, in that barn, there.

Picotee shivers

PICOTEE

Oh.....!....Poor things!

They arrive near the pool and stand looking at the big cleared area.

PICOTEE

It looks like someone was thinking
of building a house.

ETHELBERTA

And what a forsaken place to build
it in!

She looks around at the desolate area, the mist curling off the pool and a big pile of dirty rags, and rotten hay bales, nearby

She shakes her head, and turns back

ETHELBERTA

Let's go back.

Picotee hurries after her.

As they arrive back near the track entrance, they meet a labourer with his barrow.

ETHELBERTA

Excuse me, my man, do you know the
owner of this property, please?

The man stands up and tugs on his cap.

LABOURER

Oh, that be a Mr. Neigh, from a family who made a fortune from the knackers and tanning business.

Ethelberta gestures to the big cleared area beyond the pool.

ETHELBERTA

Is a house going up, there, then?

LABOURER

Oh, that Mr. Neigh, he had the place cleared and acalled Fairfield Park. But then 'e says, I don't want a wife, so why would I wants an 'ouse to put 'er in?

ETHELBERTA

Indeed!

LABOURER

Yes....'e's a terrible hater of women, I hear.....particular them of the lower classes!..... Anyhow, he now rents the land to a brother of Lord Mountclere's.

Ethelberta nods in dismissal and hands the man a small coin.

ETHELBERTA

Thank you....thank you.

The man tugs his cap, again and resumes his barrowing.

The ladies hurry on down the conifer-lined track, again.

52

INT. EXONBURY CRESCENT/DRAWING ROOM - DAY

52

Joey opens the door upon Ethelberta who is sitting reading.

JOEY

A Mr. Neigh, Madam!

He makes secret 'round eyes' and Ethelberta, annoyedly looks quickly away from him to Mr. Neigh who comes into the room, carrying his hat.

Joey slowly closes this door whilst boggling his eyes and Ethelberta tries not to show her annoyance, while she stands up and greets Neigh.

She then sits back down on her armchair, indicating for him to sit, but Neigh shakes his head, impatiently and remains standing.

He starts to pace

NEIGH

(Clipped speech) I have been meaning to write a line to you, Mrs. Petherwin... Ethelberta!... I'm not bright at a letter... never was.

ETHELBERTA

Oh, it's just...

NEIGH

.....Look, will you give me hope that I may not be entirely unacceptable to you as a husband?... Just say "Yes" and settle it now.

ETHELBERTA

Oh...but I wasn't expecting... I mean that I can't say what you wish and.....

NEIGH

...perhaps I have been too sudden and too presumptuous!

ETHELBERTA

It's not that... It's just that there can be no question of marriage between us..... My affairs are too intricate and unpleasant for me to explain to anyone, at pres.....

ETHELBERTA

....No worries....no worries, there. All business affairs can be sorted with the lawyer fellows.... All you need to say is just two words, "I will".

ETHELBERTA

I'm sorry to pain you, Mr. Neigh, but.....

Neigh stops pacing and fixes her with a stare

NEIGH

...I might have expected your interest to be fixed in another quarter, were it not for the fact of your showing particular interest in ME, in the first place.....

ETHELBERTA

...particular interest?!

NEIGH

Well.....I wish Farnfield had been
in a bit more of a tidy state...but,
there you are!...If one visits,
unannounced, one must, I suppose,
take pot luck!

ETHELBERTA

(Faintly and embarrassed)
Oh.....um...yes, I did, er, walk
round, the other day.....

NEIGH

.....Quite!..... You 'took an interest'!

He plonks himself down, smugly nodding, on the sofa, near to
Ethelberta's armchair.

Ethelberta, stung, shoots to her feet.

ETHELBERTA

(Angry) But, but....It's only
reasonable that a woman should want
to see a bit of the property of the
man who has been hooting it around
London that he "intends to marry"
her!

Neigh looks a bit shamed

NEIGH

OH!.....Well..... I own I did say
that...but it's true...and I don't
care who knows it.....Do assent to
it, dear Mrs.Petherwin!

He leans over and takes her hand, which she slowly and gently
pulls back.

NEIGH

Look...just give it some
consideration and I'll come back
again, in a little
while.....tomorrow.....tomorrow.

ETHELBERTA

Oh...um...I thin.....Maybe.....I,
(Desperately) I don't love anybody
and have no heart left even for
begining.....I...

Neigh jumps up

NEIGH

.....Till next we meet again, dear
Mrs. Petherwin!

He gives a half bow and marches out.

Ethelberta sighs, and weakly plonks herself back down on the sofa, staring at the floor.

The door opens and Joey pokes his head in

JOEY

Your sooooooter gone, then?

Ethelberta angrily throws a ball of her knitting wool at him, as he withdraws, cackling.

53

INT. LONDON/ST. GILES CHURCH CRIPPLEGATE - DAY

53

Ethelberta comes in at the main door, talking to a middle-aged woman. Another middle-aged couple follow, behind, and then Neigh.

The first woman smilingly shoos Ethelberta up to a big statue of Milton and indicates, excitedly that she is to read from the small book which Ethelberta has in her hands.

Ethelberta smiles, stands leaning back against the tomb, and starts to read, aloud.

The others deploy them selves nearby, to listen, with Neigh, passionately either staring at her, or around the church, while she reads a brief poem.

The group then scatters and goes to inspect the other tombs.

Ethelberta goes out to the churchyard, and Neigh follows her.

Ladywell comes in at the main church door, looking around for his party, which he fails to see, as they are scattered.

Ladywell goes and sits in a pew, waiting.

Neigh re-enters the church and walks past Ladywell, not seeing him.

Neigh is emplacing a partial rose head in his pocket book.

Ladywell sees this and stands up, revealing himself to Neigh, suddenly.

Neigh starts back and rapidly closes the book, scattering some of the rose petals onto the floor.

Ladywell comes out of the pew to join Neigh, looks at the petals, and good naturedly wags his finger, in fun, at Neigh, baiting him regarding romanticism.

Neigh shrugs, embarrassedly.

Ladywell asks where the others are and Neigh indicates with his head and turns to take him back outside to the churchyard.

They step out of the church into the bright light and walk towards the tower, at one end, meeting Ethelberta as she comes around the corner.

Ladywell looks surprised, but Neigh explains that he had forgotten to explain that Mrs. Petherwin was to come.

Ethelberta looks like she is recovering herself after being angry with Neigh.

She is wearing the remains of a large rose, in her corsage, but nearly all of the petals are missing, just leaving two behind on the calyx.

Ladywell sees the rose, and his jaw drops.

He looks at Neigh, aghast, and Neigh looks away.

Ethelberta says hello and shakes Ladywell's hand, while glancing, annoyedly at Neigh.

The older married woman now joins them, nods to the men and takes Ethelberta's arm, steering her back into the church.

MRS. DONCASTER

Now, my dear, I must tell you.....run along Alfred, I have something to tell Mrs. Petherwin.....

NEIGH

Yes Aunt.

He takes Ladywell, who is still shocked at his supposed discovery, back into the church.

MRS. DONCASTER

....A friend of my husband's, Lord Mountclere, has been dying to meet you for sometime....He has been to many of your performances at Mayfair Hall!...When will you dine with us to meet him, dear?

Ethelberta looks a bit disconcerted, as her father is, unbeknown to Mrs. Doncaster, Mrs. Doncaster's butler.

ETHELBERTA

Oh...um...thank you.....Er, at YOUR house...yes, um...

MRS. DONCASTER

....Where else, my dear?!

She sweeps Ethelberta indoors.

55

INT. EXONBURY CRESCENT/DINING ROOM - EVENING

55

Picotee and Ethelberta are sitting at the table which is laid for dinner and they have their soup before them which they start on.

Joey is just leaving with the tray in his hand.

JOEY

Oi'm gonna go down t' kitchen now,
as Gwendoline 'as made me an 'og's
pudding. Oi'm glad oi don't 'ave to
eat them thin veggie messes as you
two do!

ETHELBERTA

(Reproachfully) Oh, Joey....."I AM!"

JOEY

Oi KNOWS you am!

ETHELBERTA

No!....I mean that you have to say
"I", instead of....

JOEY

...Mwah!!

He rushes out.

ETHELBERTA

(Sighs) That boy will be the ruin of
us all!

They continue with their soup.

PICOTEE

That's not the worst of it! He's in
love with Mrs. Doncastle's new
maid, now.

ETHELBERTA

Mrs. Doncastle's...?!...But that's
father's house!...Besides he's only
fourteen and she must be double his
age!

PICOTEE

I don't think father knows, or he'd
stop it.

ETHELBERTA

I'll talk to father, this evening.
I'm going there to tell him I am to
dine there.

PICOTEE

To dine there?!...At Mrs.
Doncastle's?!...Gosh!.....Father
will be right there, at table, you
know!.....(Smiles)How I should like
to see you sitting at a grand table
among lordly dishes and shining
people!

She puts down her spoon, in excitement.

PICOTEE

Oh,do let me come and sneak a peek
at you, Berta!

Ethelberta smiles

ETHELBERTA

We'll talk about that when I come
home, this evening...I must hear
what father says.

Picotee resumes eating her soup.

PICOTEE

(Musingly)I have never seen a real
dinner party in my whole life!

ETHELBERTA

I can tell you, Pixie that it isn't
that much fun, trying to shoehorn
ten courses down whilst being
tightly corseted and having to
smile all the while.

Picotee looks doubtful and slowly shrugs

PICOTEE

Still.....

56

INT. THE DONCASTER HOUSE/BUTLER'S PANTRY - EVENING

56

There is a knock at the door and it is then opened by the
knocker:a woman in black.

She comes in, closes the door behind herself and unwraps her
head veiling.

Ethelberta comes forward and kisses her father, Mr.
Chickerel.

CHICKEREL

Why...it's Berta!...Hello, pet!

ETHELBERTA

Can you sit with me a few minutes,
father?

CHICKEREL

I'm alright for ten minutes, or
so...(Concernedly)Anything happened?

ETHELBERTA

Oh no.....All's well. I just wanted
to have a word about a couple of
things.

Ethelberta sits down, after removing her coat,
and Chickerel sits back in his chair.

CHICKEREL

Fire away,then, love.

ETHELBERTA

Well, first, Joey has got to be
stopped...He's taken to courting
Mrs. Doncastle's lady's maid.

CHICKEREL

Good grief! The woman is old enough
to be his mother!

ETHELBERTA

Yes, and she'll worm all of our
secrets out of the foolish boy.

CHICKEREL

Well!...Huh!..... I'll soon sort HIM
out!.....And the other thing,
love?

ETHELBERTA

Oh just that..... I accepted an
invitation to dine here...A Lord
Mountclere wants to meet
me....(Jokingly)He probably wants to
marry me, or something similar..

CHICKEREL

MARRY?!...Or "similar"?...Lord
Mountclere?...I know that man's
valet...I'd sooner see you in your
grave than married to a reprobate
like that!

Ethelberta stands up and puts her hand on his shoulder

ETHELBERTA

Don't worry, Father. Really!.....I'm
not marrying anyone just at
present.....Tell me, though, are you
alright with the idea of my dining
here?

She puts her coat on and resumes the veil.

Chickerel gets up, as well and they move towards the door

CHICKEREL

Oh, that's alright, my girl....I
like to see you getting on in the
world...I want to see you happy.

Ethelberta smiles and kisses his cheek.

Chickerel opens the door and then, suddenly, a young woman
throws a heap of clothes at him, as she rushes past, in the
corridor, outside.

He catches a heap of clothes, including a long trained muslin
gown and a blonde wig.

MENLOVE

(Breathless speed)Hello,
Mr.Chickerel!...Sorry am late, but
could you just take this stuff
upstairs and be ever such a
sweetie?

She rushes away

ETHELBERTA

Good heavens! Who was that?

CHICKEREL

THAT was Joey's intended...Mrs.
Menlove..

ETHELBERTA

Who?!....Oh, no!!..... Not JANICE
Menlove?!

CHICKEREL

The very one...She came a fortnight
ago.

Ethelberta face palms

ETHELBERTA

(Groans)Ohhhhh...this wretched woman
was my maid at Lady Petherwin's and
is a very fiend of curiosity!

Chickerel chivies Ethelberta out

CHICKEREL

Don't worry, love. I'll cut this
off at the root...Courting at
fourteen!...The very idea!

Ethelberta turns to him and kisses his cheek, again

ETHELBERTA

I wish I was just plain old Berta
Chickerel at the cottage with you
all, again, father.

Chickerel pats her shoulder as he sees her out along the
corridor to the servant's entrance.

CHICKEREL

We've all made our beds and we've
all got to lie on them, Berta.
Don't fret about it.....Now off you
go.

He kisses her cheek, then, and she smiles and turns to the
door.

ETHELBERTA

Good night, Father.

57

INT. EXONBURY CRESCENT/ETHELBERTA'S BEDROOM - EVENING

57

Ethelberta is being dressed by Picotee who laces up her rear-
laced stays, and hands her the petticoats, outer skirt and
then bodice of a (peacock blue, if blonde, or crimson, if a
brunette) gown.

Picotee then dresses her sister's hair, putting it up with
combs and flowers, all the while talking with her sister.

PICOTEE

...And then, at the end of the
letter, Faith said that I must go
down and visit them, when they are
settled at Melchester... Mr. Julian
is now playing at the Abbey church
there, you know.

ETHELBERTA

That'll be very nice for you,
Picotee... We must take a little
holiday, soon, as a family, as well.
I am getting worried about the
children who are now looking quite
worn and pinched with London
living. I'm thinking of going to
Knollsea.

PICOTEE

Why Knollsea?

ETHELBERTA

Our aunt, at Rouen, wants me to get
a copy of her baptism registry.

(MORE)

ETHELBERTA (CONT'D)

Mother, being born the year after her, doesn't know, of course, which of the parishes around Knollsea aunt was born in.

PICOTEE

Ooh, Knollsea is just a little distance from Melchester!

ETHELBERTA

Um.....Gwendoline, Joey and Father would take care of Mother....I would really welcome being able to slip away from acquaintances, here.

PICOTEE

Would you?

ETHELBERTA

Um...I'd actually like to go and see our aunt, in Rouen, after. Poor Aunt, she's always repeating her invitation.

PICOTEE

(Awed) France!...Abroad!...

Ethelberta is now dressed and she stands and picks up her fan, reticule and little evening jacket...She looks magnificent, as usual.

She sees Picotee looking wistfully up at her from a tub chair, and smiles.

ETHELBERTA

If you really want to peek at us, you can, silly!.....Get along and ask Father, how..... And if that wretched Menlove woman gets to you, don't say a thing and come away as quickly as possible.

Picotee leaps up

PICOTEE

Oh, yes, Berta!...I will! I will!...Thank you!

Ethelberta sweeps out, followed by a delighted Picotee

There are three people at the far end of the hall talking among themselves as they stand on the threshold of the salon door, looking in. One of the ladies is adjusting her long evening gloves.

The front door knocker sounds and the butler, Mr. Chickereel, answers the door to his daughter, Ethelberta.

He looks at her with a mixture of glee, at the situation, and with fatherly pride.

CHICKEREL
(Half whisper)Excellent
timing.....Just about half of them are
here, love.

Ethelberta smiles, affectionately at him

ETHELBERTA
Mr. Neigh?

CHICKEREL
Not here, yet.

ETHELBERTA
Lord Mountclere?

CHICKEREL
He came absurdly early and is as
nervous as a boy!

Ethelbereta nods, biting her lip, a little absently.

CHICKEREL
Keep up your spirits, dear and
don't mind me.

She smiles

ETHELBERTA
I will, Father..... and let Pixie see
me, will you? She wants to see the
outfit she helped me put together...
and all the other ladies' too.
She'll be here, shortly.

Chickereel nods and chivies her, in a kindly manner, towards the salon threshold.

Menlove is escorting Picotee along the top hall from the back to the front of the house.

PICOTEE
I'd much rather not bother you and
wait for father.

MENLOVE

Ooh, lor! Your father'll be busy
for hours, now, so I'm showing
you.....You're Mrs.Petherwin's
maid, ain't you?

PICOTEE

Um, yes...I'm..

MENLOVE

Um...I used to be hers, too...terrible
flirt, she was!

PICOTEE

No, she's not!

Menlove shrugs

MENLOVE

Hum!

They arrive at the top horizontal bannisters looking down on
people coming into the salon.

There are now around a dozen people, in full evening dress.

Menlove and Picotee kneel down and peep through the
bannisters.

Menlove points

MENLOVE

That's Mr. Neigh, that is....D'yoo
know,I overheard him say that a
woman and her maid went out to
check on the size of his estates,
the other day. They were all
laughing!..... I'll bet that was
you and Mrs. Petherwin, wasn't it?

PICOTEE

I don't know what you're talking
about!...No.

MENLOVE

Go on!...You can tell me!

Picotee stands up

PICOTEE

I'll go and look for father.

Menlove stands up

MENLOVE

Ugghh..... No need to be
uppity!.....Look, we'll go and peep
through the doors of the dining
room...Follow me!...Shushhh!

She turns and goes back the way they came, and Picotee follows her, a bit reluctantly...She's having misgivings.

60

EXT. EXONBURY HOUSE/PICOTEE'S BEDROOM AND ROOF - DAY

60

Ethelberta leans back into Picotee's bedroom through the french windows from the roof leads, outside.

ETHELBERTA

Well, come on then, Pixie!...You'll miss the sunrise!

Picotee is looking for her other slipper.

She finds it, slips it on and then climbs up onto the chair that takes her out onto the leads.

The girls sit with their back to a roof wall, and their legs drawn up.

PICOTEE

I wasn't sleeping, anyway.....It's too hot!

ETHELBERTA

Oh,good.....Well, was that Menlove there, and did you see me?

PICOTEE

Oh!..... Yes and yes....I don't like her you know.

ETHELBERTA

Um.....Did you see Lord Mountclere?

PICOTEE

Yes. It's dreadful how fond of you he is...He was staring at you the whole time....Ugh, I wouldn't have him for the world!

ETHELBERTA

Why?

PICOTEE

He's at least sixty five!

ETHELBERTA

So?

PICOTEE

And he shuffles with bandy legs and
he laughs like this "Hee hee hee!"

ETHELBERTA

Picotee!.....You shouldn't ape
people!

Picotee 'face shrugs'.

ETHELBERTA

Besides, Lord Mountclere said, when
he heard I was going down to
Knollsea, that he was attending a
meeting of the Imperial
Archeological Association at
Corvesgate Castle, which is nearby.
He asked if I would join them...I
think that I may, you know.

PICOTEE

I wrote and told Faith Julian that
we're going to Knollsea. I'm
writing every week, now...It's so
nice to have someone to write to. I
get to hear what she's doing...AND
Christopher...

ETHELBERTA

...(Reproving) MR. Julian.....Um.....
Did you see Mr. Neigh, Mrs.
Doncastle's nephew?

PICOTEE

Oh, yes.

ETHELBERTA

Well, he's asked me to marry
him.....What do you think?

PICOTEE

Yuk!...I wouldn't have him, either!
Menlove said that he was telling
some other men that a woman had
been chasing him and had checked
out the size of his estates!

ETHELBERTA

(Alarmed) He didn't name names, did
he?

PICOTEE

Apparently not, but the men were
all laughing with him.

ETHELBERTA

Huh!...Oh, they were, were they?!.....Well, I wasn't keen on the idea, anyway...but that DOES it, now!

She gives a big yawn

PICOTEE

All those poor starving horses and a knackers yard..... Yuk, Berta!...Surely you didn't seriously think of it!

Ethelberta gets up.

ETHELBERTA

(Sighs) No!...You're right!

She stretches

ETHELBERTA

.....I think I'll just get another couple of hours sleepybyes.....Give me a shout mid morning, Picotee, huh?

Picotee gets up, stiffly.

PICOTEE

Alright, Berta.

She leans her cheek forward for a kiss which Ethelberta gives her and then they climb back in at the french window.

61

EXT. KNOLLSEA/CAPTAIN FLOWER'S GUEST HOUSE - DAY

61

Knollsea is a pretty townlet lying between two headlands.

A seaman's cottage lies on the slopes above Knollsea. Most of the village is separated from view by a small orchard outside of the house.

There is a small lawn, however, before the orchard.

From the parlour, where you can hear the chirrups of children and the friendly roar of the captain, one can see the little sails of yachts on the sea, between the scant orchard trees.

Ethelbereta is at the dining table with the four young children, Emmeline and Picotee. She is dressed simply in a light linen v-necked dress and has her hair simply dressed back in a plait, on the nape of her neck.

Ethelberta is busy doling out porridge from a vast bowl, to the children, and Emmeline and Picotee are trying to mitigate the worst of the children's table manners.

There is an enormous painting of a ship on the wall, behind Ethelberta.

Capt. Flower is holding the door handle prior to exiting

CAPTAIN FLOWER

You be alright then, ma dears?

ETHELBERTA

Oh yes, we're fine, thank you, Captain.

CAPTAIN FLOWER

There's cream, as well as milk, to fatten up the little ones and the eggs be a comin', shortly.

ETHELBERTA

This is really very kind of you, Captain....Don't worry, we're really quite comfortable.

The captain goes out.

LITTLE GIRL

Oh! he stole my sugar!!

LITTLE BOY

No I didn't!

LITTLE GIRL

I had it f...

Emmeline leans over and takes the contested sugar bowl off them, before it spills, and she remonstrates with them.

Ethelberta gives the final bowl of porridge over to Picotee for handing to the children and then attends to doling out Picotee's bowl and handing it to her.

ETHELBERTA

I've decided to go to that meeting at Corvsgate Castle, today, Picotee, so do you and Emmeline take the children down to the sands.

PICOTEE

Alright, Ethelberta....What about lunch?

ETHELBERTA

Oh, I've arranged that Mrs. Flower will put us up sandwiches and such, every day, so we can go jaunting.

PICOTEE

Ooh, lovely!...Will do, Berta.....I'd much rather go play in the rock pools than follow some old fuddy duddies around while some lecturer-type drones on!

ETHELBERTA

Well, I was rather hoping that it might be more fun than that!..... I can't walk all that distance, though, so I'm going to rent a donkey...a brougham is far too expensive.....we need the money for the holiday.

Picotee suddenly makes a grab for a little girl who is manhandling a big jug of milk and about to spill it.

Ethelberta smiles, starts on her own porridge, and peers out at the sea.

62

EXT. DORSET SEASIDE/BARROW DOWNS/CASTLE - DAY

62

Ethelberta looks splendid in her wide-skirted, light, linen gown, dark little jacket, and pale straw hat with matching ribbons, while riding her ass.

It is a beautiful summer's day and she is enjoying herself.

She rides along the wild shore and then up a little path, onto the barrow downs.

She rides through these small undulations in the sward and comes, eventually, to Corvsgate Castle, which she remembers from her childhood.

Ethelberta rides under the gateway into the outer ward and then through, into the inner ward. There is no-one there.

She dismounts, and ties up her ass to a stone projection.

Ethelberta looks around and, seeing no-one, rambles off amongst the stone work, becoming occupied with the architecture.

63

EXT. CASTLE/INNER WARD - LATER

63

Ethelberta hears talking and comes out into the inner ward to see a party of ladies and gentlemen around her ass, laughing at him.

DR. YORE

Perhaps he's escaped from a local cottage?

One of the richly clad ladies pats the ass on its nose. It is a sad, sorry-looking, old ass, with a frayed, tatty saddle.

LADY JANE JOY

The poor thing has strayed from its owner.

Sir Cyril Blandsbury takes another swig from his hip flask

SIR CYRIL BLANDSBURY

(A bit tipsily) Probably sick of being beaten by some bare-arsed peasant!(Hic)

Lord Mountclere looks up and smiles at the sight of Ethelberta approaching.

She carefully doesn't acknowledge the poor ass.

He walks towards her and takes her hand.

LORD MOUNTCLERE

Mrs.Petherwin!...I did so hope that you would take up my invitation!...Welcome, my dear!...Welcome!

He turns to the knot of extremely well dressed people and waves, airily and points, while Ethelberta smiles and nods

LORD MOUNTCLERE

I'm sure that you recognise Sir Cyril and Lady Blandsbury, Mr. Richard Draconian, the member for South Wessex, Lady Jane Joy and the reverends Taylor and Tinkleton...oh, and Mr. Neigh.....Dr. Yore, who is just going to give his paper....and I'm sure that we ALL know the renowned Mrs. Petherwin, the poetess!

He points to Dr. Yore who is nervously rustling some papers and then Ethelberta, who nervously sees Neigh and quickly shifts her gaze away.

LORD MOUNTCLERE

Now, ladies, if you would just sit on the grass...and you, Mrs. Petherwin, please, and then we gentlemen can all admire you as if you were a bed of the most exotic flowers...Hehehe!

The ladies sit down, together and the gentlemen then sit around the outside of them.

The Marquis, Lord Mountclere, whose nearby footman deploys a cushion for him, sits down, arthritically, as near to Ethelbereta as he can and smiles at her.

Dr. Yore stands before them and launches forth upon his speech, waiving his arms around at the edifice, solemnly and pompously.

The ladies do, indeed, look like a bed of flowers, in their summer silks and muslins, with their fans and parasols.

Dr. Yore's droning becomes one with the droning of the bees and chirping of the grasshoppers on this hot day.

64

INT. CORVSATE CASTLE/DUNGEON - DAY

64

Ethelberta and Lady Jane Joy enter into a semi-underground dungeon which is half open to the sky.

They look around at the stonework

LADY JANE JOY

The marquis told us that you are staying at Knollsea...We are probably coming on, there, for a few days after staying with him.

ETHELBERTA

Oh, well, Lord Mountclere is correct, there, but I'm afraid that I'm...uh.....going away.

LADY JANE JOY

How sorry I am! We will miss you..... When do you leave?

Ethelberta looks momentarily around, somewhat alarmed at the prospect of being found out, living with her 'rural' family.

ETHELBERTA

Um...well, um, I'm off..at the begining of next week..... for Cherbourg and then Rouen.

A voice breaks in and they look up to see Lord Mountclere and Neigh standing in the doorway.

Ethelberta is a bit irritated that they heard of her departure.

LORD MOUNTCLERE

Did I hear you say that you were going to Cherbourg and Rouen?

NEIGH

I'm going to Normandy, myself.

Ethelberta sighs and half smiles, politely.

Neigh offers his arm to Ethelberta, who reluctantly takes it and the two ladies come out to join the rest of the party, Lady Jane chattering to Lord Mountclere, taking his arm and them walking him away.

She has to support him, as he is rather bandy and rickety on his legs, and he keeps slipping.

65

EXT. CORVSGATE CASTLE/INNER WARD - DAY

65

Neigh walks Ethelberta off around the inner side of the wall, away from the others.

He leans in to talk to Ethelberta who rears back her head, a little.

NEIGH

(Urgently)Will you give me an answer?!..... I have come on purpose!

ETHELBERTA

Please, don't think of this, Now....please....I, I am going to,Rouen and, and will think of this on my way.

NEIGH

When will you be there?

ETHELBERTA

Next Wednesday, I should hope

NEIGH

I will call on you. Where are you staying?

ETHELBERTA

At the Hotel Beau Sejour, but.....

NEIGH

.....Then I will meet you there and have my answer!....I would meet you in hades, for the matter of that.....I won't be trifled with....I hate all this nonsense....Say it shall be an appointment.

ETHELBERTA

Well....(Sigh)Oh, very well.

Lord Mountclere toddles up to them, which gives Ethelberta an excuse to disengage herself.

She smiles and replies to the marquis's enquiry, as Neigh walks away.

Ethelberta points

ETHELBERTA

Is Enckworth Court in the direction
of the gorge, my Lord?

LORD MOUNTCLERE

No.....Where you're looking would
be a view of the sea, if it were
not for a small stand of elms which
I planted as a boy....of course,
these trees are twenty one years
old, now...hehehehe!

ETHELBERTA

Hoho...yes.....Of course!

She taps him, playfully with her fan for his attempt at a
pleasantry.

ETHELBERTA

(Thoughtfully)Ummmm..... I would much
rather have a view of the sea, than
some plain old trees, though, I
think.

LORD MOUNTCLERE

Would you?! We....

Lady Blandsbury comes over and tugs on Lord Mountclere's
sleeve

LADY BLANDSBURY

.....Marquis, we really must get
back, as they will be waiting our
dinner because you ordered an early
one for my poor husband who's ulcer
does so plague him!

The party is getting itself together and starting to move
towards the exit.

LORD MOUNTCLERE

Oh, did I?...Sorry ma dear!

He turns to Ethelberta takes her hand and gallantly kisses
it.

LORD MOUNTCLERE

I shall see you soon, Mrs.
Petherwin....Thank you so much for
joining us, today.I have very much
enjoyed your company, yet again.

He turns away, totteringly and takes Lady Blandsbury's arm

LORD MOUNTCLERE

Here, Lady Blandsbury! Let me guide
you on this slippery slope as we
don't want you tripping, and
damaging your pretty self, now, do
we?

She anxiously holds on to him as he totters, slips and once,
almost falls, as they hurry to join the others.

Ethelberta hides a smile, gets out her sketch pad from her
reticule, looks at the last sketch and turns over a fresh
page.

She looks around, behind her, at the edifice which looks
magnificent in the late afternoon sun.

The ward is quite deserted, now, apart from the noisy
jackdaws.

Ethelberta looks at the munching ass and addresses him.

ETHELBERTA

Come on, Tatty Bogle, you've had
enough munchies, now. You can take
me outside around the back to do
some sketching.

She walks towards it and the ass looks mournfully up at her.

66

EXT. CORVSGATE CASTLE/OUTSIDE THE WALLS AROUND BACK - DAY 66

Ethelberta is sitting sketching, around the back of the
castle, looking down at the beautiful Wessex scenery and the
elms planted by Lord Mountclere, in the distance.

The ass is munching, nearby.

A hot and dusty Owen appears, walking towards the castle from
the front face.

Ethelberta is enjoying her sketching. It is late afternoon.

She suddenly sees the elms falling, in the distance.

Her mouth opens in shock and surprise.

She can see the sea, where they formerly stood.

ETHELBERTA

He knocked them down!....I said it
and he did it!.....Good grief!

Owen arrives in the inner ward, he paces around it and peers
into the open doorways.

There is no-one there and he is very disappointed.

Owen sits down and drinks some water from a canteen.

He sighs, stands up, and then retraces his steps back out of the inner ward.

67 INT. CAPT. FLOWER'S GUEST HOUSE/PARLOUR - DAY

67

Ethelberta comes in removing her gloves.

She puts her hat on the sideboard and plonks down, exhaustedly in an armchair, just as Picotee comes in, having heard her.

PICOTEE

Hello, Berta. How did your day go?

BERTA

Oh, alright. A lecture and then some sketching...Lord Mountclere was there.

PICOTEE

Oh.....(Animated, suddenly)Guess what WE did!

ETHELBERTA

Built castles by the sea?

PICOTEE

Yes, but with Mr and Miss Julian...They came down. I told them we were here, if you remember.

ETHELBERTA

Um...

She looks a little sad.

PICOTEE

But when I told him you were at Corvsgate Castle, Mr. Julian went out to meet you...Did you see him?

ETHELBERTA

No.....What a pity.....Oh well, Picotee, I have decided to go to our aunt's at Rouen, after all, and take you with me. I have also written to Sol and Dan asking them to meet me there. I want them to see some beautiful buildings in Paris, to add to their education.

Pivoted suddenly looks disappointed.

PIVOTED

Oh!...Leave Knollsea?

ETHELBERTA

I thought you wanted.....Ah!

She realises the lover's instinct and suppresses a smile

ETHELBERTA

Weeeeeell..... if you'd prefer to stay, I can always take Cornelia, who has just come down...I'm sure she'd love it.

Pivoted suddenly brightens

PICOTEE

Oh, would you, Berta?!...Miss Julian said that she and her brother might come down to Knollsea for a few days' break, soon, and I should so like to see her. She's such a nice girl!

ETHELBERTA

Ummm...

She raises her eyebrows and turns her head away

ETHELBERTA

(Soto voce and pleasantly)AND him!

She smiles to herself, and shakes her head a little at poor Picotee's transparency.

There is a horde of children seen at the door and a trampling of feet heard.

The four children rush in followed by Cornelia and Emmeline.

The are very excited, are wearing wet, sandy clothes and carrying buckets and spades.

They rush over to Ethelberta and Picotee and kiss, clutch at and climb over them, telling of their exciting exploits.

Ethelberta laughs and attempts to defend her pale pastel linen gown.

Tipman, the valet, is helping (unbuttoning, etc) Lord Mountclear out of his evening clothes (white tie) down to his "Union suit" ("combis").

He then puts Mountclere's nightdress over his lord's head, I.e.over his combis, while they talk.

LORD MOUNTCLERE
Are you sure the report is true?

TIPMAN
It is a secret known to no-one but
myself and Mrs Doncastle's maid, my
lord.

Lord Mountclere muses, fascinatedly

LORD MOUNTCLERE
Hum....daughter of a butler,
egh?.....(Urgently)No-one else
knows, egh?

TIPMAN
Oh, no, my lord. I told Menlove,
the lady's maid, to keep it totally
quiet...I just happened to be the
first person that she mentioned it
to, as she has just begun work in
Mrs. Doncaster's house and saw Mrs.
Petherwin there, just recently.

LORD MOUNTCLERE
Well, keep it mum then Tipman...keep
it mum!...You may leave me now.

Tipman starts to pick up soiled clothes, prior to leaving and
heads, slowly towards the door as Lord Mountclere speaks to
himself.

LORD MOUNTCLERE
(Sotto voce)Hah!....A clever little
puss!...Hoodwinked us all!.....How
DID she get those finished manners,
education and that
beauty?!.....Tipman!?

Tipman pauses in the doorway

TIPMAN
Yes, my lord?

LORD MOUNTCLERE
This gossip goes nowhere, do you
hear?...These things are never
true!....Here!

He holds out a couple of money notes to him, which Tipman
comes forwards to take

LORD MOUNTCLERE

This is for the information and one for that Menlove woman, too...If this story gets out from anywhere, however, you will both find yourselves out on the street....Do you hear?.....Now listen: do you go to Knollsea and find out when the steamboat for Cherbourg starts, and when you have done that, I shall want you to send Taylor to me. I wish Captain Strong to bring the Fawn round into Knollsea Bay. Next week I shall want to go to Cherbourg in the yacht...providing the weather is alright...You're coming, too.

TIPMAN

Certainly, my lord

LORD MOUNTCLERE

Remember...Absolute silence, now!....Your job and your reference from me depend on it!

Lord Mountclere waves him away

LORD MOUNTCLERE

(Sotto voce) I WILL have her....Hehehe, such beauty!....I WILL have her.

69 INT. RAILWAY CARRIAGE - DAY

69

Ethelberta is seating herself in a first class carriage. She talks to Cornelia, her "maid", who is putting luggage overhead.

ETHELBERTA

I would be with you, Corny, if it weren't for the fact that Lord Mountclere has come on the train.....That was his valet asking you questions at the harbour, before we shipped.

CORNELIA

Don't worry, Berta. Oi got yer ladies' journals as ya gave ta me....Oi'll 'ave a good read, oi will!

She smiles and goes out.

Second later, while she is taking off her gloves and jacket, it being hot, Ethelberta finds she is being stared at by a man in the corridor.

She moves her head a little and finds it to be the marquis.

ETHELBERTA

Lord Mountclere...what a singular coincidence.

LORD MOUNTCLERE

Hehehe!...Not THAT singular!...Do you go far, today, Mrs. Petherwin?

ETHELBERTA

As far as Caen.

LORD MOUNTCLERE

Ah!...Did you ever!..... That's the end of my day's journey, too.

He smiles and starts to walk on with his valet carrying the luggage.

ETHELBERTA

(Calling after)Um.....actually, I have decided to go to Paris, after all, Lord Mountclere.

LORD MOUNTCLERE

The train won't go tonight, I think.

ETHELBERTA

(Desperately)Then...then I shall go on to Rouen!

LORD MOUNTCLERE

Yes.....Now I think of it, I DID intend to go to Rouen, and shall.

ETHELBERTA

(Ironically)Where will you stay in Rouen, my lord?

LORD MOUNTCLERE

Oh, The Montmorency...

ETHELBERTA

(Smiles, acidly).....THAT is not mine.

She nods and closes her door.

Ethelberta and Cornelia arrive at their Aunt Charlotte's small hotel, in Rouen, The Beau Sejour. They are exhausted with travel.

Aunt Charlotte, warm and friendly, quite smartly dressed and of a good figure, greets them at the door, kisses them and fussily gives instructions to two young boys to take the luggage which they promptly do.

Aunt Charlotte takes the two young women through the hotel to their room, talking all the while.

They ascend steps, come out onto a balcony and see a little courtyard below with potted shrubs and plants, as well as caged birds.

There are lots of busy French maids rushing about.

Occasionally, cooks, in paper caps, carrying kitchen articles, are seen scampering out and back from what is obviously the kitchen.

The scene is very lively and the girls traverse the corridors with their aunt.

The aunt shows them into their room and they thank her and look around at its prettiness.

The aunt leaves after giving them instructions about dinner.

The girls plonk down, on the beds, smile at each other, and then collapse, onto their backs, as well.

71

INT. THE MOULIN HOTEL/ETHELBERTA'S BEDROOM - DAY

71

The two girls are in bed asleep, when there is a knock at the door.

Ethelberta leaps out of bed, grabs a shawl and answers the door, receiving a letter.

She returns to sit on her bed, opens and reads the letter

ETHELBERTA

(Softly) Oh, Mama!

MOTHER (V.O.)

My dear, I hope that this finds you and Cornelia well.

This is just to warn you that Menlove has wormed everything out of Joey. She has had another row with your father and is threatening to reveal all.

(MORE)

MOTHER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Do you hurry, my dear, and find yourself a husband from amongst your set, before it is too late and your work has all been for nothing.....I'm sure that governessing wouldn't agree with you, you know.
Oh, and one more thing, Mr. Ladywell called, and he asked for your address when we said you were in France. I really fear that he may follow you out there. Perhaps he would suit you, do you think?
Have a good rest, the both of you.
With love from your affectionate mother.

Ethelberta drops the letter onto the bed and stands up.

ETHELBERTA

(Sotto voce) I MUST do something!

She looks at Cornelia quietly sleeping on the bed.

Ethelberta smiles and starts dressing, rapidly.

72

INT. ROUEN CATHEDRAL - DAY

72

Ethelberta is just entering the door, when she hears her name called, behind her and leans out to see Lord Mountclere hurrying towards her.

LORD MOUNTCLERE

(Out of breath) Mrs. Petherwin! How delightful!

ETHELBERTA

I am just about to ascend to the parapets.

LORD MOUNTCLERE

I should be delighted to accompany you.

Ethelberta nods her acceptance.

She is pointed to the appropriate door by a curator and sets off up the spiral staircase followed by Lord Mountclere.

After the first level is gained, Lord Mountclere sits tiredly down to rest, but Ethelberta sets off again, so he gets up and gamely follows her.

When they reach the next level, he sits down exhaustedly, wheezing and asks if she still wants to proceed, but she does, so he follows.

When they get to the top, Lord Mountclere staggers out, bandy-leggedly and absolutely collapses onto a box, wheezing, apoplectically, while Ethelberta peeps over the parapets and delightedly gives an account of the view.

Eventually, they descend the tower and come back out onto the leads of the main roof.

Lord Mountclere sees Neigh walk along, on the other side of the roof, and then enter the door, to descend, further.

The marquis points him out to Ethelberta.

LORD MOUNTCLERE
Isn't that Neigh?!

ETHELBERTA
Um...yes. He has a little business with me, later.

LORD MOUNTCLERE
Not 'marriage business'?...You're not engaged, are you?

Ethelberta starts to walk slowly along the leads.

ETHELBERTA
Please my lord...I, I'm not engaged, as yet, but...

LORD MOUNTCLERE
...Then may I have a few words in private?!

ETHELBERTA
Not now...No.....not today!

LORD MOUNTCLERE
Then when may I call on you?

ETHELBERTA
Well, if you must....let it be..... a month hence, at my house in town.

She shrugs, smiles, nods her head, and turns away.

ETHELBERTA
I must go down, now, my maid is waiting for me.

She walks away.

LORD MOUNTCLERE
(Sotto voce and gleeful) I must act fast, or HE will have her. But he shall not, and I will....Hehehe!

73

INT. HOTEL BEAU SOJOURN/OFFICE - DAY

73

Aunt Charlotte and her husband are reckoning up accounts at the desk, when Ethelberta knocks at the half opened door and enters, taking off her gloves.

She gives her aunt a kiss while Mr. Moulin bustles round getting a chair for her which she doesn't sit on.

ETHELBERTA

(Tensely) Aunt, has a gentleman called Mr. Neigh been here?

AUNT CHARLOTTE

(Gleefully arch) Oh yes. I sent him on to join you at the cathedral.

ETHELBERTA

Ah, yes, we....

AUNT CHARLOTTE

.....And another suitor called, a Mr..... Ladywell, so I shoved him in the small parlour.

ETHELBERTA

Oh, Aunt!....Why did you?

Aunt Charlotte leans forward, conspiratorially

AUNT CHARLOTTE

(Sotto voce) Well, my dear, your mother did write that you were running out of time and so I thought it best to line them up...as it were.....But, are these men perhaps intruders?

ETHELBERTA

(Sigh) Oh, no, Aunt. A woman who attempts a public career must expect to be treated as public property, I suppose!....Thank you, anyway.

She smiles and then goes up and kisses her uncle's cheek and leaves.

74

INT. HOTEL BEAU SEJOUR/SMALL PARLOUR - DAY

74

Ethelberta and Ladywell are sitting on chairs by the window. Ethelberta is sitting on the edge, and looking ready to fly.

LADYWELL

I have come to check about the rumours, Mrs. Petherwin.

ETHELBERTA

If they're about my engagement,
they're false.

LADYWELL

Oh, hurray!...Then perhaps I may
permitted to...

ETHELBERTA

...No!...How many times have I told
you that?

LADY WELL

I do not wish for any formal
engagement.....Look, will you delay
your answer, lest, if you give it
now, it may be a hasty one?

ETHELBERTA

(Sighs) If you wish

LADY WELL

When shall I come to you for my
answer, then?

ETHELBERTA

(Irritably)Oh, well, it might as
well be (parroting) 'a month from
now....at my London house'.

She stands up, abruptly and gestures for him to leave, which
he does after bowing to her.

LADYWELL

I shall just finish the letter I
started in the small parlour,
upstairs.

Ethelberta bows, in acknowledgement.

He leaves and her aunt comes bustling in

AUNT CHARLOTTE

That Mr. Neigh is here again, dear!

ETHELBERTA

(Irritably)Oh, send him in,
then,please, Aunt.

Aunt Charlotte bustles out.

Neigh then rushes in and bows as he gets to her.

NEIGH

Have you been able to form an
answer, yet, Mrs.Petherwin?

ETHELBERTA

If you will (glazed eyes) 'come to my London house in a month', I will be able to give you one.

NEIGH

(Loudly) But I came here for an answer!

ETHELBERTA

Shhhh!...Keep your voice down, Sir. There are others nearby!

A servant enters with a note for Ethelberta which she takes

NEIGH

I hate this writing business....

ETHELBERTA

..Will you excuse me a moment?

She turns away and reads

LORD MOUNTCLERE (V.O.)

I must see you again today. I will arrive five minutes after you receive this note. Pray be alone and eternally gratify, Yours, Mountclere.

NEIGH

If anything has happened, I shall be pleased to wait.

Ethelberta whips around

ETHELBERTA

Oh, would you?.....I'm sorry for this.....I, I may be rather a long time.

Neigh bows, again

NEIGH

My time is yours

ETHELBERTA

Then could you please wait upstairs, in the smal...no, no, not that one...er,er..... ..can you go into the small linen room, two doors along.....on, on the left, upstairs, please?

NEIGH

LINEN roo....(Sighs) Alright.

He leaves.

Ethelberta hears the wheels of the marquis's carriage, has a quick look out of the window and dashes out.

75

INT. HOTEL BEAU SEJOUR/OFFICE - DAY

75

Ethelberta tears into the office to find her aunt, alone, writing at her desk.

Aunt Charlotte looks up, in surprise at Ethelberta's hurry.

ETHELBERTA

Oh, Aunt Charlotte! I hope that you have rooms enough for my visitors, for they are like the fox, the goose and the corn, in the riddle; I cannot leave them together and I can only be with one at a time!

AUNT CHARLOTTE

My dear...what is this?

ETHELBERTA

I'm sorry, but I need the nicest drawing room you have for an interview of a bare few minutes with an old gentleman.

AUNT CHARLOTTE

Old?...Who?

ETHELBERTA

I'm sorry, Aunt, but I only arranged to meet one suitor. The other one pursued me in his yacht and then another was sent by my misguided, but well meaning mother!

AUNT CHARLOTTE

(In awe) Three suitors!

Ethelberta pulls a reluctant face

ETHELBERTA

Ughhhhh!

She peeps through the window, as she hears a carriage pull into the yard.

76

INT. HOTEL BEAU SEJOUR/LINEN ROOM - DAY

76

Neigh is sitting, upright, sullenly, on a stand chair, in the linen room.

He taps his foot.

He looks at his pocket watch.

He suddenly hears talking, outside.

ETHELBERTA (V.O.)
Yes, the scene is pleasant, today.
I like a view over the river

LORD MOUNTCLERE (V.O.)
I should think the steamboats
rather objectionable, when they
stop here, though.

Neigh sits up, out of his lounging slump

NEIGH
Mountclere?!

He goes to the window, and sees, Lord Mountclere and
Ethelberta on the balcony, below.

77

EXT. HOTEL BEAU SEJOUR/OUTSIDE FACE - DAY

77

Neigh hears a slight cough and looks to his right, and there
he sees Ladywell.

LADYWELL
(Hissing, dumbfoundedly) You,
Neigh?!

NEIGH
(Annoyed) You, Ladywell?!

The voices, below, resume and they both look down, again.

ETHELBERTA
As I have said, Lord Mountclere, I
cannot give you an answer now, as I
must consider what to do with Mr.
Neigh and Mr. Ladywell.....

LORD MOUNTCLERE
...To the dogs with Neigh and
Ladywell!...

ETHELBERTA
...And I shall not consider that you
have addressed me on the subject of
marriage until you have received a
letter that I need to write to you
and then, having received it, you...

LORD MOUNTCLERE
.....Repeat my proposal!...Look! I'm
repeating it now, Ethelberta!...How
long is it that I have to suffer
this uncertainty?

ETHELBERTA

A month..... By that time,
perhaps I will have grown weary of
my two other suitors.

LORD MOUNTCLERE

A month!!....SO inflexible?!

They return inside.

Neigh and Ladywell look at each other.

LADYWELL

Come and see me!

NEIGH

I will!

They both pop their heads back.

78

INT. UPSTAIRS SMALL PARLOUR - DAY

78

Neigh strides in and finds Ladywell, in his usual fastidious
flamboyance of dress and a big daffodil yellow neck tie,
scribbling at a table with pens and hotel paper.

Neigh nods at Ladywell and sits down opposite him, taking up
a piece of paper and a pen.

NEIGH

Just let me write a note, Ladywell,
and I'm your man.

Ladywell nods

LADYWELL

Just doing the same thing, old
chap!

They both snatch envelopes and write, "Mrs. Petherwin" on
their envelopes.

Ladywell rings the bell and regards his envelope

LADYWELL

That's for you, my fair
one!.....Yours for Mrs.
Petherwin, too, old boy?

NEIGH

Umph!

When the servant has taken the two envelopes and has left,
Neigh stands up.

NEIGH
(Disgustedly) Let's get out of this place!

79

EXT. ROUEN STREET - DAY

79

Neigh and Ladywell walk down the street and see two, big young men coming towards them. They are Sol and Dan.

Sol tips his cap at Neigh.

SOL
BONGJOOR, MONZUR!.....EEENGLEESH?

NEIGH
(Irritably) I certainly hope so!

SOL
(Relieved) Oh, good. Could you be atellin' us, Zur, where be the Hotel Beau Sejour, please?

Neigh turns around and points.

NEIGH
Yes..... Just up there.

Sol and Dan now both tips their caps

SOL
Thank 'ee kindly, Zur.

Ladywell stands with raised eyebrows as they walk away.

LADYWELL
Good grief!....Not MORE of us?!

NEIGH
(Acidly) Once a woman's been on the stage, she gets Bohemian ideas.

LADYWELL
(Glumly) Yes, like swapping us for Mountclere!.....A beautiful creature to think of marrying an old coot like that!

NEIGH
He can give her a title.

LADYWELL
But I distinctly understood her future answer to be favourable to ME!

Neigh grabs a chair at a small outside table of a wine shop and sits down.

NEIGH

(Grimly mimicking) "I'll give you
an answer in a month".....To all
three of us!!

Ladywell collapses, dramatically in a chair and calls

LADYWELL

Wine! Wine!.....Give me wine and
oblivion!

He closes his eyes and points his face to the sky

Neigh leans his head on his hands standing on their elbows,
on the table, and stares moodily at said table.

A waiter comes out and hovers nervously and interrogatively
near to the devastated couple with a pad and pen.

80

EXT. HOTEL BEAU SEJOUR/INNER COURTYARD - DAY

80

Sol and Dan walk into the courtyard and look around.

A couple of young maids come out of door, see them, giggle
and scutter through an opposite door.

A cook boy, with a paper cap comes out of another door,
hurries across, acknowledges them, enroute, and then enters
another door.

COOKBOY

Bonjour!

SOL

BONGJOOR!

Dan leans in towards Sol

DAN

Oi don't know 'ow you be adoin' o'
that lingo, Sol. Don't feel natural
to be a pretendin' as we is one o'
them, you know.

SOL

Oi'm not pretendin', Dan. Oi'm just
making 'em feel comfortable wi' us,
loik.

DAN

Oh....Roit then....

He looks around and sees a young woman hanging up some
washing on the first floor gallery.

Dan calls up

DAN

Er.....BONGJOOR, Madam!...Silver
plate?!

The young woman starts to reply and turns around to see them

CORNELIA

You ruddy what?!...

She sees them and beams

CORNELIA

Ah!..... Sol!...Dan!....

She darts down the stairs and gives them big hugs.

CORNELIA

Ya great loplollies!

More kisses

CORNELIA

Oi'll be givin' ya "silver plate",
bless you!.....Come on, oi'll show
you your rooms!

SOL

There's nay need to ballyrag us
like that, Cornelia, being as 'ow
you be younger 'n us and don't
speak French,yersen, no how!

The boys pick up their bags

A valet emerges from another door and is followed by an
elderly gent, his master.

The gentleman climbs into his coach and the valet climbs on
top.

The coachman drives away.

Sol, Dan and Cornelia start off across the yard and
Ethelberta appears from another doorway.

She sees them, smiles, comes across and kisses them, too, but
a bit less effusively than Cornelia.

ETHELBERTA

Sol! Dan!...How lovely to see
you!...You got here safe, then....I'm
so sorry, though, but I've got to
go back to London,now, after
meeting with the gentleman who just
left....I DO hope that you'll
forgive me.

SOL
Yer not comin' to Paris, then?

ETHELBERTA
No, but I've got you a nice, little
guest house, there, and I'll give
you a list of things that you must
see....My treat.....I do hope you'll
both forgive me....?

Cornelia starts to chivvy Sol and Dan up the stairs.

CORNELIA
'Course thi' will!...Come on, you
two!

ETHELBERTA
See you both for dinner, this
evening!

DAN
Alright, Berta.....Egh...get a look at
this staircase, Sol! The treads are
all in little blocks!

SOL
....And all painted chocolate, as
oim aloive!

They ascend the stairs while staring at them.

Ethelberta picks up her skirts and hurries indoors.

81 INT. EXONBURY HOUSE/MRS CHICKEREL'S BEDROOM - DAY 81

Ethelberta is just seating herself on her Mother's bed with
Cornelia.

Mrs. Chickerell is sitting with her accustomed bed shawl and
nightie on.

ETHELBERTA
Well, we're nearly all here, Mama.
I've just left Picotee at Knollsea,
as I'm going back there, tomorrow.
Emmeline is putting the children to
bed.

Mrs. Chickerell looks up

MRS. CHICKERELL
Going back, tomorrow?!...Whatever
for?

ETHELBERTA

Picotee is going to finish off her schooling and I am going to set myself a little study of geography.

MRS. CHICKERELL

Geography?!

ETHELBERTA

Yes, I'm going to give up the performances, as they're less popular, now and I've had enough of them, anyway..... I'm going to ask you to let my extra rooms while we still have the remnants of the lease, Mother, and this should give us enough to live on, along with Father's money.

MRS. CHICKERELL

But what will you live on after?

ETHELBERTA

By the time this money runs out, Picotee and I will have taken on a little school in the country, somewhere, and you can come and live with, or near us.

CORNELIA

What about yer marriage proposals, though?

ETHELBERTA

Oh, I've had enough of suitors and their insults to last a lifetime.

MRS. CHICKERELL

Proposals?.....Several proposals?!.....A proposal can never be an insult, Berta!....Do be sensible, love and give any proposals a good consideration.

Ethelberta stands and draws off her gloves.

She leans down and kisses her mother's forehead.

ETHELBERTA

I'm too fagged for talking, now, Mother(smiles) but I promise to give ALL proposals my very best consideration.

Cornelia looks up.

ETHELBERTA

Good night, you two!

She bends down and kissed Cornelia, turns and goes out
Mrs. Chickerell shakes her head, mystifiedly, at Cornelia

MRS. CHICKERELL
Lots of proposals and she's
thinking o' being a school
teacher!...Oi ASK ya!

82 EXT. STREET/RAILWAY STATION/STREET/CRT. FLOWER'S GUESTHOUSE - DAY

Ethelberta waves her hands around and instructs a cabby driver who is loading four bags into a handsome cab.

She then gets in with her reticule and umbrella

Ethelberta waves her hands around and instructs a porter who is loading her four bags and suitcases into a second class train compartment.

Ethelberta then gets in with her reticule and umbrella

Ethelberta waves her hands a around at the dog cart driver who is loading her bags onto his fly.

She then gets in with her handbag.

They start to drive off when, Ethelberta suddenly realizes that she has left her umbrella on the train and starts calling him to stop.

Ethelberta races back into the station.

Ethelberta comes out, glumly, without her umbrella and remounts the cart.

It starts to rain. She is even glummer.

83 INT. CAPTN. FLOWER'S COTTAGE/SITTING ROOM - DAY 83

There is a fire and Picotee and Ethelberta are sitting by it.

Picotee is pouring the tea and Ethelberta is drying her hair with a towel, by the fire.

PICOTEE
It's such a pity you missed Mr and
Miss Julian!.....They stayed an
extra two days, you know, as well!

ETHELBERTA
Well, perhaps I'll see them next
time, Pixie...Any more news?

Picotee hands her cup of tea to Ethelberta.

PICOTEE

Not really.....Oh!...No!...I nearly forgot! This letter was re-addressed from Exonbury Crescent and just got here, this morning.

She pulls the letter out of her pocket, and hands it to Ethelberta who reads it.

ETHELBERTA

Oh!...It's from Lord Mountclere...

She reads and then looks up.

ETHELBERTA

Now Picotee, we'll have to see him and make the most of him, you know.....He's coming down, next week, for I have, um... altered my plans since I was last here.

PICOTEE

What?.....Are you NOT going to be a poor person, after all?

ETHELBERTA

Indeed not! (Smiles).....I know, I seem to turn and turn about!.....Now, before I reply to this letter, we must go into new, smart lodgings. I will rush out, immediately and look out a large villa.

PICOTEE

Can I come?

ETHELBERTA

Of course! It must be the gayest house that we can find.

Picotee shoots to her feet, but Ethelberta sips her tea.

Ethelberta looks up at her.

ETHELBERTA

(Reprovingly surprised) Tea first, dear.

Picotee sits down, abashed.

PICOTEE

Oh, yes.....tea, of course.

She picks up her own cup, and sips, in a ladylike manner, just like her older sister.

Ethelberta and Picotee are sitting in identical positions before returning the fire, still sipping tea, but, as the camera pulls back it can be seen that they are now in a very large, polite, drawing room with pale washed walls, plenty of paintings and ornaments.

They are in their best clothes.

Picotee puts her cup and saucer down, gets up and goes out onto the balcony.

They hear carriage wheels

ETHELBERTA

Is that he?

PICOTEE

No....STILL not!

Picotee cranes, looking up and down.

PICOTEE

Can we go and look at the fireworks....? The coast guard is practising for the autumn wrecks.....Perhaps Lord Mountclere has stopped to watch them.

ETHELBERTA

Well, you just pop out, then, Pixie.

Picotee whizzes through from the balcony, grabs a light shawl and exits the room, into the hall.

Ethelberta continues to drink, whilst listening to the fireworks.

Eventually, Picotee reappears, looking excited.

ETHELBERTA

Why were you so long?

PICOTEE

Oh, I thought I'd just watch the fireworks a while.

ETHELBERTA

But is he there?

PICOTEE

Yes....But he's gone, now?

ETHELBERTA

Lord Mountclere?

PICOTEE

No, Mr. Julian!.....He just passed through. He wanted to call here, but an accident prevented him calling. He couldn't miss his seat for Sandbourne, so when he had helped the gentleman, he had to go.

Ethelberta gets up and goes into another room for a fan.

She returns with it and paces up and down, whilst Picotee takes and eats a biscuit.

ETHELBERTA

An accident

PICOTEE

Yes, umph, said, umph, um..

ETHELBERTA

(Reproachfully)Not with your mouth full, dear!

Picotee swallows the mouthful of biscuit ands Ethelberta fans herself.

PICOTEE

An old gentleman's carriage had overturned at the bottom of the hill, coming into town, and Mr. Julian stopped to help out the man who had sprained his ankle.

ETHELBERTA

I suspect that that carriage might have been Lord Mountclere's.

PICOTEE

He said that the old gentleman swore like a trooper, and then got back into another coach and went back up the hill...Mr. Julian then saw me as he passed by, going to the steamer.

ETHELBERTA

You didn't say anything about it possibly being Lord Mountclere?

PICOTEE

No...I was thinking of other things
(Sighs)

She muses, absently.

ETHELBERTA

(Amusedly) Ummm...I'm sure you were!

Ethelberta is taking her morning walk, and reading a letter, when she is caught up with, by a hurrying Picotee.

Picotee's bonnet is hanging off and she is breathing, breathlessly through her mouth.

ETHELBERTA

Good grief, Pixie!....Look at you!
You look likely you've put your
clothes on with a pitch fork...and
don't hang your mouth, so! It's
quite vulgar!

Ethelberta stops.

Picotee catches her breathe, while bending over, somewhat, and holding her side, in pain.

PICOTEE

Sorry, Berta!....Good
Morning!.....Got a stitch!....Was
late for breakfast!

ETHELBERTA

Well, you won't be able to 'lie in'
when you go back to finish your
schooling!

PICOTEE

Ugh!....No....

Ethelberta carefully folds up her letter and the girls walk on

ETHELBERTA

It WAS Lord Mountclere who injured
his leg, you know, and because of
this injury, which is still
mending, he has kindly asked me if
I will go over and join himself and
some friends at Enckworth Court.

Picotee is still a little breathless and still rubbing her side

PICOTEE

Gosh!....Visiting at a Marquis's
house, Berta!.....Are you going,
then?

ETHELBERTA

Um....I think I will.

PICOTEE

You don't want a lady's maid, do you?...I've nothing to do till term begins.

Ethelberta smiles and shakes her head

ETHELBERTA

Uh, uh!..... I've had QUITE enough of my family pretending to be my servants!

PICOTEE

PreTENDING?!

ETHELBERTA

Alright.....BEING!

She straightens up and takes a deep breath in

ETHELBERTA

Come on, Pixie!

She speeds up her walking

ETHELBERTA

Stop this lolling around and lets take some bracing sea air, then!

She pulls ahead

ETHELBERTA

(Shouts back)Come on!

Picotee, still rubbing her side, looks up at Ethelberta's departing back, in dismay.

86

INT. ENCKWORTH COURT/DRAWING ROOM - EVENING

86

Everyone, who was at Corvsgate Castle, is yet again assembled at Lord Mountclere's house.

The party is in evening costume of white ties and tails, with the women in brilliant silks and gauzes.

The women are languidly fanning themselves nearish to the fire and the men are just coming in to join them after their port.

There are two ladies on a particular sofa, and Ethelberta is sitting on an armchair, near to them.

One sofa dweller addresses the other

MRS. O'FANAGAN

Mrs. Webley! Would you perhaps entertain us with a little piano?

MRS. WEBLEY

Oh, my dear...really, I couldn't!
I'm far too exhausted this
evening!...Do you know, I did a third
time around the shrubbery!....It's
positively extinguished me!

MRS. O'FANAGAN

Um....

She turns to Ethelberta

MRS. O'FANAGAN

Mrs. Petherwin! Perhaps you would
entertain us with one of your own
amazing stories which we hear so
much about?

Ethelberta sighs, and nods.

ETHELBERTA

Well, if the others want....

MRS. WEBLEY

...Oh, yes, my dear!...DO!...DO!

The others similarly urge her, so Ethelberta straightens out
her skirts and settles herself.

ETHELBERTA

Alright, then....This is a tale, um,
a tale about a girl born into a
servant's home...The fifth of ten
children...

The audience all nod, appreciatively and Ethelberta tells her
very own tale.

The audience don't realize that the tale is her own, but,
after a while, she begins to get a bit emotional and flags in
her telling of it.

The Marquis stands up and interrupts her.

LORD MOUNTCLERE

Well, that's enough for the time
being. Mrs. Petherwin must be
exhausted and, anyway, I'm after a
high stakes game of piquet!...Anyone
taking?

He points to three large round table set out with cards over
the other side of the room.

Mrs. Webley jumps up and claps her hands.

MRS. WEBLEY
Oh, high stakes! What fun!...(To
Ethelberta)Thank you, my dear!

The party hurries over to the tables.

The marquis comes over to Ethelberta.

He whispers, tremulously

LORD MOUNTCLERE
My dear!....Don't bother telling
them all about yourself! They're
not worth it, and I know all,
anyway!

ETHELBERTA
Know all?!

LORD MOUNTCLERE
Yes. Look! Meet me in the
conservatory along the passage,
outside. Go straight there, now!

He hurries off through another door and Ethelberta leaves
through the door into the passage.

87 INT. ENCKWORTH COURT/CONSERVATORY- EVENING

87

Ethelberta enters the conservatory and Lord Mountclere
hurries up to her from around some plants.

ETHELBERTA
How long have you known?

LORD MOUNTCLERE
Oh, weeks, ma dear!.....Weeks!

He takes her hand and comes close up to her

LORD MOUNTCLERE
You promised at Rouen to make me a
decisive reply!

ETHELBERTA
But, but my father and friends are
servants, you see and....

Lord Mountclere shakes his head

LORD MOUNTCLERE
.....Nothing that an annuity and a
comfortable cottage won't solve!

ETHELBERTA
But my brothers are artisans!

LORD MOUNTCLERE
 Manufacture is business. I might
 just set them up with their own.
 That is, if they don't buy ME up,
 first, egh!...Hehehe!

ETHELBERTA
 But your own family....

LORD MOUNTCLERE
Pshaw!....It would take fifty
 alliance with fifty families so
 little disreputable as yours,
 darling, to drag mine down! I do
 assure you!

Ethelberta smiles, shyly

ETHELBERTA
 Then, Lord Mountclere, I shall
 think it a great honour to be your
 wife.

She shyly and slowly drops her head, while he kisses her on
 the cheek and then nods.

LORD MOUNTCLERE
 Hehehe!

88

INT. KNOLLSEA/VILLA'S DRAWING ROOM - DAY

88

There are a few melancholic notes being played, on the piano,
 as Lord Mountclere is shown into the drawing room, by the
 servant.

MAID
 Lord Mountclere, Ma'am.

Ethelberta rises from her piano stool, comes forward and
 extends her hand to him.

Lord Mountclere takes the hand, draws her near and kisses her
 on the cheek, looking into her face.

Ethelberta submits and then draws away and pats her own hair
 bun at the nape of her neck.

She surreptitiously wipes away a tear.

Lord Mountclere has observed the tear in her eye, and he
 draws near to her manuscript music, to inspect the name at
 the top.

It is Christopher Julian

LORD MOUNTCLERE

Ah!...You shed a tear for the giver of this homage, I suppose, my dear...?

ETHELBERTA

What?... (Smiling ironically brightly) For his unpardonable use of the diminished seventh, in the introduction, his execrable taste in modulating twice between major, and minor, within only three phrases, or because you think I pine over lost loves, my lord?

LORD MOUNTCLERE

Oh!..Hehehe...No!...I'm sure that there are no previous entanglements, as such.....

ETHELBERTA

(Annoyed)My Lord....I believe that I am now "entangled" with yourself. HOW, then, could I be "entangled" with another?...Are you perhaps jealous, Sir?

Ethelberta walks over and sits down on an armchair, near to the fire.

LORD MOUNTCLERE

Oh, no!.....NO!...I mean, I was just, um, not, ...Um...I've actually come to ask you if you would care to accompany me to a charity instrumental concert?

Lord Mountclere follows her over and sits down on another nearby armchair

ETHELBERTA

When?

LORD MOUNTCLERE

Next week, in Melchester....Just a.....oh, you know, a random assortment of players.

ETHELBERTA

If my family gets to hear of our engagement, it is cancelled, my lord. Is it wise, therefore, that we are seen together, in public?

LORD MOUNTCLERE

Why should our marriage be cancelled?

ETHELBERTA

Because my father would prevail
upon me to break the engagement.

LORD MOUNTCLERE

(Haughtily) He won't object. I don't
see why he should!..... Oh, no, you
will be mine, now..... (Suddenly
smiling) So will you meet me at
Anglebury and go on with me to
Melchester, my dear?

ETHELBERTA

Well, I don't understand why you
are so keen to go to this
particular concert, but if my
sister may accompany me, I will
attend.

LORD MOUNTCLERE

Yes, of course!.... Of course she
may..... Splendid! Splendid!

Ethelberta stands up, and so Lord Mountclere rises, also.

ETHELBERTA

Now, if you will excuse me, my
Lord, I have to meet my dressmaker,
shortly.

Lord Mountclere picks up his hat and gloves.

LORD MOUNTCLERE

Yes, yes!..... My pretty bird must
ruffle her gay feathers!

He leans and kisses her cheek.

LORD MOUNTCLERE

Good bye, my dear.... My own one!

He departs and Ethelberta sits down, breathing heavily.

She then looks over at the music on the piano and sighs,
smiling wistfully, and then looking down at her lap.

89

INT. LORD MOUNTCLERE'S COACH - DAY

89

Lord Mountclere settles himself down on his seat and raps,
authoritatively, to the coachman to drive on, which the
coachman does.

Lord Mountclere gets out a concert leaflet and peruses it.

There, at the head of a short list of players, is the name of
the organist, Mr. Christopher Julian.

Lord Mountclere nods his head, smiles and cackles to himself.

LORD MOUNTCLERE

Hehehe!

90

INT. MELCHESTER TOWN HALL/GREEN ROOM - DAY

90

There is the sound of instruments tuning up with long 'A's being held, in the next room.

Lord Melchester ushers in Ethelberta and Picotee and sits them down, on two chairs at the other side of a table which stands at one side of this corridor room.

He remains standing, nearby.

The party is in smart day clothes

LORD MOUNTCLERE

You see, we have come in quite privately and, when the musicians enter, we can follow them out and huddle to our seats, anonymously.

The door opens and around eight musicians hurry through, going out of the other door, towards the stage entrance.

Christopher comes through last.

He sees Ethelberta, gasps, halts, and sags, plopping his music down onto the table.

He breathes loudly and is white-faced.

Ethelberta stands up rapidly and shoots a piercing look of hatred at Lord Mountclere.

ETHELBERTA

(Hisses) This is your pretty jealous scheme!....I see it!...DON'T think I don't!

She hurries around the table, takes Christopher's hand, and smilingly nods, and murmurs encouragement at him, while he recovers, nods, and then smiles at her.

Lord Mountclere and Ethelberta suddenly hear a gasping exclamation from Picotee who then starts to swoon.

PICOTEE

Oh!

Ethelberta drops Christopher's hand, leaves him, and hurries back around the table to catch Picotee as she faints.

Ethelbereta realizes her opportunity and seizes it.

She stabs a finger at each of Picotee and Christopher, and addresses Lord Mountclere

ETHELBERTA
NOW do you see it?!

LORD MOUNTCLERE
I do! I do!

Christopher comes round to help Ethelberta sitting Picotee back upright in her chair.

Picotee is very embarrassed and won't look at anyone.

She plays with her handkerchief, dabbing at her nose and sniffing.

Christopher smiles at her and then at Ethelberta.

ETHELBERTA
Are you feeling better, now, Mr. Julian?

CHRISTOPHER
Yes, yes....Um, just a little stage nerves, I suppose! I'm, I'm glad to see you both, but I must go through, now....Thank you.Thank you!..... Good Evening!

He hurries, embarrassedly away.

Ethelberta leans towards the hovering Lord Mountclere

ETHELBERTA
(Sarcastic whisper)You're quite sure between whom the love lies then, now, egh?

LORD MOUNTCLERE
I am! I am! Oh, yes!.....Beyond a doubt!

Ethelberta sweeps out of the room, in high dudgeon and Lord Mountclere follows, totteringlly.

91 EXT. MELCHESTER/HIGH STREET - DAY

91

Ethelberta storms along, with Lord Mountclere occasionally catching up, and then pausing to catch his breath and falling behind again.

Picotee follows slowly, in the distance.

LORD MOUNTCLERE
Ethelberta, dearest! Please forgive me!

ETHELBERTA

You had no right to mistrust me!

He falls back, again and then recovers his ground

LORD MOUNTCLERE

I DO trust you...I do! You didn't
blench...You should have told me
that it was your sister and not you
who was entangled with him!

ETHELBERTA

Are you not ashamed?!

LORD MOUNTCLERE

I am. I am...Sorry, my dear!

She pulls ahead, again, dabbing her eyes.

He catches up to her

LORD MOUNTCLERE

It was an inconsiderate trick of
me, I own it...Now do you....

She has pulled ahead, again and he stands wheezing and
looking after her.

Ethelberta has a quick look at the train times on the board
outside of the railway station, sighs, and then returns along
the road, on the other side, meeting Picotee, there.

The two of them storm down the road, and then go into the Red
Lion Hotel, and so Lord Mountclere totters into the White
Hart, opposite.

92

INT. RED LION HOTEL/PRIVATE SITTING ROOM - EVENING

92

Ethelberta, standing, seals a letter, addressed to Lord
Mountclere, and gives it to the servant.

Picotee, is sitting by the fire and she pours the tea.

Ethelberta is just sipping her tea, when the servant returns
a letter from Lord Mountclere.

She opens and reads it and rolls her eyes.

She goes over to the other table, picks up the pen and writes
again. She addresses it to Lord Mountclere.

Ethelberta rings for the servant.

The servant arrives and collects the letter.

Picotee offers a cake to Ethelberta.

Ethelberta sniffs, sits down, picks up her side plate and takes the proffered slice.

She takes a big, snapping bite and chews, ruminatively, glowering.

ETHELBERTA
I'm going for a stroll and a
'think' around the cathedral,
Pixie...You have a rest here.

Picotee stretches her feet to the fire and wiggles her toes.
She has taken her boots off.

PICOTEE
Oh, alright, Berta.

Ethelberta regards her food

ETHELBERTA
Actually, this cake's not bad.....FOR
a public house!

93 INT. MELCHESTER CATHEDRAL/AISLE - DAY 93

Ethelberta is strolling down the aisle, when Lord Mountclere hurries up to her.

He takes her hand and kisses it.

He explains and apologises, yet again.

Ethelberta accepts his apology.

Lord Mountclere urges that she marry him soon.

Ethelberta agrees, whereupon he takes her hand, kisses it, and then kisses her on her cheek, delightedly.

She gives a small smile and nods her head.

94 INT. TRAIN - EVENING 94

Picotee is struggling to put a bag in the overhead container and Ethelberta is rearranging her hat and hair.

ETHELBERTA
Pixie, I ought to tell you that I
am getting married early.....Not that
I can believe the fact...It's to be
the day after tomorrow.

Pixie plumps down on a nearby seat

PICOTEE

Gosh!...So soon?..... He can't make you, you know!

She moves over and sits next to Ethelberta and takes her hand, looking concernedly at her.

ETHELBERTA

(Languidly) I agreed to the day.....It's to be a secret wedding, so we need no preparations.

PICOTEE

Is this on account of his family?

ETHELBERTA

No.....OURS, dear. I suspect that Papa would try to stop me, if he heard. I suspect that he has....um... prejudices....Now dress again as my sister, tomorrow, Pixie, as Lord Mountclere is dropping by early, to conclude some bits of paperwork.

PICOTEE

Gosh! My sister marrying a lord!

ETHELBERTA

Gosh is vulgar, dear...and yes, I'm thinking that with Lord Mountclere being a little more mature than most suitors, I won't be expected to have ten children and then spend my life ill in bed, like poor mother.

PICOTEE

Yeeees..... but I think I wouldn't mind, though, having TWENTY children if it was with Chris....Hum, I mean, you WILL still visit abroad, and entertain at home, won't you?

ETHELBERTA

I don't really know, but I will certainly now have time to get on with my writing. I am already planning a grand play cycle and will be able to use his vast library.

Picotee puts Ethelberta's hand down, and sits back in her seat.

PICOTEE

Oh, yes....(Uninterestedly puzzled)Writing....

Ethelberta looks out of the window and remembers her last meeting in the church with Lord Mountclere.

Flashback:

LORD MOUNTCLERE

Marry me on Friday and, as you desire, I solemnly promise all that money and influence can do to bring about the union of your sister and her desired love.

Ethelberta nods and he raises her hand to his lips.

ETHELBERTA

On that condition, I am yours.....
irrevocably.

95

INT. MRS. DONCASTLE'S HOUSE/BUTLER'S ROOM - DAY

95

Mr. Chickerell is sitting reading the newspaper when there is a commotion at the door, with a raised young woman's voice and a man, speaking bullishly to her.

Then butler puts down the paper and looks up.

The door bursts open and a well-dressed, late, middle-aged man strides in.

He stops and stares.

BERTIE MOUNTCLERE

You Chickerell?!

Chickerell stands up.

CHICKERELL

I have that honour, Sir. May I ask who you are and why you are here?

BERTIE MOUNTCLERE

Name's Bertie Mountclere....Brother of the Marquis!

Chickerell looks very worried

CHICKERELL

(Faintly) Lord Mountclere....?

BERTIE MOUNTCLERE

Yes, and my blasted brother is going to marry your daughter!....Are you in on it, Sir?

CHICKEREL

(Insulted) I beg your pardon, Mr. Mountclere?!...I know nothing of this.

Mountclere starts to pace, furiously

BERTIE MOUNTCLERE

Then you don't approve, egh?!

CHICKEREL

(Shocked) Approve?!.....I would rather she be a scullery maid! I would rather she scrubbed the floors!

BERTIE MOUNTCLERE

Then, will you come with me and persuade the girl otherwise?

Chickerell grabs his coat and umbrella and races out of the door.

CHICKEREL

Try and stop me!.....
I just need to drop in at Exonbury Crescent and collect a few clothes....Have you a carriage?

BERTIE MOUNTCLERE

It's outside....Hurry!

They thunder down the corridor

96

EXT. EXONBURY CRESCENT. - DAY

96

Chickerell comes out of the front door, with Joey boggling out at the carriage and then closing it behind him.

As he starts down the steps, a handsome cab draws up at a quick trot and Sol and Dan jump out.

They address their father as he is on the steps.

SOL

Father, our Berta be a runnin' away with that Marquis fella!

DAN

No, Sol! Pixie said as 'ow 'e were a marrying 'er!

SOL

Well, yeh, so we reckoned as 'ow the aristocracy would be a marryin' in London, loike, and that you moight be able to stop it, Father.

Chickerel resumes hurrying down the steps and mounting into the carriage.

CHICKEREL

(To Bertie) We might need some reinforcements, if your brother has brought along some footmen who try to interfere!...My sons are here!

BERTIE MOUNTCLERE

Oh, bring them along! Bring them along...Dammit!!

He bangs the roof

BERTIE MOUNTCLERE

Ride on!...Ride on!!

The boys mount and the carriage horses canter away.

97

EXT. ROAD TO ENCKWORTH COURT - DAY

97

Christopher is slogging along the road to Enckworth Court, when he hears a carriage approaching.

He stands in the road and waves it down.

The carriage stops and Christopher goes to the door, with the open window.

CHRISTOPHER

Excuse me, Sir, but do you know....Mr. Chickerel!!...What are yo..... Are you going to Enckworth Court, as well?

CHICKERELL

Yes, we are, indeed!

CHRISTOPHER

So you've heard, then?

Bertie leans forward and calls

BERTIE MOUNTCLERE

Yes, the whole ruddy world has heard and...

CHRISTOPHER

.....I'm a good friend of Miss Petherwin's, could I possibly come along..... please?

BERTIE MOUNTCLERE

What do you think this is?...We're in a hurry....Oh, for goodness sake....Get in, then! Get in!!

Christopher scrambles in and squeezes, uncomfortably between the two brothers.

Bertie raps on the roof, again and roars

BERTIE MOUNTCLERE
Ride on! Ride on...and fast, Man,
fast!!

The coach canters off.

98 EXT. ENCKWORTH COURT/FRONT DOOR - DAY 98

The men stream up the front steps and Bertie rings the bell.

The butler tells them that Lord Mountclere has left for the church.

The men all pour back into the carriage and canter off, again.

99 INT. CHURCH/NAVE AND VESTRY - DAY 99

The men pour into the church and look around.

It is empty, but there are traces of confetti on the floor.

The men stream into the vestry where the priest is just finishing disrobing.

They demand to hear about the marriage and he shows them the new entries in his marriage celebrations register.

They all stand up, again and look at one another, in dismay.

100 INT. THE JULIAN'S HOUSE/SITTING ROOM - DAY 100

Julian enters, haggardly, at the door and Faith jumps up to greet him with a kiss on his cheek.

She is waving a letter around

FAITH
You'll never guess!...Aunt Lucy has
left us a few hundred pounds in her
will!...Hundreds!

Christopher looks up

CHRISTOPHER

A few hundred
pounds?.....(Sighs:suddenly
decisive)Well, in that case, we're
going to live in Italy for a few
years, to get away from all of
this!

FAITH

Oh Italy!...Rome?

CHRISTOPHER

Wherever you want!

He sits down, heavily, in the armchair

FAITH

Oh!....Sorry!... Did Mrs. Petherwin
marr...

CHRISTOPHER

...Yes, yes!

He bites his nails and stares into the fire.

FAITH

Well, then!...That's
that!.....Tea?...And you can tell
me about
Italy.....(Reproachfully)Don't bite
your nails, Chrissy!

She playfully taps his hand, picks up the kettle and goes to
fill it.

Christopher sighs

101

EXT. FIR TOP VILLA/SANDBOURNE - DAY

101

Christopher, looking tanned and a little Bohemian, approaches
the house, when he has suddenly to stand back for a quickly
driven carriage which swiftly emerges, turns in the opposite
direction to where he stands, and bowls off down the road.

Christopher recognises the shoulders, hair and bonnet of
Ethelberta. Her driver stands postillion in the rear. She is
driving.

Christopher smiles to himself,slowly shakes his head and
enters the drive.

102

INT. FIR TOP VILLA/SITTING ROOM - DAY

102

Mr and Mrs. Chickerel are seated by the lit fire and Picotee
is sitting near to them, together with a nine-year old girl,
seated on a stool.

Mrs. Chickereel has a blanket over her knee.

Joey ushers Christopher in and Chickereel gets up and wrings Christophers hand.

Picotee is pleased, but very embarrassed and doesn't know where to look, especially after Christopher smiles at her.

Chickereel ushers Christopher to a seat and Picotee pours and hands him some tea and cake, the latter of which he deposits on a nearby elbow table, while drinking his tea.

CHICKEREL

Come in, Sir! Come in! How kind of you to accept our invitation...

MRS. CHICKEREL

...Yes...Kind!

CHICKEREL

As soon as your Faith wrote Picotee you were coming back, and to Melchester, I said, we've got to have them for tea...

MRS. CHICKEREL

...For tea!...Yes!

CHRISTOPHER

I'm sorry she couldn't come, Sir, but she has had to visit a friend who is very ill.

CHICKEREL

Oh, we're happy to see either of you....You've just missed Ethelberta, you know!

CHRISTOPHER

Yes, I just saw her driving away, with the carriage boy merely looking on!

MRS. CHICKEREL

Oh, she's allus bin an independent body....allus!

CHICKEREL

She completely runs the marquis's estate, now...the books, the orders, who rents which farms.

CHRISTOPHER

Good grief...Well, she always was a good organiser.

CHICKEREL

And she's published a cycle of plays, to great acclaim. They're going to put them on in the West End of London.

CHRISTOPHER

Whatever next?..... How is the marquis with all of this?

MRS. CHICKEREL

He don't be saying much at all. He's much in the gardens, these days and she don't let him drink and such. 'e be very happy to leave things in 'er 'ands.....Picotee, take those secateurs and pick me some roses for the table, there, pet..... P'raps Mr. Julian would help you?

Both Picotee and Julian shoot nervously to their feet.

CHRISTOPHER

Yes, of course....Certainly.

Picotee blushes, and picks up the secateurs, from the table.

They both go out through the French windows.

103 EXT. FIR TOP VILLA/GARDEN - DAY

103

Picotee wanders down to the bottom of the garden, followed by Christopher.

She shyly bows her head and starts cutting roses and putting them into her trug, on the floor, there.

PICOTEE

I'm sorry you missed Berta.

CHRISTOPHER

I'm not.

She looks up, startled.

PICOTEE

Why?

Christopher takes her hand, removing the secateurs to the trug.

CHRISTOPHER

I came to see you.

PICOTEE

Me?

CHRISTOPHER

Yes....You, Pixie....At long last I've realized what a blithering idiot I've been, letting a little flower bloom unseen, whilst chasing visions of strangling vine flowers in the jungle.

PICOTEE

Is, is the strangling vine.....
Ethelberta?

CHRISTOPHER

(Faux embarrassed) Um.....I suppose so!

They both laugh and then Picotee turns her head away, in confusion.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

Picotee, I realized that I was waiting to hear the next instalment of your letters to Faith, in Italy, not because I wanted to hear of Ethelberta, but because I wanted to hear of you....I missed you!

Picotee's head is still turned away.

PICOTEE

Me?

CHRISTOPHER

My missing you made me realize that..... that I love you, Picotee.....And that you are the sweet lady that I want.

Picotee turns her head and looks up at him.

Christopher takes her other hand, now, as well, and kisses them both.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

Will you have me as your husband, Picotee?...Will you marry me and make me the happiest man alive?

PICOTEE

Yes...yes....Oh, yes!

He kisses her.

Mr and Mrs Chickereel look out of the French windows, see them and smile at one another.

